



SERVICES AND PRACTITIONERS  
FOR THE ELIMINATION OF ABUSE  
QUEENSLAND

## **SPEAQ Network – Key Information and Constitution** as at June 2024

SPEAQ (Services and Practitioners for the Elimination of Abuse Qld) is a network of practitioners and services involved in, or with an interest in, working with men and boys who have perpetrated domestic and family violence. The network has been operating in Queensland for over 30 years, with a permanent part-time secretariat established in 2009.

Network participants come from a range of services, comprising workers from almost all of the state funded mainstream men's DV intervention programs; counselling services, family intervention and intensive family support services working with men who use DFV; DVConnect Mensline and men's court workers; as well as government agencies, and individual practitioners.

SPEAQ operates at both a practitioner level and a management level. Our roots and our main focus has been in supporting practitioners, but our interests are broader than just practitioner roles. Elected members form the SPEAQ Steering Committee, led by two nominated co-convenors, which is responsible for the strategic direction of the network, overseeing the secretariat, and representing the network in advocacy, consultation, and written submissions. Manager's meetings have been held since 2008, and currently serve to support the SPEAQ Steering Committee in decision making for SPEAQ's direction and major activities, as well as being a forum to assist SPEAQ's consultation with government.

SPEAQ is a key stakeholder in the Qld Government's domestic and family violence reform process. We have been liaising with the Qld Government for many years in relation to Perpetrator Intervention Programs (also known as Men's Domestic Violence Behaviour Change Programs), and played a key role in the development of relevant practice standards and regulatory frameworks, including the most recent Perpetrator Intervention Services Requirements published in 2021.

We have made a number of formal submissions to the Qld and Federal governments on domestic violence matters, including in response to major reviews and inquiries:

- Numerous legislative, policy and regulatory consultations (2023, 2024)
- Consultation on Strategy for Persons Using Domestic and Family Violence (2023, 2024)
- Consultation Draft – National Principles to Address Coercive Control (2022)
- Draft Domestic and Family Violence Protection (Combating Coercive Control) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 - Identifying the person most in need of protection (2022)
- Consultation Draft – Perpetrator Intervention Services Requirements (2022)
- Joint Letter to Women's Safety Ministers (2021)
- Proposed Queensland legislation governing public access to, and reporting of, sexual offence and domestic and family violence matters (2021)
- Queensland Law Reform Commission review of proposed domestic violence disclosure scheme (2017)
- Review of the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012 (2016)



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- Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence (2014)
- Inquiry on strategies to prevent and reduce criminal activity in Queensland (2014)
- Consultation Draft – Domestic and Family Violence Protection Bill 2011 (2011).
- Review of the Qld Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 1989 (2010);
- Consultation Paper – Queensland Whole of Government Strategy to Target Domestic and Family Violence (2008);

We continue to be involved in consultation with government about issues affecting intervention work with men who use DFV and issues affecting the DFV service sector generally.

We work on supporting and developing the sector in many ways, including activities such as monthly Community of Practice teleconferences, an annual professional development event called the SPEAQ Forum, and collaborating with WorkUp Qld to support professional development needs.

We are the only collective voice representing practitioners and services in this field in Qld. The SPEAQ secretariat is funded from membership subscriptions and donations. The SPEAQ Steering Committee, along with the SPEAQ secretariat and is currently supported by a large component of voluntary unpaid time. We have received specific project funding from both the Qld Government and Challenge DV (formerly known as Australia's CEO Challenge) in the last couple of years, and are pleased to receive ongoing funding support for the secretariat through our partnership with Challenge DV.

We acknowledge the generous support of North Qld Domestic Violence Resource Service which has auspiced SPEAQ since the beginning of 2017, providing administrative and management support, and extend thanks to Pauline Woodbridge, former manager, for making this happen. We also acknowledge the support of Di Mangan and DVConnect, which auspiced SPEAQ for 8 years from the establishment of the secretariat in 2009 until 2017.

