



Little Towns, Big Voices

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A **STUDY GUIDE** BY KATY MARRINER



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LITTLE TOWNS, BIG VOICES (2016), a documentary written and directed by Fran Dobbie for Earthstar Productions, is an investigation of domestic violence in regional and rural communities across Australia. The documentary through interviews and re-enactments explores people's personal encounters with domestic violence and its impact on individuals, families and communities.

CURRICULUM LINKS

Domestic violence has a significant impact on society. Schools have the potential to make a difference through the delivery of curriculum content relating to this important social issue. Through its examination of domestic violence and the importance of speaking out against domestic violence, *Little Towns, Big Voices* allows students to define respectful relationships and identify the factors that shape respectful relationships. Respectful relationships education is a strategy for the prevention of domestic violence.

This study guide to accompany *Little Towns, Big Voices* has been written for students in Years 10 – 12. It provides information and suggestions for learning activities in Year 10 Civics and Citizenship, English, Health and Physical Education, Media and cross curriculum projects discussing the issue of domestic violence and the importance of respectful relationships.

The General Capabilities play a significant role in the Australian Curriculum in equipping young Australians to live successfully in the twenty-first century. As a curriculum resource, *Little Towns, Big Voices* provides opportunities for teachers of Year 10 students to address the organising elements of Personal and Social Capability and Ethical Understanding.

For students in Years 11 and 12, *Little Towns, Big Voices* can be used as a resource in Community and Family Studies, English, Health (SA), Health Education (QLD), Health and Human Development (VIC), Health Studies (TAS and WA), Media, Legal Studies, Personal Development, Health and Physical Development (NSW), Sociology, Psychology, VET Community Services and VET Human Services.

Teachers are advised to consult the Australian Curriculum online at <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/> and curriculum outlines relevant to their state or territory for further information.

*States and Territories have been indicated where there is significant variation in a subject's title.

The activities within this study guide provide opportunities for students to develop a knowledge and understanding of:

- domestic violence and the causes of domestic violence;
- the impact of domestic violence on individuals, adult relationships, families and communities;
- responses to domestic violence;
- the prevention of domestic violence;
- the qualities of healthy, respectful and equal relationships.





not required to disclose their own experiences. If a student discloses that they or a family member are experiencing domestic violence or shows signs of distress after content has been delivered, teachers should respond in accordance with school and legal procedures.

Schools can have a positive impact on the lives of students who live in homes where domestic violence occurs. By understanding the dynamics involved and the impacts of domestic violence on children and adolescents, schools will be better equipped to deal with this issue. Schools are encouraged to provide opportunities for staff, as well as parents and guardians to view *Little Towns, Big Voices*, in order to develop a whole-school approach to domestic violence.

Running time: 28 minutes

» Using *Little Towns, Big Voices* in the classroom

The activities in each section promote student engagement and active participation via individual reflection, class discussions and small group work. Multiple activities are provided to allow teachers to select those that will best suit the demands of their subject and the needs of their students.

Prior to viewing *Little Towns, Big Voices*, teachers may choose to facilitate a values based discussion about a relevant prompt. For example: 'Violence is never acceptable.'

Teachers are advised to preview *Little Towns, Big Voices* before showing it to students. Students should also be briefed about the content and purpose of *Little Towns, Big Voices* prior to viewing. In discussing the issue of domestic violence, teachers need to create a supportive learning environment so students feel safe to learn and ask questions. School staff directly responsible for student health and wellbeing, such as the school counsellor, should be made aware of the curriculum prior to the commencement of the unit.

For some students, content about domestic violence may be confronting and sensitive and trigger trauma as they or a family member may be in a domestic violence situation. It is important to enable students to withdraw if they find issues personally confronting and to protect them from making harmful disclosures. To minimise harmful disclosures, teachers need to establish clear expectations prior to activities that, although students may express personal views and values, they are

Synopsis

'There's a scourge eating away at communities, particularly our regional communities. It's almost like a silent killer, and it's unseen a lot of the time, except for the people who experience it, and yet it affects everybody in those communities.' – Peter Garrett

Domestic violence is a significant problem in Australian society. Labelled an epidemic by some, current statistics reflect the critical importance of taking action as a society to challenge and change attitudes to domestic violence. *Little Towns, Big Voices* provides an insight into the impact of domestic violence on individuals and families, particularly for those who live in Australia's regional and rural communities.

In closed-knit communities speaking out is all the more difficult. Victims of domestic violence choose to suffer in silence rather than risk exposing the truth about their situation. This is true of the women who share their experiences of being subject to ongoing situations of domestic violence. While most of the victims of and witnesses to domestic violence remain unidentified in *Little Towns, Big Voices*, Mandy bravely faces the camera and provides a harrowing account of her husband's abusive and aggressive behaviour.

Little Towns, Big Voices, highlights how one regional community is challenging domestic violence and creating change for future generations. Heather Blackley, Senior Project Officer at Western Plains Regional Development Inc. is dedicated to protecting the women, and men, who are hurt by domestic violence, so too is Senior Constable Daniel Greef from the New South Wales Police Force. Musician and former Federal Labor Minister Peter Garrett voices his concerns about the damage caused by domestic violence and the urgent need to break the silence that allows the abuse to be perpetuated.



Domestic violence is violent, abusive or intimidating behaviour by a partner, carer or family member to control, dominate or cause fear. It can affect anyone in the community, regardless of gender, sexual identity, race, age, culture, ethnicity, religion, disability, economic status or location. Domestic violence is a pattern of behaviour rather than an isolated incident of violence, abuse or intimidation. The severity and frequency of violence often escalates over time.

Domestic violence happens in all kinds of family relationships. When the violence occurs against children in families, research shows that parents and stepparents are most likely to be the perpetrators. Children and young people also experience violence when they witness violence between other family members.

Little Towns, Big Voices is particularly about intimate partner violence. When domestic violence occurs between adults in heterosexual relationships, research shows that men are most likely to be the perpetrators and women the victims.

- Students should use the ‘Defining domestic violence – Little Towns, Big Voices’ chart (Appendix 1) to record their observations about the issue of domestic violence as it is depicted in the documentary.
- How has *Little Towns, Big Voices* added to your knowledge and understanding of domestic violence?
- Domestic violence against women is a common and serious problem in Australia.

