

THREE YEARS
ON FROM
**THE ROYAL
COMMISSION
INTO FAMILY
VIOLENCE**



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WORKING TOWARDS A VICTORIA FREE FROM FAMILY VIOLENCE

In March 2016 the Royal Commission into Family Violence made 227 recommendations to prevent family violence, keep victim survivors* safe and supported, and hold perpetrators to account. The recommendations outlined the systemic and cultural change needed to achieve the vision of a Victoria free from family violence.

The Victorian Government committed to implementing all 227 recommendations in recognition of the devastating and often intergenerational impacts of family violence on the community. An unprecedented investment of over \$2.7 billion has been allocated to support this change.

The government has already implemented 120 of the 227 recommendations since the release of the report: *Royal Commission into Family Violence: Summary and recommendations*. The acquittal of these recommendations demonstrates the significant steps that the government has taken to create a world-leading service system aimed at changing underlying attitudes and beliefs that condone family violence, while delivering services to support victim survivors. The experiences of victim survivors form the centre of the reform agenda, to ensure cultural and systemic change.

The Royal Commission into Family Violence (Royal Commission) emphasised the need for outcome-orientated action. The government has responded by clearly linking the reform agenda to the desired outcomes. The Family Violence Outcomes Framework was developed in consultation with the family violence service delivery sector, victim survivors and community members. The framework clearly outlines Victoria's priorities in preventing and responding to family violence, why these priorities matter and what constitutes success in achieving these outcomes.

The framework is embedded into *Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change* (10-year plan) and the associated *Family Violence Rolling Action Plan 2017–2020*, to articulate the ambitious, collective vision of a reformed family violence system. Every part of the family violence reform links back to the framework to ensure we are on the right track to deliver the necessary outcomes.

Three years on from the Royal Commission into Family Violence highlights the progress of the family violence reforms since the Royal Commission into Family Violence handed down its report in 2016. The *Three Years On* report provides a summary of the key achievements in 2018, organised under the four domains of the Family Violence Outcomes Framework, and provides a snapshot of what the Victorian Government has achieved in the last three years.

*[*Note: While 'victim survivor' is the agreed-upon term of the family violence sector, it is recognised that not every person who has experienced or is experiencing family violence identifies with this term. The use of 'victim survivor' acknowledges the strength and resilience shown by people who have experienced or currently live with family violence. However, over the past three years it has emerged that some victim survivors prefer the term 'people with lived experience of family violence'.]*

WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN THE LAST TWELVE MONTHS?

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE REFORM IN 2018

Victoria's Family Violence service system has undergone immense change in 2018. A number of key elements of the reform took shape and delivered improved responses to the Victorian community. The benefits and opportunities of this reform are starting to be realised and the foundations have been created to achieve a Victoria free from family violence.

We are creating a Victoria where **family violence and all forms of violence against women will not be tolerated**. We established **Respect Victoria**, an independent statutory authority that will lead the state's prevention efforts in changing the attitudes, social norms and culture that result in family violence and violence against women.

The community-led Aboriginal agreement *Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way: Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families* (2018–2028) has been developed and underpins the approaches to ensure that Aboriginal people, families and communities are living free from family violence.

It is critical that **victim survivors and vulnerable children and families are safe and supported to recover and thrive**. Central to the reform has been the commencement of **The Orange Door** across five initial areas, which provides victim survivors an integrated practice team of specialist family violence, perpetrator and family services working together to improve safety, reduce risk, and connect to services. The **Central Information Point** was established to allow frontline workers to access timely, consolidated and up-to-date information to make more informed assessments of family violence risk and identify safety needs.

Our response to family violence has also been improved with:

- more safe and stable accommodation
- specialist support and legal services in courts
- new family violence investigation units
- restorative justice options for victim survivors.

This year we have been able to focus on developing new and innovative responses to ensure that **perpetrators are held to account, engaged and connected** with services. We are testing **police body-worn cameras**, have commenced trialling **therapeutic models of case management** for Aboriginal men, and are addressing existing service gaps through **trailing new interventions** for those perpetrators who have diverse and complex needs.

Preventing and responding to family violence must be systemic and enduring. That is why we are embedding **culturally diverse responses** across key agencies and implementing significant **legislative reform**. We are strengthening our workforce capability through the implementation of *Building from Strength: 10-Year Industry Plan for Family Violence Prevention and Response*.

We have introduced system-wide initiatives including the **Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme**, and the **Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework**, which underpin the whole reform, ensuring that our response to all Victorians is aligned, informed and safe.

FAMILY VIOLENCE OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK

The Family Violence Outcomes Framework (Outcomes Framework) was developed in consultation with and is supported by the sector, victim survivors and the community. It will provide evidence of what works – and what doesn't – in delivering lasting and meaningful change.

The framework will ensure that we focus reform efforts on the actions that make a difference and drive evidence-informed practice. This supports the ambitious agenda and vision of a Victoria free from family violence, while allowing the government and family violence system to evaluate and learn from what is working, through the different phases of implementation.

The Family Violence Outcomes Framework includes outcomes across four domains:

-
+ Family violence and gender inequality are not tolerated
.....
- + Victim survivors, vulnerable children and families, are safe and supported to recover and thrive
.....
- + Perpetrators are held to account, engaged and connected
.....
- + Preventing and responding to family violence is systemic and enduring.

There are currently sets of indicators for the first three domains, which can be used to measure the outcomes that we want to achieve to improve the family violence system in Victoria. We are continuing to refine the framework by developing indicators for the fourth domain and finalising measures to report against the outcomes.

A summary of the Outcomes Framework is at Figure 1 on the following page.

FIGURE 1: FAMILY VIOLENCE OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK



Enduring systemic reforms need strong governance structures to hold the government to account while avoiding unforeseen complexities, inconsistent practice, duplication of effort and service gaps.

