



Armada Domestic Violence Intervention
Project (Inc)

**10th Anniversary Celebration of the Armadale
Domestic Violence Intervention Project
(ADVIP)**

28 May 2003

By the Hon David K Malcolm AC CitWA
Chief Justice of Western Australia

Don Russell Performing Arts Centre
Murdoch Road, Thornlie,
Western Australia



Hon. J A McGinty MLA

Hon SM McHale MLA – represented by Ms Pauline Phillips, Chair of the Family
and Domestic Violence Coordinating Committee

Mr Paul Andrews MLA

Mr Martin Whitely MLA

Ms Louise Pratt MLC

Cr Joan Scott (on behalf of Shire President of Jarrahdale-Serpentine)

Mayor Pat M Morris (City of Gosnells)

Cr Carol Matison (City of Gosnells)

Cr Julie Brown (City of Gosnells)

Ladies and Gentlemen

Domestic violence is a serious crime that challenges society at every level.

For an individual victim, domestic violence can impinge on all aspects of life. It can harm their physical and mental health, sense of self-worth, diminish their ability to work and reduce the quality of their relationships with family and friends. In many cases the consequences of domestic violence for the victim are fatal, and crime statistics in Western Australia indicate that around 30% of all murders are committed by spouses or family members.

At the familial level, domestic violence threatens the stability of the family which is the core unit of any society. It negatively impacts on all family members, not just the person who is the direct victim of any violence. Children who are exposed to violence in their homes may experience serious emotional, behavioural, developmental, and academic difficulties. Domestic violence also teaches children that violence is an acceptable solution and a normal way of exerting power and control. This creates a cycle of violence where abused children become perpetrators of violence later on in life.

In the wider community, domestic violence creates serious social and economic problems on top of the major cost in human trauma and dislocation. It is estimated that it costs Australian society billions of dollars every year in labour, health, legal, welfare, and social services expenses. Domestic violence erodes valuable medical, legal, judicial, and



social resources, both human and financial, in a way that is not comparable to any other crime. These factors alone should strengthen the resolve of communities in the fight against domestic violence.

In 1993, the Armadale Domestic Violence Intervention Project (ADVIP) bravely took up the challenge of domestic violence. Today's celebration of its 10th Anniversary indicates the great success that it has experienced. It has been an honour to have been Co-Patron of ADVIP with Mrs Ruth Reid since its establishment in 1993 and its formal launch in 1994. It was around this time of year, 9 years ago, in April 1994 that I was given the opportunity to speak at the launch of ADVIP. At that time, the Victims of Crime Sub-Committee of the Task Force on Gender Bias, which I established in 1993, had made some preliminary findings on domestic violence. These were subsequently endorsed by the full Task Force whose report was delivered to me on 1 July 1994. The sub-committee considered that:

“Domestic violence is not understood by the majority of society. Many individuals who are required to assist victims of domestic violence as part of their job are hired, retained, or appointed without benefit of proper training on the causes and effects of domestic violence and the most effective ways to handle situations where it is involved... Domestic violence is considered to be a social problem that should be handled by social services agencies. Domestic violence is a crime and should be treated as such by the police who are often the first contact by victims. If domestic violence is not treated seriously by the police, a victim will believe that the behaviour of the abuser is non-criminal or will believe that protection is not available. The police have adequate power under the law to respond effectively to crimes involving domestic violence. What is needed is that they in fact fulfil their legal obligations to enforce the law in a consistent manner.”

At the launch in 1994, I said that ADVIP responded to many of these issues. ADVIP was modelled on the effective inter-agency criminal justice response developed in Duluth, Minnesota in the United States. The basis of the response was that all agencies and personnel involved in intervening in domestic violence, including police, courts



corrections and refuges should have a consistent, co-ordinated response to family violence.

The key principles were:

- Violence in the home is dealt with as a crime;
- The abuser is made accountable for his or her actions;
- The onus of intervening is shifted from the victim to the community and agencies which deal with domestic violence;
- All agencies involved – police, courts, victim support, social services, community corrections and abuser education and counselling – are integrated and consistent in their approach through co-ordinated policy development;
- All systems are monitored to ensure accountability and compliance with policies.

Armadale was chosen as a WA pilot because two key agencies, police and refuge, agreed to work together to develop an inter-agency approach. It was anticipated that the benefits of the Project would include:

- Increased safety and protection of victims from further injury or death;
- Support for victims to help re-build their lives;
- An effective and consistent method in application of education of perpetrators and victims, their families and the community that violence and abuse are unacceptable;
- Monetary savings to the community (in a reduction of the high cost incurred as a result of continuing domestic violence).

This is what has happened. The Project has also served to educate the community and change attitudes to domestic violence. It also incorporated a parallel Aboriginal project which took into account the special needs of Aboriginal peoples.

The 10th anniversary of ADVIP is an appropriate time to acknowledge the work and achievements of ADVIP over the past years and reflect on the progress that has been made in the fight against domestic violence.

In 1994, ADVIP was recognised on a national level for its pioneering work in developing an interagency integrated response to domestic and family violence, by an Australian Prevention Award. In 1996, ADVIP members developed an extensive regional



domestic violence action plan as part of the government requirements. In 1997, ADVIP was successful in obtaining funding for the Men's Perpetrator Group for the Department of Justice. In later years, Relationships Australia was successful in obtaining the funding and continues to be a highly regarded member of ADVIP. In 2001, ADVIP members participated in three planning sessions to explore agency-service linkages. Individual agency-service responses were created in the form of Prevention, Intervention and Follow Up Charts and where appropriate, process referral flow charts. A victim safety framework was also created to enhance shared understanding of intervention. ADVIP was successful in obtaining funding in 2001 from the Department of Indigenous Affairs and in 2002 from Safer WA. In 2002, another regional domestic violence committee was created in the Peel Region. Also in 2002, ADVIP members developed a Commitment Statement for all relevant agencies and service providers to sign. The Commitment Statement acknowledged membership of the Project and was based on adherence to the Principles of Intervention and a shared understanding of the power and control dynamics of domestic violence, and the impact of domestic violence on all family members. In 2003, ADVIP has grown in stature by the inclusion of more government and non-government agencies. The field of domestic violence now has a much higher public profile.

All of this could not have been achieved without the vision, hard work and commitment of all those involved in the Project and they are to be congratulated.

Although we celebrate the success of ADVIP today, we are also mindful that due to the enormity of the problem of domestic violence, much more remains to be done. Even the best and most sophisticated legislation dealing with domestic violence will not have an impact unless it is properly and conscientiously implemented by those involved in the legal system and the administration of justice. In particular, it is important that the attitudes of all of the people involved, including judicial officers, are informed and educated in order to be fully aware of the problem of domestic violence and the harm which can be suffered by women and children in a domestic violence situation. Organisations like ADVIP have been instrumental in the general education of the public on matters of domestic violence.



By enlisting the co-operation of a wide range of agencies which come into contact with situations of domestic violence, both governmental and non-governmental, ADVIP ensures continuity of care for victims of domestic violence. The inter-agency approach allows for both a consistent and co-ordinated approach by those agencies in their dealings with victims of domestic violence. It is encouraging that there is a developing network of similar programs in other parts of Western Australia. I congratulate ADVIP on its 10th Anniversary and on its achievements so far. I wish the Project and all of those involved in it continuing success in their very important work.