

## Improving Women's health and wellbeing

*The Bligh Government is improving health services to women in areas of high risk and need and promoting positive images of women and lifestyle choices that enhance their wellbeing.*

### Sustainable health

The Sustainable Models of Health Services for Rural Queenslanders initiative has included finalising the *Statewide Health Services Plan 2007-2012: The framework for reform in health service planning and delivery*. The plan includes specific actions for small communities with a population of less than 7,000 people.

*Our Future Plan: The Bligh Government is developing an integrated health planning framework to guide sustainable models of health care delivery in rural communities, and better ways to address priority health issues closer to people's homes by enhancing primary health care approaches, clinical outreach models and tele-health services.*

### Maternity services

Recommendations from the 2005 statewide, independent review of birthing services, *Re-birthing: Report of the Review of Maternity Services in Queensland*, are being implemented. \$21 million over four years was invested for prevention and early intervention programs to reduce disproportionate mortality and morbidity of Indigenous children. This includes employing new Indigenous Child Health Workers and other health professionals to address major risk factors including improving prenatal care, supporting first time parents with breastfeeding and infant care, supporting vulnerable families with home based interventions, implementing the *Positive Parenting Program* and promoting immunisation.

*Our Future Plan: The Bligh Government's current and upcoming areas of work relating to rural maternity services include:*

- *Developing a Maternity Services Action Plan 2008 – 2012 to articulate actions, timeframes and strategies endorsed in our response to Re-birthing: Report of the Review of Maternity Services in Queensland.*
- *Assessing vulnerable rural maternity services that may not be safe or sustainable.*
- *Endorsing the National Consensus Framework for Rural Maternity Services as the guide to planning and delivering rural maternity services into the future.*
- *Standard statewide communication, transfer and referral agreements between primary, secondary and tertiary services to better support rural communities.*
- *Developing maternity care models with multidisciplinary team approaches bringing together midwives, rural doctors, nurses, Indigenous health workers and allied and child health professionals.*
- *Area service planning for mobile antenatal and postnatal outreach services for women in areas that are isolated or without adequate public transport.*
- *Funding the Universal Postnatal Contact Service package which will contact every woman who gives birth in Queensland post-birth to ensure they are coping with parenthood's early stresses.*

### Reproductive, gynaecological and sexual health

*Our Women's Reproductive and Gynaecological Health initiative encompasses a number of discrete funding arrangements:*

- *The Women's Reproductive Health Program provides joint federal and state funding to six non-government organisations, including Family Planning,*

*to deliver sexual and reproductive health services and pregnancy help projects.*

- *Joint federal and state funding is provided to Children by Choice, a non-government organisation offering advice on options for unwanted pregnancy.*
- *The National Women's Health Program is a joint federal and state budget which funds three statewide women's health networks, seven non-government organisations and a Queensland Health Service District to provide a range of gender specific services throughout both metropolitan and rural Queensland.*
- *We fund Family Planning Queensland's Multicultural Women's Health Project to support women and communities affected by the practice of female genital mutilation, with improved health services and facilitation of a coordinated community response to the practice.*

*We have developed a range of strategies to improve women's sexual health, of which the following are relevant to rural women:*

- *A free testing and treatment program for chlamydia and gonorrhoea for Indigenous people tested 11,882 women in 2006-07.*
- *The Healthy Women's Initiative encourages rural and Indigenous women to participate in cervical screening and reproductive and sexual health practices. The initiative also focuses on improving physical activity, promoting healthy lifestyles and implementing programs to address alcohol, tobacco and other drug use.*
- *Communication programs reach audiences statewide via the internet (including the Sexual Health and I Stay Safe websites) and Health Information Centre.*

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*Our Future Plan: The Bligh Government is also continuing to prioritise women's reproductive and gynaecological health with ongoing funding of key programs in this area, and will continue to develop and implement strategies to improve women's sexual health.*

### Access to breast screening

The Bligh Government has supported *BreastScreen Queensland* to develop strategies for rural and remote women. These include:

- Developing resources specifically aimed at Indigenous women, as part of a campaign to increase breast screening participation for Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and South Sea Islander women in the target age group of 50-69 years.
- A marketing campaign has been implemented that aims to increase and maintain participation of new women and lapsed attendees aged 50 to 69 years by addressing barriers to regular breast screening. Following a media campaign in late 2007 in regional Queensland there was almost a 30% (916 women) increase in people being screened from regional and rural areas.