The safety of victim survivors often relies on the ability to navigate through the family violence system when they need it and how they need it. This is reliant on a joined-up system, which intervenes earlier, and builds better connections between universal, secondary and tertiary services. This person-centred approach to services must be underpinned by coordinated governance structures.

The Royal Commission into Family Violence highlighted that fragmented governance approaches had resulted in a disjointed system that lacked system-wide oversight, accountability and a shared vision. A number of recommendations were made by the Royal Commission to encourage greater oversight, coordination and integration across the family violence system. These recommendations centred on establishing central governance structures with oversight at the highest levels of government, to focus on the reforms and embed the victim survivor experience in the family violence system.

Whole-of-government governance structures that have been established through Cabinet and the Victorian Secretaries’ Board ensure effective risk management and coordination across the reform, by holding departments, agencies and entities to account, while also cutting across often siloed operations.

A strong layer of governance and program management supports the Victorian Government’s family violence reforms across the whole of Victorian government, including senior executive and ministerial oversight. We recognise that robust governance structures that reach across government and encourage collaboration with the family violence sector, are critical in achieving our vision of a Victoria free from violence. For this reason, we remain committed to investing time and resources into learning and evolving our systems to ensure that they work together effectively, transparently and in a coordinated manner for the benefit of victim survivors.

Operationally, departmental and cross-departmental program boards, steering committees and working groups, such as the Family Violence Reform Interdepartmental Committee, manage the day-to-day dependencies, risks and issues and provide guidance on adapting implementation approaches.

To ensure that the reforms are designed and delivered with the people who need services in mind, we continue to invest in governance structures that enable a partnership approach with the Victorian community. These include:

-
 Victim Survivors’ Advisory Council

-
 Aboriginal Children’s Forum

-
 Chief Magistrate’s Family Violence Taskforce

-
 Dhehk Dja Partnership Forum

-
 Diverse Communities and Intersectionality Working Group

-
 Family Violence Housing Assistance Implementation Taskforce

-
 Family Violence Steering Committee

-
 Industry Taskforce

-
 Judicial Advisory Group on Family Violence

-
 LGBTI Family Violence Working Group

-
 Ministerial Taskforce on the Prevention of Family Violence and other forms of Violence Against Women.

FAMILY VIOLENCE STEERING COMMITTEE

Co-chairs: CEO of Domestic Violence Victoria, and Minister for Prevention of Family Violence.

The Family Violence Steering Committee is responsible for providing specialist advice on the development and implementation of policies, strategies and programs that seek to address family violence in Victoria. It monitors the development of a comprehensive, coordinated family violence reform agenda and provides advice on the whole-of-government implementation of the Royal Commission's recommendations.

VICTIM SURVIVORS' ADVISORY COUNCIL

Chair: Rosie Batty, 2015 Australian of the Year.

The Victim Survivors' Advisory Council brings the strength, resilience and lived experiences of victims into our reforms. It advises the Victorian Government on the various experiences of family violence and the contemporary Victorian service system from the victim's perspective.

DHELK DJA PARTNERSHIP FORUM

Co-chairs: Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and the hosting Dhelk Dja Action Group Chairperson.

The Dhelk Dja Partnership Forum is responsible for providing family violence reforms, funding and policy development with a strong and informed voice, cultural perspective and strategic policy advice based on self-determination. The forum leads the development and implementation of Dhelk Dja Action Plans – the ground-breaking, community-led Aboriginal agreements to address family violence, and to drive improved safety outcomes for Aboriginal people.

DIVERSE COMMUNITIES AND INTERSECTIONALITY WORKING GROUP

Co-chairs: The Executive Director of Women with Disabilities Victoria, and Family Safety Victoria.

The Diverse Communities and Intersectionality Working Group is a subgroup of the Family Violence Steering Committee. The group provides guidance and expert advice on the intersectional needs of diverse community groups across the spectrum of family violence and social service reform. It supports the Victorian Government to embed an understanding of and responsiveness to diverse communities in the design and accessibility of family violence and social service reform.