After viewing *Little Towns, Big Voices*, allow students to share their personal responses to the documentary. Teachers may also choose to compile a list of questions that students have about the documentary. These questions can then be used to initiate a class discussion about *Little Towns, Big Voices*.

The title of the documentary – *Little Towns, Big Voices* – may also prove a useful starting point in initiating conversations about Fran Dobbie’s decision to examine the issue of domestic violence in the context of regional and rural Australian communities.

“*Domestic violence is never the victim’s fault. Domestic violence is always the offender’s fault.*”

– Daniel Greef

1. WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

‘Domestic violence is never the victim’s fault. Domestic violence is always the offender’s fault.’

– Daniel Greef





Use the Internet to determine the statistics about domestic violence in Australia.

Drawing on your findings, make a community service announcement about domestic violence. Use Google Slides to format your community service announcement.

A community service announcement is an advertisement disseminated by the media without charge, with the objective of raising awareness, changing public attitudes and behaviour towards a social issue.

Before you begin, watch the New South Wales Police Force's community service announcement to stop domestic violence. The community service announcement can be viewed online at <http://www.domesticviolence.nsw.gov.au/> or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RycvvpCiFz4>.

Domestic violence takes many forms. While physical violence may be the most visible form of domestic violence, other forms such as verbal, psychological, emotional, social, financial and

sexual abuse are equally harmful. Harassment and stalking are also forms of domestic violence.

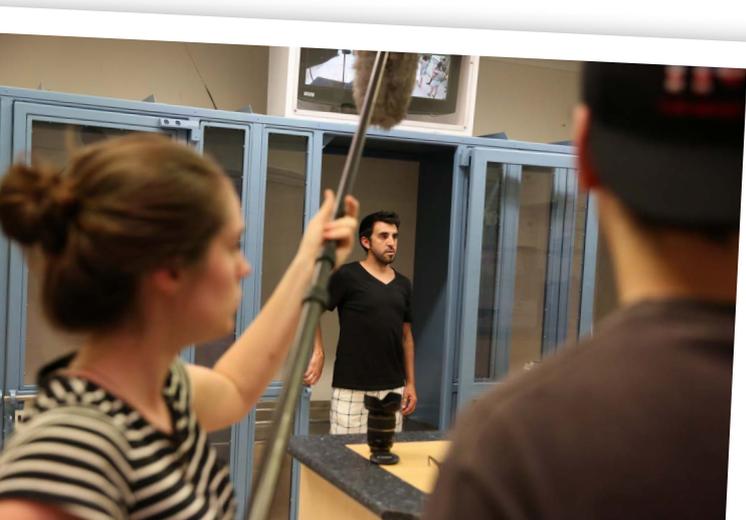
- 'He'd grab my throat and punch me in the chest more than he would mark my face.' This statement is made by one of the documentary's participants.

What does the woman's statement suggest about the offender's behaviour?

Working as a class, make a list of the types of domestic violence. Use print and electronic resources, as well as your viewing notes to complete this task. Provide examples for each type of domestic violence.

Working as a class, make a list of factors that contribute to domestic violence. Use print and electronic resources, as well as your viewing notes to complete this task. Provide examples for each contributing factor.

- In Little Towns, Big Voices, Heather Blackley, Senior Project Officer at Western Plains Regional Development Inc. claims that the factors contributing to domestic violence in regional and rural communities are both similar to and different from the factors that contribute to domestic violence in urban areas: 'Some of the factors that contribute to domestic violence are similar in regional and rural areas, as well as in the city. But I think that the rural ones are far greater and they're far deeper. Some of those factors are the consumption of alcohol, and it's well known in rural towns that the consumption of alcohol is greater in the family home rather than at clubs and hotels. Another factor is the unemployment level and the difficulty of not having consistent





employment. There could only be seasonal work in rural communities. Housing is another main issue where often you might have family members who are living with their grandparents or living with their own parents and then they're having their own children.

Another major one for rural and remote areas is the drought throughout all regional Australia, and we've had many, many examples of tragic situations where lives have been lost and a lot of those things have been hidden and it's very, very difficult for families to cope with.'

Spend time as a class discussing Heather's claims about the factors contributing to domestic violence in regional and rural communities. Based on your viewing of *Little Towns, Big Voices*, what other factors would you add to the list?

Use the Internet to research facts and statistics associated with domestic violence in Australia. Does your research support Heather's view? What does your research suggest are the contributing factors to domestic violence in city and suburban communities?

- 'I think all the facts show pretty clearly that most domestic violence happens to women, and for men who maybe have been unemployed, who've had a rough trot themselves, who maybe are drug addicted or have got an alcohol problem, and maybe as well who've seen it happen in the past with their families, it becomes a form of behaviour which is completely unacceptable but which spills out, and then of course is visited upon the woman.' – **Peter Garrett**



Who experiences domestic violence?
Are some individuals more at risk of domestic violence than others?

“*Little Towns, Big Voices, draws the audience's attention to the plight of Indigenous Australian women in situations of domestic violence.*”

Little Towns, Big Voices, draws the audience's attention to the plight of Indigenous Australian women in situations of domestic violence.

- 'Aboriginal communities have often suffered a lot of dislocation, dispossession, low socio-economic opportunities and certainly we will see domestic violence taking place in those communities, and of course it permeates right through the family structures, because family's so important and such a big part of indigenous community life.' – **Peter Garrett**

'But I've come from domestic violence home too, where my father and mother, so yeah. So to be able to help people heal from that helps me too.' – **Aboriginal Legal Service Support Worker**

Use the Internet to research the prevalence of domestic violence in Indigenous communities.





What are the facts? What are the figures? Why is domestic violence such a serious problem in Indigenous communities?

- ‘Sometimes men experience domestic violence as well and that’s also something which is completely out of sight and hidden, and I think there’s a terrible feeling of shame that blokes feel if they’re actually receiving it.’ – **Peter Garrett**

Domestic violence can happen to men too. Perpetrators of violence against men include their children, wives or partners, parents, siblings and carers.

Why are more women than men victims of domestic violence?

