



Gold Coast Branch  
Professional Development Workshop  
and  
Domestic Violence Forum

Burleigh Waters Community Centre  
Saturday 25 February 2017

Report

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Gold Coast Branch of the Queensland Justices Association (QJA) held a Professional Development Workshop and Domestic Violence Forum at the Burleigh Waters Community Centre on Saturday 25 February 2017. A total of 75 individuals, including Justices of the Peace (JPs) Commissioners for Declarations (Cdecs) and members of the general public, attended throughout the day. The workshop session was attended by 62 JPs and Cdecs, while the Forum was attended by 42 people.

Local Members of Parliament, Verity Barton MP, Jann Stuckey MP, Ros Bates MP, and John-Paul Langbroek MP, generously gave their time to speak with participants as well as supporting the event with financial donations, as did Ray Stevens MP.

The results of the evaluation survey indicate that the event was very successful, met the needs of the participants, and that they would support future similar events.

Key lessons learnt include:

- A lead in time of 3 months which included a seasonal break and traditional holiday times proved to be very challenging for getting responses from invited guests in a timely manner.
- Experience shows that there will always be people who register and do not attend, as well as those who do not register but attend on the day, particularly where there is no financial outlay to register and no penalty for non-attendance.
- Resource material is time consuming and too expensive for the Branch to provide each person with a range of documents. In the future consideration needs to be given to providing any resource material electronically for participants to print personally and bring along on the day.
- In future all material to be submitted to organising committee for approval prior to the event.
- Remind people to bring cardigan or similar if the premises are air-conditioned, and advise about potential parking congestion if relevant.
- Ensure venue is available the evening before future events to facilitate set up, equipment testing and setting up catering supplies.
- While it appears not everyone is prepared to pay for professional development at all, 30% of respondents considered \$20 reasonable, while 35% suggested \$10 and 17% suggested \$5.

The survey respondents suggest future professional development topics include:

- Affidavits and annexures
- Statutory declarations
- Land titles documents
- Identity checking and identity fraud
- Warrants
- Family and protection orders

## 2. ORGANISING COMMITTEE

The Organising Committee first met on 22 November 2016 to kick off the planning and organising for the Gold Coast Branch Professional Development Workshop and Domestic Violence Forum.

Committee members:

- John Bell, Chair
- Joan Kennedy, Secretary
- Helen Morrow, Treasurer
- Carol Drovandi
- Carol Jackson

Judy Heuchan, who originally agreed to participate, unfortunately, was unable to participate on the committee due to illness but assisted with the registration desk on the day.

Helen Morrow generously hosted 5 committee meetings with the final debrief meeting hosted by Carol and John Drovandi. Planning and logistics occupied members with each taking on specific roles. Initially, approaches were made to the Domestic Violence Specialist Court to secure a speaker, however, as the event was scheduled for a Saturday, the offer was declined as the court staff could not be made available outside normal business hours. This placed significant demands on the committee to secure alternative speakers available on Saturdays.

Despite the short time frame, and a hiatus during the seasonal break in December, the committee was able to meet the deadline of 25 February 2017 and deliver a well organised and professional event.

### 2.1. Lessons Learnt:

A lead in time of 3 months which included a seasonal break and traditional holiday times proved to be very challenging for getting responses from invited guests in a timely manner.

## 3. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

The workshop was well attended by 62 participants. The survey evaluation of the workshop component indicated that in excess of 90% rated the event as excellent or very good.

### 3.1. Speakers and Content

Ms Verity Barton MP opened the workshop and thanked all JPs and Cdecs for their valued time and efforts in providing services for the Gold Coast Community.

Mr Nash Teua, Gold Coast Public Trustee Office spoke at considerable length on General and Enduring Powers of Attorney providing the audience with much valued information. The evaluation survey results indicate that people see this as very important topic and found the talk and discussion extremely informative and useful.

Mr Keith Revell, President QJA, followed with this theme and conducted some group work on actual documents. This generated a lot of discussion at the tables and allowed participants to share their experience and knowledge. In addition, Mr Revell went through the Statutory Declaration for traffic camera offences. Survey results indicate this was a very useful exercise and also generated lots of discussion.

The workshop was closed by Jann Stuckey MP who also spoke about the dedication of JPs to serve the community, the value of volunteering at signing centres and the importance of recognising community needs in relation to domestic violence.

## 4. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FORUM

### 4.1. Speakers and content

Ros Bates MP, Shadow Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Child Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence and Shadow Minister for Disability Services and Seniors, who was a victim of domestic violence as a child, opened the Domestic Violence Forum and invited the audience to hear her harrowing story of how she had suffered at the hands of a very violent father.

Detective Inspector Marc Hogan, Domestic Violence Taskforce, Queensland Police Service (QPS) spoke about his work with the taskforce and provided detailed information and statistics about domestic violence on the Gold Coast. He outlined the QPS strategies being implemented on the Gold Coast to reduce the incidence and assist the victims. He also highlighted the role of the QPS with the perpetrators of domestic and family violence noting that police officers are rarely welcomed by these people. Audience members responded with their own accounts of interaction with the QPS and court system. Detective Inspector Hogan was able to offer some helpful advice in some instances.