*Our Future Plan: We are supporting BreastScreen Queensland to implement initiatives for rural and remote women.*

- *Over the next 18 months, 50 analogue mammography units will be updated to digital imaging, to allow immediate checking of images at mobile Screening and Assessment Services. In the longer term, digital imaging may reduce the need for women to travel long distances to attend further assessment sessions to review screen detected abnormalities.*
- *Two new mobile units are to be built in 2008/09, both with access to the latest digital equipment. One will replace the service operating from Townsville for North Queensland. The second will operate across the south east corner to provide better access for women in areas of population growth.*

### Access to health information and health services

We have developed the following initiatives to improve access to health information and services for rural women including:

- *The Mobile Women's Health Nurses' Service* provides a range of services to rural and remote women. In 2006, 326 communities were visited by the Service (compared to a goal of 200).
- *The Rural and Remote Women's Health Program*, operated by the Royal Flying Doctor Service, provide visiting female General Practitioners to women in rural and remote areas. Services include breast and skin examinations, screening programs and health promotion. There are now 72 rural and remote communities which are part of the Program.
- *The National Human Papillomavirus Vaccination (HPV) Program* vaccinates female students in secondary school years 10, 11 and 12.
- *The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Cervical Screening Strategy 2006 – 2010* promotes strategies to reduce morbidity and mortality from cancer of the cervix among Queensland's Indigenous women. This strategy progresses the Indigenous Women's Cervical Screening Strategy 2000 - 2004.
- *An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Alcohol Diversion Program* provides treatment before sentencing for eligible offenders.

*Our Future Plan: The Bligh Government will ensure the continuance of initiatives to improve rural women's access to health information.*

### Other health initiatives for women

The Bligh Government has also supported a number of other health initiatives for women across the state. These include:

- A statewide, 24 -hour *health contact centre*, the 13 HEALTH service, was established in 2005 to provide better and wider access to immediate health information, referral and triage services.
- *The Young Women and Smoking "Feeling Good"* campaign has had success in increasing thoughts about quitting smoking, action taken and quit rates.

- *The Young Women and Alcohol Campaign* commenced in 2004 and has achieved levels of recognition and behaviour modification amongst "reluctant drinkers".
- *The Falls Prevention for Older Queenslanders* initiative distributes "Client Capacity Building Kits" to assist clients to reduce the risk of injury from falls. It distributed 5,000 kits last financial year. Resources were also developed for the culturally and linguistically diverse client group.
- *A Be Kind To Your Mind* trial social marketing project aims to enhance community understanding of mental health and improve social connectedness and inclusion. Four pilots were commenced in Townsville, Mount Isa, Innisfail and Moranbah in 2006.

*Our Future Plan: The Bligh Government's ongoing and planned support for state-wide health initiatives include:*

- *Expanding 13 HEALTH to provide statewide 24-hour information and support to parents about newborns and young children. Phase One will transition the existing Child Health Line to 13 HEALTH and will treble capacity from 50,000 to 150,000 calls per year with 27 additional child health staff at the end of 2008. A \$3.5million recurrent annual funding upgrade will be provided as part of the Government's \$29 million Universal Postnatal Contact Service package.*
- *Developing Phase Three of the Young Women & Smoking initiative.*
- *Encouraging young women to say no to alcohol when they want to, with the latest phase of the Young Women and Alcohol Campaign, launched on Boxing Day 2007. In addition, our Liquor Licensing Division will run the Safer Drinking Cultures public education campaign in the latter half of 2008. Areas of focus will include young, female binge drinkers and the secondary supply of alcohol to underage drinkers.*
- *The Home and Community Care Resource Unit working in collaboration with Queensland Meals on Wheels and the Department of Primary Industry Food Technology Innovation Unit to improve nutrition for aged clients, since fall risk is linked to poor nutrition. It recently held a Nutrition Leader's Laboratory for 150 participants.*

## Promoting opportunities to help women balance their work, family and lifestyle

The Bligh Government is promoting the benefits of, and providing information about, balanced work, family and lifestyle. We are also increasing support and services to Queensland families and taking action to value the role of carers in Queensland.

### Work life balance

The *Balanced Work, Family and Lifestyles* strategy includes:

- Distributing hardcopy work-life balance toolkits for employers and employees across Queensland through council libraries and electoral offices.
- Creating and disseminating work-life balance information and resources online.
- Balanced work/life initiatives for Queensland public servants statewide.

We have launched the *Better Work-Life Balance Survey* as a downloadable tool, to assist employers statewide to evaluate and improve their work-life balance policies.