Why do you think that men who are victims of domestic violence may not disclose their abuse?

- Are men subject to the same types of abuse as women?
- Do they experience the same impacts as women who experience domestic violence?
- How can society support the male victims of family violence?
- Recommended reading: ‘Domestic violence in Australia—an overview of the issues’ – **Parliament of Australia**

http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/BN/2011-2012/DVAustralia

- ‘Most of them have children, and they won’t leave because of the children. She still loves that person and she thinks that he may change. Sadly, that doesn’t happen.’

- This claim made in *Little Towns, Big Voices*, identifies two reasons why women may choose to stay in an abusive relationship.
- Working as a class, identify other reasons why victims of domestic violence may not leave an abusive relationship.

2. SHARON AND MICK

Little Town, Big Voices relies on re-enactments to portray incidents of domestic violence.

The documentary begins with the audio of a dispute:

Mick: Sharon, I’m home!

Sharon: Where you been?

Mick: Just had a couple of beers with the boys, Sharon.

Mick: Look at it. It’s fuckin’ rabbit food. Look! Come on!

The shots and scenes that follow provide a more graphic depiction of domestic violence.

Mick is at a bar drinking beer with a mate. Sharon is waiting at home; phone in hand. When Mick arrives home he verbally lashes out, ‘Fucking tomatoes again! What is this crap?’ When Sharon dares to answer back, ‘For God’s sake, I’m trying!’, Mick becomes physically violent. Sharon calls the police.

- Why does Mick become abusive? How does the filmmaker suggest that this is not the first time that Mick has behaved in an abusive way?
- Drawing on all that you have learnt about domestic violence, identify the forms of abuse depicted in the re-enactment.



How does Mick use fear and intimidation to control Sharon?

- What comment does this re-enactment make about alcohol as a contributing factor to domestic violence?
- How does Mick react when Sharon calls the police? What does his behaviour towards the police suggest about his ability to control his anger and aggression?
- 'Sharon, we're going to take the video statement from you now. Can you just state your full name?'

The police officers that respond to the report of domestic violence film Sharon's statement. Before they begin filming, Sharon is asked to give consent and is advised that the recording may later be used as evidence in court.

Senior Constable Daniel Greef explains, 'Now instead of getting a written statement off a victim, we film a statement. We film it as soon as practicable after the incident happens and it captures the emotion, any injuries that the victim may have. It's a world first and it's a real game changer for us.'

- What are the advantages of a video statement?

- Useful link: <http://www.wlsnsw.org.au/wp-content/uploads/DVEC-external-summary.pdf>

In New South Wales, when the police attend a domestic violence incident, they assess the incident of domestic violence and the safety of the victim by using a Domestic Violence Safety Assessment Tool (DVSAT).

- 'So Sharon, I'm just going to ask you a number of questions now about your relationship with Mick and your history. We use this to identify your risk of future harm and domestic violence. Has Michael ever threatened you before?'





What is DVSA? How does it work? What are its benefits? How can a DVSA be used in court proceedings?

Useful link: http://www.domesticviolence.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/file/0003/301179/DVSA_guide.pdf

What happens when the police officer uses the DVSA to identify Sharon's level of threat of future harm?

What types of support will be provided to Sharon based on the findings of the DVSA?

Domestic violence is a criminal offence. Based on the findings of their investigation, the police charge Mick,

'Alright Mick, you've been charged with assault occasioning actual bodily harm against Sharon. You've also been bail-refused, which means you're staying in here overnight. We've also applied for a provisional apprehended violence application to protect Sharon from you. So the conditions on that ... You must not harass, threaten or otherwise interfere with Sharon or the kids ... You are not to enter any premises ... And you're not to approach Sharon or your children within twelve hours of consuming alcohol or drugs. Do you understand that?'

- Drawing on the re-enactment, identify how the police can take immediate action to protect and support victims of domestic violence. Do you think the law will deter Mick from reoffending?

“

Alright Mick, you've been charged with assault occasioning actual bodily harm against Sharon.

You've also been bail-refused, which means you're staying in here overnight'

”

3. MANDY

In *Little Towns, Big Voices*, Mandy tells her story of domestic violence.

Transcripts from Mandy's account of her husband's abuse are reproduced below and are accompanied by questions that allow teachers to moderate a discussion of Mandy's experience of domestic violence. Use Mandy's claims to exemplify answers provided to questions and tasks in other sections of the study guide.

- 'I was the nanny; he was the station hand. Very good looking man, and smitten right from the start. I would go over to his family home with him a lot, and his father was a drunk and used to belt his mother around and he always said that he would never, ever belt me. There was warning signs even before we got married but I was, yeah, in love with him, well and truly. He used to get half full and he'd drop me off somewhere and tell me to walk, and I'd be forty kilometres from town. The night of our wedding night, he got drunk and he gave me a hiding. And um, I still put up with it. Like my mother said, 'you get married for good. You only do it once.'

What did you think and how did you feel as Mandy described her partner's abuse? What does Mandy's statement reveal about her decision to marry a man that she knew was capable of violence?





What does her statement suggest about the reasons why women stay in abusive relationships?

What statement does Mandy's story make about the role that alcohol plays in domestic violence?

- 'And the children did ... they knew things were happening, but they were too frightened to ... I mean, he was a big man. He had a big fist. They come out with things now and say to me like, 'do you remember the night that Dad argued with me about what was on TV and he was drunk, and he was going to hit me and you came out?' You know, she remembers things like that and she was only eleven. And I walked out and I took it instead. I said, 'no, hit me. Don't hit her.' ... And he did.'

What does Mandy's account of her husband's behaviour suggest about perpetrators of domestic violence?

Explain the significance of Mandy's daughter's childhood memory. What comment does her childhood memory make about the ongoing impact of domestic violence?

- 'When my eldest daughter turned twelve, she wanted to go to boarding school and I thought, 'right, I'm going to get off my haunches and I'm going to get a job and send her to boarding school.' And I went and did my nursing degree. We lived on the farm and I worked in with the retirement village and he knew how long it would take me to get home from work. It

was about an hour and a quarter away. If I was five, ten, fifteen minutes late home, the masking tape'd be sitting on top of the fridge and he put masking tape round my hands and tied me to a chair. That was ... I think that was it. I just had no self-esteem. I was just dead inside. I was just dead. I just had no strength.

