

CLIENT PROFILE



THE DAY A LADY CAME TO CONFERENCE

A lady attended conference today, she is well known to the Commissioners and the community, and she greets the commissioners as you would greet friends. She has been to conference many times and has a long list of prior notifications. Five from Child Safety Services, eight from Education Queensland and one from the Magistrates Court, but life has not been easy lately. She has three children and one grandchild living with her one of the children has identified mental health and behavioural disabilities and requires constant monitoring and her partner is currently in jail. The partner is in and out of jail regularly, usually for violence and aggressive behaviour and sometimes also for possession of illegal drugs and illegal alcohol.

The previous conference she was to attend was delayed until she returned from the local women's shelter after an incident with her partner. Her life is a constant challenge to keep the family together, meet the requirements of Child Safety Services and keep her partner out of jail. In conference the Commissioners and the lady discussed the situation and agreed on a case plan to help her deal with her partner's impending release from custody for matters relating to the latest incident when she had to go to the women's shelter.

For the first time in a long time she arrives at conference with a smile, her partner is back in the family home after being released from jail and things are going well. It has been three weeks since the partner attended the three day 'Ending Family Violence' course jointly conducted by Queensland Corrective Services, Department of Community Safety and the Commission. The partner had been conferenced by the Commission and referred to the program as soon as he returned to the community after being released from jail. As a result of

the course, he tells his partner he has some understanding why he has previously been violent and what he has been doing to the family.

The partner has now made a commitment to help rebuild the family. He is making changes in his attitude and relationship and he is working hard to build a better future for the children. He is walking the children to school in the mornings and helping around the house, he wants to take responsibility for the care of his children and make sure they do not see any more violence. He knows he has lots of energy some of it bad, and thinks getting a job is the best outlet, not the drinking, smoking and fighting that he has been involved in.

The Commissioners know this is early days and temptation to misuse grog again is all around. They are also aware it is easy to become violent when frustrations boil over but they are encouraging and supportive of the efforts of everyone involved. They tell the lady they are glad to hear the good progress reports and encourage her to keep the children going to school everyday, reduce the drinking in the house and enjoy time together as a family. They will support her both as Commissioners and as extended family that care for everyone involved. The male Commissioners also talk often of the benefits of attending the men's group and doing traditional activities like fishing and hunting. They also offer the partner a place to come to when he feels like he is overheating. Day or night the Local Commissioners are working not only as Commissioners but also as community members that will be there to support the family in the weeks, months and years ahead and as members of their respective clans who will return to their country forever when their time comes.