

QUEENSLAND TREASURY

Domestic and family violence calls for police service

Research paper

April 2021

Queensland Government Statistician's Office

Queensland Treasury

www.qgso.qld.gov.au

© The State of Queensland (Queensland Treasury) 2021

The Queensland Government supports and encourages the dissemination and exchange of information. However, copyright protects this publication. The State of Queensland has no objection to this material being reproduced, made available online or electronically but only if it is recognised as the owner of the copyright and this material remains unaltered.

Licence

This document is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0) International licence.



To view a copy of this licence, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>

Attribution

Content from this report should be attributed to:

Queensland Government Statistician's Office, Queensland Treasury, *Domestic and family violence calls for police service*.

Disclaimer

While great care has been taken in collecting, processing analysing, and extracting information, Queensland Government Statistician's Office, Queensland Treasury makes no warranty regarding errors or omissions and assumes no legal liability or responsibility for loss or damage resulting from the use of the information.

Contents

Acronyms	iii
1.0 Introduction	1
2.0 Background	1
3.0 Methods and data descriptions	2
4.0 Findings	3
4.1 Increases in DFV calls for service	3
4.2 More police time being spent on DFV incidents	5
4.3 No change in when DFV incidents occur	6
4.4 Disadvantaged locations have relatively high rates of reported DFV incidents	7
5.0 Discussion	8
Appendices	10
1.1 Project limitations	10
1.2 Socio-economic area information	10

Figures and Table

Figure 1	Classification of DFV CFS within this paper	2
Figure 2	Number of DFV CFS	3
Figure 3	Number of DFV incidents by final DFV incident outcome	4
Figure 4	Average time for DFV incidents by outcome classification, 2012–13 compared with 2017–18	5
Figure 5	Proportion of DFV incidents occurring by month of year, hour of day and day of week, 2012–13 to 2017–18	6
Figure 6	Rate ratio of DFV incidents by socio-economic index and outcome classification, 2012–13 to 2017–18	7
Table 1	DFV incidents by socio-economic status and outcome classification, 2012–13 and 2017–18	8

Acronyms

CFS	calls for service
DFV	domestic and family violence
DVO	domestic violence order
ERP	estimated resident population
PPN	police protection notice
QCAD	Queensland Computer Aided Dispatch
QPS	Queensland Police Service

Research at a glance

Domestic and family violence (DFV) calls for service

*These data only refer to information relating to recorded calls for service to police and **do not reflect all incidents of DFV in the community or all time spent on DFV matters by the police.** Information relates to calls made to the Brisbane, Beenleigh and Maroochydore Police Communications Centres.*

When comparing 2012–13 with 2017–18:

There was an increase in the number of DFV calls for service recorded by police and the amount of initial police time spent responding to DFV matters, particularly coinciding with the release of the *Not Now, Not Ever* report.

61% growth
in distinct DFV calls for service made by the public

92% increase
in finalised DFV incidents resulting in a **breach** of Domestic Violence Order

60% increase in finalised DFV incidents resulting in a **police application** for a Domestic Violence Order

57% increase in finalised DFV incidents resulting in **referrals** made to support services

About **45 minutes more** spent on each breach of Domestic Violence Order

About **one hour more** spent on making a police application for a Domestic Violence Order

About **18 minutes more** spent on making referrals to support services

While the prevalence of DFV in the community is unknown, locations characterised by social and economic disadvantage have higher rates of **reported** DFV incidents than locations characterised by social and economic advantage and this gap has increased.

58% increase in the number of DFV incidents reported in the most socially and economically **disadvantaged** locations



28% increase in the number of DFV incidents reported in the most socially and economically **advantaged** locations

1.0 Introduction

A range of initiatives and reform activities that aim to reduce domestic and family violence (DFV)¹ in the community were implemented by the Queensland Government following the release of the *Not Now, Not Ever: Putting an end to domestic and family violence in Queensland (Not Now, Not Ever)* report in 2015.²

This paper presents information relating to telephone calls for service (CFS) made to selected Queensland Police Service (QPS) police communication centres within south-eastern Queensland seeking assistance with DFV-related matters. It provides a temporal and spatial exploration of the number of DFV CFS and police time spent on responding to DFV CFS. Unreported DFV incidents, DFV-related incidents reported in-person at police stations, DFV incidents detected by police and time spent on activities occurring after CFS are administratively closed are not reflected in the CFS information used to compile this report.³ It is also noted that DFV incidents reported to the police tend to be of a more serious or violent nature⁴, and it is possible that some CFS regarding offences committed in a domestic and family context may not have been recorded as a DFV incident.

The results show that:

- there has been an increase in the number of DFV CFS
- more police time is being spent on DFV incidents
- disadvantaged locations have relatively high rates of reported DFV incidents.

These results provide insight into the characteristics of DFV in south-eastern Queensland and highlight how more police resources have been deployed because of a call for assistance for DFV-related matters in recent years.

2.0 Background

The *Not Now, Not Ever* report included 140 recommendations to inform the development of a long-term DFV strategy for Queensland. The *Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy 2016–2026*⁵ was developed in response to the *Not Now, Not Ever* report and includes initiatives and reform activities that centre on shifting community attitudes, supporting DFV victims and perpetrators, and building a criminal justice system that prioritises victim safety and holds DFV perpetrators to account.