NEXT STEPS

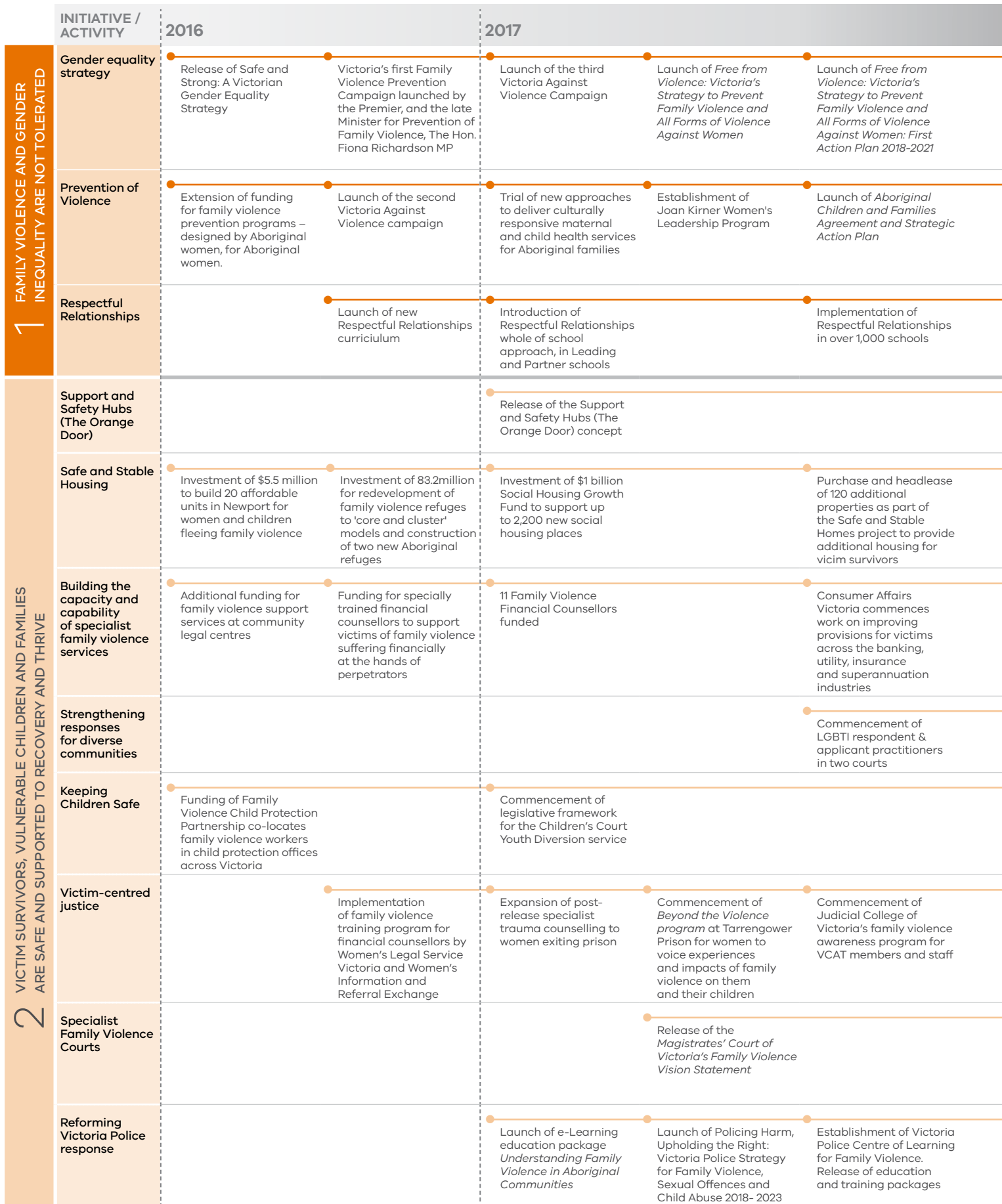
A new Family Violence Rolling Action Plan outlining the next phase of implementation will be released in 2020. In developing this new plan, we will be using our best and growing knowledge about the impacts of family violence, linkages between aspects of the reform, and applying lessons learnt regarding effective governance.

We will continue to strengthen genuine and meaningful partnerships with victim survivors, the service sector and the community. Engagement with partnerships such as the Victim Survivors' Advisory Council and Dhelk Dja Partnership Forum, have demonstrated how meaningful engagement and collaboration provides the government with valuable perspectives and advice, while driving more effective responses as the reforms develop. It is only by embedding the voices and experiences of victim survivors at the heart of the reform agenda, that we will be able to make lasting cultural and systemic change.

As the Victorian Government undertakes the ongoing planning work for the next phase of the reforms, it is important to track current progress against the key initiatives and actions outlined in the *Family Violence Rolling Action Plan 2017–2020*. 'Figure 1: Family violence reforms – key milestones' shows the initiatives that have been developed and implemented following the Royal Commission findings in 2016. It provides an overview of the changes to the way services are being delivered, and how we are transforming the way the system responds to the needs of victim survivors.

We will continue to use strong governance arrangements and guiding frameworks and tools like the 10-Year Plan, Rolling Action Plans and Outcomes Framework to continue to connect work and identify linkages for efficient and effective delivery of this large and complex reform program.

FIGURE 2: VICTORIA'S STRATEGY TO PREVENT FAMILY VIOLENCE REFORMS – KEY MILESTONES



2018

\$6.3 million funding to trial and evaluate new approaches to primary prevention of family violence

Launch of *Respect Women: Call It Out* behaviour change campaign

Respect Victoria is established as the dedicated, statutory authority focused on the primary prevention of family violence for all Victorians

Launch of Victoria Against Violence #OrangeCard campaign, coinciding with United Nations' 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence campaign

Release of Gender Equality Bill Exposure Draft for public consultation

Launch of Safer and Stronger Communities Pilot for new approaches to prevent family violence in multicultural communities

Release of Office for Women's Primary Prevention Activity and Infrastructure in Victoria report

Establishment of Preventing the Cycle of Violence Aboriginal Fund

Funding for Victoria's multicultural and faith communities to prevent and respond to family violence, under the Capacity Building and Participation grants program

Multifaith Advisory Group's Family Violence Working Group selected five faith communities to deliver projects to prevent and respond to family violence and gender-based violence

Launch of Respectful Relationships professional learning for early childhood educators

Launch of Workplace Equality and Respect Program in public sector organisations

Commencement of The Orange Door service in Bayside Peninsula, Barwon and Mallee

Commencement of The Orange Door service in North Eastern Melbourne

Further Orange Door locations are announced for Central Highlands, Loddon and Goulburn

Commencement of The Orange Door service in Inner Gippsland

Construction of new long term public housing properties commences.

Funding for further refuge services to provide secure, after-hours crisis accommodation

Family violence service providers undertake HOW2 Program Training ('Rainbow Tick') accreditation for LGBTI inclusive standards

Launch of Koori Women's Place pilot program by Djirra to provide holistic support and services

Launch of Statement of Support for LGBTI clients by ten faith-based family violence service providers

Launch of W/Respect ("With Respect") the integrated LGBTI family violence specialist service

Commencement of Intersectionality Capacity Building Project

Expansion of Sexually Abusive Treatment Service programs eligible for young people aged 15 to 17 years old

Launch of Fines Victoria's Family Violence Scheme to support victim survivors with infringements

Commencement of Family Violence Contact Centre in the Melbourne Magistrates' Court family violence registry

Launch of Family Violence Restorative Justice Service pilot program

Introduction of 20 new multimedia screens to inform court users about court and Family Violence Intervention Order (FVIO) processes

Opening of a new Family Violence Court Division at Shepparton Magistrates' Court

Commencement of family violence applicant and respondent workers at Melbourne Children's Court

