

SECOND RED BENCH TO RAISE DV AWARENESS

Recently a second Red Bench was launched in Maleny as part of a local campaign to stop domestic violence.

The first is outside the post office. The bench was donated to Maleny shoppers years ago by local service club Quota. It was their last project in the town. They facilitated its renovation by the [Maleny Mens Shed](#) and [Rotary Club of Maleny](#), and included the Red Bench plaque "Domestic Violence: Let's change the ending".

Then, on a rainy day before Christmas, Federal member for Fisher [Andrew Wallace - LNP Federal Member for Fisher](#) and [Councillor Winston Johnston - Division 5 Sunshine Coast Council](#) the white ribbon at the [Maleny Neighbourhood Centre](#); and the second Red Bench was ready for tired citizens.

In his speech Andrew Wallace expressed his horror at the statistics revealed by the Federal Government's Standing Committee for Social Policy and Legal Affairs that will release its report on A Domestic and Family Violence Inquiry in February or March this year.

"This [report] is revealing harrowing information. One woman every nine days is killed as a result of DFV; each day 12 women are hospitalised from assault.

"...it certainly reaches every single corner of the country and doesn't discriminate by postcode, wealth or occupation. It permeates every single part of the community," he said.

Mr Wallace said men had to take a leading role in overcoming the scourge that starts with a lack of respect for partners and ex-partners.

"We need to look at men's behaviour programs. The inquiry is looking at 'coercive control', which is one of the pre-emptors of homicide. Coercive control means controlling the woman's finances, who she can and cannot see, separating her from her family...

"Nowadays this control is often done through mobile phones to have more control about a partner's movements.

"I have learnt a lot in the past six months from this inquiry. And thanks to MNC, Rotary and Zonta – the best thing we can do is talk about DV. Ask 'are you OK?' And if they are not okay, refer them to the appropriate help," he said.

As an added bonus for the SPEAK UP NOW committee, Cr Winston Johnston has advised that [Sunshine Coast Council](#) will coordinate the launch of the Red Bench Project across Council areas at Nambour, Alexandra Headlands, Caloundra and a third one for Maleny as part of DFV Prevention month in May.

The Red Bench Project is an initiative of the [Red Rose Foundation Australia](#), a National not for profit charity that works to end domestic and family violence across our communities.

It was launched in May 2019 as a permanent reminder that DFV occurs within all of our communities. The benches raise awareness and provide an opportunity for this issue to remain visible.

This year the SPEAK UP NOW committee will look at ways to get its message across to young people, says Rotary representative on the committee Greg Williams.

"I agree with Andrew Wallace that in order to 'change the culture we have to start with the kids'. So I am keen to partner with sporting, drama and church groups to look into innovative ways of engaging with them in seminars, fun events like a kite flying competition at a festival and drama activities," he said.

The current committee consists of members of the former Maleny Quota, Val France and Barbara Jones, Zonta Club of the Blackall Range Sunshine Coast Hinterland representatives Ann Koenig and Linda McElrea and representatives of Maleny Rotary Sherryl Gregory and Greg Williams.

Pictured: Zonta's Anne Koenig, Val France with Red Roses, Barb Jones, and Sheryl Gregory from Rotary.

#communitysupport #enddomesticviolence #domesticviolenceawareness