DFV-related initiatives and reform activities most relevant to the interpretation of data shown in this paper include the:

- release of public awareness campaigns regarding DFV
- enhanced training of police officers to assist them to better recognise and respond to DFV
- provision of specialist advice and improved technology to frontline police officers
- prioritisation of support to and safety of DFV victims
- heightened capacity of police officers to refer DFV victims and offenders to support services due to an increase in the number of available support services and the ability to refer people to services without their consent
- amendment of the *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012* (Qld) to increase the default life of protection orders from two to five years.

Further information on these and other reform activities is available in the *Summary of Queensland criminal justice system reforms related to domestic and family violence* document prepared by QGSO.

¹ DFV is behaviour by a person (the first person) towards another person (the second person) with whom the first person is in a relevant relationship (intimate personal, family, or informal care relationship) that is physically, sexually, emotionally, psychologically, or economically abusive; and/or is threatening, coercive, or in any other way controls or dominates the second person and causes the second person to fear for the second person's safety or wellbeing or that of someone else (as defined in the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act).

² The Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland 2015, *Not Now, Not Ever report: Putting an end to domestic and family violence in Queensland*, <<https://www.csyw.qld.gov.au/resources/campaign/end-violence/about/dfv-report-vol-one.pdf>>.

³ The police spend time on a range of DFV-related activities not captured by CFS information. This includes the provision of support to DFV victims and involvement in DFV high risk teams, vulnerable persons units and DFV coordinator roles.

⁴ Voce, I and Boxall, H 2018, 'Who reports domestic violence to police? A review of the evidence', *Trends & issues in crime and criminal justice*, No. 559, Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology, <<https://aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/tandi559>>.

⁵ Queensland Government 2015, *Domestic and family violence prevention strategy 2016–2026*, <<https://www.csyw.qld.gov.au/resources/campaign/end-violence/dfv-prevention-strategy.pdf>>.

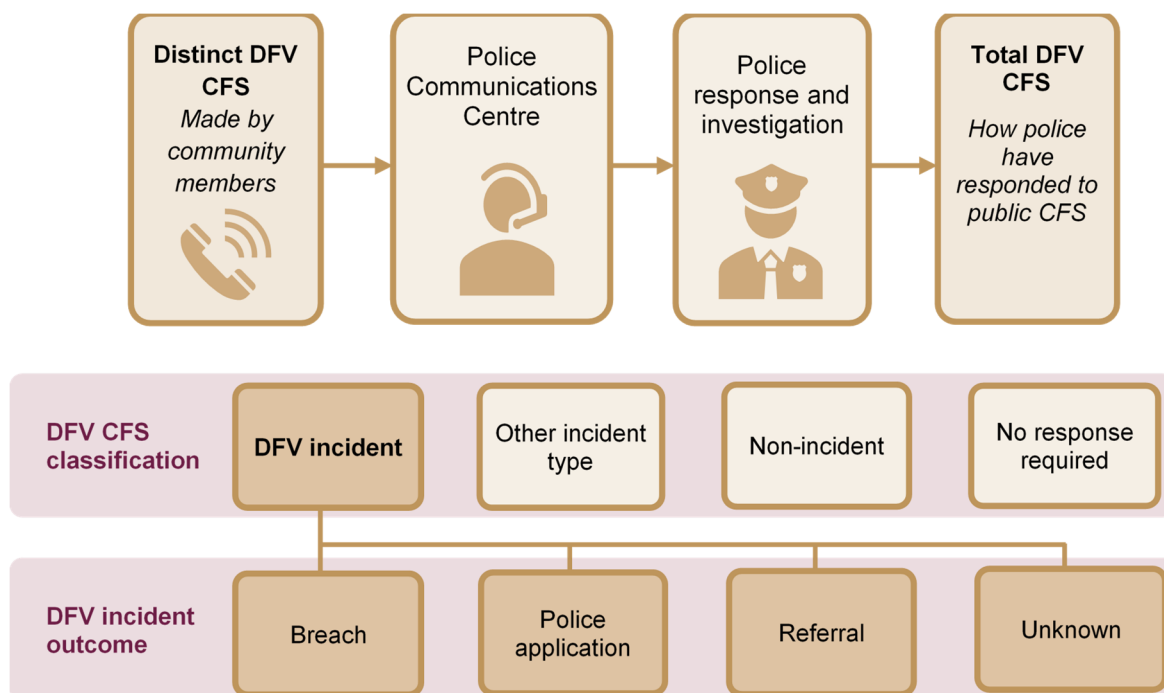
3.0 Methods and data descriptions

The information presented in this paper has involved the statistical analysis of CFS administrative data sourced from the QPS. Data relates to DFV CFS made between 1 July 2012 and 30 June 2018⁶ to the Brisbane, Beenleigh and Maroochydore police communications centres.⁷ It is estimated that these police communications centres cover about 63 per cent of the Queensland population.⁸

The CFS data reflect police responses to CFS by members of the community. There may be instances where multiple police resources⁹ are sent to the same call for assistance (especially if incidents are of a violent nature and back-up is required) and not all requests for assistance initially deemed to be related to DFV will result in the dispatch of police resources or in the confirmation of a DFV incident following police investigation. Some CFS not initially recognised as DFV-related may be reclassified as DFV once considered by the police.

