



# Annual General Report

## 2016 - 2017

### Board of Management Report

This year has been another year of massive growth and expansion in terms of budgets, services provided, staff numbers and office locations with DVAC continuing to expand during 2016.

2017 saw DVAC expand into the Toowoomba and Darling Downs Regions with successful funding to provide domestic and family violence and sexual assault services to those regions. Extra funding was also received to enhance services across the Ipswich region.

This growth has resulted in DVAC being the largest provider of domestic and family violence services in Queensland with over 50 staff. The Board sees this as a great responsibility and will continue to work with the DVAC leadership teams to ensure positive outcomes.

This year also saw our strategic plan refreshed with a Vision Statement of "A community free from violence and abuse" and a Philosophy "That recognises gender inequity as the underlying cause of domestic/family and sexual violence where the majority of people subjected to violence and abuse in personal relationships are women and children".

As outlined in the 2016 report, the previous management committee became the Board of Management (BOM) and the title of General Manager was replaced with CEO. The BOM is still actively recruiting members with IT, Legal and Marketing identified as areas of need. We are also looking to successfully transition the role of Treasurer going forward with Richard Thomas to continue in that role until a replacement is found.

In 2017 the Chairperson (Sandra Venn- Brown), Deputy Chairperson (Karen Newton) and Committee Member (Charlotte Yellowlees) resigned due to changing circumstances. All have given outstanding contributions to DVAC and the Ipswich community in general and continue to assist the vulnerable and disadvantaged. Thank-you to Emma Thomas for acting in the position of Chairperson until this AGM.

The Board of Management is committed to ensuring DVAC is a sustainable, professional, engaged and highly respected organisation that is well managed and strategically placed to build capacity and take advantage of future opportunities to enhance services. With this in mind, DVAC achieved well with the Health Services Quality Framework audit and the Board thanks staff for all their work in this regard. Going forward, the Board will have an increased focus on training.

The 2016 DVAC Gala Ball was another successful event with many attending saying it was the best entertainment they had seen in years. The speakers, Steve Renouf and Jean Kittson gave different however very important messages.

In closing, the Board wishes to acknowledge the work of all the DVAC members of staff and thanks them for the difference they make for the vulnerable and disadvantaged in our community.

We would also like to recognise the continuing support of our members.

Geoff Noller Secretary  
DVAC BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

**Vision Statement** "A community free from violence and abuse"

**Philosophy** "That recognises gender inequity as the underlying cause of domestic/family and sexual violence where the majority of people subjected to violence and abuse in personal relationships are women and children"

P 07 38163000

F 07 38163100

A PO Box 964

Ipswich Q 4305

E [info@dvac.org.au](mailto:info@dvac.org.au)

## Education and Training at DVAC in a nut shell

It is near impossible to mention everyone and everything that has happened in this realm on one page.... But here is a snippet of the year...

DVAC'S Schools program, 'Not Being Heard is no Reason for Silence,' was an enormous triumph! Reaching over 1300 students from Ipswich, Bremer, Lowood and St Mary's. All four schools participated in Domestic Violence & Healthy Relationships education for over a semester, and the end product brought our Ipswich community together to unite against domestic and sexual violence. Through this program we were so very fortunate to be able to work with extraordinary writer and director, Scott Alderdice and his actors from Ozplays who performed a segment of their play 'Smack,' as well as the gorgeous Crystal Heart from Taboo and the absolutely delightful young women from 'The Unwanted Truths.'

## Shinead Cunningham



**“A massive thank you and congratulations to our fearless and amazing DVAC Community Trainer. Without you this event wouldn't have happened.”**

Continuing on from this program, Ozplays is creating a range of subsidiary creative practice and workshops with DVAC, which aim to support further understanding of the myriad issues connected to DV and to enable personal identification of individual placement within that milieu. As a means towards reconciliation, Ozplays and DVAC is also committed to developing a range of creative practice that enables people to tell their own stories and reify their own experiences of domestic violence in a safe and supported environment.

Other training/ education for the year:

I presented **D&FV seminars/ training** to Bundamba SSC, Laidley SHS, Bundamba TAFE, Queensland Police, Queensland Health, and Lockyer Valley **Paint Me A Picture** that specifically focus on and engages ATSI, CALD & LGBTIQ communities (this is a large program that will be finalised towards the end of this year, to be implemented in 2018)

I am currently writing **D&FV Education programs** for Redbank Plains SHS, Ipswich Boys Grammar, Lowood, Bremer and YMCA to be carried out this semester.

