

Maleny Candlelight Ceremony to honour victims of domestic violence

[Speak Up Now - Stop Domestic & Family Violence - Maleny & Blackall Range](#) in conjunction with [Maleny Neighbourhood Centre](#) will host a community gathering in Tesch Park next to the Maleny Library on Wednesday evening May 10, to remember those who have died as a result of domestic violence during the past year.

People are asked to gather by 5pm for 5.15 when guest speakers will address the community.

The candlelight ceremony will begin at 6pm and attendees will be invited to come forward with LED candles and place them in empty shoes representing those who have died as a result of domestic violence over the past year in Queensland. Candles will be provided.

Following the ceremony, those who wish may join the contemplative walk to the Neighbourhood Centre in Bicentenary Lane where there will be informal discussions, and a barbecue.

A member of the community, herself a survivor of domestic violence, said after last year's event that she had never been so moved. "It helped me a lot to know that people care, and that now victims are being taken seriously," she said.

Established in 2020 by the combined services clubs of Quota, Zonta and Rotary, Speak up Now aims to bring awareness of the challenges of domestic and family violence to the community of the Blackall Range, according to a spokesperson for the group.

"We aim to raise awareness and educate our community about the effects of domestic and family violence, how to identify the indicators of the various forms of domestic and family violence, and how to help victims find the support they need.

"We have already published a booklet [Dating Without Violence](#) for young people, and hope this month to publish another free booklet on elder abuse to follow on from three successful forums we have held in Maleny.

"This evening is a tribute to those people throughout Queensland who, tragically, have not been able to be helped. It is hoped that this community gathering is a way of making sure they have not died in vain and that their memory will empower others to find solutions, and to speak up against it," she said.

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Speakers will include Dr Karen Struthers, CEO True Relationships & Reproductive Health, Maria O'Brien representing Queensland Police Vulnerable Persons Unit (VPU), Ashton Wood CEO of DV Safe Phone, and local Sunshine Coast [Councillor Winston Johnston - Division 5 Sunshine Coast Council](#).

Dr Struthers brings wide-ranging skills to her support for progressive policy, legal and service reforms that counter male violence and advance reproductive rights for women.

As Minister for Community Services, Housing and Women in the Bligh Government she initiated major reforms in the Domestic Violence legislation.

CEO of [DV Safe Phone](#), Ashton Wood says the group's aim is to get a safe phone into the hands of every victim of domestic violence in need.

"We collect, repurpose and gift mobile phones providing a lifeline to call for help when it is needed most," he said.

[Queensland Police Service](#) Commissioner Katarina Carroll initiated the Vulnerable Persons Unit in 2021 to deliver sustainable, effective and efficient policing strategies to victims of domestic violence and vulnerable persons.

Pictured: Former cabinet minister, Dr Karen Struthers who will address the audience at the candlelight ceremony.