## Vision

A Queensland free from domestic and family violence, where all people feel safe in their own homes and in their communities, and where children can grow and develop in safe, secure environments.<sup>1</sup>

## Mission

To be a key voice through leadership in the prevention and elimination of domestic violence in Queensland, supporting the highest level of effectiveness and safety in interventions with men and boys who perpetrate domestic and family violence. We will do this through developing a robust, well-resourced and inclusive network with the capacity to contribute specialist experience,

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<sup>1</sup> SPEAQ supports the vision set out in the *National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022-2032*. A country where all women and children live free from fear and violence, thrive and reach their full potential, and where women and children and LGBTIQ+ people of all genders are safe at home, at work, at school, in the community and online.



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knowledge and perspectives from the field of working for change and accountability with men who use domestic and family violence.

## Values

These values are interwoven and support each other, speaking to what drives the way we work together and the position we take in the world.

**Safety** – Safety is core to all our decision making. We support practitioners and services in doing safe practice with clients, as well as providing a community of practice that centres feelings of safety and belonging in our members.

**Accountability** – SPEAQ holds itself accountable to its members, to the victim-survivors experiencing violence, and to the men and boys receiving services. Aligned with best practice and relevant regulatory frameworks, we centre the safety of women and children, and men's accountability and personal responsibility, in our practice and advocacy.

**Gender Equity and Intersectionality** – We have a commitment to gender equity and addressing gender inequality as a key to ending violence against women and children, with a recognition of multiple forms and layers of oppression, disadvantage, and trauma.

**Collaboration and Inclusion** – SPEAQ values diverse voices and experiences in striving for our work and our advocacy to be inclusive and effective through meaningful collaboration and partnerships, particularly working alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders, Elders and communities.

**Innovation** – SPEAQ supports evidence-based research and creative solutions in responding to the demands of services and the diverse and complex needs of individuals, families, and communities, contributing to research and consulting opportunities with specialist knowledge.

## Purpose and Activities

Services and Practitioners for the Elimination of Abuse Queensland (SPEAQ) is a network of service providers, individual practitioners and others involved in and with an interest in intervention programs for men who have used domestic and family violence. We are committed to increasing the safety of victims of domestic and family violence, primarily women and children, and assisting men who have used violence to prioritise safety and respect in their relationships. SPEAQ members work collaboratively for the advancement of practice in ending and preventing domestic and family violence.

We will work to achieve our purpose through activities including, but not limited to:

- providing information to workers about developments in the field,
- providing a forum for discussion of current practice issues in the field,
- creating and maintaining a safe and respectful forum for genuine dialogue among practitioners,



- providing opportunities for professional development and peer support by sharing information, knowledge and practice wisdom; holding regular forums for discussion; convening conferences; and hosting training and workshops,
- sharing of materials and resources,
- contributing to the development of practice standards,
- maintaining current databases relating to experienced facilitators, clinical supervisors and available programs, as available resources permit,
- advocating on behalf of that part of the domestic and family violence prevention sector which works with male clients,
- influencing social and systemic change through means such as developing and distributing issues papers, making submissions to government on relevant issues, and contributing to the development of government policy, and media
- act as a conduit for the practice wisdom of the men's behaviour change sector to government, through consultation, negotiation, liaison and similar activity
- strengthening the domestic and family violence service sector and the work with men who use domestic and family violence, including through collaboration with other networks.

## **SPEAQ Membership**

### **Membership Structure**

There are 4 categories of membership. All membership categories require payment of an annual subscription fee.

- Organisational members
  - Which covers all relevant employees
- Individual members
- Associate Organisational members
  - Not providing a direct client service based in Qld; does not have voting rights; lower membership fee
- Associate Individual member
  - Not connected to direct client service based in Qld; does not have voting rights; lower membership fee

Other professionals with an interest in SPEAQ's activities can request to join the SPEAQ mailing list as a guest.

### **Benefits of Membership**

- Inclusion in membership contacts database and access to member contact information
- Access to member-only library resources, networking features, discussion forums and other features and resources on the SPEAQ website
- Access to SPEAQ professional development events at reduced cost
- Being part of and contributing to the development of a community of practice
- Access to resources for practice development through sharing among members



- Opportunity to keep abreast of new research, participate in research projects, and help shape future research
- Assists organisation to meet Qld government service agreements
- Contribution to statewide systemic change and policy development by being a member of a professional Queensland body
- Expand professional networks
- Opportunity to collaborate with other networks