**“The show was so great! The show was confronting and true to my personal experiences, and it felt like the second half of the show was my life and relationship! I can't lie, I quietly cried throughout the production, but it felt so good and important to be there. I will be at DVACs next show rain, hail or shine. “**

**“I have learnt that it wasn't just me. I honestly had no idea how high the statistics actually are. I loved collaborating with other passionate people and being able to raise awareness, and together trying to make a difference to the world. For the rest of my life I am going to remember doing this phenomenal program with DVAC. It has taught me so much, I will remember what domestic violence looks like including the warning signs, barriers and effects. I am going to remember how to help myself and others out of that situation and I have learnt that it is not okay under any circumstance. Before joining DVAC, I had no idea of the warning signs that escalate and that it is far too common.**

**Honestly, I recommend that a program like this continues with young people and adults because it is just so valuable and educational, and no one else has ever bothered to help educate us about things like this before.”– STUDENT**



I am amazed at how fast the last year has gone and how much change DVAC has managed with real grace and professionalism. I believe this is in part due to the fact that we are a feminist values driven organisation and we operate from a set of feminist practice principles. We were very excited and grateful to be the successful applicant for the funding for a full suite of Domestic and Family Violence and historical Sexual Violence Services in Toowoomba and Darling Downs.

We also received an ongoing top up amount of funding for our Counselling and Support initiative for our Greater Ipswich Service. This enabled us to make our Child Safety Liaison position full time and we have enjoyed enhancing our ongoing working partnership with the Ipswich North, Ipswich South and Springfield Child Safety Service Centres. It also meant that we could establish a Health Liaison Position working in close partnership with the West Moreton Hospital and Health Service. DVAC is now the biggest Domestic and Family Violence Service in the state and we wear this responsibility with a great sense of accountability to our communities across Greater Ipswich and Greater Toowoomba and with pride.

Our focus is and always has been on providing the best evidence based services we can, and to continue to excel in practice, in partnership development and in growing integrated responses to Domestic and Family Violence. The growth we have implemented over the last couple of years means we now have just over 50 staff located across our Greater Ipswich and Greater Toowoomba sites, outreaching to Goodna, Springfield, Laidley, Gatton, Lowood, Toogoolawah, Warwick, Stanthorpe, Chinchilla, Dalby, Oakey, Pittsworth and Goondiwindi. These amazing staffing resources are not wasted. The Greater Ipswich Counselling and Support Teams worked with a bit over 1000 women in the first quarter of 2017 and 840 in the second quarter.



We are working with large volumes of people and exponential growth in resources as well as demand and have managed to do so really well. We are able to do this because we have the most amazing team of people working for us who put their all into the work they do. I am extremely proud of them all and could not ask for more passionate and committed staff and volunteers. We are also blessed with incredible Leaders in our Team Leaders (Andrea, Sharon and Sarah), Our Integrated Response Manager (Dawn), Our Finance Manager (Jodie), Our Toowoomba Service Manager (Kath) and Operations Manager (Bec) who have all contributed not only incredible Leadership and passion but also fantastic innovation and ideas that have shaped our growth. We are fortunate to also have a great volunteer Board who have shared and supported our vision for direction and partnership development. I would like to give special thanks to outgoing members for all the hard work you have committed to our organisation and our cause. I also want to extend a special thank you to our Administrative team who does so much work that goes unnoticed. You keep the wheels turning for us all Amanda, Renee, Liz and Julie.

To all the people who have accessed our services during the year I want to say this: "You are important and valued! You deserve safety and respect and you are always welcome here with us where ever we might be!"

**Some comments from our clients**

E stated that "she was very thankful for all the support and is in a really good place now"

"I found speaking to S so helpful... I was feeling so overwhelmed before I spoke to her'. She gave me advice that I identified with straight away"

"Our session was really helpful. I had it all held in and it was so hard and now I feel open and so much better"

S stated "she could not have done this without the support she received from T and how wonderful it was that the service existed for women.

