



Queensland Police Service

Sexual Violence Response Strategy 2023-2025

Services and Support

If you or someone close to you is in distress or immediate danger, please call 000.

There are many different support services available for victim-survivors of sexual violence. Below is a list of some sexual violence support services in Queensland. For more information on support and services, visit the [Queensland Government Website](#).

Help and Support		
1800RESPECT	24 hours national sexual assault and domestic violence support.	1800 737 732 https://1800respect.org.au
Statewide Sexual Assault Line (DV Connect)	Domestic Violence Connect provides a sexual assault helpline.	1800 010 120 http://www.dvconnect.org/sexual-assault-helpline
Queensland Sexual Assault Network (QSAN)	QSAN provides a list of Queensland Sexual Assault Support Services.	https://qsan.org.au/services/
Queensland Health – Sexual Assault Services	Queensland Health provides a list of sexual assault support service providers available in Queensland.	https://www.health.qld.gov.au/sexualassault/html/contact
Sexual Health Clinic Contacts	Queensland Health provides a list of sexual health clinics in Queensland.	https://www.health.qld.gov.au/clinical-practice/guidelines-procedures/sex-health/services
54 Reasons	Sexual assault and family violence support for teens and caregivers.	https://www.54reasons.org.au/services/specialist-violence-assault-and-domestic-and-family-violence-services
Living Well	Online resources for men affected by Sexual Assault.	https://Livingwell.org.au
LGBTIQA+ Supports	QPS provides support options for LGBTIQA+ members of the community.	https://www.police.qld.gov.au/police-and-the-community/lgbtiq-communities
Victims Assist	Supports for victims and witnesses of crime.	1300 546 587 https://www.qld.gov.au/law/crime-and-police/victims-and-witnesses-of-crime
WWILD Sexual Violence Prevention Service	Sexual Violence Prevention Service for people with an intellectual disability.	07) 3262 9877 https://Wwild.org.au



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Introduction

The Queensland Police Service (QPS) acknowledges the experiences of victim-survivors of sexual violence and how the criminal justice system can be complex and confronting for victim-survivors. In Queensland, the QPS is often the first point of engagement for victim-survivors within the criminal justice system. The lasting impact, trauma and devastation on victim-survivors of sexual violence is well-established and it is imperative the response provided by law enforcement is appropriate, effective and supportive through victim-centric and trauma-informed practices. The QPS is committed to achieving this through the delivery of this Sexual Violence Response Strategy 2023-2025, and subsequent strategies.

In 2021, the QPS published the Sexual Violence Response Strategy 2021-2023 (the Strategy 2021-2023). The Strategy 2021-2023 aimed to enhance the Service's capacity to prevent, disrupt, respond to and investigate sexual violence, put victim-survivors first and hold perpetrators accountable. The Strategy 2021-2023 was the first of its kind for the QPS, and was delivered as a foundational strategic framework to meet the QPS commitment to deliver a victim-centric and trauma-informed response to victim-survivors of sexual violence. The Strategy 2021-2023 outlined 25 actions for implementation over 2021-2023 under four strategic priorities: Advance our People, Enhance our Response, Empower our Community and Maximise our Partnerships.

An independent evaluation of the Strategy 2021-2023 was undertaken to assess the implementation of the Strategy, and the short-term outcomes. The evaluation found the QPS is making progress in the four strategic priority areas. To continue to meet the QPS commitment to enhance the response to victim-survivors of sexual violence, the same vision, purpose, principles and priorities are incorporated into this strategy to continue and to progress the work commenced under the Strategy 2021-2023.

This Sexual Violence Response Strategy 2023-2025 provides a strategic framework consistent with the Queensland Government approach. This Strategy aligns with recent National and State reforms including the Queensland Government Sexual Violence Prevention Action Plan, and the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce's Report Two, which examined the barriers faced by Queensland women and girls accessing the criminal justice system, as both victim-survivors of sexual violence and as offenders.