Figure 1 illustrates the CFS process and ways in which DFV CFS have been categorised for data analysis.¹⁰ It shows that DFV CFS may be categorised as a 'DFV incident', 'other incident type', 'non-incident' or 'no response required' following police triage and investigation. In responding to a DFV incident, the police may record a breach against a domestic violence order (DVO), make an application for protection, or make a referral to support services.¹¹ Applications for protection include police applications for DVO and police protection notices (PPN).

Figure 1 Classification of DFV CFS within this paper



⁶ The analysis period of 2012–13 to 2017–18 was selected as it provided an approximately equal period of time prior to and after the February 2015 release of the *Not Now, Not Ever* report for analysis. Data were extracted on 14 February 2019 and only relate to DFV CFS

⁷ Consistent CFS data were not available for all Queensland locations for the analysis period as the QPS commenced a staged transition to their new Queensland Computer Aided Dispatch (QCAD) system from other administrative systems in March 2012. The Brisbane, Beenleigh and Maroochydore police communications centres had transitioned prior to 1 July 2012 whereas other locations transitioned at various times throughout the analysis period.

⁸ Queensland Government Statistician's Office calculation based on the estimated resident population (ERP) (sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics ABS.Stat (Beta) – ERP by statistical area level 2 and above (ASGS 2016), 2001 onwards, 2019) of the area under analysis.

⁹ A police resource would generally consist of a police car with two police officers.

¹⁰ The DFV CFS classification was assigned according to the revised incident type and result code combinations provided by the QPS. A hierarchical approach was used to determine the final incident type if different incident types were recorded in the revised incident type field and the result code (breach > police application > referral > non-incident > unknown > other incident type).

¹¹ A DVO is a civil order of the court requiring a person to (among other things) be of good behaviour and not commit domestic violence against another person or persons. It is a criminal offence to breach a DVO. If a DVO is not currently in place, police have the option to make an application for a DVO or issue a police protection notice (PPN). A PPN acts as an application for a protection order heard by the court but also provides immediate protection for a person. Police may also refer people (both offenders and victims of DFV offences) to support services.

In this report:

- **distinct DFV CFS** refers to CFS relating to DFV made by the public to the police (after investigation, not all of these were classified as being DFV in nature)
- **total DFV CFS** represents the total number of police resources deployed in response to distinct DFV CFS
- **DFV incidents** refers to **distinct DFV CFS** that have been investigated by the police and classified as relating to DFV.

It is important to note that the data presented in this paper are subject to limitations that should be considered in the interpretation of findings. Data may also vary from data published elsewhere by the Queensland Government Statistician's Office and others, due to differences in counting rules applied and data extraction dates. See Appendices 1.1 and 1.2 for further information about the project's limitations and methods.

4.0 Findings

The results of analysing information related to DFV CFS made to the Brisbane, Beenleigh and Maroochydore police communications centres between 2012–13 and 2017–18 are provided in this section. Information on the numbers and characteristics of DFV CFS is followed by an investigation into how much time was spent by police responding to DFV incidents and when they occurred. The section concludes with an exploration of the relationship between socio-economic area and the distribution of DFV incidents.

