

# 5 REASONS YOUR WORKPLACE SHOULD ADDRESS DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

## 1. DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE AFFECTS MANY EMPLOYEES

Research shows that 1 in 4 women and 1 in 13 men in Australia will experience some form of domestic and family violence (DFV) in their lifetime. Of the women experiencing DFV we know that two thirds are employed. We can also reasonably assume a similar percentage of people using DFV would also be in the workforce.

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE (ALL FORMS) EXPERIENCED



RATES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & MEN SINCE THE AGE OF 15

Source: ABS (2017)

## 2. DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE IS A HEALTHCARE CONCERN

DFV has significant impact on physical, psychological and social impacts on all those affected. For those experiencing their injuries may result in death or permanent disability.

All those experiencing DFV and their children experience higher rates of depression, anxiety, stress related symptoms, post-traumatic stress disorder, sleep difficulties, eating disorders, emotional distress, suicide ideation or attempts, substance abuse and other negative health consequences. Employers may only observe some of the less severe impacts such as: headaches, back pain, abdominal pain, and poor overall health results.



CHILDREN ARE PRESENT IN

1 OUT OF EVERY 3

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE CASES REPORTED TO POLICE

Source: 2019

The earlier workplaces can recognise, respond and refer the better the outcomes for all those affected.

## 3. DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE IS A WORKPLACE ISSUE

1 in 5 Australian women say the violence continues at work 3. Between 25–50% of Australian women subjected to DFV report having lost a job, at least in part due to the violence.

Women who have experienced says this can happen via abusive calls and emails, or even their abusive partner turning up to their workplace. This not only poses significant risk of harm to the person experiencing but also to other colleagues.

DFV reduces work performance and productivity. Survey data shows the main reported impact is on work performance with 16% of victims reporting being distracted, tired or unwell; 10% needing to take time off and 7% being late for work 2. Data suggests that only 48% of those who experienced DFV disclosed the occurrence with their manager or supervisor. Of those that did, only 10% found their responses helpful 4 Clearly we need to be doing more for our staff to increase their safety and wellbeing at work and at home.

It is estimated that DFV costs Australian economy 22 billion annually Other studies have found that it impacts directly on Australian businesses to the sum of 1.9 Billion in areas such as: lost opportunity costs, errors, poor service, stress, performance management, search and hiring costs, retaining costs and permanent loss of labour capacity.

### Economic Costs of Domestic and Family Violence



Source: McPherson 2017

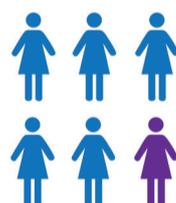


Australian Human Rights Commission/AMGC 2016

## 4. NEW LEGISLATION REQUIRES WORKPLACES TO BE INFORMED AND ACTIVE

The Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth) has been amended to provide the right for workers to request flexible work arrangements if they are experiencing DFV. For staff at risk of injury, threats or harm from an abusive partner or ex-partner who is stalking, threatening or harassing the flexible work may be lifesaving. Different States and Territories across Australia are implementing public service policies to address this significant issue. A change to work patterns and hours, potential transfers, paid leave, a different desk or office location, and a change to email address and phone number are a few practical steps a business can take to better ensure the safety of an affected staff member.

In response to the Not Now, Not Ever report the Queensland public service broadly adopted the 2016 Industrial Relations Act which, set-up a standard number of provisions for all those affected by DFV. This includes (but was not limited to) provisions for flexible work arrangements, transfers, leave and anti-discrimination. More information on what the Queensland Government has done can be found here. We would recommend all organisations familiarise themselves with these provisions when implementing a workplace response to DFV.



Source: 2016

## 5. DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE IS A MANAGEMENT ISSUE

The Australian Human Rights Commission research has found that employers do not have the knowledge, resources and tools to support staff affected by DFV.

However, an effective workplace DFV policy can help workplaces to be prepared and responsive to incidences of DFV. A policy should, distribute up to date information and resources; training staff to recognise, respond and refer; and having policy and procedures support all those affected by DFV. This means the workplace can appropriately support the affected employee to change their circumstances whilst remaining employed and increases safety for all. For more information on how your workplace can effectively respond to DFV contact Australia's CEO Challenge.

## Employers CAN make a difference

Whether you know it or not, it is highly likely that a proportion of your staff and colleagues are affected by domestic and family violence.

- BECOME INFORMED
- BECOME AWARE
- BECOME PREPARED

Visit our website  
[www.australiasceochallenge.org](http://www.australiasceochallenge.org) or CALL US on 07 3119 6347 to organise A FREE WORKPLACE PRESENTATION

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