The Bligh Government is a partner in an Australian Research Council funded research project to assess the impact of industrial relations legislative changes on Queensland employees, particularly the implications for gender pay equity and work/family balance.

We have also delivered a seminar, "Where are the Workers?", in Townsville on work-life balance in non-traditional industries, tailored to the employment and geographical context of Northern Queensland.

*Our Future Plan: The Bligh Government plans to implement a quality part-time work project that will focus on recognition of part-time work as a legitimate and viable component in employee career paths.*

*We will continue to work with local women and community organisations to identify ways to promote women's workforce participation and work, family and life balance including within rural and regional communities.*

*We will lead a public sector work-life balance strategy to improve uptake of work-life balance policies, with a view to attract and retain quality staff.*

### Carer Recognition

Our *Carer Recognition Policy* aims to better recognise the role of carers in our community, the majority of whom are women. Key initiatives of the policy's action plan include:

- a Companion Card, to allow companions free admission into participating venues and activities, available in late 2008.
- a Carer Business Discount Card, with discounts for carers from participating businesses, available in mid-2008.

*Our Future Plan: The Bligh Government's plans for progressing initiatives in the Carer Action Plan include:*

- *Increasing access to respite for older parent carers.*
- *Supporting young carers in education and training.*
- *Increasing participation of consumers and carers in the mental health system.*
- *Assisting carers to plan future care needs of their loved ones with a disability.*

### Disability service delivery

Our *Growing Stronger* initiative is a program of reforms to improve specialist disability service delivery statewide, reflecting the rights and service delivery principles contained in the *Disability Services Act 2006*.

In December 2007 we introduced a single application form for specialist disability services, allowing applicants to apply for a range of programs in one application, and helping us to understand people's needs and determine eligibility faster.

*Our Future Plan: The Bligh Government is committed to continuing the Growing Stronger initiative through:*

- *A professional assessment process for all applicants.*
- *Tailored service responses for individuals.*
- *Better information systems to ensure fair and sustainable service delivery.*

### Child care and support for parents and families

The *Child Care Information Service* is a free, statewide telephone information service, operating since 1993. It provides information to help parents make informed choices about child care and to find services in their local area.

The *Early Years Strategy* is a cross-Government strategy to promote better health, family support and early childhood education and care services for families with children aged 0-8. To develop the strategy, the government conducted consultations in regional locations Queensland-wide, with participation of over 600 people.

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The statewide *Queensland Families: Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI)* strategy includes initiatives to strengthen individuals and families to limit the need for intervention and divert children and young people from statutory systems. In particular, some Best Start initiatives in regional centres have included reading to children programs, all abilities playgrounds, neighbourhood centres and parenting programs.

*Our Future Plan: The Bligh Government is committed to the ongoing implementation of each of these initiatives and ensuring their accessibility statewide.*

## The Queensland Government employing women

The Bligh Government, as an employer, aims to model best practice in attracting, retaining and providing fulfilling work for women statewide. Across our departments and agencies we are implementing a variety of projects that promote flexible and supportive employment. Examples include:

- The Department of Main Roads is promoting the health of women employees with initiatives ranging from an e-learning health tool, *Secret Women's Business*, to supporting local district health challenges. A *Rural and Remote Area Incentive Scheme* and flexible working practices encourage rural and remote women's workforce participation. Women's leadership at work is promoted by membership of the Queensland Women in the Public Service's *Incorporated's Women to Leadership Mentoring Program* and offering other leadership and development programs.

- The Department of Education, Training and the Arts' *Workforce Diversity and Equity Framework for Action 2006–2008* ensures policies support the work-life balance of all employees including women, especially by promoting a range of flexible work practices. Key actions include:
  - *Promoting work-life balance* seminars in central and regional offices include practical information on strategies to balance work and personal life.
  - *Stay in Touch* helps managers maintain communication with employees on extended leave, including women on maternity leave. Women are kept informed of key workplace changes and discussion of suitable working arrangements assists when they transition back to work.

- The Department of Emergency Services has a range of training and career development opportunities for rural and remote women, including:
  - The *Queensland Ambulance Service Rural and Remote Women's Forum*, held in Mt Isa in October 2007, enabled participants to discuss the challenges of working in a rural and remote location.
  - *Pathways for Women* involved ninety women in Career Development Programs in Brisbane, Townsville and Cairns in May 2007.
  - In December 2007, *Express Executive Succession Coaching for Women* provided executive coaching, shadowing, mentoring, relieving opportunities and a day on the road to encourage leadership in the Department's executive level women.