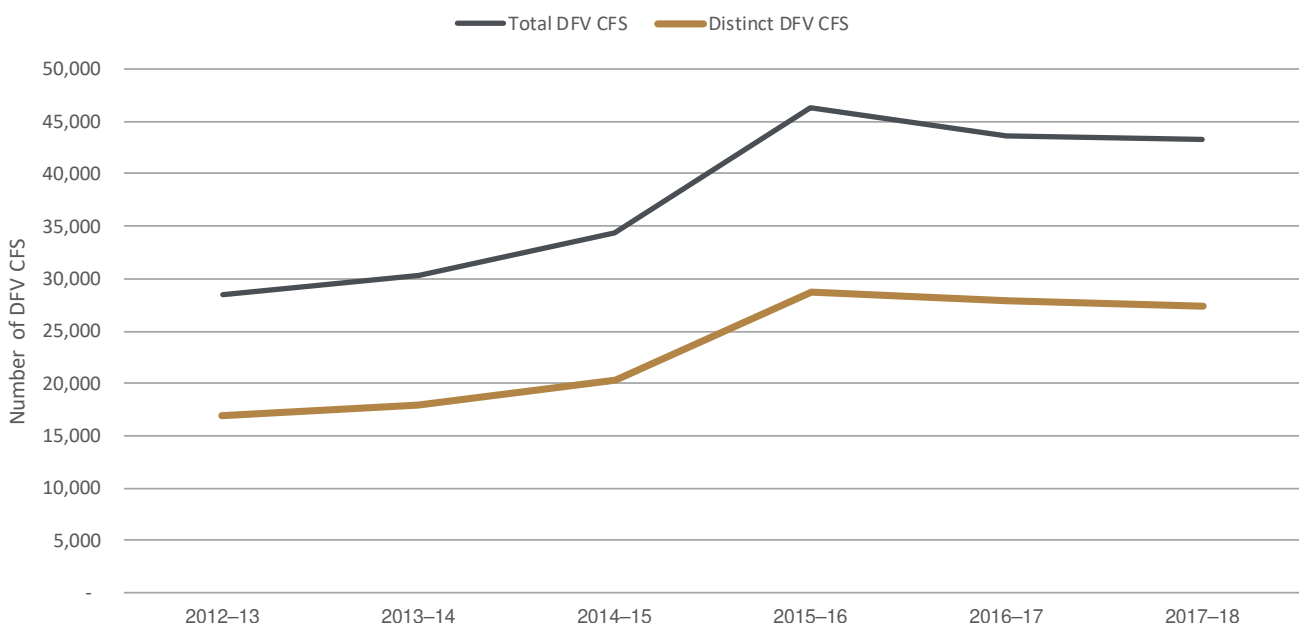
4.1 Increases in DFV calls for service

Both distinct DFV CFS and total DFV CFS increased overall during the analysis period (Figure 2). There was a sharp rise in numbers between 2014–15 and 2015–16, which coincides with the release of the *Not Now, Not Ever* report and the roll out of DFV-related reform. The number of DFV CFS then declined slightly over the following two financial years, but not to pre-2014–15 levels. When comparing 2012–13 with 2017–18:

- distinct DFV CFS increased by 61.2%, from 17,007 to 27,408
- total DFV CFS increased by 51.5%, from 28,532 to 43,230.

An almost identical trend pattern was observed when rate of CFS per 100,000 ERP was examined.

Figure 2 Number of DFV CFS



Note: Total DFV CFS represents the number of police resources sent in response to distinct DFV CFS.

Following police investigation of DFV CFS, it was determined that 60.7% of distinct DFV CFS over the analysis period met the definition of being DFV (referred to here as DFV incidents).¹² Of these DFV incidents:

- just over one-third (34.1%) were in relation to breaches of a DVO
- just under one-third (32.6%) resulted in referrals being made
- just over one-quarter (26.5%) resulted in police making an application for a DVO
- 6.8% had an unknown outcome.

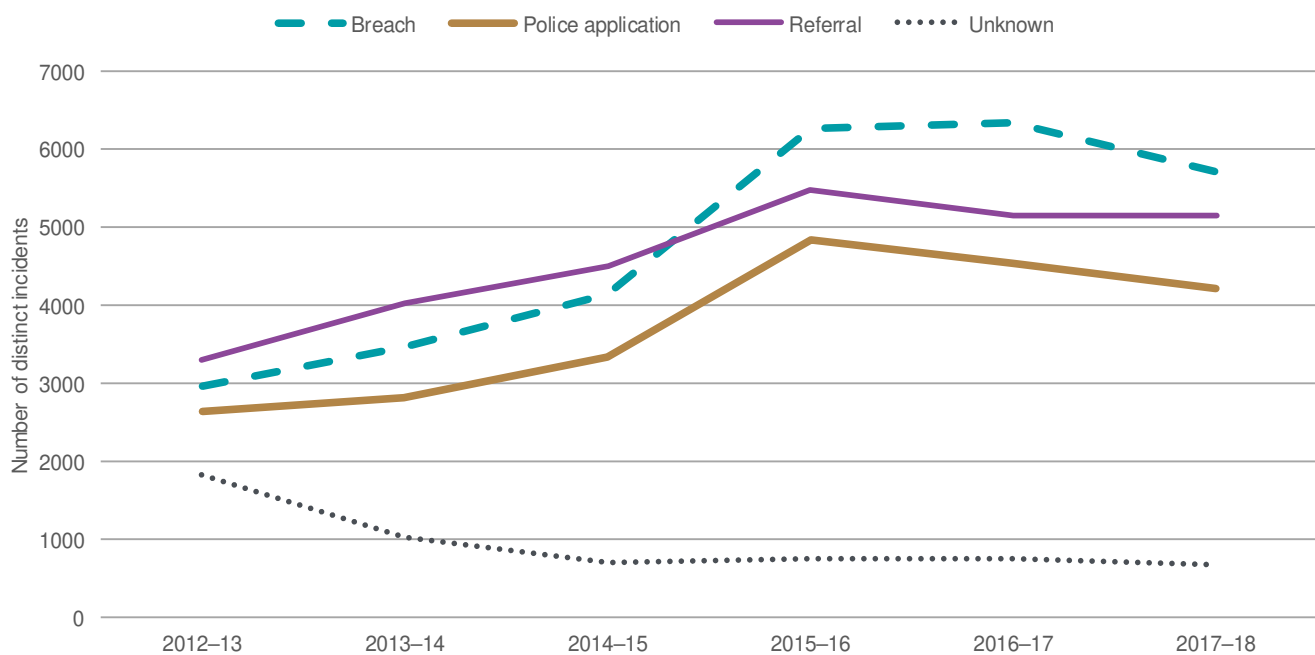
It is noted that further DFV breaches or referrals may be made after DFV CFS are finalised.¹³

The number of breaches, police applications and referrals increased over the time period, with the number of DFV incidents relating to breaches of DVO increasing the most (Figure 3). Again, increases were most apparent following the release of the *Not Now, Not Ever* report. When comparing 2012–13 with 2017–18:

- breaches increased by 92.4%
- police applications increased by 60.2%
- referrals increased by 56.7%.¹⁴

