

Calls for domestic violence support in workplaces

Inge Hansen | 13th May 2016 5:59 PM



SPREADING AWARENESS: Magistrate Simon Young, CEO of Whitsunday Regional Council Barry Omundson, Sue Manthey from Whitsunday Crisis and Counselling Service, and Solicitor at Mackay Regional Community Legal Centre Simone Butschle at the Domestic and Family Violence Awareness Workplace Response Luncheon this afternoon. Photo Inge Hansen / Whitsunday Times.

Inge Hansen

BARRY Omundson spoke as a guest at today's Domestic and Family Violence Awareness Workplace Response Luncheon.

The CEO of Whitsunday Regional Council said he was passionate about creating a new, strong culture of whitsunday where everyone belongs and has a sense of purpose and leave with a sense of achievement.

"If you're having a good day at work, you take that home and you have a positive reaction to your family and your loved ones," he said.

"If you're having a bad day at work for whatever reason, domestic violence for example, that's negative energy and a negative charge you're bringing home."

Mr Omundson was joined by three other speakers at the event, including Solicitor at Mackay Regional Community Legal Centre, Simone Butschle.

Ms Butschle said victims should have support from their workplaces and be able to continue being financially dependent.

She said one factor employers need to take into consideration was leave.

"Often when you have a DVO application through the courts, you've got to see a lawyer, you've got to go to court, you've got to see the councillor and see your kids," she said.

Ms Butschle said there were a number of steps employers could take to support their employees.

"Having a safety plan, relocating victims, changing phone numbers or having a safe area at work can all help," she said.

"If the victim is an admin officer, there should be an opportunity to have someone else take over their duty," she said adding "If the perpetrator knows they're (the victim) working and they have to pick up their phone, they're going to ring and abuse."

Magistrate Young said domestic violence would never be tolerated and could never be excused or justified.

"I've seen how dealing with domestic violence can directly impact businesses," he said.

"I have the capacity to prohibit a spouse or partner from attending workplaces- that power exists."

Sue Manthey from the Whitsunday Crisis and Counselling Service also spoke at the event and said domestic violence did not discriminate.

"One in three women experience violence before they are even 15 years old with one woman dying each week at the hands of an ex or current partner," she said.

"One in 20 men also experience domestic and family violence."

Ms Manthey said abusive partners used power and control in their relationships.

"They use intimidation, emotional abuse, isolation, male privilege, economic abuse and coercion and threats," she said.

"They also minimise the issue with denial and blaming their partner."

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