- The Queensland Police Service (QPS) Women's Network supports women police in rural and remote locations, with a 'buddy system', where senior QPS women visit remote areas. QPS also provides a *Supporting Women in Remote Locations* remote mentoring program and Remote Location 'Care' Packages.

*Our Future Plan: The Bligh Government will continue to encourage the implementation of workplace practices and initiatives to promote flexible, supportive and fulfilling employment for women Queensland-wide.*

## Improving women's capacity to achieve economic security

*The Bligh Government is providing Queensland women with more flexible and accessible education, training and employment pathways. We are supporting women's participation in emerging industries and providing better information and training so women can achieve greater financial security. We are also supporting women to start up, or continue in business and improving housing services to women.*

### Education and training

Get SET for Success forums, which promote science, engineering and technology, were held on the Sunshine Coast in June 2008. A day of 'hands on' activities for year five students and a second day for year nine students provided girls the opportunity to engage in latest laboratory practices and stimulate their interest in science, engineering and technology careers (SET).

Training and employment in non-traditional careers, including the government's Women in Hard Hats initiative, are promoted to young women at careers fairs and expos statewide. In 2008, this has included two events in Ipswich, two in Toowoomba, one at the Sunshine Coast, one at the Gold Coast and four in Brisbane to date.

The Bligh Government runs two *Smart Women – Smart State Seminar* series broadly aimed at improving women's economic security.

- *Workplace Negotiation Skills* seminars were delivered in 2006-07, at locations statewide, including Arana Hills, Logan, Ipswich, Robina, Bundaberg, Toowoomba, Maroochydore, Mackay, Rockhampton, Townsville and Brisbane CBD.

- A free, 20-hour information and training package, *Economy Wise – Budget Smart*, helps women manage their financial affairs and achieve long-term economic security. To date, the package has been delivered in 19 Queensland locations.

*Skilling Queenslanders for Work* aims to ensure individual Queenslanders get the right mix of training, vocational skills and associated assistance to be skilled for the workforce. The strategy assisted more than 17,000 disadvantaged jobseekers, underemployed people and those outside the labour force in the first 11 months of 2007-08. Of these, 48% lived outside south-east Queensland and 48% were women. Women and rural and remote Queenslanders have access to skilling and employment assistance through initiatives including:

- *Parents and Carers*: for parents and carers returning to paid employment.
- *BushWorks*: skilling and employment opportunities for people in rural and remote communities with a focus on retaining young people in their communities.
- *Experience Pays*: giving older (45+) jobseekers skills to re-enter the workforce.

The *Rural and Remote Education Framework for Action 2006-2008* drives improved educational and training opportunities for students, teachers, schools and communities in rural and remote Queensland. Under this framework, the Bligh Government has implemented the *Workforce Diversity and Equity Framework for Action 2006-2008* to enhance attraction, retention and career development of local Queensland communities, including Indigenous women,

women with a disability, women from a non-English speaking background and women in management.

*Our Future Plan: The Bligh Government will continue promoting women to train for non-traditional careers, and, due to the success of the Get SET for Success forums, plans for a similar event in 2009.*

*The Government has also funded Smart Women – Smart State Seminars to continue throughout Queensland in 2008 and 2009. Workplace Negotiation Skills seminars will be delivered across Queensland from July – December 2008, in Ipswich, Mackay, Townsville, Cairns, Gladstone, Rockhampton, Emerald, Nambour, Gympie, Hervey Bay, Kingaroy, the Gold Coast and three Brisbane locations. Twelve Economy Wise – Budget Smart seminars will be delivered in 2008-09 at Cherbourg/Murgon, Redcliffe, Beenleigh, Mackay, Charleville, Bowen, Charters Towers, Mt Isa, Rockhampton, Yarrabah, Nambour and Toowoomba.*

*The Bligh Government is committed to continuing Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiatives and improvements in rural and remote education.*

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## Employment pathways for women in non-traditional industries

The Bligh Government is committed to promoting greater workforce participation by women statewide in the mining, construction, science, engineering and technology (MCSET) industries. Regional delivery of the following is imperative as mining predominantly occurs in regional and rural areas and construction is important in high growth regional areas such as the Sunshine Coast, Gold Coast and Mackay.