There was a change in the composition of DFV incidents during the observation period, with the number of DVO breaches exceeding the number of police referrals to support services from 2015–16 onwards. The increase in DVO breaches may be explained by multiple factors including growth in the number of DVOs issued; changes in reporting practices (influenced by a greater understanding by the public of what constitutes a breach, and reform activities resulting in the better support of victims); and/or changes in the way police respond to breaches following enhanced training of frontline police officers. The increased default life of a DVO is unlikely to explain increases, given that the impact of this legislative amendment on breach numbers will not have occurred during the observation period.¹⁵

Figure 3 Number of DFV incidents by final DFV incident outcome



¹² The remaining distinct DFV CFS were comprised of those with a final classification of 'other incident type' (17.7%), 'non-incident' (10.6%) and 'no response required' (11.0%).

¹³ After finalisation of CFS in the QCAD administrative system, police can conduct further investigations which may result in additional DVO breaches being identified or referrals being made which are not necessarily captured in QCAD data. The specific nature of DFV incidents classified as 'unknown' were unable to be further classified using the information available in QCAD data (but may be able to be further explored in other QPS administrative data systems).

¹⁴ Only DFV incidents with a final classification of 'unknown' decreased (by 62.7%) over the observation period. This could be due to an improvement in recording practices (QPS, personal communication).

¹⁵ The default life of a DVO increased from two to five years in May 2017. Extending the life of the order could increase the number of breaches given the extended 'monitoring' period.

4.2 More police time being spent on DFV incidents

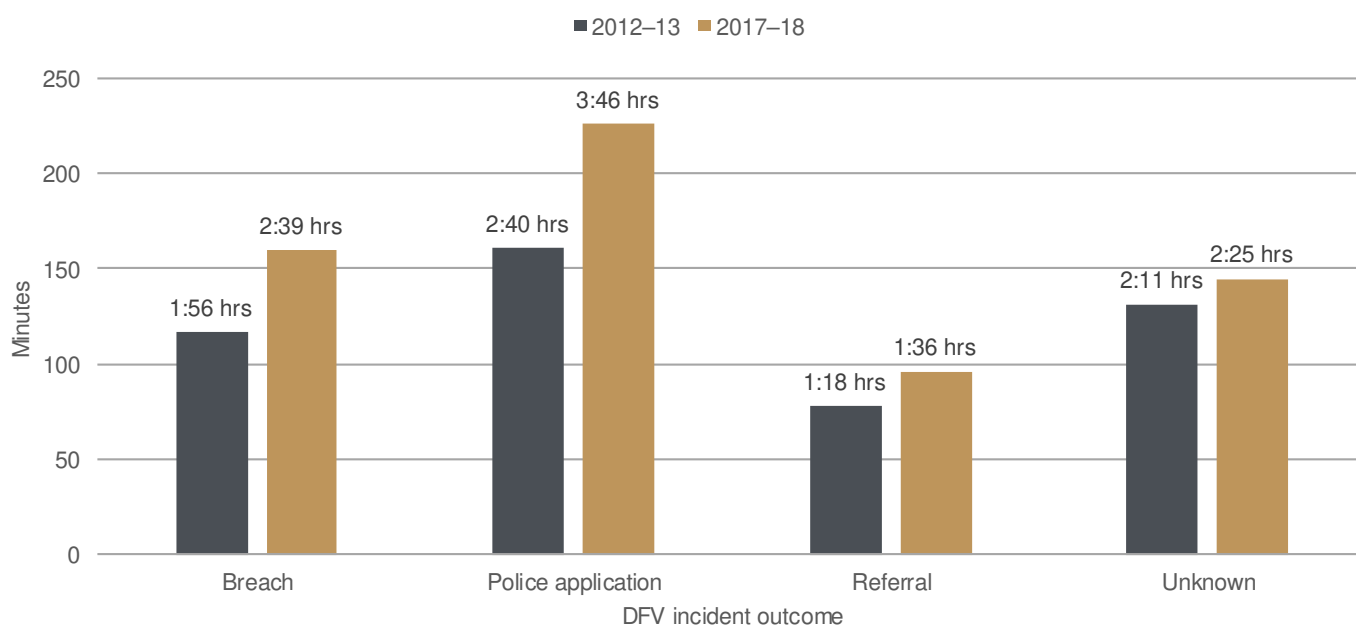
Investigation into how much time was spent by police responding to DFV incidents at the beginning of the reporting period showed that time spent has increased over the analysis period. The time spent on DFV matters referred to below relates to the total time logged in QCAD for all police resources (each usually comprising a patrol car with two police officers) at each DFV incident and is therefore not a measure of how much time is spent on DFV CFS by individual police officers and nor does it capture additional time police may spend on follow-up investigations.

