

Cop 'gave' DV survivor's address to ex-partner

EXCLUSIVE

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A POLICE officer is under investigation for allegedly giving the address of a high-risk domestic violence victim to the man accused of raping, choking, torturing and beating her.

It's the third time in 10 months a Queensland public servant has been accused of handing out a victim's location to a person facing shocking domestic violence offences.

In the latest case, NewsRegional exclusively reports the mother went into hiding after finding out in April the officer sent her former husband her address on an official Queensland Police Service document.

The south-east Queensland woman cannot be identified.

NewsRegional has a copy of the QPS document, containing her address, that went to the accused perpetrator.

The same document has been supplied to Queensland Police Commissioner Ian Stewart, Police Minister Mark Ryan and Domestic Violence Minister Shannon Fentiman.

The state's ethical standards branch is investigating the latest alleged breach of privacy

that domestic violence experts labelled "outrageous" and "deadly".

The distraught victim revealed to NewsRegional how police offered to put her in witness protection and that they are investigating how her car came to be torched and her home broken into about the time her address was released.

The mum called on Commissioner Stewart to

stand down the officer at the centre of the controversy until the investigation is complete.

She also urged Mr Stewart, Mr Ryan and Ms Fentiman to fix the "flawed system before it leads to an innocent woman being murdered".

"I was in absolute fear," the woman said.

"My body went cold and I left my house straight away because I feared for my life.

"Nobody close to me, even my family, knew my address and yet the people who were supposed to be looking after my safety were the very people who provided the one piece of information my abuser should never have had."

The woman lived in motels, tents and caravans until recently when she was able to find a home in a secluded area.

She has also spent more than \$5000 on accommodation and moving costs as a result of the breach.

"The system and protocols that are in place at the moment need to protect victims who are vulnerable to further abuse," she said.

"Some reform needs to be done to ensure that no personal information is provided by any state department or public servant to somebody that shouldn't have it - for example someone who is on bail for rape and torture."

A police media spokesperson said the issue was being investigated and it would therefore be "inappropriate to provide further comment".

Police Minister Mark Ryan said he expected all police to "act with integrity and accountability".

"I have been reassured that the woman involved has been offered extra support by the Queensland Police's

Domestic Violence team while the investigation takes place," Mr Ryan said.

"While I cannot comment on the specifics of this case due to the investigation, as Police Minister I expect our police to act with integrity and accountability at all times, particularly when it comes to dealing with victims of domestic violence.

"The Palaszczuk government will ... work to ensure victims have appropriate support in place and will always look for ways that we can improve

that support across government agencies and non-government agencies."

Minister Fentiman did not respond to a request for comment.

Opposition domestic and family violence spokeswoman Ros Bates said DV survivors had no "confidence" in a system that sent their details to their attackers.

"It's beyond belief a

victim's address would be handed over on a silver platter to the man who's alleged to have strangled and raped a woman just so that he can do it again," Ms Bates said.

"This is the second time in as many weeks that a terrified woman fleeing domestic violence has been forced to flee again because Labor's domestic violence system has failed to protect her.

"Does a woman have to die for Mark Ryan to fix this broken system?"

Women's Legal Service Queensland CEO Angela Lynch said police officers needed to realise that domestic violence abusers were "manipulative" and

would try anything to get information on their victims.

"It really is simply outrageous that the police have not as a matter of protocol checked the history of this fellow," Ms Lynch said.

"It wouldn't have taken

much for them to realise he is up on extremely serious charges.

"Police should be trained to understand that perpetrators will use systems and police to get what they want and to manipulate the system to show that they are a victim."

Criminologist Dr Silke Meyer said the system needed fixing.

"It is appalling that we continue to jeopardise victims and children's safety because organisations have operating systems that aren't up to standards," she said.

"As far as I'm aware officers should be checking for history of DV but again, they're operating from a system that is not user friendly for people responding to crisis situations because it doesn't simply flag offences relevant to the response."

"For 24-hour support in Queensland phone DVConnect on 1800 811 811, MensLine on 1800 600 636 or the national hotline 1800RESPECT on 1800 737 732.

— NewsRegional



LIVING IN FEAR: An alleged domestic violence survivor has been in hiding since April when a Caboolture police officer gave her address to her violent former husband.