- The 2006 election commitment, *Women in Hard Hats (WIHH)*, promotes and encourages greater workforce participation by women in MCSET industries. Initiatives have included: eight *Girls in Hard Hats* panel events in conjunction with careers expos across Queensland, a think tank in Mt Isa and a series of events and activities for *Women in Construction Week*.
- The *Smart Women – Smart State Taskforce*, established in 2005, provides advice to the government on ways to improve outcomes for women's education, training and employment in Queensland's science, engineering and technology (SET) industries. A 12-point *Action Plan (2006 – 2009)* sets out a range of practical initiatives being implemented by government agencies in partnership with educational and private sectors to address this aim. Some of the actions include regional women, and all of them benefit women statewide. For example, in July 2008, a two day *Women in Engineering Queensland* workshop was delivered for over 150 female engineering undergraduates from throughout Queensland.
- The annual *Smart Women – Smart State Awards* recognise and promote achievements of women of all ages in study and careers in the non-traditional fields of science, engineering and technology (SET). Since their inception, the Awards have seen a marked increase in interest, with more nominations, sponsorship and media attention each year. 2008 is the sixth year the Awards will be held.

- In 2008, we sponsored two new grant categories to help organisations statewide to encourage increased women's participation in non-traditional industries:
  - The Women in Trades Grants program awarded ten grants of up to \$10,000 for initiatives across nine organisations, for projects or programs aiming to increase women's participation in non-traditional trades.
  - The Indigenous Working Women's Fund challenged business to develop strategies to support sustainable employment of Indigenous women in non-traditional roles in industries experiencing skills shortages. Funding was available for two projects for up to \$50,000 each.

*Our Future Plan: The Bligh Government continues to support the promotion of Queensland women's economic security through encouraging women's participation in non traditional industries.*

*Women in Hard Hats ongoing initiatives include showcasing activities to highlight, promote and profile careers in MCSET, policy development and research, a social marketing campaign, information provision and monitoring the impact of the initiatives.*

*Under the Smart Women – Smart State Taskforce Action Plan, the Bligh Government is partnering with government agencies and industry to:*

- *Develop an online resource centre for women and girls wishing to pursue careers or education in non-traditional industries.*
- *Promote the range of SET programs within Queensland that target girls in schools and promote effective models to Government and Industry.*
- *Identify the best ways to promote family friendly employment practices in SET industries.*
- *Provide information to assist women re-entering SET careers after a career break.*
- *Conduct ongoing research on women in SET industries.*

*The 2008 Smart Women – Smart State Awards will include two new award categories:*

- *A Green Award for the nomination that best considers the environment.*
- *A Community Innovation Award for a woman or group of women contributing to an Indigenous community in an innovative and positive way.*

*The Bligh Government plans to build on the success of the new grants with another grants round currently in development.*

## Supporting women in business

The *Enterprising Women in Rural Industries* program supports and promotes women producers developing food, fibre and tourism businesses. Strategies include regular e-newsletters to 1100 producers, professional development and regional networking activities, trade shows and promotional events.

We also sponsor and coordinate the *Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation's (RIRDC) Rural Women's Award*, comprising a \$10,000 bursary awarded annually.

*Our Future Plan: the Bligh Government is continuing to support the Enterprising Women in Rural Industries program and the Rural Women's Award.*

## Housing services

Our *One Social Housing System* reforms are creating a more efficient and responsive social housing system to support integrated provision of housing assistance for low income Queenslanders. Women are over-represented amongst public housing tenants, and head 90% of all single parent public housing households.

*Our Future Plan: The Bligh Government is continuing to implement the One Social Housing System. These include:*

- *Expanding the base of housing for low income Queenslanders.*
- *Ensuring all social housing assistance can be applied for at one time and via one entry point.*
- *Developing standard processes to assess eligibility and to allocate housing assistance.*
- *Providing assistance for the duration of the need.*
- *Ensuring client needs are matched with the appropriate level of housing assistance.*
- *Linking clients to support services, crisis accommodation and the wider housing system.*
- *Assisting clients to leave social housing and enter the private market if they are able.*

## Enhancing women's safety

Women are overrepresented amongst victims of domestic and family violence compared to men. The Bligh Government is implementing strategies to reduce violence against women and helping women to feel safe and supported in their homes and communities.

### Addressing domestic and family violence

We have developed statewide initiatives to reduce violence, including a focus on specific rural areas. The *Ministerial Advisory Council on Domestic and Family Violence* provides advice to the Bligh Government about developing effective statewide policies, programs and services that impact on domestic and family violence issues. Priority areas identified by the Council in 2005-07 were perpetrator programs, legislation, Indigenous family violence and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month.