Vision

A victim-centric, trauma-informed sexual violence response that protects the community, strengthens public confidence, and contributes to Queensland and National integrated action plans.

Purpose

Together we prevent, disrupt, respond to and investigate sexual violence by putting victim-survivors first and holding perpetrators to account.

Strategic Priorities

QPS has four strategic priorities to achieve our vision.

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

Capability Owner

The Child Abuse and Sexual Crime Group (CASCG), Crime and Intelligence Command, is the designated capability owner for sexual violence responses within the QPS. The CASCG is a specialist group within the QPS which aims to protect children and the community by identifying, responding to and preventing physical and sexual offending.

Within CASCG, the Sexual Violence Response Project Team was established to ensure commitment to best practice for sexual violence responses, investigations and training across the state, as well as managing the implementation of reforms to enhance the QPS response to victim-survivors of sexual violence.

Our Strategy in Context

This Strategy aligns with several State and National Strategies and Plans, including:

National

- Work Plan to Strengthen Criminal Justice Responses to Sexual Assault 2022-2027
- National Plan to End Violence against Women and their Children 2022-2032
- National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021-2023



Queensland Government

- Queensland Sexual Violence Prevention Framework and Action Plan
- Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy 2016-2026

Queensland Police Service

- QPS Strategic Plan 2023-2027
- QPS Operational Plan 2023-2024
- QPS Prevention Together Strategic Framework 2021-2024
- QPS Domestic and Family Violence Strategy 2023-2025

Scope of the Strategy

This Strategy relates to sexual violence involving victim-survivors over the age of consent in Queensland (16 years of age or older).

Defining Sexual Violence

Sexual Violence is defined as any unwanted sexual behaviour towards another person and encompasses a range of offence types.¹ The scope of this strategy encompasses the following offence types:

- **Sexual assault²** refers to any unwanted sexual act that is forced on a person without their consent – including where intimidation, physical force, or coercion are involved. Sexual assault includes rape and attempted rape, as well as unwanted sexual touching or groping, or being forced to perform a sexual act on another person. Rape is a term used when sexual penetration is involved.
- **Youth sexual violence and abuse³** is defined as sexual contact between persons where either the perpetrator or the victim is under 18 years of age and where that contact is non-consensual. Such contact is non-consensual if either person is under 16 years of age (out of scope) or lacks the capacity to consent, or if a situation of imbalance of power exists, and if there is the presence of a threat or coercion to either person.
- **Technology-facilitated sexual violence⁴** refers to a range of behaviours where digital technologies are used to facilitate both virtual and face-to-face sexually based harms. This can include unwanted sexting, cyberstalking using mobile phones and social media technology, harassing and repetitive text messages or phone calls of a sexual nature, using technology to record sexual activity without consent, creating fake



sexual images or videos, and sharing sexual images or video without consent of those involved, often called image-based abuse.

• **Intimate partner sexual violence**⁵ refers to the perpetration of sexual acts without consent in intimate relationships (including by cohabiting and non-cohabiting partners, boyfriends/girlfriends, spouses or dates). It may involve physical force or psychological/emotional coercion, unwanted sexual acts, or tactics used to control decisions around reproduction. Intimate partner sexual violence often occurs alongside other forms of domestic and family violence and puts a victim at much higher risk of being killed.⁶

Principles Underpinning our Approach

The principles underpinning our approach align with the QPS' organisational purpose: "Together, we prevent, disrupt, respond and investigate."

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

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

- **Victim-centric**¹– A victim-centred approach is defined as prioritising the needs and concerns of a victim to ensure a nonjudgmental, compassionate and sensitive service delivery. A victim-centric approach seeks to minimise re-traumatisation associated with the criminal justice processes by providing support and empowering victims as engaged participants by providing an opportunity to play a role in their relevant matters.
- **Trauma-informed**²– A trauma-informed approach recognises that trauma can be present for anyone, past or present, and that traumatic events can present differently in people as it affects a person's emotional, psychological, social wellbeing and

¹ Definition pending QPS final approval.