"Without this support and help I would not have been able to leave him and keep myself and my kids safe., thanks M"

Well, what a year! DVAC has continued the journey of innovation, growth, partnership and client-centred practice this year. Two key innovations are the liaison positions for Child Safety and the Health/Hospital. The Child Safety Liaison is a key initiative focused on developing relationships with our three local Child Safety Service Centres (Ipswich North, Ipswich South & Springfield) and the new Regional Intake and Assessment team. The CS Liaison provides consultation, direct risk assessment, safety planning and case management, and has even commenced a group co-facilitated between DVAC and a CSO. The partnership seeks to support the further uptake of the Safe & Together framework for domestic violence informed child protection practice, and to improve safety for adult and child victims of domestic violence by partnering with the adult victims and holding the person using violence accountable for their actions and parenting choices. The Child Safety Liaison spends time on-site at each CSSC, and also responds to urgent requests for support. After operating this position for over a year, we are pleased to note that the outcomes of the Liaison position have been great for our shared clients, and speak to the importance of collaboration and partnership, not to mention integrated responses. Also, a big thankyou to key staff Jo, Jo, Katherine, Sharon & Dawn for taking the project on and making it happen for DVAC – without your commitment and hard work this would not have been possible.

The Health & Hospital Liaison is a newer position for DVAC, but a reflection of much partnership work behind the scenes over many years. This position has been prioritised in acknowledgement of the many women who present to health services (directly or indirectly) as a result of experiencing DV and sexual violence. The current focus for our Liaison is in the Emergency Department and Maternity, with openness to extend into Mental Health. We have also commenced a more explicit partnership with Kambu in order to reduce barriers for indigenous women needing support for DV and SV. This Liaison position only started in the last quarter of the 2016/17 financial year, but is already working at a cracking pace supporting women and liaising with the social work department in relation to responses to these issues. Referrals from the Ipswich Hospital have increased significantly already. Another big thank you goes to Dawn, Jo and Gab for working for a long time to make this happen.

DVAC was also successful this year in receiving some pilot brokerage money for the Keeping Women Safe In Their Homes project – this money is targeted at women who are deemed to be at high risk and who are experiencing technology-facilitated abuse. The brokerage money can be used to install cameras, provide personal safety devices, do bug sweeps/tech safety audits of houses, and replace phones and computers that may have been compromised. It is an exciting trial, and is highlighting just how much tech-facilitated abuse is a strong feature of the stalking and surveillance behaviour of people who use violence. The pilot runs until June 2018 – we hope that it will be an ongoing success and will roll out to more sites after this. I want to thank Dawn, Sharon and the entire Safety Team (particularly Sian) for taking on this big project in addition to the amazing work that they already do.

### Integrated Response Team

Dawn Osborne

Although just a new team for DVAC, our team has embarked on some innovative ground breaking work which will we believe will ultimately improve responses for women and children across a number of areas. The team is made up of our Court Advocate, Health and Hospital Liaison, Child Safety Liaison and Integrated Response Manager. All the members of the team are highly experienced, skilled workers and are really passionate about working with partners around currently existing gaps in the systems response to DFV.

In the area of Court support our advocate has plans to extend the breadth of support for women by making appointments available at Ipswich court on days other than Monday. She is also working closely with all court stakeholders to close existing gaps. Our Health and Hospital Liaison has established strong links with the Emergency and Maternity Departments at Ipswich Hospital, providing outreach for women in domestic or family violence. She has also begun work with Kambu and Children By Choice to support understanding of DFV and to encourage positive partnership work. Our Child Safety Liaison extended the work started in the Differential Response Pilot to carry out effective interventions with challenging and complex families involved with Child Safety and experiencing DFV. This partnership has been very well received by the Child Safety staff and has increased DVAC's understanding of Child Safety's work. The Integrated Response Manager is responsible for DVAC's key role in the local High Risk DV Response in partnership with Queensland Police and Ipswich Probation and Parole. This partnership has been really successful at helping to keep women and children safe and we look forward to the development of this work in the near future.

I started as the Community Development Worker in December 2016 and hit the ground running. I've worked with such a diverse array of stakeholders, including Ipswich City Council, the Queensland Government, community members, Jets Rugby League Football Club, Queensland Police Service and countless other community organisations to raise awareness, educate and prevent violence against women in all its forms.

Via the Community Development Program, DVAC has led numerous projects, including:

**One Billion Rising** - a community dance jam 'rising up' against violence against women held at Studio 188, in partnership with Ipswich City Council.