As the kids got older, I had two in boarding school. So I was working my backside off to put them through boarding school. And then there was only my baby at home. She came home once and saw me covered in wet liquid. He had a thing about throwing hot coffee on me. And she said, 'Mum, you know, we've gotta go.' But we didn't. Where were we going to go to? All my family's from the far south coast. We had nowhere to go to. Later on as the kids got older and went to different things, if he went out and got half drunk, he'd bring the shotgun in and sit the shotgun beside the lounge. I did get a bit gutsy sometimes and I'd bring it up that I was going to leave. And he said if I left he'd shoot the kids. My youngest daughter, she started boarding school. The last twelve months there was the several times that he'd got me down on the ground and kicked me and busted my ribs. But the time that he wouldn't let me get up, after I'd wet myself on the floor, I thought then, 'I'm gonna die.' I think that was the worst night of my life, and he threw hot coffee on me, and that was just ...'

'My fourth child, as far as I'm concerned, she was conceived of rape, because I didn't want to have anything to do with him anymore. There





was never any sexual consent towards the end of the marriage.'

'My daughter was sexually assaulted by him. And it happened when she was about fourteen. I was on a late, in town. A late shift meant I worked till 10.30, and he assaulted her one night, and she didn't tell anyone till after the fire. And we had him charged, and um, he got off again. And every day I cry when I think of it. It's the worst possible thing a mother should have to go through, is knowing that your daughter's been assaulted by her father.'

Why did Mandy stay despite her husband's ongoing abuse?

How did Mandy seek to protect her children?

What does Mandy's account reveal about the place of power in situations of domestic violence?

How did domestic violence diminish Mandy's self-esteem and self-respect?

Why was Mandy unable to challenge her husband's abusive behaviour?

○ 'We heard his car coming in and next thing, I heard wine bottles smashing. And I crawled down to my daughter's bedroom. She was standing at the other side of the door with the cat in her hands, and I said, 'we're off.' We walked out the front door, me in my pyjamas, her in her pyjamas, and we started walking along the road, and I rang my son and I said, 'I can't take anymore.' And he said, 'Mum, I'll be there in fifteen minutes. Just hide in the grass.' So we did that and he pulled up and he said, 'my girlfriend's behind me.' 'Get in the car and I'm going to sort him out.' And his father wanted to fight him. We were sitting there, it was about half past one in the morning, and just coffee after coffee after coffee. And we got the phone call from the fire brigade to say the house was on fire. Everything was gone. And he took off. The police took two days to find him. And they took him to court and he had a barrister which his mother employed. And he got off on 200 hours community work and a two year good behaviour bond.'

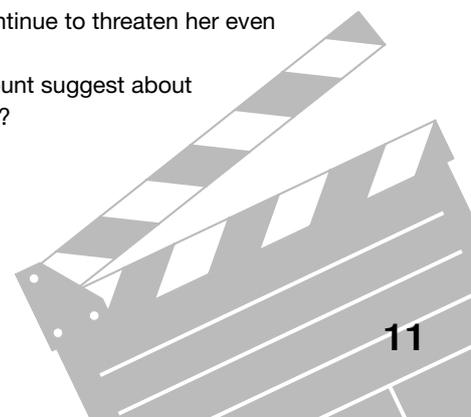
'The support was unbelievable from them, and even now, one of the policemen here, I've got him on speed dial. You know, he ... because he always said if I left him, he'd finish me off. And do you know what? I still think he will.'

Why did Mandy finally find the courage to leave?

What does Mandy's account tell the audience of *Little Towns, Big Voices* about her relationship with her children?

How did her husband continue to threaten her even after she had left?

What does Mandy's account suggest about victims' access to justice?





4. WHO GETS HURT?

‘That behaviour becomes one which so many people in the extended circle of family witness, and so many people are affected by it.’

– Peter Garrett

In *Little Town, Big Voices*, Mandy throws a stone into the river. The ripples that form in the water are suggestive of the ripple effect of domestic violence. Domestic violence does not just hurt the primary victim. Family members who witness domestic violence may also be either primary or secondary victims of domestic violence. Communities are also damaged by domestic violence. Peter Garrett explains,

‘And violence is always going to produce only the fruits of disease, unhappiness and suffering. It’s got nowhere else to go. So in this case, this ripple is spreading out through families, into schools, onto the street, in behaviours of kids and also of adults in other social settings, and I think it does lead in some places to underlying sense of unease and uncertainty. The social fabric, in a way, is being torn as domestic violence ripples out through a community.’

- What are the costs of domestic violence? Spend time as a class, discussing what is meant by the term ‘costs’. How does *Little Towns, Big Voices* define the costs of domestic violence?



“

That behaviour becomes one which so many people in the extended circle of family witness, and so many people are affected by it.’

– Peter Garrett

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Use print and electronic resources to further your knowledge and understanding of the costs of domestic violence.

Make an infographic that identifies and explains the costs of domestic violence for individuals, families and communities.

- ‘When I was a little boy I was involved with domestic violence and that. Like had to watch it and watch me Mum being bashed all the time and thrown around.’ – **Young man**
‘I had to look after my little brother and sister because of it and that’s why ... that’s why I’m sad and depressed and stuff like that as well.’ – **Young woman**
‘One of my children might be in and out of correctional centres because you know, the effect it’s had on them. And in a way I blame myself because I stayed so long.’ – **Woman**



'For a child who witnesses that, it's something that they'll carry with them for a very long time, and the sort of treatment that's necessary is to enable people to talk and to be counselled, to understand that it's not their fault, 'cause sometimes kids internalise these things and think that it might be their fault.' – **Peter Garrett**

'Children are the hidden victims of domestic violence.' – **Daniel Greef**

Use Daniel Greef's claim as the starting point for a piece of imaginative writing about the impact of domestic violence on the victim's children. Draw on *Little Towns, Big Voices* and your research about domestic violence to shape an authentic and sensitive portrayal of this aspect of the issue.