Commencement of Judicial College of Victoria's family violence education program at Shepparton Magistrates' Court's Family Violence Court Division

Establishment of Koori Family Violence Police Protocols in Morwell

Commencement of Family Violence Investigation Units, establishing specialist family violence roles across Victoria Police

Trial of Family Violence Body-Worn Cameras

Redesign of Family Violence Report L17 Form

		INITIATIVE / ACTIVITY	
		2016	2017
3 PERPETRATORS ARE HELD TO ACCOUNT, ENGAGED AND CONNECTED	Central Information Point (CIP)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development and planning of CIP master concept, including co-design and collaboration Rollout of initial training and cultural change programs
	Improving perpetrator interventions and accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding for early intervention program to target fathers experiencing drug or alcohol abuse who have committed, or are at risk of committing, family violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural Change in Prisons Grants provided to all prisons to implement projects focused on increasing family violence awareness and driving cultural change Development of improved minimum standards for Men's Behaviour Change Programs
	Expert Advisory Committee on Perpetrator Interventions (EACPI)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of Expert Advisory Committee on Perpetrator Interventions Design of perpetrator intervention trials using ANROWS evidence and EACPI advice
	Law Reforms		
	Strengthening responses in diverse Communities		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch of Ngarra Jarranounith Place - intensive culturally appropriate, residential behaviour change program for Aboriginal men
4 PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO FAMILY VIOLENCE IS SYSTEMIC AND ENDURING	Family Violence Industry Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch 10-Year Plan, Ending Family Violence; Victoria's Plan for Change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Release of <i>Building from Strength: 10-Year Industry Plan for Family Violence Prevention and Response</i> Release of <i>Responding to Family Violence Capability Framework and Preventing Family Violence and Violence Against Women Capability Framework</i>
	Building capacity and capability of the workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$38.4million investment in <i>Strengthening Hospital Responses to Family Violence</i> to train hospital staff in identifying patients at risk of family violence Funding to support Women with Disabilities Victoria to push for reforms to make family violence policies and services more inclusive of people with disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allocation of \$17.3 million over four years to continue specialist family violence advisors on an ongoing basis in alcohol and other drugs and mental health services Establishment of Centre for Workforce Excellence to build workforce capacity with community services, justice, education and health sectors Rollout of Inaugural Workforce Census. Results received and collated
	Redevelopment of the Family Violence Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM)		
	Information sharing reforms: Sharing information and working more effectively		
	Improving our approach to data collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment in a new Risk Assessment Report Portal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch of the Enterprise Reporting and Project Management System to manage collaborative implementation of reform work Release of Crime Statistics Agency 2016-17 Family Violence Database
	Governance and Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of Victim Survivors' Advisory Council, to represent diverse experiences of people with lived experience of family violence Ownership of 511 public housing properties transferred to Aboriginal Housing Victoria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commencement of co-design project with Aboriginal Communities leading the design of a holistic approach and framework to family violence Investment of \$23million in 26 Therapeutic Intervention pilot programs to provide support and build evidence about best practice responses to family violence Establishment of Family Safety Victoria, Victoria's family violence coordination agency Establishment of the Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor

2018

Establishment of CIP and commencement of new information sharing regime

Commencement of CIP service offerings in The Orange Door locations

Release of *Enhancing Safety: Family Violence Strategy* for the Victorian Corrections system 2018-2021 and Action Plan

Commencement of new interventions for perpetrators from diverse backgrounds and with complex needs

Introduction of revised Men's Behaviour Change Program model is introduced by Family Safety Victoria

EACPI provides provides final report to government

Amendments to Bail Act 1977, allowing officials to consider family violence risks if a person is released on bail

Parliament passes Justice Legislation Amendment (Family Violence Protection and Other Matters) Act 2018

Prevention of Family Violence Act 2018, establishing Respect Victoria, comes into effect

Parliament passes Residential Tenancies Amendment Act 2018

First intake of clients in the Ngarra Jarranounith Place behaviour change program

Commencement of trial for case management of perpetrators from diverse backgrounds, and with complex needs

Development of first Rolling Action Plan for Building from Strength Industry Plan

Development of accredited courses in family violence prevention and response

Funding of inTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence to build responsiveness of the sector and services to the needs of culturally diverse communities

Commencement of LGBTI Practitioner team at the Neighbourhood Justice Centre

Redevelopment of the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM)

Family Violence MARAM commences under the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008*

Regulations prescribing organisations to align with the MARAM Framework commence

Tools for Risk Assessment and Management (TRAM) is launched in The Orange Door

Commencement of Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS) in Feb 2018 and Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) in Sep 2018

Training for initial tranche workforces under FVISS commenced in Feb 2018

Release of Crime Statistics Agency Victorian Family Violence Database (including Coroners Court and Ambulance Victoria)

Establishment of the Disability and Family Violence Reforms Expert Advisory Group

Launch of *Wungurilwil Gagapduir Aboriginal Children and Families Agreement Strategic Action Plan*

Implementation of Aboriginal Children and Families project

Launch of *Umalek Balit*, a culturally safe program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, in Melbourne Magistrate's Court

DOMAIN

1

FAMILY VIOLENCE AND GENDER INEQUALITY ARE NOT TOLERATED

All Victorians experience respectful relationships underpinned by human rights and gender equality—healthy relationship behaviours are celebrated and promoted.

Victorians do not tolerate family violence—family violence reporting rates reflect increased confidence in the system and intolerance of family violence, and eventually reflect sustained effort in prevention.

Victorians hold beliefs and attitudes that reject gender inequality and family violence—people recognise and reject all forms of family violence and gender inequality, and know how to challenge it when they see it. Individuals and systems do not minimise or deny family violence or blame victims, and stigma and discrimination is addressed.

Women and men, and girls and boys are equal—gender inequalities where people live, work, learn and play are diminished.

WHAT HAS CHANGED IN THE LAST THREE YEARS?