We provide ongoing domestic and family violence funding (\$27.55 million triennially) for a range of services to people, predominantly women and children, experiencing domestic and family violence:

- Services receiving funding include dvconnect, a telephone service for people affected by domestic and family violence, with a dedicated 24-hour Womensline able to provide referral (including refuge referral), information and counselling.
- \$14.6 million is provided to 53 accommodation services under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program to assist women and children escaping violent relationships.
- We also provide \$4.48 million per annum to a research, education and evaluation centre to increase knowledge about domestic and family violence.

The *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 1989* aims to provide safety and protection for people who are experiencing domestic and family violence. Strategies

around the Act include providing training and updating Departmental resources to increase access for more vulnerable groups, some of which are concentrated in regional and rural communities, such as Indigenous people. We are also undertaking service reviews, including of women's services.

The *Safe and Strong Families* initiative aims to reduce family violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities statewide.

Some regionally-based activities include:

- Counselling services in Cooktown, Cherbourg and Thursday Island.
- A range of marketing materials were distributed and events were held statewide for *Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month* in May 2008.
- Healthy relationship education was delivered via the infrastructure of 27 'Kickstart' football clinics in Queensland remote Indigenous communities.
- The *Safe Haven* initiative was developed to reduce the impact of domestic and family violence on children in Coen, Mornington Island, Cherbourg and Palm Island.
- Research was conducted into various aspects of domestic violence in Indigenous communities.

We have allocated funding for *Services for Men Who Perpetrate Domestic and Family Violence*. In 2005-06, an extra \$0.75 million was provided to enhance perpetrator services in Cairns, Townsville, the Gold Coast, Logan, Roma and surrounding areas.

*Our Future Plan: the Bligh Government is committed to ongoing funding to support services and research around domestic and family violence.*

- *The Ministerial Advisory Council on Domestic and Family Violence is continuing to focus on key priority areas including linkages between domestic and*

*family violence and other social issues.*

- *Resources for people affected by domestic and family violence have been produced in Tagalog, Sudanese and Vietnamese languages. The government plans to produce resources in other languages.*
- *We are also establishing Indigenous Family Violence Counselling Services in Cherbourg and the Torres Strait. In Cooktown we are currently focusing on the community development stage for a service.*
- *We are supporting Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month in 2009.*
- *We are entering into a partnership with Xstrata Mining which includes funding for a men's domestic and family violence behaviour change program in Mt Isa and outreach from Emerald to people affected by domestic and family violence living in the Lower Bowen Basin.*
- *The Bligh Government will also continue to provide funding for domestic and family violence services in rural locations including Mt. Isa, Roma, Cunnamulla, Emerald, Pormpuraaw, Weipa, Atherton, Mossman, Biloela, and Charters Towers.*

### Alcohol reforms

The *Meeting Challenges, Making Choices* Policy Framework has applied alcohol supply restrictions and demand reduction initiatives in 19 Queensland Indigenous Communities, to reduce harm associated with hazardous and harmful use of alcohol. Since implementation, there has been an overall decrease in alcohol related violence and fewer hospital admissions for assault related injuries amongst the communities.

*Our Future Plan: The Bligh Government's 2008 alcohol reforms project aims to achieve a significant and sustained improvement in alcohol related harm. Elements of the project are:*

- *Strengthening alcohol supply restrictions.*
- *Implementing legislation prohibiting any mainland Queensland Council from holding a general liquor licence from 1 July 2008.*

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- *Developing treatment, rehabilitation, diversion programs and activities to reduce harm associated with alcohol misuse.*

## Supporting the homeless

The *Homeless Person's Information Queensland (HPIQ)* is a call centre to assist Queenslanders with information and referral to homelessness and related support services. HPIQ callers include single women, women with children and women as part of a household or extended family, including women experiencing homelessness as a result of family and domestic violence. The service commenced in 2006 and became statewide in July 2007. It is available 24 hours to women anywhere in Queensland.