The average time initially spent on DFV incidents across the analysis period was 2 hours and 27 minutes (SD [standard deviation] 1:28 hrs)^{16,17}, although the time varies depending on which type of action is taken by police (with police applications being the most time-consuming) as follows:

- Breach – 2 hours 28 minutes (SD 1:29 hrs)
- Police application – 3 hours 31 minutes (SD 1:38 hrs)
- Referral – 1 hour 29 minutes (SD 0:59 hrs).¹⁸

The average time spent on different DFV incident outcomes increased when comparing 2012–13 with 2017–18, particularly for police applications and breaches of DVO (Figure 4). The time spent making a police application was on average over an hour (1:06 hrs) longer in 2017–18 than in 2012–13, while the average amount of time spent on each DVO breach increased by 43 minutes. The observed increased time spent on DFV incidents occurred despite improvements in technology and may reflect changes to the process for DFV reporting which have occurred during this time period as a result of system reform which is aiming to provide better support for victims and holding DFV perpetrators to account.

Figure 4 Average time for DFV incidents by outcome classification, 2012–13 compared with 2017–18



Note:

The average time taken per DFV incident outcome was calculated by dividing the total time taken (in seconds) from when officers arrived on the scene of an incident to the time taken to return to the station (i.e. the time the resource was available to be assigned to another job) by the number of distinct DFV incidents. DFV incidents where no on-scene and/or returned times were recorded or where the job duration time was ≤ 60 seconds were excluded from analyses.

¹⁶ DFV CFS which were classified as 'other incident type' or 'non-incident' took around 58 minutes on average.

¹⁷ Standard deviation (SD) measures the amount of variation or dispersion of a set of values. The high SD for average time spent on DFV incidents suggests high variability in DFV incident complexity.

¹⁸ DFV incidents with an unknown outcome took 2 hrs and 36 minutes on average.

4.3 No change in when DFV incidents occur

Over the analysis period, most calls for assistance relating to DFV incidents tended to occur between the hours of 4 pm and 10 pm (peaking between 6 pm and 9 pm), in the warmer months (September to March) and on the weekend (Figure 5). This pattern did not change substantially over time and is consistent with other research.¹⁹

Increases in DFV incidents during the summer months coincide with other seasonal offence patterns, and the timing of DFV incidents reflect times where most couples and family members are in proximity (that is, non-work hours). It is also noted that non-urgent incidents occurring during the daytime could be reported at police stations rather than by a CFS.

Figure 5 Proportion of DFV incidents occurring by month of year, hour of day and day of week, 2012–13 to 2017–18



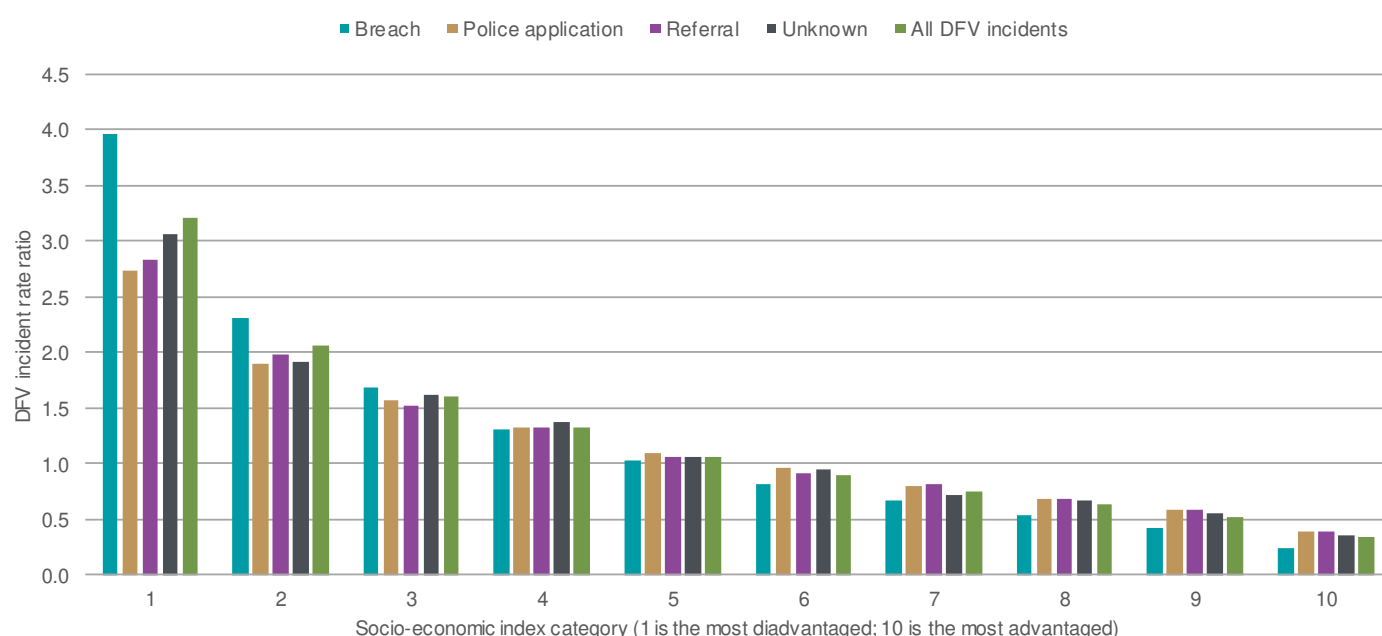
¹⁹ See, for example, Crime and Misconduct Commission, Brisbane, 2005, *Policing domestic violence in Queensland: Meeting the challenges*; and Grech, K and Burgess, M 2011, *Trends and patterns in domestic violence assaults: 2001 to 2010*, Bureau Brief No. 61, NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, Sydney.