The ground-breaking work of the Royal Commission into Family Violence focused on the need to improve services for victims, strengthen early intervention and hold perpetrators to account. It also recognised that family violence is preventable, and we must work together to change the attitudes, behaviours and social norms that drive family violence and all forms of violence against women.

This includes the recognition that family violence – the most common form of violence against women – is closely linked to gender inequality. The Victorian Government is committed to building knowledge around preventing family violence, fostering innovation in the design and delivery of prevention programs and scaling up projects that are already delivering real benefit to Victorian communities.

RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS INITIATIVE

The Respectful Relationships initiative has been implemented in over 1,000 government, Catholic and independent schools across Victoria.

GENDER EQUALITY AND THE PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE

Two key strategies have been launched to address gender inequality as a key driver of family violence. *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy* and *Free from Violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women* acknowledge that family violence is a deeply gendered issue, and that prevention starts with clear messages about respect and equality. These strategies provide the groundwork for making generational changes in the social norms that influence attitudes towards women.

FAMILY VIOLENCE AND PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN CAMPAIGNS

Two significant behaviour change and prevention of violence against women campaigns have been making changes in the community. The Respect Women: Call It Out campaign was seen by an estimated 5.2 million Victorians. Research has shown that people who had seen the campaign had more positive attitudes towards gender equality and the importance of respect. The #OrangeCard campaign asked Victorians to call out the drivers of family violence online. This campaign reached over 11 million social media users worldwide.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS?

RESPECT VICTORIA

Respect Victoria was established under legislation in October 2018 as an independent statutory authority focused on the primary prevention of family violence and violence against women in Victoria (Recommendation 188 of the Royal Commission into Family Violence). Respect Victoria received \$24 million over four years in the *Victorian Budget 2018–19*.

Respect Victoria provides leadership in the prevention of family violence and all forms of violence against women. It provides advice on policy and program reform to improve the way government, organisations and the community prevent family violence including:

-
+ researching trends in family violence
.....
-
+ building and testing outcomes
.....
-
+ advising government on funding decisions
.....
-
+ communicating and engaging the community on family violence prevention.
.....

Prevention of family violence and violence against women aims to stop violence before it starts, so that we see an overall reduction in incidents of violence. Respect Victoria is committed to ensuring victim survivors are represented in all its work and has a dedicated position on its Board of Directors for a member of the Victim Survivors' Advisory Council.

RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS

The Respectful Relationships initiative continues to be implemented in schools across Victoria. By 2018, over 1,000 schools had implemented the whole-school approach recommended by the Royal Commission. Over 17,000 school staff participated in training sessions. A Respectful Relationships early childhood training package was also launched in 2018, providing training for up to 6,000 early childhood educators.

We know that changes in attitudes and behaviours can be achieved when positive attitudes, behaviours and equality are embedded in our education settings. The Respectful Relationships initiative adopts a whole-school approach, to promote widespread cultural change in the community. The approach leads to positive impacts on academic outcomes, mental health, classroom behaviour, and relationships between teachers and students.

FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION CAMPAIGNS

The Victorian Budget 2018-19 committed \$24 million over four years for Preventing Family Violence, including family violence and violence against women prevention campaigns and activities. These campaigns provide the community with the necessary techniques to 'call out' sexism, harassment, and gender inequality – some of the early drivers that may lead to family violence.

The Respect Women: Call It Out campaign provides techniques to 'call out' sexism, harassment and gender inequality. The campaign has been seen by an estimated 5.2 million Victorians. Research showed that people who had seen Respect Women: Call It Out had more positive attitudes to gender equality, and were more likely to understand the importance of respect and the impact that family violence has in our society (further details contained in Case Study – Respect Women: Call it Out – family violence prevention campaign).

RESPECT WOMEN: CALL IT OUT – FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION CAMPAIGN

The Victorian Government's second family violence behaviour change campaign was launched in March 2018.

Respect Women: Call It Out focused on the prevention of family violence, including violence against women and active bystander intervention. Individuals who witness, or are informed of, sexism, harassment and violence are commonly referred to as 'bystanders'. When an individual is a bystander, they can either be a 'passive' bystander who does not intervene, or an 'active' bystander who takes action.

Bystanders have received growing attention as an important part in early violence prevention. Mobilising bystanders to prevent and respond to violence or to the situations and factors which increase the risk of violence taking place ('bystander intervention'), is an important form of primary prevention.

An estimated 5.2 million Victorians have now seen the campaign. Close to 75 per cent of all Victorians are able to recall the Respect Women: Call It Out campaign. The most commonly cited key messages include:

- family violence is never acceptable
- abuse takes many forms
- everybody has a role to play in ending and calling out violence (EY Sweeney, 2018).

Research shows that those who have seen the campaign have more positive attitudes towards gender equality, the police, and the government's response to family violence. They were more likely to endorse the importance of respect and the impact that family violence has, both on individual households and society (BehaviourWorks, Monash University, 2018). There is a growing recognition among Victorian males around the drivers of family violence, with 72 per cent of males surveyed acknowledging that partners should have equal say in all decisions. This is an improvement on the 2016 data, with 64 per cent of males surveyed in 2018 acknowledging that someone criticising their partner as a joke is a serious matter.

Family violence is a complex issue with many contributing risk factors at the individual, community and societal levels. While this has been understood for a significant length of time, it has now been further underlined by the Royal Commission into Family Violence and extensive independent research. Research findings have identified gender inequality and the pervasive attitudes towards women, including the social norms that contribute to the context in which family violence occurs, as critical contributors to family violence.

DHELK DJA: SAFE OUR WAY – STRONG CULTURE, STRONG PEOPLES, STRONG FAMILIES

Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way – Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families is the Aboriginal 10-year family violence agreement. Dhelk Dja is the key agreement for Aboriginal communities, Aboriginal services and the government to work together and be accountable for ensuring that Aboriginal people, families and communities are stronger, safer, thriving and living free from family violence.