- 'It's happening to lots of people and so the psychological and the personal consequences and the trauma that people experience is great, and it unsettles people, particularly in families where they see it happening. And it's pervasive, and so it has the effect of completely undermining all the trust that we need to have healthy communities.' – **Peter Garrett**

Why does Peter Garrett describe domestic violence as 'pervasive'?

Explain what Peter Garrett means when he claims that 'trust' is the basis of a healthy community.

- In the title sequence of *Little Towns, Big Voices*, a young woman is crouching in front of a grave. What comment is this scene making about domestic violence?

5. BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

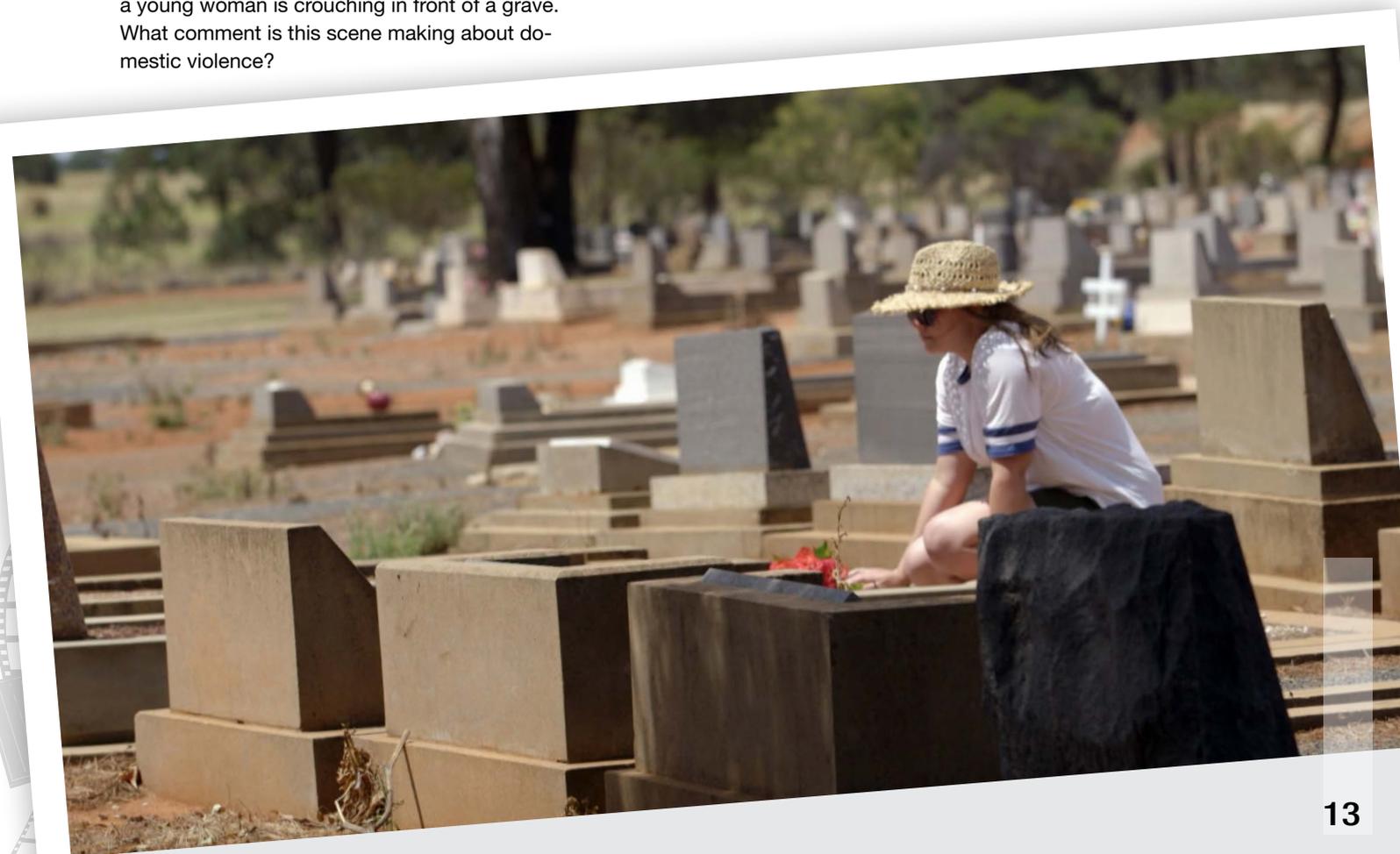
Most incidents of domestic violence happen in the privacy of family homes.

- 'The thing about domestic violence, of course, is that it happens behind closed doors, most often between partners, and it's incredibly difficult for people in those situations who experience it to figure out how they can actually deal with what's happening to them.' – **Peter Garrett**

Is this true of the incidents of domestic violence documented in *Little Towns, Big Voices*?

Victims of domestic violence are often reluctant to disclose abuse because of fear or shame. Some victims remain silent because they do not think they will be believed. Other victims do not immediately recognise actions of social and economic control, as well as threats, coercion and insults as abuse.

- What are the indicators that a woman may be a victim of domestic violence?
What are the indicators that a child may be exposed to and affected by family violence?
- How can victims of domestic violence and those who witness domestic violence make themselves safe in their own homes?





Little Towns, Big Voices highlights the New South Wales Police Force commitment through legislation to respond to all reports of domestic and family violence and pursue the perpetrators to hold them accountable for their criminal behaviour.

- 'The decision to arrest, charge and prosecute lays with the New South Wales Police Force. It does not lay with the victim of domestic violence.' – **Daniel Greef**

Watch 'Domestic Violence and Family Violence – a message from Assistant Commissioner Mark Murdoch' online at http://www.police.nsw.gov.au/community_issues/domestic_and_family_violence or https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qqnv7A84p_U#t=88.

Recommended reading: http://www.police.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/165202/domestic-and-family-violence-code-of-practice.pdf

How does the Code of Practice for the NSW Police Force response to Domestic and Family Violence aim to improve police practice in regard to domestic violence?

How does the Code of Practice for the NSW Police Force response to Domestic and Family Violence aim to support victims of domestic violence and hold perpetrators to account?

How does the Code of Practice for the NSW Police Force response to Domestic and Family Violence aim to reduce and prevent domestic violence?