4.4 Disadvantaged locations have relatively high rates of reported DFV incidents

While DFV can occur in any social context, an exploration of the relationship between socio-economic area and the distribution of DFV incidents (see Appendix 1.2 for further information) showed that people living in socio-economically disadvantaged locations disproportionately report DFV incidents by calling for police assistance (Figure 6). The rate of DFV incidents occurring in the most disadvantaged (category 1) areas was 3.2 times that of the total population under examination over the analysis period (with the ratio of DVO breaches being higher than the other DFV incident outcome classifications). The ratio of DFV incidents occurring in each category gradually declined as the level of advantage increased.

This finding does not necessarily mean that DFV is occurring more often in locations characterised by low socio-economic status. It could be that people living in more socio-economically advantaged locations have further options for leaving DFV situations, the ability to employ other strategies (such as using a lawyer) to stop the violence rather than seeking assistance from the police, and/or may be more hesitant to contact police for assistance due to negative stigma.

Figure 6 Rate ratio of DFV incidents by socio-economic index and outcome classification, 2012–13 to 2017–18



Notes:

1. The DFV rate ratio was calculated by dividing the rate of DFV incidents per 100,000 persons in each socio-economic index category by the rate for the total population of the area under analysis.
2. Incidents where addresses were not supplied, or which were interstate or international were not included ($n = 1,256$). Also, results for addresses with more than 20 distinct DFV incidents ($n = 44$) were not included due to low counts when disaggregated by socio-economic index category.

While growth in the number of DFV incidents was evident across all locations under examination, the most disadvantaged communities experienced a disproportionate increase over the analysis period (Table 1). When comparing 2012–13 with 2017–18, the number and rate of total DFV incidents in the most:

- disadvantaged locations increased by 58.0% and 48.2% respectively
- advantaged locations increased by 28.2% and 16.8% respectively.

In addition, in 2012–13 the DFV incident rate in the most disadvantaged locations was 5.0 times greater than the DFV incident rate in the most advantaged locations, while in 2017–18, the DFV rate ratio was 6.4.

The pattern of higher growth in the most disadvantaged communities when compared with the most advantaged communities was evident for police applications, referrals, and to a lesser extent, breaches.

Table 1 DFV incidents by socio-economic area and outcome classification, 2012–13 and 2017–18

		2012–13	2017–18	Change in number	2012–13	2017–18	Change in rate
Socio-economic area	DFV incident outcome	— number —	— number —	— % —	— rate ^(a) —	— rate ^(a) —	— % —
Most disadvantaged (socio-economic index categories 1 and 2)	Total DFV incidents	2,973	4,696	58.0	894	1,324	48.2
	Breach	1,041	2,016	93.7	313	569	81.7
	Police application	634	1,119	76.5	191	316	65.6
	Referral	829	1,341	61.8	249	378	51.8
	Unknown	469	220	–53.1	141	62	–56.0
Most advantaged (socio-economic index categories 9 and 10)	Total DFV incidents	1,494	1,916	28.2	178	208	16.8
	Breach	289	541	87.2	34	59	70.5
	Police application	408	590	44.6	49	64	31.7
	Referral	537	703	30.9	64	76	19.2
	Unknown	260	82	–68.5	31	9	–71.3
DFV rate ratio (disadvantaged: advantaged) ^(b)	Total DFV incidents	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	5.03	6.38	n.a.
	Breach	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	9.10	9.70	n.a.
	Police application	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	3.93	4.94	n.a.
	Referral	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	3.90	4.96	n.a.
	Unknown	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	4.56	6.98	n.a.

n.a. = not applicable

(a) Rates are expressed per 100,000 persons and are calculated based on the ERP as at 30 June of each year.

(b) The DFV rate ratio used to examine the relative incidence of DFV of the most disadvantaged locations, relative to the most advantaged locations is calculated as:

$$\frac{\text{DFV rate for socio-economic index categories 1 and 2}}{\text{DFV rate for socio-economic index categories 9 and 10}}$$

where the DFV rate for the socio-economic index categories is calculated by using the aggregated numbers (e.g. DFV incident totals and ERP totals) for all SA1 locations that have been classified by the Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage as being in each category.

5.0 Discussion

This research paper has examined DFV CFS short-term trends to explore the potential impact of initiatives aiming to address DFV in the community following the release of the *Not Now, Not Ever* report in 2015. The key objectives of these initiatives are to shift community attitudes, support DFV victims and perpetrators, and build a criminal justice system that prioritises victim safety and holds DFV perpetrators to account.

The research indicates that the criminal justice system underwent a period of change following the release of the *Not Now, Not Ever* report and there has been an increase in police resources deployed in response to DFV. This is evident in the higher number of calls being made to police seeking assistance with DFV matters and the increased amount of time spent on responding to individual DFV incidents. These findings are potentially indicative of a shift in public awareness and a more supportive criminal justice system promoting the reporting of DFV matters and holding people to account when committing DFV offences (including the contravention of DVO conditions). The increased resourcing deployed in response to DFV matters warrants further investigation.