This ground-breaking, community-led Aboriginal agreement was launched in October 2018. Dhelk Dja was developed through a comprehensive consultation and co-design process with Aboriginal communities and organisations. The consultation approach ensured that the final agreement embedded Aboriginal self-determination and that Aboriginal voices informed and shaped the agreement. The release and continued implementation of Dhelk Dja is supported by an investment of \$13.5 million in the *Victorian Budget 2018–19* to prevent family violence in Aboriginal communities.

Building on the principle of Aboriginal self-determination, an extensive co-design process is underway with Aboriginal community and services through the Dhelk Dja Partnership Forum to plan and design the Access Points. Once established, the Access Points will be a key service entry point for Aboriginal women, children, and families with lived experience of family violence and Aboriginal people who use violence. Staffed by a predominantly Aboriginal workforce, the Access Points will be culturally safe and give Aboriginal people a choice about where and how they access services. This will complement and enhance the accessibility and service offering for Aboriginal people across The Orange Door network.

“Approaches to Aboriginal leadership must be Aboriginal owned and defined, not constrained by Western definitions”

– Indigenous Family Violence Partnership Forum, San Remo, March 2018

“A strengths-based guiding principle acknowledges Aboriginal people’s ability to be adaptable, resilient and resourceful, which are protective factors”

– Indigenous Family Violence Partnership Forum, Caroline Springs, December 2017

“We need to share stories, understand pain and heal the whole person. You can’t address the use of violence in isolation”

– Aboriginal Family Violence Co-design Forum, April 2018

SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES PILOT

The Victorian Government has allocated \$2.8 million over 2018–2020 to fund the Safer and Stronger Communities Pilot. This pilot is a new place-based approach to test what works best to prevent family violence in multicultural communities.

Prevention experts, the Multicultural Centre for Women’s Health and Our Watch will provide training, advice and support to build the prevention expertise of five multicultural organisations. These five organisations will support local communities to address the attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that lead to family violence. The multicultural organisations will:

-
+ Implement the Workplace Equality and Respect Standards for a multicultural workforce, introducing a framework to address gender inequality and violence against women in the workplace
.....
- + Support the design and development of family violence prevention initiatives with local multicultural communities.

MULTICULTURAL CAPACITY BUILDING AND PARTICIPATION GRANTS

The Capacity Building and Participation Grants Program included a designated Prevention of Family Violence stream for the first time in 2018–2020. An allocation of \$2.36 million will fund over 30 projects, which aim to build the capacity of Victoria’s multicultural and faith communities to work towards creating a future free from family violence and all forms of violence against women.

Funding has been provided to emerging and established organisations, including ethno-specific, multicultural and specialist family violence organisations, to deliver prevention and early intervention projects for young people, women, men and elders from over 20 communities. Activities will be delivered across settings including sport, community and family services, education, the arts and faith.

Matter of Trust: Supporting Elders developed by the Eastern Community Legal Centre received funding from the 2016–17 Capacity Building and Participation Program. Building on this project, the Eastern Community Legal Centre is receiving further funding in the 2018–2020 grants round to deliver another capacity-building project: *Matter of Respect* (See case study: *Matter of Trust*, see Page 25).

WORKING WITH FAITH LEADERS TO ADDRESS FAMILY VIOLENCE

The University of Melbourne and the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health are collaborating with the Multifaith Advisory Group's Family Violence Working Group to develop best practice responses to family violence in faith communities.

Five faith communities (including one representing a multifaith approach) will design and deliver pilot projects using a Participatory Action Research model in 2019–2020. The projects will draw on and test evidence-based, promising and emerging practices to prevent and respond to family violence and gender-based violence in faith settings. The communities will be supported by the University of Melbourne and the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health to deliver these projects.

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The Joan Kirner Young and Emerging Women's Leadership Program was established in 2017 to provide opportunities to new and emerging women leaders in Victoria. The program is delivered by Leadership Victoria and includes a formal leadership development course, mentoring and skill-building sessions. It supports women in the early stages of their leadership journey who are new to a leadership position or aspire to become an influential leader in their profession, industry or community.

25 women participated in the program in 2017 and 26 women started the program in 2018. Participants from the first group reported that the program increased their confidence, skills and knowledge, positively impacted their career decisions and career progression and strengthened their commitment to giving back. Many see themselves not only as part of the pipeline of new women leaders, but have reported they feel an obligation to increase that pipeline. The participants also valued the peer-to-peer networking component, to be continued after the program has been completed.

The Women's Board Leadership Program was launched in 2017. As an early action of *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy* the program was developed to support the Victorian Government's commitment to support Victorian women to serve, stay and excel on boards. The program includes networking, mentoring and governance training, and is delivered in partnership with the Australian Institute of Company Directors and Leadership Victoria. The program attracted a diverse range of women, including women from culturally diverse backgrounds, women with disabilities, Aboriginal women, and women living in rural and regional Victoria.

Now in its second year, 88 women are participating in the program, which includes a number of streams, including programs specifically designed for Aboriginal women and a stream for culturally diverse women.

DEVELOPING THE PREVENTION WORKFORCE

WORKPLACE EQUALITY AND RESPECT PROGRAM

The Workplace Equality and Respect Program aims to reduce violence against women in the broader community using a change management approach to promote gender equality in the workplace. The program includes direct implementation in public service departments and agencies such as Victoria Police, as well as support provided through the Municipal Association of Victoria to approximately 20 local governments who receive Free from Violence grants that focus on the implementation of best practice workplace programs.

Implemented in 2018, participating agencies are supported to develop and implement gender equality plans that respond to the Workplace Equality and Respect standards developed by Our Watch. Best practice workplace initiatives include:

-
+ training to understand the link between gender inequality and family violence
.....
-
+ interventions designed to promote gender equality
.....
-
+ learning how to deal with any disclosures of family violence in the workplace.