- What is the New South Wales Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007? Write an evaluation of the legislation that answers the following questions:

6. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS AN OFFENCE

In *Little Towns, Big Voice*, Senior Constable Daniel Greef of the New South Wales Police Force acknowledges,

'Domestic violence is an offence, and the New South Wales Police Force has a zero tolerance policy towards domestic violence. We have a pro-investigation and a pro-prosecution policy as well.'

- What is the duty of the police in regard to domestic violence? Is this duty legislated or is it part of police codes of practice? Do police codes of practice in regard to domestic violence vary in Australia's states and territories? What are police codes of practice in regard to domestic violence in your state or territory?

“

'Domestic violence is an offence, and the New South Wales Police Force has a zero tolerance policy towards domestic violence. We have a pro-investigation and a pro-prosecution policy as well.'

”





How does this legislation protect and assist victims of domestic violence?
 How does this legislation discourage domestic violence?
 How does this legislation seek to change the behaviours of the perpetrators?
 How does this legislation shape community attitudes to what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in intimate partner relationships?
 Useful links : http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/consol_act/capva2007347/ and http://www.justice.nsw.gov.au/Pages/media-news/speeches/2016/ministerial_speeches/gabriel-leupton_dvo-bill-2016.aspx

Or

'Use the Internet to research domestic violence laws in your state or territory. Drawing on the questions stated above write an evaluation of the legislation.

- 'I did go to my doctor. It's really strange, I think back now, because he didn't say to me, 'Are you going to the police? Do you want to go to the police?'' - **Mandy**
 Why do you think Mandy's doctor did not advise her to inform the police?
 What is mandatory reporting?
 What responsibilities do health professionals have to report incidents of domestic violence?
 How do these responsibilities vary in Australia's states and territories?
 Make a list of the arguments for and against mandatory reporting of domestic violence to authorities. Do you think that Australia should legislate in favour of mandatory reporting of domestic violence?
 Recommended reading: <https://www.1800respect.org.au/workers/fact-sheets/mandatory-reporting-requirements/>
- 'Everyone should report it, otherwise it goes unseen. If someone sees a car getting stolen, they report it. If someone sees a window getting smashed, they report it. Why don't people report domestic violence?' - **Daniel Greef**

'After he burnt the house down, the neighbours right next door went to the police and said they'd heard everything over the last few years. They never said anything.' - **Mandy**
 Use these statements as starting points for a class discussion about the challenges the police face in investigating cases of domestic violence.
 Why do you think family members, friends and neighbours may choose not to report an incident of family violence?
 What may be the consequences of these witnesses of domestic violence not standing up and speaking out?

7. SUPPORT

- Heather: In small rural towns, that sharing and caring is a good thing, but also sometimes people feel very threatened that people know what their stories are, and that they feel ...
 Aboriginal Legal Service Support Worker: Exposed.
 Heather: Yeah, they feel exposed. They feel that people will be talking about them, because everybody knows everybody else.
 Drawing on this conversation, discuss the reasons why victims of domestic violence, particularly those living in regional and rural communities, may not seek support?
- 'I hear a lot of people saying, 'Oh, she probably deserved it', you know, and stuff like that, you know. Obviously people that don't go through it, you know.'
 'I think my turning point was my family support worker approached me one day, you know and she sat down, and I always remember her saying, 'Don't let men use you as a doormat, you know.' ... And I had two children at the time, pushed me out the door and said, 'You're coming with me.' I think that's the day I started building myself up. And I really thank her. Like I really think if it wasn't for her, I wouldn't be here.'
 Use these claims made by one of the women interviewed in *Little Towns, Big Voices* to initiate a discussion of blame.





What is blame? How does blame get in the way of supporting victims of domestic violence?

In *Little Towns, Big Voices*, Heather Blackley explains the initiatives that her community have implemented to support women who are victims of domestic violence:

‘One of the initiatives that came from our committee was to have a court support program for women who were going to court. And so we had people trained as court support workers who sat with the women whilst they were waiting to go to ... to have their AVO dealt with.

‘Then the court house set up a safe room so that the women and the children could sit in this room rather than sitting out on the street or waiting to be called for their AVO.’

- How do the initiatives identified by Heather support women to achieve justice for themselves and their families?

Little Towns, Big Voices identifies the valuable support provided by programs such as It Stops Here: Safer Pathway. It Stops Here: Safer Pathway, an initiative of the New South Wales Government, reflects a shared commitment to improving the response to domestic and family violence through collaborative, integrated service provision and improved information sharing.

- Use the Internet to learn about It Stops Here: Safer Pathway.
Recommended link: https://www.women.nsw.gov.au/violence_prevention/It_Stops_Here
How can programs like It Stops Here: Safer Pathway support victims of domestic violence?
Working with a partner, use the Internet to research the work of an organisation that supports people

whose lives are affected by domestic violence. Use PowerPoint to share your findings with the class. Limit your presentation to ten slides. Make sure that you include words and images in your presentation. You may include audio.

8. WHITE RIBBON

‘White Ribbon Day is about wearing a white ribbon. It’s men pledging that they won’t commit an act of violence against any other woman, and it’s also about blokes standing up and saying, ‘This is completely unacceptable.’ – **Peter Garrett**

In 1999, the United Nations General Assembly declared November 25 as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, with a white ribbon as its iconic symbol. White Ribbon began in Australia in 2003 as part of UNIFEM (now UN Women). White Ribbon Day signals the start of the 16 Days of Activism to Stop Violence against Women, which ends on Human Rights Day – December 10.

- What is White Ribbon?
- Why is White Ribbon an important campaign?
Recommended links: <http://www.whiteribbon.org.au/> and <https://www.facebook.com/whiteribbonaustralia/>
- Have you ever worn a white ribbon?
What motivated you to do so?
- ‘We had the whole high school students marching with their teachers and principal and many other community members. Everybody had on a white shirt and white ribbons and whistles, and the street was closed. The general manager from the local government shire here joined in. It was a whole of community and looking at White Ribbon.’



In Little Towns, Big Voices, Heather recounts a recent experience of White Ribbon Day. Why is Heather proud of the way the community participated in White Ribbon Day?