*Our Future Plan: The Bligh Government will continue to fund the HPIQ service.*

## Access to justice

Women's Legal Aid, within Legal Aid Queensland (LAQ), provides specialist services to women. Its projects relevant to rural and remote women include:

- Information sessions on family law, domestic violence and child protection, run in conjunction with the Family Law Legal Assistance Division for women and community service organisation workers in regional and rural communities.
- The *Rural Women's Reference Group*, comprising representatives from the women's and domestic violence sectors who discuss and respond to emerging issues affecting legal aid access and services for rural and regional women.
- As part of a *Rural Women's Legal Awareness Project*, the translation of resources into Tagalog to target Filipino women in the Mackay and Mt Isa regions. A leaflet on the legal system and a pocket pack about domestic and family violence has also been translated into Mandarin, Vietnamese and Aboriginal Australian languages.
- The *Western Justice Project*, delivered in partnership with the Advocacy and Support Centre, Toowoomba, increases access to justice services for rural and Indigenous women in South West Queensland via community-based video conferencing facilities and an online legal database.

Rural women can access LAQ services via specialist unit telephone advice clinics and the Client Information Services call centre and website [www.legalaid.qld.gov.au](http://www.legalaid.qld.gov.au). There are also regional Community Legal Centres in Roma, Goondiwindi and Mt Isa, and the Women's Legal Service who provide information and advice statewide.

Legal Aid Queensland's Integrated Indigenous Strategy unit helps Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islander Queenslanders, particularly women and their families, access justice, with a focus on remote and regional communities. Activities include:

- A pilot program in Thursday Island, the Northern Peninsula Area, Cooktown, Yarrabah, Palm Island, Bowen and Ingham whereby community liaison officers and solicitors visit communities monthly to provide legal advice and education. Indigenous legal officers in the communities assist clients between visits.
- Raising awareness of LAQ services within Indigenous communities.
- Increasing access to legal services for remote Indigenous women and their families.
- Ensuring LAQ services are provided in a culturally appropriate way.
- Conducting community legal education in the communities.
- Participating in law reform which reflects Indigenous experiences.

The *Community Justice Group* program provides support to Indigenous people dealing with the justice system. Funds are allocated to Community Justice Groups to develop strategies within their communities to deal with justice related issues and to decrease Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders' contact with the justice system.

The pilot *Seniors Legal and Support Service* provides free legal and support services for seniors concerned about elder abuse, mistreatment or financial exploitation. Services are delivered by Community Legal Centres in Brisbane, Cairns, Hervey Bay, Toowoomba and Townsville. The services are staffed by solicitors and social workers, and assist seniors with legal information and advice, counselling, advocacy, court support, community education and links to other consumer and support services.

*Our Future Plan: The Bligh Government is partnering with the Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research and the Central Queensland University to establish a research project to examine the impact on domestic violence victims of the Queensland Police Service's policy of mandatory reporting of domestic violence incidents to the Department of Child Safety. This issue was raised through LAQ's Rural Women's Reference Group.*

*Women's Legal Aid will be providing social work support to the clients of the Western Queensland Justice Network in Mt Isa.*

*The Government is supporting Legal Aid Queensland to evaluate its Integrated Indigenous Strategy. We are also supporting a pilot service program to identify more*

*effective ways of delivering legal services and information to Indigenous Queenslanders in remote and regional communities, especially services to assist women and children.*

*The Bligh Government has extended the Seniors Legal and Support Service pilot program until June 2009.*

## Preventing crime

We have implemented a number of police programs which promote safety of all Queensland women, including:

- The *Personal Safety and Protective Behaviours* program that provides practical, personal safety advice.
- The *Neighbourhood Watch* program that provides around 700 neighbourhood watch areas throughout the state.
- *Crime Prevention through Environmental Design* that involves designing public facilities that improve safety and prevent crime.
- The *Five Ways to Safety* project that involves inter-government agency partners working collaboratively to make Queensland neighbourhoods safer.

*Our Future Plan: The Bligh government is committed to supporting these ongoing initiatives.*

## Information and referral

The Bligh Government's *Statewide Information Strategy* is an information and referral service for Queensland women, consisting of the Women's Infoclink number and the online, searchable 'Find a Service' database of over 2,000 government and community services, including services to support women experiencing safety issues.

In particular, the Office for Women addresses rural women's issues via its network of 10 Regional Coordinators operating in the following regions: Far North, North Queensland, Sunshine Coast, Darling Downs/South West Queensland, Fitzroy/Central West Queensland, Wide Bay/ Burnett, Ipswich/ West Moreton, Gold Coast, Mackay/Whitsunday regions and a statewide coordinator in Brisbane. Their primary function is to promote Government services for women in regional Queensland and to provide a link between women, community organisations and government in order to address regional women's issues.

