



# Gender Based Violence Awareness in the Noosa Region of Australia

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## **Introduction**

Research was undertaken on the Noosa Communities awareness of domestic violence prevention measures in their local area and their awareness of the rates of domestic violence in their community. There are high numbers of domestic violence in the region with 2000 reported cases in 2014. Police attend at least one domestic violence call out per day. Funding is an issue and there is no sufficient support services in place. Questionnaires were used to collect data, using coding to protect privacy and maintain confidentiality. The purpose of the research was to determine community awareness on domestic violence and to understand if participants had experienced domestic violence in their lives.

## **Literature Review**

There are high rates of domestic violence cases in the Noosa area. In 2014 there were “2000 cases of domestic violence reported to the authorities in the region” (NoosaCouncil, 2015). These statistics highlight how prevalent the issue is in the region. According to Scope, “Domestic and Family Violence is defined by the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012” (Scope, 2015). Sexual

Abuse, Spiritual Abuse, Emotional and Verbal Abuse, Physical Violence, Stalking, Technology Abuse, Financial and Social Abuse are all covered under the DFVP act. Annually Australia holds domestic violence prevention month in the month of May. According to Noosa Today ‘domestic violence is the biggest killer of women aged between the ages of 15 and 44’ (Today, 2015). Despite these staggering statistics, Noosa was overlooked on much needed funding. According to Ogle ‘Queensland Government had called for tenders in areas throughout the state but ignored Noosa, where police attend at least one domestic violence incident per day’ (Ogle, 2016).

## **Limitations**

There are limitations when determining how prevalent domestic violence is in Australian communities. According to our watch “there are a vast majority of domestic violence victims do not report the violence to police therefore recorded crime statistics do not give an indication of how many people live with domestic violence” (OurWatch, 2014). As crime statistics do not give a good indication of domestic violence victims, it is necessary to rely on information from personal safety survey.

## **Methodology**

Questionnaires were used to survey participants on their awareness of the prevalence of gender based violence in their community. Qualitative research was undertaken using coding in order to protect privacy and maintain the participant's confidentiality to protect them from any harm.

Questionnaires related to

- Domestic Violence Awareness Month
- Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012
- The number of domestic violence cases in the region
- Statistics showing domestic violence being the biggest killer for women aged between 15 and 44
- The questionnaire also sought to ask if participants had experienced domestic violence and if they were aware of support services in their area

## Results

- Participants had experienced domestic and family violence at some point in their lives either directly or indirectly
- Surveys were completed by twenty participants
- Seventy percent of participants were unaware of Awareness month, the protection act and the high incident of domestic violence occurring in their community
- Sixty Five percent of participants were female and thirty five percent male
- Seventy Five percent of participants were unaware of support services available in the area to domestic violence victims.

## **Conclusion**

Domestic Violence is an issue in the Noosa region. Police resources are stretched, being called out to one case per day. Funding for support services is an issue with Noosa missing out on recent funding allocation. Coded research indicated that participants have a lack of understanding on how domestic violence impacts on their community, highlighting that more campaigning and advocacy is required to reduce the high rates of gender based violence. It is clear that more community driven advocacy is necessary to address the issue and that members of the community are able to access safe spaces where they can openly engage in dialogue about the violence occurring in their community.

## References

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