- Is your school a White Ribbon School?
Run a White Ribbon Event in your school. Access the information about how to run an event online at <http://www.whiteribbon.org.au/host-event> and <http://www.whiteribbon.org.au/host-event/resources>. Teachers can access information about White Ribbon's Breaking the Silence Schools Program online at: <http://www.whiteribbon.org.au/schools>.



9. RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS

- What is a respectful relationship?
What does a respectful relationship look like?
- Think – Pair – Share
Make a list of your rights in a relationship.
Make a list of your responsibilities in a relationship.
Discuss your list with a partner. Share your list with the class.
Make a class list of relationship rights and responsibilities.
- Use the following claims made by some of the documentary participants to discuss the importance of educating children, adolescents and young adults about respectful relationships.
'Seeing your Mum like that, you don't know where to go and who to talk to and you think that you have to be the same way she does, like when you see a relationship like that, you think, 'is that what I'm s'posed to be, or is that what I'm s'posed to be in to be happy or think I'm happy?'" – **Young woman**
'They need to learn what the triggers are, like you know, if that person's controlling them or not allowing them to have friends around or they keep control of their money. You know, they've got to give the man the money. It's just stuff like that, you know. Things that don't make them feel comfortable within themselves. So they need to realise that and if it keeps on reoccurring, they need to know when to get up and get out of that situation.' – **Woman**
'It's a whole of community approach that's needed, isn't it? It's the families and the people involved themselves. It's their peers, their

friends, their colleagues, it's the provision of social services, in the education system, it's a recognition that kids can be affected in really bad ways by this, and then some opportunity for them to address it, and to be able to, you know, learn and be fully formed young people so that they themselves don't, in a later point in time, fall into the same repetitive pattern.'

– **Peter Garrett**

'That's the Napcan program. It's a national program for Year 9 and 10 students. So we do that with the crime prevention officer and the domestic violence liaison officer from the police. It talks on healthy relationships and trying to encourage young people what to accept and what to see as a standard with their relationships with their partners.'

– **Heather**

- 'Domestic violence, as far as I'm concerned, it's as important as sex education. It should start back in primary school.'
Do you agree? Is it ever too early to teach children about respectful relationships?
- Young woman: Well we've both been in relationships that have been bad since we were little, so I think that's what our standard is 'cause we both know what it's like to be through that stuff and we do talk about it sometimes.

Young man: Sometimes.

Young woman: Mainly all the time.

Young man: You know when the buttons are getting pushed, yeah.

Young woman: The triggers, yes. That's for sure.

Young man: Try to avoid that.

Explain the significance of this scene. How does it add to the audience's understanding of how we as individuals and as a society can respond to the issue of domestic violence?





- Working in a team, create a PowerPoint or Google Slide presentation that educates students about respectful relationships. Your PowerPoint or Google slide presentation should use words, images, video and audio to convey the information. Do not cut and paste information from websites. Rewrite the researched information to suit the teenage audience. Arrange for your presentation to be played on screens in the school environment.

Production elements

- camera techniques, technologies and qualities for film
 - lighting
 - mise-en-scene
 - acting
 - sound
 - editing of vision and sound
- How does Little Towns, Big Voices use production elements to protect the identities of the documentary participants?
 - Working as a class and by drawing on evidence from the documentary, make a list of the challenges of filming Little Towns, Big Voices.
 - Consider those images that work in a symbolic way, such as the ripples in the river. How do these images inform your understanding of the issue of domestic violence?

10. THE WAY FORWARD

'People need to speak up, to speak out and to seek help.' – *Peter Garrett*

- In Little Towns, Big Voices, the audience hears a woman desperately shouting 'Enough!'. Explain the significance of this moment.
- In the final scene of Little Towns, Big Voices, Heather walks along a street in her town. Documentary participants and members of the local community join Heather and walk with her. Explain the significance of this scene. Compare the closing scene with the opening scene of Little Towns, Big Voices, how do they differ and why?
- Can a documentary make a difference? How do you think Little Towns, Big Voices can address the issue of domestic violence?



- What does Little Towns, Big Voices reveal to be the filmmaker's priorities?

» Media watch

In *Little Towns, Big Voices*, the audience's attention is drawn to newspaper headlines about domestic violence:

'STAND UP TO YOUR MATES TOP OFFICER TELLS BLOKES'

'Mum's screams still echo after 22 years'

Your task is to investigate the mainstream media's portrayal of domestic violence.

Work with a team of your peers to complete a comprehensive analysis of the mainstream media's portrayal of domestic violence. This includes reports and responses to domestic violence in print and online newspapers, and on television and radio.

Task 1: Use Wordle to make a word cloud of the language used in the headlines of the source material that you have collected. What does the Wordle reveal about the language that the media uses to portray domestic violence?

Task 2: How does the media portray incidents of domestic violence? Your answer to this question should consider how the media portrays the victims of domestic violence and the perpetrators of domestic violence.

» For Media students

- Work with a peer to compile a detailed analysis of the use of story and production elements in *Little Towns, Big Voices*.

Story elements

- the opening, development and resolution of the narrative
- cause and effect
- establishment and development of and relationships between characters
- point/s of view from which the narrative is presented
- the function of setting in the narrative
- the relationship between multiple storylines
- the structuring of time and its impact on narrative progression



Task 3: Is there enough coverage of domestic violence in the mainstream media?

Task 4: Is the media's portrayal of domestic violence part of the problem or is it working towards a solution?

Task 5: Write a feature newspaper article or record a radio segment or film a television current affairs story about the issue of domestic violence.

» Debate

'Challenging domestic violence in Australian society is everyone's responsibility.'

Hold a class debate. Divide the class into two teams. The affirmative team will agree with the contention. The negative will disagree with the contention. Appoint team captains. They will be the first speakers for each team. They will introduce the team's case. Every speaker in the debate must speak for at least one minute. Ask a staff member to adjudicate the debate. Invite students from another class to listen to the debate.

USEFUL LINKS

The following is a representative list of websites providing information about domestic violence. Teachers are recommended to preview websites before providing students with the links.