### **Membership Criteria**

- Members commit to supporting the Vision, Mission and Values of SPEAQ.
- Members commit to representative democratic decision making based on a consensus process.
- Members acknowledge the following responsibilities of membership:
  - Active participation in network activities where possible
  - Feedback provided where requested and possible to the SPEAQ Steering Committee as the representatives of the network.
  - Organisational and individual members contribute financially to the secretariat by paying an annual fee.
  - Organisational members contribute to network activities through additional financial and/or in-kind support as resources permit

### **Membership Fees**

- Membership Fees are set by the Steering Committee
- Fees shall be determined according to the following considerations:
  - The running costs of the secretariat
  - The potential level of participation of organisations according to number of branches and programs
  - The financial resources and funding level of relevant programs in each organisation
  - The projected number of members
  - Individual fees are set at a reasonable level relative to the organisational member fee

### **Participation in SPEAQ Activities**

Note: in this section, a “financial member” is one who has fully paid their membership subscription for the current subscription period (e.g. financial year)

- Financial Organisational members nominate a representative
- Organisational members may put forward further participants in SPEAQ activities as required
- Participation in SPEAQ committees is open to financial members only
- Where decisions are being made in a forum that includes both financial members and guests, guests are welcome to contribute to the discussion, however the decision making power rests solely with the financial members



- Guests, such as prospective members or lapsed members, may participate in various activities such as teleconferences, email discussions etc as determined from time to time by members
- Invited participants, such as representatives of Government Departments or people in an advisory or mentoring role, may also contribute to teleconferences and e-mail discussions etc, but are not part of the decision making process.

## Governance, Operation and Structure

### Governance and Operation

SPEAQ is an unincorporated body under the auspices of one of the member organisations, currently NQDVRS. The primary decision-making group is the SPEAQ Steering Committee, elected by SPEAQ membership. The SPEAQ Steering Committee, led by two Co-Convenors of different genders, is responsible for the strategic direction of the network, supporting the workforce, and raising SPEAQ's profile and influence. The SPEAQ Steering Committee meets regularly as needed, and at least quarterly.

General members' meetings occur quarterly, and are open to all members. Ad-hoc committees are formed and operate as needed for specific activities. See the diagram below.

Operationally, SPEAQ's activities are carried out primarily through the Secretariat, which has one formal position, the Secretary who also performs the Treasurer role, supported by an additional position of Assistant Secretary who also performs the Website Administrator role. The work of the Secretariat is guided by the Steering Committee, with Co-Convenors performing some functions of the Secretary in an acting capacity when needed.

# SPEAQ

## SPEAQ Steering Committee

- Any SPEAQ member can nominate
- Decided by SPEAQ members' vote (2 nominees per Organisational member + Individual members) if nominees + continuing members exceed vacancies
- 8 members total; quorum of 5 including permanent seat for manager of Auspicing body
- All titled roles including Secretary/Treasurer and Co-convenors are drawn from the elected members and decided by all SSC members
- SPEAQ members are advised to aim for the following in nominations and voting (the current SSC may actively recruit nominations to achieve these goals):
  - \* at least 4 members hold current management roles
  - \* at least 4 members are current direct practitioners in DFV perpetrator intervention roles, including victim/survivor advocate roles
  - \* at least 3 members have direct practice experience working with men using DFV
  - \* at least 3 members have direct practice experience working with people experiencing DFV
  - \* there may be overlap between the previous three requirements
  - \* diversity in multiple ways – gender, ATSI, practice approaches, type of organisation, regional/metro location

### Auspicing Body (NQDVRS)

- Legal and financial functions**
- \* Auspice currently performed by NQDVRS
  - \* Holds legal liability
  - \* Administers financial functions, under direction of the Treasurer
  - \* Manager holds a position on Steering Committee

### General Membership Group

- All Members**
- \* Decisions requiring broad membership input
  - \* Meets Quarterly
  - \* Holds monthly Community of Practice meetings

### Ad-hoc Committees

- Committees formed for specific projects**
- \* e.g. Forum Organising Committee

#### Co-Convenors

- \* 2 people of different genders
- \* Arranges meetings
- \* Facilitate meetings
- \* Meeting participation and decision making
- \* Face of SPEAQ

#### Secretary

- \* Meeting participation and decision making
- \* Support Convenors and other committee members
- \* Provides input from the Secretariat