² Definition pending QPS final approval.



behaviour. This approach entails considering the impact of trauma on individuals, identifying signs of trauma, being aware of potential triggers, and creating a secure and supportive environment to minimise re-traumatisation. Interactions within a trauma informed approach prioritise safety, trust, collaboration, and choice, with the ultimate goal of empowering all individuals. This includes how we treat each other as well as those in the community we serve.

- **Evidence-based** – Describes models, approaches or practices found to be effective through evaluation or peer reviewed research. ⁷
- **Consideration of human rights** – respect, protect and promote the human rights of individuals in alignment with the *Human Rights Act 2019*.⁸

Shaping the Strategy

Since 2021, following the introduction of the first Strategy 2021-2023, several reports and inquiries have been published highlighting the experiences of victim-survivors within the Queensland Criminal Justice System, including the QPS.

- In 2021, the Women’s Safety and Justice Taskforce (WSJTF) was established to consider Queensland government responses to domestic and family violence (Report One) and the experiences of women and girls in the criminal justice system, as victims of sexual violence and as offenders (Report Two)⁹.
- In 2022, an independent Commission of Inquiry into QPS responses to domestic and family violence was established¹⁰.
- In 2022, a Commission of Inquiry into DNA testing in Queensland commenced¹¹.
- In 2023, Queensland Parliament’s Legal Affairs and Safety Committee conducted an inquiry into support provided to victims of crime¹².

This Strategy provides a strategic framework for the delivery of key actions and recommendations from recent reports, including the above, which have identified initiatives and reforms to improve the experiences of victim-survivors of sexual violence.

The following reports have shaped the development of this Strategy.

Women’s Safety and Justice Taskforce Report Two

In July 2022, the WSJTF delivered Report Two which contained 188 recommendations to improve and drive reform of Queensland’s criminal justice system, with 92 of the recommendations relating to women and girls as victims of sexual violence. Report Two notes



the QPS is 'taking positive steps to strengthen and improve responses to sexual offending, but more work is needed'¹³.

Aligning with the QPS commitment to continue to enhance the Service's capacity and capability to respond to victim-survivors of sexual violence, several key recommendations from WSJTF Report Two are incorporated into this Strategy 2023-2025 and the associated action plan.

Queensland's Framework to address Sexual Violence

In 2019, Queensland Government published the *Prevent. Support. Believe. Queensland's Framework to address Sexual Violence* (the Framework)¹⁴ and in 2021 released the whole-of-government *Sexual Violence Prevention Action 2021-2022*. The action plan set out new and continuing initiatives to meet the Queensland Government's vision of prevention and responding to all forms of sexual violence in Queensland. Through the Action Plan 2021-2022, the QPS delivered a range of actions to further support and enhance the QPS and whole-of-government response.

Independent Evaluation of the Sexual Violence Response Strategy 2021-2023

In 2022, the QPS contracted the Griffith Criminology Institute, Griffith University to undertake an independent evaluation of the Strategy 2021-2023. The final evaluation report was delivered in March 2023. The evaluation focused on assessing the ongoing implementation of the Strategy 2021-2023 and examining its short-term outcomes. The report identified some limitations to the evaluation, including the short timeframe between implementation and evaluation, which limited the ability of the evaluators to assess long-term outcomes and changes in victim-survivors experiences over time.

Based on short term evaluation findings, the evaluation found the QPS is making progress in the four strategic priority areas of the Strategy 2021-2023. The evaluation report made 16 recommendations to further enhance the QPS response to victim-survivors of sexual violence and build on work already underway. The recommendations address key areas of education and training, policy and practice, online reporting, and measures for long-term evaluation of outcomes for victim-survivors. The recommendations made in the evaluation are consistent with recommendations from WSJTF Report Two and have been heavily relied upon in the development of this Strategy 2023-25 and action plan.