An initial suite of change management tools and an online resource hub has been created to support the development and implementation of the gender equality plans and ensures consistent good practice in workplace interventions.

The Workplace Equality and Respect Program builds on the finding of the Royal Commission that gender inequality is a key driver of family violence and recognises the importance of workplaces as a setting to change behaviour. The program addresses Recommendation 192 by implementing best practice workplace programs in all public sector workplaces through partnerships with relevant organisations.

WORKFORCE CAPACITY BUILDING: PRIMARY PREVENTION TRAINING FOR FAMILY VIOLENCE PRACTITIONERS

The Victorian Government has invested in the learning and development needs of the primary prevention workforce since May 2018 including:

-
+ Implementation of a non-accredited induction program for new workers entering the prevention sector
.....
-
+ Implementation of training for new and existing prevention worker supervisors
.....
-
+ Establishment of multiple communities of practice for prevention workers working in a range of settings and with different cohorts, to be delivered through a variety of methods and platforms.

MATTER OF TRUST – SUPPORTING OLDER PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY



Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) leaders and communities in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne are supporting older people in their communities by participating in Eastern Community Legal Centre’s innovative Matter of Trust program.

The program is raising awareness of elder abuse and challenging ageist beliefs and behaviours that can lead to elder abuse. A key focus is the prevention of financial abuse of older people.

Eight community sessions with over 405 community members from various CaLD community groups and interfaith networks participated in the program, with the support of 34 community professionals.

An initial workshop with community leaders comprises a training session on elder abuse followed by a ‘Build the Story’ workshop where participants work with Eastern Community Legal Centre staff to create a fictional scenario that is representative of elder abuse as it may occur in their community. The Centre has observed that the Build the Story workshops provide a safe environment for community members to explore the issue of elder abuse without disclosing personal experiences, or identifying victims or perpetrators within community settings.

Building trust and working closely with community leaders has led to a better understanding of culturally appropriate language, presentation styles and the best way to get communities involved in the workshops. Eastern Community Legal Centre staff have found that the Matter of Trust model works best for CaLD communities who have a shared understanding of how elder abuse is expressed within their community.

Participants reported that the community sessions gave them greater insight into the drivers and impacts of elder abuse, and where to go for assistance and support. Similarly, the sessions acknowledged some of the considerations of addressing elder abuse, including financial matters for particular CaLD communities, and the importance of talking about these issues in their communities and among professional services. As a result of the program, the Eastern Community Legal Centre received a number of requests to provide community legal education on wills and powers of attorney, and other related legal rights issues enabling new opportunities to partner with organisations to provide similar events.

Central to the Matter of Trust project is an understanding that the community’s expertise and knowledge is valued and respected, and informs any work that aims to shift attitudes and beliefs. Indian community leader, Anand Shome, said *“As someone who represented the Indian community, I felt I was heard and empowered 100 per cent. This resulted in our owning the program.”*

DOMAIN

2

VICTIM SURVIVORS, VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES, ARE SAFE AND SUPPORTED TO RECOVER AND THRIVE

Early intervention prevents escalation—people, including children and young people, at risk of witnessing or experiencing family violence are identified early and provided with effective early interventions.

Families are safe and strong—the system intervenes early to prevent harm to children and young people and enables families to access effective support services when they need them.

Victim survivors are safe—the system takes responsibility for managing risk, instead of placing the onus on victim survivors, including children and young people.

Victim survivors are heard and in control—victim survivors, including children and young people, are always listened to, believed and understood, and supported to take control of their immediate situation and make decisions about their future.

Victim survivors rebuild lives and thrive—disruption is minimised for victim survivors, including children and young people, with safe and secure housing, finances, employment, education and recovery from trauma available for as long as people need it.

WHAT HAS CHANGED IN THE LAST THREE YEARS?

The systems responding to victim survivors and children affected by, or at high risk of being affected by, family violence have been fragmented, inconsistent, and placed the onerous burden of safety and managing risk on the victim survivors and their families.

Victim survivors can now access more timely and responsive assistance, tailored to their own individual circumstances, needs and experiences of family violence.

FAMILY SAFETY VICTORIA

Family Safety Victoria was established in July 2017 as the family violence coordination agency, to maintain a continued and dedicated focus on the delivery of the family violence reforms. Family Safety Victoria leads policy development and delivers key reforms arising from the Royal Commission, works in partnership across government and the service sector, and leads collaboration and engagement to ensure victim survivors remain at the heart of Victoria's family violence response.

FLEXIBLE SUPPORT PACKAGES

Over 16,000 flexible support packages have been provided to victim survivors to provide financial assistance for housing and financial security. This new, individualised approach delivers a personalised response to victim survivors, including education and transport expenses, with financial support tailored to their specific needs.

THE ORANGE DOOR – SUPPORT AND SAFETY HUBS

The Orange Door (Support and Safety Hubs) commenced service in five areas across Victoria: Barwon, Bayside Peninsula, Mallee, North Eastern Melbourne and Inner Gippsland. The Orange Door brings together access points for family violence services, family services and perpetrator/men's services. The Orange Door is the primary contact and intake point for responding to and supporting victim survivors of family violence. The Orange Door will replace existing referral points for victims and perpetrators of family violence as it is established across all 17 Department of Health and Human Services areas in the state.

SPECIALIST FAMILY VIOLENCE COURTS

Shepparton Magistrates' Court opened a new Family Violence Court Division in October 2018. In adopting a victim-centred approach to family violence, the specialist family violence court operating model represents a significant shift in the way courts and the justice system respond to family violence. Specialist family violence courts include a specialist family violence team, culturally appropriate services (including Koori Support Workers), additional support services (including interpreters) and links to broader family violence services. The courts focus on the protection of all parties in family violence-related matters, and will improve the experiences that victim survivors have in court.