**DVAC Goes to the Movies** – a free screening of the film 'Hidden Figures' and morning tea on International Women's Day, in partnership with Ipswich City Council. This event aimed to educate the community about women and girls' participation in all aspects of society.

**Fight Like A Girl** – a poetry slam event for Queensland Women's Week, funded by the Queensland Government. This event aimed to give young people a voice regarding what it means to "fight like a girl" in their community.

**Walk Against Domestic and Family Violence and Candle Lighting Ceremony** – this event also unveiled the memorial plaque that Ipswich City Council dedicated to women killed by domestic violence perpetrators.

**Ulysses Motorcycle Club Ride for Awareness of Domestic and Family Violence.**

**Mothers' Day Bathrobe Charity Drive** in partnership with Jennifer Howard, MP and Ipswich City Councillors Wayne Wendt, Kerry Silver, and Kylie Stoneman. This event asked for donations of bathrobes to give to women in need on Mothers' Day.

**Domestic Violence Prevention Month Bunnings Raffle** – in partnership with Bunnings West Ipswich, this event raised money for DVAC's clients.



In addition to this, DVAC have also contributed to a variety of other community development projects, including:

- ◆ **Jets Rugby League Football Club Ladies Day**
- ◆ **St Vincent de Paul's Settlement Communities Women's DV Prevention Month Activity**
- ◆ **Lockyer Valley Says No to Violence Group**
- ◆ **Pamper with a Purpose**

I have a full program of work planned for the next 12 months, with some really exciting and innovative projects. It is so exhilarating to work with all our stakeholders and see tangible change in community attitudes and behaviour regarding violence against women.



**IPSWICH & TOWOOMBA PROGRAMS**

- Crisis response, safety planning, and safety upgrades to support women's choice to stay in their own home
- Court Support – including assistance with DVO's
- Women's counselling and group work
- Family counselling and group work – including ReNew program
- Historical sexual assault counselling for both female & male victims over 14 years of age
- Integrated community response
- Information, advice and referral
- Community and public education

**IPSWICH SPECIFIC PROGRAMS**

- Keeping Women Safe in their Homes trial

**TOWOOMBA SPECIFIC PROGRAMS**

- Men's Behaviour Change Program
- Mobile outreach to women & children in temporary accommodation
- Women's Recovery Program

**IPSWICH REGIONAL PROGRAMS**

- Place-based outreach to Goodna, Springfield, Gatton, Laidley and Lowood.

**TOWOOMBA REGIONAL PROGRAMS**

- Place-based and electronic outreach to key satellites in Warwick, Stanthorpe, Dalby, Chinchilla, Goondiwindi, Oakey and Pittsworth.

**Acknowledgments**

The Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services provides funding for: The Resource Service ; Counselling and Support Initiative; Court Support Initiative; Children's Counselling and Support Initiative; Safety Upgrades Program, Keeping Women Safe in their Home Trial, Renew and DV Prevention Month Grant



**Thank you Sponsors & Supporters**

- |                                                                |                                      |                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Ipswich City Council, Councillors & Community Development Team |                                      |                                          |
| Department of Justice                                          | Minter Ellison                       | Ipswich Hospital Nurses Association      |
| Rotary Club of Booval                                          | Quota Club of Ipswich                | CityHope Care                            |
| Bethany Lutheran Church                                        | Lowood CWA                           | RizeUP Australia                         |
| Ipswich Jets Rugby League Club Inc                             | Cinta Graves                         | Patches of Indooroopilly                 |
| GiveNow.com.au                                                 | Lions Club of Ipswich                | Brothers Leagues Club                    |
| USQ Springfield Campus                                         | Strike Publications                  | Centro Church                            |
| Zonta Club of Ipswich                                          | Share the Dignity                    | Brisbane Youth Education Training Centre |
| OzPlay                                                         | Taboo                                | New Hope Group                           |
| Australian Food Corporation                                    | The Nappy Collective                 | Ulysses Club Inc. Ipswich Branch         |
| Officers Mess RAAF Base Amberley                               | AMB Airmen's Club RAAF Base Amberley |                                          |

**Various wonderful individuals and groups in our community directly donating to our service**



I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land in which we live, meet and work. LGBTQI friendly.