Key Achievements

The Strategy 2021-2023 outlined 25 actions to enhance the Service's response to victim-survivors of sexual violence. The actions focused on victim-focused responses, victim-centric and trauma-informed training, support service engagement and evidence informed practices.

Over the life of the Strategy 2021-2023, 11 of the 25 actions were delivered in full. The remaining actions are ongoing and require long-term implementation approaches. Many long-term actions coincide with reform recommendations made in the WSJTF Report Two¹⁵ and have been carried over into this Strategy's action plan for continued implementation.

Key actions delivered to improve sexual violence responses since 2021

- ✓ The state wide roll-out of the Sexual Violence Liaison Officer (SVLO) model across the QPS.
- ✓ The development and delivery of key training products including the 'Child Sexual Abuse Fundamentals Education' (CSAFE) and 'Challenging Beliefs, Inferences, Attitudes, and Stereotypes' (CBIAS) courses.
- ✓ Continuation of delivery of the specialist training course 'Investigating Sexual Assault – Corroborating and Understanding Relationship Evidence' (ISACURE).
- ✓ Conducting thematic Business Unit Reviews focusing on sexual violence responses in each police district to identify strategies for continuous improvement.
- ✓ Establishment of a QPS central capability owner of sexual violence for the Service, for the purpose of coordinating specialist sexual violence advice, training, intelligence, specialist investigative support and driving best practice for responding to victim-survivors of sexual violence.
- ✓ Release of an educational video through QPS social media platforms, describing how to access support as a sexual violence victim-survivors, and how to make a report of sexual violence to the QPS¹⁶.
- ✓ QPS Intelligence Directorate launching the joint QPS/Tinder safety campaign, a first of its kind campaign with tailored safety messaging proactively promoted to Queensland-based users of the Tinder app.
- ✓ Development of a Sexual Violence data dashboard for internal QPS members to track and monitor sexual offences, including identifying trends, across the state.



Strategies and Action Plan 2023 – 2025

The Queensland Police Service has continued its four interconnected strategic priorities to achieve the purpose and vision of this Strategy:



1. Advance our People

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

Strategies under this priority area are focused on cultural change, victim-centric and trauma-informed practices, training and the wellbeing of QPS members. Opportunities exist to continue education and training of our members about best practice when interacting with and responding to victim-survivors of sexual violence. Frontline and station front-counter officers and staff, including investigators, are often the first point of contact with victim-survivors, and it is important they have the necessary skills, values and beliefs to respond appropriately and effectively to victim-survivors of sexual violence. Support of frontline and station front-counter staff capabilities through victim-centric and trauma-informed leadership forms a critical aspect of cultural change.

To be effective, our members need to feel and be supported. As noted in the Griffith University Evaluation report, officer and staff wellbeing is not specific to only supporting members who provide responses to sexual violence¹⁷. The QPS offers a range of wellbeing initiatives and programs and is developing a new early warning system¹⁸. Regular promotion of these initiatives will assist in awareness and uptake of available support options.



Over 2023-2025, we will Advance our People through the delivery of the following Actions.

Action Plan	
1.1	Increase awareness and understanding of the <i>Sexual Violence Response Strategy 2023-25</i> to support cultural change in the Service.
1.2	Implement victim-centric and trauma-informed training and education for first response officers responding to sexual violence victims in the first instance, including frontline officers and station front counter officers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. This action should include the roll-out of initiatives focused on improving the cultural capability of the QPS and its ability to respond to sexual violence reports.
1.3	Noting the proven value of the ISACURE course and the high demand for its delivery, develop an issues paper for consideration by ELT outlining issues and options to increase uptake of the course, particularly in regional and remote areas of the Service.
1.4	Promotion of the QPS Online Learning Product (OLP) 'Look a Little Deeper – Human Trafficking' to build officer awareness and understanding of human trafficking, sexual servitude, slavery and forced marriage.
1.5	Create a tailored training package for commissioned officers to refresh their knowledge and understanding of QPS responses to sexual violence. Continue to promote wellbeing initiatives for all members of the QPS.
1.6	Continue to promote wellbeing initiatives for all members of the QPS.