Louise Gorman from the Domestic Violence Prevention Centre summed up the impact domestic and family violence has on individuals and families and outlined some strategies to help vulnerable people

through the cycle of violence, deal with power and control issues, and how to plan for ongoing safety and support.

Mona Neilson from the Salvation Army outlined problems with housing and accommodation suffered by people impacted by domestic and family violence, as well as recounting some traumatic experiences suffered by the victims.

The evaluation survey indicated all of the above speakers were very well received and the audience appreciated the information provided.

On closing, John-Paul Langbroek reiterated the voice of the previous MPs and thanked JPs and Cdecs for their valued contribution to the Gold Coast Community and supported the Branch in delivering on such an important topic.

## 5. LOGISTICS

### 5.1. Registrations and attendance

Seventy-five (75) people registered an interest in attending one or both sessions. Seventeen (17) registered for the workshop only and seven (7) registered for the forum only. However, of these 75 people, 21 did not attend any session on the day. This was disappointing as venue arrangements and catering had been organised based upon this number. This was despite a reminder notice being sent to registrants 2 days prior to the event.

As the event had been widely advertised among the Gold Coast Justices community either at signing centres or word of mouth, 14 non-QJA members attended the event. This generated a total of \$140.00 in admission fees for the Branch and recruited a few new QJA members.

Additionally, 9 JPs and Cdecs attended the workshop who had not registered prior to the event and were accommodated due to the number of 'no shows'. A total of 62 JPs and Cdecs attended the workshop.

The Domestic Violence Forum had been promoted in the local press and 7 members of the general public attended the Forum without prior registration. At the opening of the Forum 42 people were in attendance, however, as the afternoon progressed people drifted away with approximately 30 people in attendance at the close of event.

The committee did not monitor whether those registered for both the Workshop and Forum actually attended both sessions so it is not able to report accurately on whether people who registered stayed as indicated.

Each participant was provided with a sample bag from the QJA which included pens, rulers and notebooks.

The registration table was located at the entrance, however, the merchandising table was located at the side of the room, which made the process of keeping track of all registrants a little challenging. This resulted in a number of people who were eligible for a lunch ticket did not receive one.

Raffle tickets were on sale adjacent to the registration table which has the potential to create a bottle neck and obscured the raffle ticket seller. Raffle ticket sales were a bit disappointing and certainly less than anticipated.

### 5.2. Lessons Learnt:

Experience shows that there will always be people who register and do not attend, as well as those who do not register but attend on the day, particularly where there is no financial outlay to register and no penalty for non-attendance.

Registration and payment needs to be processed at the same table to ensure smooth flow. Attendees need to be able to present their QJA number or a confirmation email to assist with efficient registration processes.

Raffle tickets need to be sold throughout the event and attendees need to be reminded to purchase. It may be better to have 3 or 4 people circulating among the tables and crowd selling and encouraging people to purchase. It appears that the actual raffle prize was not what prompted people to purchase tickets.

It also may be better not to distinguish between a morning raffle, an afternoon raffle, and a lucky door prize, but just to make the draws as the event proceeds, with those not staying until the end missing the opportunity to win.

Overall both sessions were well received based on the information collected in the evaluation survey, however, many found that questions during presentations were disruptive and would prefer a set question time at the end of the speakers' presentations.

The survey respondents suggest future professional development topics include:

- Affidavits and annexures
- Statutory declarations
- Land titles documents
- Identity checking and identity fraud
- Warrants
- Family and protection orders

### 5.3. Resource Materials

A considerable amount of resource material was provided to the attendees. The Public Trust Office kindly provided a suite of Powers of Attorney and Advance Health Directives documents and guidelines, and the QJA head office provided the practical resource material for the workshop training. The Domestic Violence Prevention Centre also provided a guidebook. A personalised story of discovery was also provided, however, on reflection the committee agreed that this publication was heavily weighted towards the author's religious beliefs and in hindsight not appropriate on this occasion.

### 5.4. Lessons Learnt:

Resource material is time consuming and too expensive for the Branch to provide each person with a range of documents. In the future consideration needs to be given to providing any resource material electronically for participants to print personally and bring along on the day.

In future all material to be submitted to organising committee for approval prior to the event.

### 5.5. Venue

The committee spent considerable time and discussion about the venue before settling on the Burleigh Waters Community Centre. Initially, difficulty lay in not knowing how many participants were to be catered for. The venue was chosen based upon availability, catering for large numbers, has very good kitchen facilities and being centrally located on the Gold Coast for access by both northern and southern residents.

Unfortunately, on the day the microphone was a little 'crackly' and the acoustics rather poor so that participants often could not hear discussion from the floor.

Air-conditioning was less than ideal at times, however, this was rectified by switching off and reverting to ceiling fans.

Parking is shared with sporting facilities, thus can be challenging for later arrivals, however street parking is comfortably available.