Make a tax-deductible donation at [www.givenow.com.au/dvac](http://www.givenow.com.au/dvac)

This year has been a very positive one for the DVAC counselling programs. We have a team of very experienced and credentialed counsellors who are providing evidenced based client centred therapeutic and systemic support to women, children and young people. Our family and women's counselling programs continue to be a vital support to the residents of the greater Ipswich Region. Our women's counsellor, Martha, celebrated 10 years at DVAC in May. On behalf of DVAC I would like to both thank and congratulate Martha on the amazing work she continues to do at DVAC.

Our sexual violence program celebrated its 1<sup>st</sup> birthday and I would like to thank Lauren, Kelly, Lisa and Vashi for their hard work and dedication in ensuring that the greater Ipswich community are aware of this relatively new service and how to access it. Including a specialist sexual violence program within DVAC has been a natural fit due to the passion and commitment DVAC and its staff body have in addressing all forms of gendered violence. It is hard to imagine a DVAC without this valuable program. Additionally, the unique and innovative manner in which DVAC is able to provide client centred integrated responses both internally and systemically, has meant that we have been able to provide tailored support to sexual violence survivors in order to meet their therapeutic and safety needs.

The innovative Renew Pilot Program which aims to break the cycle of domestic violence through early intervention is tracking really well in its second year. Two Renew group cycles have been completed with high retention rates. The program continues to attract significant community and sector interest. To date Renew has received a lot of media attention and has featured on 60 Minutes, The Drum, Radio National, ABC 612 and other regional radio programs.



## Toowoomba Team

Kathleen Turley  
Service Manager

Thanks to the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services we were successful with our request for quote for the Toowoomba and Darling Downs Regional Service. We worked hard on recruiting a fantastic team of workers and our doors opened on 03.07.17 as required. We will have a team of 14 full time positions who will work across the region and we started with 8 staff ready to go on the first day. 3 of the 8 staff are pre-existing DVAC staff. The DVAC Toowoomba/ Darling Downs service will consist of a Service Manager; a Safety Team Leader supervising three DV Practitioners, a Court Advocate and a Child Safety Liaison position; a Counselling Team Leader Supervising two Women's Counsellors (one CALD Specific), two Family Counsellors and a men's Behaviour Change Facilitator. New programs for DVAC are the Men's Perpetrator Intervention Program, a mobile outreach program for women transitioning to shelter who have been placed in a motel while waiting for a space and a Women's Recovery Program. These new programs will only run out of the Greater Toowoomba service.

Since opening we have had a consistent and increasing intake of clients into all programs. We began the service with guaranteeing we would provide crisis response, court support and responding to Redbourne referrals (police referrals). The staff have worked hard to ensure that we have provided these services as well as responding to the high demand for service from incoming calls.

Our venue has been finalised enabling the counselling team to respond to people who are on our waiting list. I want to thank the Toowoomba and Darling Downs communities for welcoming us into their spaces. DVAC Toowoomba and Darling Downs have received an overwhelmingly positive response from not only clients but also stakeholders in the region.



**Court Support** DVAC court support areas remain with the three Magistrate Courts: Ipswich; Gatton; and Toogoolawah. The program met some challenges this year with staffing due to the court being split and we needed to draw from more than the usual two DVAC workers and volunteers. Staff from the Safety team met this added demand with great professionalism and provided excellent support. Our volunteer program has still attracted committed volunteers without which we would not be able to carry out such quality support.

The Court Support Program is often the first point of contact that many women have with a domestic violence support service and the courts. Those who work within this program understand this, and work towards making the experience as supportive and informative as possible in what is otherwise a highly stressful environment.

The 2016-2017 year between Ipswich and Gatton Magistrates Courts DVAC assisted/supported 3303 attendees through the court system. This compares with last year's total of 2699. Many of these attendees then went on to access further support from DVAC Safety and Counselling Teams.

**Safety Upgrades** Safety Upgrades aims to help women and children who have experienced domestic and family violence to stay in their home if it is safe to do so. This helps women and their children to stay connected to support networks and reduces the impact on children e.g. having to relocate schools and leaving their family home. Staying at home has not often been an option for women and children experiencing domestic and family violence. As more often than not they would have to relocate to escape the abuse. However, through the Safety Upgrades Program women and children may be able to remain in their home and continue to receive ongoing support.