Performance Indicators

- ✓ Increase in organisational knowledge and understanding of intent and aim of the *Sexual Violence Response Strategy 2023-25*.
- ✓ Increase in understanding key themes including a consistent and service wide understanding of 'victim-centric' and 'trauma-informed'.



- ✓ Increase in frontline QPS members who have undertaken the training and who have a strong understanding of trauma-informed and victim-centric responses to victim-survivors of sexual violence.
- ✓ Increase in number of officers trained in ISACURE, including Sexual Violence Liaison Officers (SVLOs) and officers from rural and remote districts.
- ✓ Number of officers undertaking the 'Look a Little Deeper – Human Trafficking' OLP and an increase in officer awareness and understanding of human trafficking, sexual servitude, slavery and forced marriage and the linkage to sexual violence.
- ✓ Number of Commissioned Officers undertaking the sexual violence training package.
- ✓ Increase in awareness and uptake of available wellbeing initiatives.
- ✓ QPS investigators are supported.

2. Enhance our Response

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

Strategies under this priority area are focused on enhancing internal capability, leadership and forward planning. A key focus is providing not only QPS members with resources, but also the victim-survivors we engage with. We will do this by equipping our officers with resources to keep victims informed about the criminal justice system. This will include increasing knowledge and understanding of the role of the QPS in responding to sexual violence, including the role and responsibilities of our SVLOs. We will review internal policies and procedures relating to sexual violence to ensure we are equipping our officers with the relevant resources to provide best practice responses.

We will also ensure that, when victim-survivors do not feel the QPS response is compliant with the Charter of Victims' Rights, they are aware of how to report, and the report will be appropriately reviewed and reported on¹⁹. This will improve the system to facilitate greater victim-survivor involvement and control over their participation in the criminal justice system. We will also continue our partnership with the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP), so that we can, together, review the investigation and prosecution of sexual violence offences to identify opportunities to improve the system for victim-survivors.

Over 2023-2025, we will Enhance our Response through the delivery of the following Actions.



Action Plan

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| 2.1 | Continue to develop resources to equip QPS members to provide consistent information to victim-survivors about the criminal justice system and their engagement with it. |
| 2.2 | Clarify and promote the role of the SVLO both internally and externally to the QPS. |
| 2.3 | Review and revise QPS operational policies and procedures in relation to the investigation of sexual violence offences. |
| 2.4 | Continue to implement and communicate key legislative reforms including the adoption of an affirmative consent model in Queensland. |
| 2.5 | Establish a process for collating and reviewing complaints from victim-survivors about police non-compliance with the charter of victims' rights and the <i>Human Rights Act 2019</i> . |
| 2.6 | Realign the 'QPS and ODPP Seeking Justice Committee' and associated working group to become the Sexual Offence Review Committee to focus on continuous improvement in the investigation and prosecution of sexual violence. |
| 2.7 | Promote and maintain currency of the sexual violence dashboard to encourage continued use and efficacy. |
| 2.8 | Continue to review unfounded and withdrawn sexual violence offences to ensure outcomes and recorded in line with QPS policy. |

Performance Indicators

- ✓ Increase in officers' understanding of the criminal justice system for victim-survivors of sexual violence.
- ✓ Increase in understanding and awareness of the SVLO role by frontline officers, and the community.
- ✓ Increase in awareness of Queensland sexual violence reforms by QPS members.



- ✓ Revised policies and procedures are published and communicated to investigators.
- ✓ A complaints process regarding Charter of Victims' Rights and *Human Rights Act 2019* is established and communicated to QPS officers.
- ✓ A Sexual Offence Review Committee is established.
- ✓ QPS members have access to current data to inform decision making for sexual violence cases and oversight of outcomes of sexual violence offences (solved, unsolved, unfounded or withdrawn).
- ✓ Unfounded and withdrawn sexual violence offences are finalised accurately as per QPS policy.