*Our Future Plan: The Bligh Government is continuing to support the provision of an information and referral service for Queensland women through Women's Infoclink and 'Find a Service'.*

## Increasing women's participation in leadership, decision-making and community building

*The Bligh Government is working to provide more information and opportunities to increase women's leadership and community building skills, in order to address women's under-representation in leadership and decision-making.*

### Women on boards

The Women on Boards strategy supports the Government's goal that, where possible, 50% of new appointments to government boards be women. The strategy incorporates promotion of the Queensland Register of Nominees (QRoN), building women's board readiness and ongoing, active identification and recruitment of suitable, skilled women for board appointments. *Women on Boards* networking events were held in Cairns and Townsville in early 2008, and were attended by over 50 women. Since the implementation of the strategy there has been an overall increase in the percentage of new board appointments filled by women.

Since July 2007, over 60 suitably qualified women were nominated for consideration to 20 boards. Currently 40% of new appointments of significant board appointees across Queensland are women.

*Our Future Plan: The Bligh Government continues to support the Women on Boards Strategy to identify female board nominees and monitor new significant appointments. We are also supporting the maintenance of the Queensland Register of Nominees to Government Bodies.*

### Community leadership

*Community Leadership Seminars* held throughout the state aim to bring together Indigenous women and girls to share stories of leadership and to encourage the next generation of community leaders to develop their skills and ideas. They have provided practical information and skills for women aspiring to become community leaders and advocates and assisted them to forge networks with other women leaders. *Indigenous Women's Leadership* seminars were held in Bamaga, Rockhampton, Barcaldine, Mt Isa, Yarrabah and Cherbourg. *Women into Local Government* seminars were also held in Longreach, Charleville, Bowen, Mackay and Caboolture.

Since 2002, we have annually sponsored four Queensland Indigenous women to attend the annual National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Gathering. This is a key event for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to raise issues with, and make recommendations to, Ministers for Women from state and commonwealth governments and New Zealand.

*Our Future Plan: The Bligh Government is supporting future Community Leadership Seminars for Indigenous women. We are also committed to working with local women and community organisations to identify ways to promote women's leadership within their communities.*

*Recommendations from the 2007-08 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Gathering, on Indigenous health and wellbeing, will be considered by the Ministerial Conference on the Status of Women in October 2008.*

### Women in Local Government

The *Women in Local Government Strategy Group* (WILG Strategy Group) was formed in 2004. The WILG Strategy Group aims to increase women's representation in local government statewide, at the elected (councillor) and officer (council worker) levels. It does this by identifying obstacles preventing women from participating in local government and developing strategies to overcome these obstacles.

*Our Future Plan: In the 2008-2009 financial year the WILG Strategy Group will award the inaugural WILG Professional Development Bursary (\$4,500) to two Queensland women working in local government in an elected or an administrative / managerial role.*

Liveability – A Woman's View

Rural Women's Symposium  
Roma, Queensland  
4 September 2008

The Bligh Government is also supporting focus groups and consultation around Queensland to identify obstacles and career blockers for women in local government, to form the basis of a workshop to develop strategies to overcome these.

### Sports management

The *Women's Representation in Sports Management and Coaching Roles* initiative is part of the Bligh Government's commitment to getting more women and girls engaged in sport and active recreation. A *Rural/Regional Coach Mentor* program was completed in 2005. In addition, four forums on women and girls' participation in sport and recreation involved women sporting leaders and respected female athletes sharing information on how to overcome obstacles and achieve success.

*Our Future Plan: The Bligh Government is funding Womensport Queensland – an advocacy body to raise awareness of issues women and girls face in participating in sport and recreation and profile their achievements. Womensport Queensland is beginning a new strategic direction which includes expanding its activities into regional areas.*

### International Women's Day

The Bligh Government supports the community to celebrate *International Women's Day (IWD)* in March each year. The theme for IWD 2008 was *Queensland Women: Shaping the Future*, which aimed to inspire women and girls to challenge media and society's fixation on the ideal body and appearance. Over 300,000 resources were distributed statewide. Over 68 community events were held across Queensland and government displays were placed at many of these celebrations.

*Our Future Plan: The Bligh Government is supporting planning for International Women's Day 2009.*

### Profiling Queensland women

*Profile: Queensland Women* is a demographic publication of current statistical information about the social, legal and economic status of women in Queensland. It is a reference tool for government agencies, community organisations, Members of Parliament, researchers and students. While covering Queensland women as a whole, the Profile includes information relevant to regional and rural women.

*Our Future Plan: The Bligh Government is releasing a six-page, 'snapshot' of the Profile, comparing latest available key statistics with those available in 2004.*