Aurora

https://www.women.nsw.gov.au/violence_prevention/domestic_and_family_violence_app

Australian Bureau of Statistics

<http://www.abs.gov.au/>

Australian Institute of Criminology

<http://www.aic.gov.au/>

Australian Institute of Family Studies

<https://aifs.gov.au/>

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

<http://www.aihw.gov.au/>

Daisy

<https://www.1800respect.org.au/daisy/>

DHHS Family Violence Counselling and Support Service, Tasmanian Government

http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/service_information/children_and_families/family_violence_counselling_and_support_service

Domestic and Family Violence, New South Wales Police

http://www.police.nsw.gov.au/community_issues/domestic_and_family_violence

Domestic Violence, Queensland Police

<https://www.police.qld.gov.au/programs/dv/>

Domestic and Family Violence, Queensland Government

<https://www.qld.gov.au/community/getting-support-health-social-issue/domestic-family-violence/>

Domestic Violence: An overview, Parliament of Australia, Parliamentary Library

http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/BN/2011-2012/DVAustralia#_Toc309798383

Domestic Violence in Australia: A quick guide to the issues, Parliament of Australia, Parliamentary Library

http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1415/Quick_Guides/DVinAust

Domestic Violence, New South Wales Government

<http://www.domesticviolence.nsw.gov.au/>

Domestic Violence Prevention Council

<http://www.dvpc.org.au/>

Domestic Violence, Government of South Australia

<https://www.sa.gov.au/topics/emergencies-and-safety/safety-at-home-and-in-the-community/domestic-violence>

Domestic Violence, Government of Western Australia

<https://www.wa.gov.au/information-about/community-safety/domestic-violence>

“

'Challenging domestic violence in Australian society is everyone's responsibility.'

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Domestic Violence Protection Centre, Queensland

<http://www.domesticviolence.com.au/pages/domestic-violence-statistics.php>

Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria

<http://www.dvrcv.org.au/>

Domestic Violence, South Australia Police

<https://www.police.sa.gov.au/your-safety/domestic-violence>

Domestic Violence, Victorian Government

<http://www.vic.gov.au/law-justice/crime/domestic-violence.html>

Fact File: Domestic Violence in Australia, ABC News

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-04-06/fact-file-domestic-violence-statistics/7147938>

Family and Domestic Violence, Australian Government, Department of Human Services

<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/subjects/family-and-domestic-violence>

Family and Domestic Violence, Department for Child Protection and Family Support, Western Australia

<https://www.dcp.wa.gov.au/CrisisAndEmergency/FDV/Pages/FamilyandDomesticViolence.aspx>

Family and Domestic Violence, Western Australia Police

<https://www.police.wa.gov.au/Your-Safety/Family-and-domestic-violence>

Family Law Act 1975

<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2016C00415>

Family Safety Framework, Northern Territory Police

<http://www.pfes.nt.gov.au/Police/Community-safety/Family-Safety-Framework.aspx>

Family Violence, Department of Human Services, Victoria

<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/children,-families-and-young-people/family-violence>

Family Violence, Victoria Police

http://www.police.vic.gov.au/content.asp?Document_ID=43360

Our Watch

<http://www.ourwatch.org.au/>

National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2010 – 2022

<https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/women/programs-services/reducing-violence/the-national-plan-to-reduce-violence-against-women-and-their-children-2010-2022>



National Sexual Assault, Domestic and Family Violence Counselling Service for people living in Australia

<https://www.1800respect.org.au/>

ReachOut.com

<http://au.reachout.com/what-is-domestic-violence>

Royal Commission into Family Violence, Victorian Government

<http://www.rcfv.com.au/>

Safe at Home, Tasmania Police

<http://www.police.tas.gov.au/programs/safe-at-home/>

Safety is Everyone's Right, Northern Territory Government

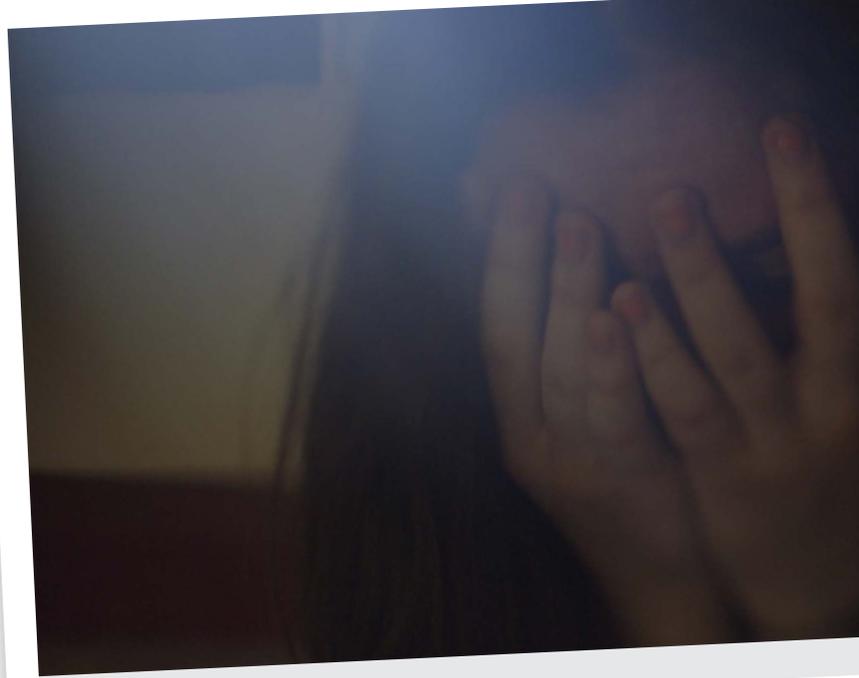
http://www.domesticviolence.nt.gov.au/documents/Domestic_Violence_Strategy.pdf

KEY CREATIVES

FRAN DOBBIE | DIRECTOR AND WRITER

Fran Dobbie is a teacher, author and motivational speaker and mother. She is the daughter of a Yuin Aboriginal woman from the south coast of NSW. Dobbie is currently the director of Earthstar Productions.

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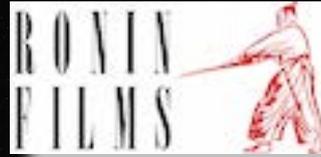
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AUSTRALIAN TEACHERS OF MEDIA



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