The findings also show that DFV incidents reported via CFS are more prevalent in more socio-economically disadvantaged areas than more advantaged areas – a finding consistent with other literature.²⁰ Moreover, the observed discrepancy in the number and rates of DFV incidents by socio-economic status became more pronounced over the analysis period. While DFV can occur in any social context, these results highlight the importance of targeted place-based DFV interventions and could be explained in part by the ability of people located in more socially and economically

²⁰ Capaldi, DM, Knoble, NB, Shortt, JW and Kim, HK 2012, 'A systematic review of risk factors for intimate partner violence', *Partner Abuse*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 231–80; Costa, BM, Kaestle, CE, Walker, A, Curtis, A, Day, A, Toumbourou, JW and Miller, P 2015, 'Longitudinal predictors of domestic violence perpetration and victimization: A systematic review', *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, vol. 24, pp. 261–72.



advantaged locations to use other mechanisms (such as making a civil application for a DVO) in response to DFV. Different policing practices may also contribute to the observed differences. These possible explanations require further exploration and it is noted that a growing disparity in the experience of other types of crime in relation to socio-economic advantage/disadvantage in Queensland has been identified in other research undertaken by the Queensland Government Statistician's Office. See QGSO's *Spatial and temporal distribution of offences in Queensland* report for further information.

The CFS information presented in this paper provides one way to examine the potential impact of DFV reform activities in Queensland.²¹ Future publications developed by the Queensland Government Statistician's Office will build on this picture by examining DFV applications, orders, offences, reoffending and revictimisation.

²¹ The *Evaluation Framework for the Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy (2016–2026)* provides the overarching approach to assessing the impact and outcomes of Queensland's 10-year program of DFV reforms (<<https://www.csyw.qld.gov.au/resources/campaign/end-violence/dfvp-strategy-evaluation-framework-updated.pdf>>).

Appendices

1.1 Project limitations

There are several limitations which apply to the findings presented in this paper. One of the main issues to take into consideration is that the actual incidence of DFV is largely under-represented in administrative data maintained by criminal justice agencies, which only represent those instances of DFV which are reported to or detected by criminal justice agencies, and these are usually incidents of a more serious or violent nature.²² The majority of those who experience DFV do not formally report these incidents to authorities. For example, results from the 2016 ABS Personal Safety Survey indicate that over two thirds of Australians²³ who have ever lived with a partner and who had ever experienced partner violence (sexual or physical assault or threat) since the age of 15 did not contact the police.²⁴ Although DFV is under-reported, statistics based on administrative information can provide insight into DFV trends, and can be used to gain an understanding as to how much support for the involved persons is required. There may also be instances where DFV incidents that come to the attention of the police may have not been recorded as occurring in a DFV context in QCAD.

The police CFS data did not contain any information relating to the socio-demographic profile of the individuals involved. Thus, analyses relating to sex, Indigenous status or age were not able to be performed.

CFS data covering the entire state of Queensland were not available for comparative analysis due to the progressive changes across the state of the police communications centres. Almost two-thirds (62.7%) of Queensland's population is located in the areas covered by the Brisbane, Beenleigh and Maroochydore police communications centres, whose data were analysed in this paper. However, it must be kept in mind that data from the more rural and remote areas of Queensland are not included, and thus the data are skewed towards CFS from more highly populated areas and may therefore not be representative of the areas not able to be studied.

A number of factors will contribute to changes in DFV CFS and this paper does not attempt to attribute any observed changes to specific criminal justice system reforms which have been implemented in Queensland since the *Not Now, Not Ever* report.

1.2 Socio-economic area information

Information relating to distribution of DFV CFS based on the socio-economic characteristics of the location where they occurred was obtained using the ABS Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) structure. One of the four separate measures which comprise SEIFA, the Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage, was used. This index summarises information about the economic and social conditions of people and households within an area, including both relative advantage and disadvantage measures.²⁵

The socio-economic area variable was constructed based on where the CFS occurred. This provided a category ranking according to relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage, on a continuum from most disadvantaged (category 1) to most advantaged (category 10). To provide a comparison of how much each socio-economic index category experiences distinct DFV incidents relative to another, a ratio was calculated of the rate of distinct DFV incidents in each socio-economic index category compared with the rate of DFV incidents for the total population in the analysis area. This was done by dividing the rate of DFV incidents per 100,000 persons for each socio-economic index category²⁶ by the rate per 100,000 persons for the total analysis population. A ratio of one indicates that the rate is the same for a socio-economic index category as it is for the entire analysis population, while a ratio greater than one indicates that the DFV incident rate of the socio-economic index category is greater than that of the total analysis population.

²² Voce, I and Boxall, H 2018, Who reports domestic violence to police? A review of the evidence, Trends & issues in crime and criminal justice No. 559, Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology, <<https://aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/tandi559>>

²³ Data not available for Queensland.

²⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Personal Safety, Australia, 2016* (ABS Cat. No. 4906.0), ABS, <<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4906.0>>

²⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Population and Housing: Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) 2016* (ABS Cat. No. 2033.0.55.001), ABS, Canberra, <<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/2033.0.55.001Main+Features12016?OpenDocument>>

²⁶ The ERP figures for each statistical area level 1 area within each socio-economic index category are available from the ABS consultancy table, at <<https://www.qgso.qld.gov.au/statistics/theme/population/population-estimates/regions#current-release-estimated-resident-population>>