The program has now completed its fifth year of operation and every year more and more families are accessing this service. This year 102 new clients were assessed for SUP assistance. This year we also had the introduction of a state pilot "Keeping Women Safe in Their Homes (KWSITH). This pilot focusses on technological abuse such as monitoring apps on phones or bugging devices as well as stalking. DVAC were one of only 4 pilot areas to receive this funding and have exceeded expectations with a total of 62 high risk clients accessing the service. DVAC would again like to acknowledge the continuous support of local businesses/contractors to complete installations and we extend our appreciation to all who have provided assistance.

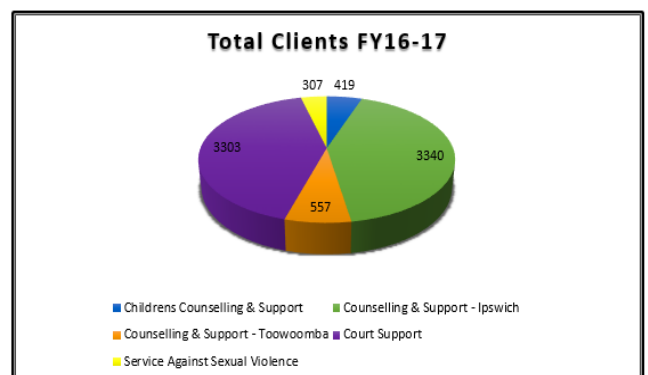
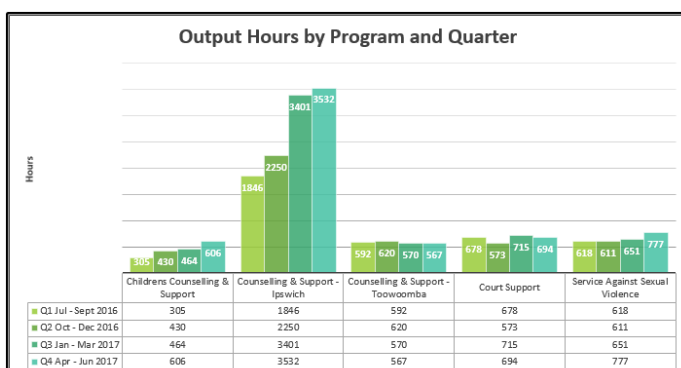
**Crisis Response/Case Management** This has again been a busy year for Crisis Response and as with the rest of DVAC experienced a great deal of change. The team has had several new staff joining their team and this has brought new skills and experience to add to our existing highly skilled team. The team still provides high quality support which includes;

- Intake and Assessment
- Danger Assessment and Safety Planning
- Identifying as Safety Upgrades or KWSITH client, carrying out home safety audit or Technology Safety Audit.
- Passing to satellite areas for further support or case management.
- Carrying out Needs Assessment and Support plan where necessary (if allocated to case management)
- Carrying out appropriate and informed referrals both external and internal.

This year has also seen a number of exciting projects which have allowed us to respond more effectively to evidenced need of women and children in our area experiencing domestic and family violence:

- Funding for a Child Safety Liaison Worker based on the success of the innovative 'Differential Response' pilot project in partnership with Child Safety.
- The continuation of the 'High Risk DV' meetings in Ipswich, Lockyer Valley and Toowoomba.

I would like to thank all the members of the Safety team for their hard work (and patience) especially in light of so much change.





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**Domestic Violence Action Centre Inc.**  
ABN 91 593 855 217

**Declaration by the Management Committee**  
For the year ended 30 June 2017


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The management committee of Domestic Violence Action Centre Inc. declares that:

1. The financial statements including the Statement of Profit and Loss or Other Comprehensive Income, Statement of Financial Position, Statement of Changes in Equity, Statement of Cash Flow and the Notes to the Financial Statements, are in accordance with the Associations Incorporation Act 1981 (Qld):
  - a. comply with the Associations Incorporations Regulation 1999 (Qld); and
  - b. give a true and fair view of the financial position as at 30 June 2017 and performance for the year ended on that date of the association;
2. In the management committees' opinion there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Domestic Violence Action Centre Inc. will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

This declaration is made in accordance with a resolution of the management committee.

  
.....  
Emma Thomas  
Chairperson

  
.....  
Richard Thomas  
Treasurer

Dated: 10.8.17.