3. Empower our Community

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

Strategies under this priority area focus on increasing community awareness of available reporting options and educating the community on the QPS role in responding to sexual violence. It is important that victim-survivors know and understand their options when considering reporting sexual violence to police. This includes face to face reporting and understanding the difference between the options available online to report. We will ensure these options are available, supportive, simple to use and provide sufficient information to allow victim-survivors to have the information they need to make informed decisions about reporting. In addition, we will collaborate with our partner agencies to develop and deliver initiatives aimed at increasing community knowledge of sexual violence.

Over 2023-2025, we will Empower Our Community through the delivery of the following Actions.

Action Plan

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| 3.1 | <p>Community education and awareness of reporting options for sexual violence victim-survivors, including communicating the difference between online reporting and Alternative Reporting Options (ARO). This should include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Continue to review and update the sexual violence site on the QPS website in consultation with key stakeholders. |
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| 3.2 | Explore options to make online reporting available in languages other than English to ensure that access to the online reporting form and to ARO are made more accessible to those for whom English is not their first language. |
| 3.3 | <p>Promote awareness of the role of the QPS regarding sexual violence responses both internally and externally, and in collaboration with partner agencies. This includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting Districts to develop communications to meet the needs of vulnerable groups. Develop communications plan for Sexual Violence Awareness Month. |

Performance Indicators

- ✓ Increase in reporting of sexual violence offences through the QPS online sexual assault reporting form, and Alternate Reporting Options (ARO).
- ✓ Increase in accessibility to the online reporting options.
- ✓ Increase in community engagement and education activities.

4. Maximise our Partnerships

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

Strategies under this priority area focus on relationships with partner agencies, enhancing collaboration and multi-agency responses. Responding to sexual violence victim-survivors is less effective when done in isolation and requires a holistic approach involving multi-agency collaboration. A holistic approach to responding to victim-survivors leads to more effective responses and better outcomes. A broad range of government and non-government agencies assume a key role in responding to sexual violence, and we must leverage off the expertise of these agencies to enhance multi-agency responses for victim-survivors.

The QPS has an opportunity to formalise relationships with key stakeholders, by establishing multi-agency sexual assault response networks. It is important we continue current collaboration and build new relationships to support effective multi-agency delivery. This will be achieved through developing and enhancing opportunities to engage with local sexual



assault support services, community stakeholders and government agencies including Queensland Health. Our SVLOs play a key role in maintaining relationships with these agencies and will drive collaboration through the delivery of actions in this Strategy.

Over 2023-2025, we will Maximise Our Partnerships through the delivery of the following Actions.

Action Plan

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| 4.1 | Establish a multiagency sexual assault response network in each District in consultation with external stakeholders including government and non-government agencies. |
| 4.2 | Develop opportunities to foster and enhance engagement with local sexual assault support services to ensure a collaborative approach to victim-survivors of sexual violence. |
| 4.3 | Enhance opportunities for SVLOs to leverage off existing community engagement with multi-cultural communities, first nations communities, vulnerable persons (including people with disabilities, mental health and the elderly) and sex workers to promote relationships and reporting options. |
| 4.4 | Continued engagement with Queensland Health to advocate for consistent, timely and high-quality forensic medical examinations for sexual violence victim-survivors. |

Performance Indicators

- ✓ Implementation of sexual assault networks in each police district.
- ✓ Increase in engagement by Sexual Violence Liaison Officers (SVLOs) with sexual assault support services.
- ✓ Increase in engagement by Sexual Violence Liaison Officers (SVLOs) with members of multicultural communities, First Nations communities, vulnerable communities, and sex workers.
- ✓ Reduction of reported issues regarding victim-survivors access to forensic medical examinations.



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