The committee was able to source the key to the venue the night before and with the help of committee partners, spent 2 hours setting up, so that on arrival at the event, all tables and chairs, registration and catering tables were ready to go and only final touches were required on the day.

Cleaning up was efficiently attended to by the committee and partners within an hour.

### 5.6. Lessons Learnt:

Remind people to bring cardigan or similar if the premises are air-conditioned, and advise about potential parking congestion.

Ensure venue is available the evening before future events to facilitate set up, equipment testing and setting up catering supplies.

Participants could be encouraged to assist with packing up by stacking their chairs on the way out.

### 5.7. Catering

A variety of catering options were considered and the committee agreed that Subway wraps provided the better option as they are individually wrapped for hygiene purposes and not messy to consume. The evaluation survey indicated that very few people were disappointed with the catering, while 85% of respondents stated the catering was fantastic or fine.

Bottled water was provided to each attendee, with coasters provided to prevent wetting the tables and resources.

Carrot cake and iced sponge cake for morning tea and afternoon was delicious, however a little hard to cut up and present.

### 5.8. Lessons Learnt:

Catering is always challenging and getting it right is time consuming and resources intensive.

## 6. PROMOTIONS

QJA sent out broadcast emails in December 2016 and January 2017 to all local branch members. It was clear that these emails generated most interest as registrations quickly followed the broadcasts.

Following negotiations with the JP Branch, Department of Justice and Attorney General, and the Gold Coast Justices Association, all signing centres were provided with advertising flyers.

The Gold Coast Sun and Gold Coast Bulletin carried information about the Domestic Violence Forum the week prior to the event.

The committee realised the need for promotional material for the Branch to be used at all events and secured a sponsor to produce a free standing banner and Branch thank-you cards with the QJA logo.

The banner was given a prominent position on the stage ensuring that attendees were in no doubt about the organisers of the event.

Branch thank you cards were given to each speaker.

A QJA merchandising table was set up in a convenient place and reported that \$1200 worth of merchandise was purchased which is more than twice the average sales.

During the event, live streaming was made available via the QJA facebook page.

### 6.1. Lessons Learnt:

Email broadcasts via QJA appear to be a very effective method of communication.

Involving other Justice organisations also generated interest and recruitment of new and returning members.

The banner and thank you cards can be used at all future events to help promote the Gold Coast Branch QJA among the community.

Making QJA merchandise available was a useful exercise.

## 7. FINANCIAL COSTINGS

Funds for the event were obtained from:

Donations	\$800	
Raffle proceeds	\$144	
Registration fees	\$140	
Total		\$1,084

The cost of the event included:

Venue hire	\$201.28	
Catering	\$884.60	
Gratuities	\$100.76	
Stationery	\$93.35	
Total		\$1280.09

Overall the event created a shortfall of \$196.09

It is reported that QJA sold \$1,200 in merchandise on the day.

### 7.1. Lessons Learnt:

Catering was clearly the most expensive item, and unfortunately, due to registrants not attending and thus over catering, costs rose to about \$17 per head. While the Branch has funds to cover the shortfall, it is noted that Branch funds are generated by donations from dedicated members who attend regularly and proceeds of any raffles at Branch meetings, as well as the proceeds of annual pre-appointment training. While it is an appropriate use of Branch funds to support the professional development (PD) of all Branch members, it is not realistic to continue to provide free PD for those who do not attend Branch activities or participate in or contribute to Branch activities.

Participants were asked how much they would be willing to pay for a similar event in the future. While it appears not everyone is prepared to pay for professional development at all, 30% of respondents considered \$20 reasonable, while 35% suggested \$10 and 17% suggested \$5.

## 8. EVALUATION

Only 21 (13%) of participants completed the evaluation forms. While this was a disappointing return, it was noted that many people complimented the committee on a job well done and the 'general buzz' during the day appeared to be positive.

In general, the survey indicated that the event was well organised, useful and informative. All speakers and sessions were well received.

## 9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Committee acknowledges and thanks the following local Members of Parliament for their financial support and generously giving their time to open and close the Professional Development Workshop and Domestic Violence Forum.

- Very Barton MP
- Ros Bates MP
- John-Paul Longbroek MP
- Jann Stuckey MP

The committee also acknowledges the support of and wishes to thank the following:

Local Member of Parliament Ray Stevens MP for his financial support.

Martin Lindley, Priback Body Corporate Services for sponsoring the Gold Coast Branch banner and thank you cards.

QJA President Keith Revell giving his time for delivering a valuable workshop, providing lots of information and encouragement.

Registrar Wendy La Machhia, for advice, administrative support, registrations, merchandising and undertaking the evaluation survey and analysis.

QJA staff Cindy Revell, for administrative support, photographs, and merchandising.

QJA Staff Gabor Beres and Aaron Dunster for administrative support including registrations and enquiries.

Committee member partners Peter Bootes, John Drovandi, and Douglas Kennedy for assistance with set up and clean up.

Douglas Kennedy for his assistance with writing promotional material.

Helen Morrow for hosting committee meetings

Carol and John Drovandi for managing the catering and hosting and catering for the debriefing meeting.