#### Treasurer

- \* May be combined with Secretary role

#### Committee Members

- \* Meeting participation and decision making
- \* Support Co-Convenors and Secretariat

### Secretariat

- \* includes other paid or unpaid operational positions including Website Administrator



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### ***SPEAQ Steering Committee Key Roles and Responsibilities***

Key responsibilities for the SPEAQ Steering Committee include but are not limited to:

- Set the Strategic direction for SPEAQ
- Monitor and review performance and compliance
- Oversight and approval of budget
- Review sustainability and set membership fees
- Explore options for sponsorship, funding etc
- Oversee events (annual SPEAQ Forum, Training and PD activities etc)
- Lead SPEAQ network development
- Government liaison, consultations, submissions
- Sector Development (eg training) and liaison with other DFV sector networks
- Approval of new membership requests by quorum
- Nomination and election of Secretary and Treasurer, oversight and support
- Community of Practice/s Chair/s nomination, oversight and support

In addition to the above, key responsibilities of SPEAQ Steering Committee Co-Convenors include but are limited to:

- Arrange, host and facilitate SPEAQ Steering Committee meetings (monthly) and additional meetings as needed
- Support active participation of all Steering Committee members in committee activities
- Represent SPEAQ network in external consultations, meetings, events
- Coordinate/oversee writing of submissions, position papers
- Information sharing to network
- Perform Secretary functions in acting capacity as needed (eg., leave coverage)

In addition to the Steering Committee responsibilities, key responsibilities of Secretary include but are not limited to:

- General Admin and Membership Admin
- Information sharing to network
- Represents SPEAQ in external consultations, meetings, events
- Minutes of General Members (quarterly) and Managers (annual) meetings
- Facilitates member engagement in SPEAQ activities
- Supports committees and working groups, including SPEAQ Forum organising committee
- Operational management of other secretariat staff, e.g. website admin role
- Oversight of website development, content, admin
- Reports as requested by SPEAQ Steering Committee and other ad hoc requests
- Perform Community of Practice Chair functions in acting capacity as needed (eg., leave coverage, gaps in recruitment)

In addition to the Steering Committee responsibilities, key responsibilities of the Treasurer include but are not limited to:

- Oversee SPEAQ finances in cooperation with Auspice financial officer, including payment of expenses, receipt of income and accounting





- Provide approval for payment of invoices
- Liaise with Auspice body around grant/funding applications, sponsorships and donations
- Manage receipt of subscription fees
- Drafting of budget
- Reporting back to Steering Committee to support decision making

Further details for the Steering Committee (SSC):

- Membership terms for Steering Committee members will be 24 months from the elected date. SSC Members can re-nominate for future vacancies.
- If more than number of nominations + continuing members are greater than number of committee positions, the membership of the Committee will be decided by a vote: one practitioner delegate and one manager delegate from each member organisation (delegates chosen by organisational member employees), as well as individual members.
- Committee members will decide who takes on the co-convenor roles, once elected by membership, through consensus process
- Committee members will decide who takes on the secretary role, once elected by membership, through consensus process
- Committee members will decide who takes on the Community of Practice chair roles through an interview panel process with members invited to nominate themselves.
- The Committee can seek “ex-officio members” for specific purposes (e.g. to provide expertise on working with LGBTIQ, Disability, CALD clients, where this expertise does not already exist within the Steering Committee), or call in expertise at meetings where specific topics (e.g. systems advocacy) are discussed
- Committee members must be people who have decision making ability, or capability to liaise with those who do in a timely manner, and the capability to follow through on tasks
- Vacancies created by members leaving before term may be filled by the Steering committee by people who nominated at the last election. Any positions so filled will be held on a temporary basis until the next election, when they can renominate.
- Elections will be held annually, in the last quarter of the calendar year.
- The current Managers Meetings will continue to be held, but on an annual basis. Managers are invited to also attend the quarterly General Members Meetings.

## Further Information

Detail on the current membership fees and member privileges is contained in the document [SPEAQ membership structure and privileges.](#)

For [further information about SPEAQ](#), or to [apply for membership](#), please visit the SPEAQ website at [www.speaq.org.au](http://www.speaq.org.au) or contact the SPEAQ secretariat: [secretariat@speaq.org.au](mailto:secretariat@speaq.org.au)