MORE SAFE AND STABLE HOUSING

Family violence housing refuge is being developed to include in-house support and after-hours service provision, providing victim survivors with the ability to more quickly access supported accommodation. While the redevelopment and expansion of crisis accommodation and refuges is not yet complete, there are other alternative forms of housing that have been provided for victim survivors and their families. These include 324 long-term social housing properties as well as 245 homes headleased from the private market.

FAMILY VIOLENCE SUPPORT FOR KOORI WOMEN

Djirra (formerly known as the Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service) and the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service have delivered community-led, culturally appropriate family violence intervention programs and services to hundreds of Koori women across Victoria. Sisters Day Out workshops promote women's safety and raise awareness about family violence. Young Luv workshops explore the nature of healthy relationships for Koori women aged 13–18. The Dilly Bag two-day intensive workshop focuses on personal development to reduce Koori women's vulnerability to family violence.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS?

THE ORANGE DOOR: SUPPORT AND SAFETY HUBS

The Orange Door commenced service in the following areas between May and November 2018:

-
+ Mallee: Mildura primary physical premises
.....
-
+ Bayside Peninsula: Frankston primary physical premises
.....
-
+ Barwon: Geelong primary physical premises
.....
-
+ North Eastern Melbourne: Heidelberg primary physical premises
.....
-
+ Inner Gippsland: Morwell primary physical premises.
.....

The Orange Door is a central part of Victoria's approach to addressing family violence, integrating specialist family violence services, perpetrator services and child and family services. The Orange Door provides screening, risk and needs assessment and planning and connection to services, including information and advice about service options and pathways.

The Orange Door has integrated and replaced the intake points that formerly received police referrals (L17s) for victim survivors and perpetrators and provided the Child FIRST service.

The Royal Commission into Family Violence recommended the integration of access points for the family violence and child and family services systems for the following reasons:

-
+ People often don't know where to go for help and feel that they're bounced around the service system.
.....
-
+ Children and families are not always getting the right care at the right time – services are overwhelmed and family violence is a major driver of child vulnerability.
.....
-
+ Efforts across the service system to hold perpetrators to account and keep them in view are insufficient, leaving victim survivors with the burden of managing risk.
.....
-
+ There is too little effort in preventing harm and intervening at the earliest possible opportunity.
.....
-
+ Existing risk assessment processes have not always been supported by the best information and practitioners have not always had the tools to address the diversity of people's experience of family violence and risks to children's wellbeing.
.....
-
+ The response people receive is often dependent on their point of entry to the service system.
.....
-
+ Service responses can be fragmented and uncoordinated.
.....

The Orange Door will be rolled out progressively to ensure the services cover all 17 Department of Health and Human Service areas.

THE ORANGE DOOR



A retired male of Italian background walked into The Orange Door, after a Centrelink referral. The man held concerns for his sister's safety and had come to seek support from The Orange Door on her behalf.

His sister was living in a dilapidated home with no functional shower or toilet, caring for two adult children with disabilities, and in a marriage with no access to money. Additionally, she was in her sixties, did not speak English and had been isolated from her extended family for many years. The brother had chosen to contact The Orange Door because his sister's husband was overseas visiting family for two weeks. Being able to walk into The Orange Door and get an immediate response from practitioners was essential to the success of this case, due to the time constraint posed by his brother-in-law's holiday.

The man supported his sister to attend The Orange Door, but did not participate in the appointment. A bilingual practitioner met with the sister to better understand her needs and determine if The Orange Door could assist. Based on the assessment, it was confirmed that family violence was a presenting issue, as was unsafe housing and difficulty managing adult children with disabilities.

Practitioners in The Orange Door worked collaboratively to assess the woman's immediate safety and developed a safety plan tailored to her circumstances. After discussing appropriate external service options, the practitioners referred her to a culturally-specific support service for case management within their family violence program.

This case involved the collaboration of several practitioners within The Orange Door and provided an opportunity for information sharing across various partner agencies to inform a comprehensive risk assessment. The service provided by The Orange Door to both the brother and the sister was timely, culturally sensitive and client-centred.

KEEPING FAMILIES SAFE: CRISIS AND EMERGENCY HOUSING

The Victorian Government committed funds in the *Victorian Budget 2018–19* to enable victim survivors to gain stable housing as quickly as possible through expanded supports:

-
✦ **\$27.7 million over four years** to fund up to 12 family violence refuges to continue to provide secure, after-hours crisis accommodation for women and children seeking immediate support. This will enable refuges to refer and accept women and children with the greatest need and at the highest risk. [As of 31 December 2018, three refuges are under construction. Two are in the final design phase, with a further four in the early stages of planning and design].
.....
- ✦ **\$1.3 million in 2018–19** for additional crisis properties in the Wimmera Southern Mallee area for women facing family violence. This will fund six additional units, which are currently in the early stages of planning and commissioning.
.....
- ✦ **\$4.1 million over two years** for the continuation of 120 family violence headleased properties to provide additional housing options for victim survivors of family violence. A procurement process has secured 128 headleased properties from the rental market. Improved data collection about emergency housing will provide insights into the outcomes achieved for victim survivors and their families.

REDEVELOPING FAMILY VIOLENCE REFUGES

The Royal Commission into Family Violence highlighted the challenges of shared and communal living spaces for families who need to access family violence supported crisis accommodation.

The Victorian Government is redeveloping all 17 of its existing communal refuges with new 'core and cluster' facilities. The new facilities will comprise the 'core' office and support building as well as the 'cluster' or independent unit accommodation for families experiencing family violence crisis.

The redesigned 'core and cluster' model means families can receive a suite of supports and services delivered in-house and still live independently within a safe and secure environment. The new facilities will also be able to meet the diverse needs of families who require intensive crisis support, including people with disabilities, and those with other complex issues such as mental health issues.

Two new core and cluster refuges specifically for Aboriginal people are also being built, making a total of 19 new facilities. As of 31 December 2018, three refuges are under construction. Two are in the final design phase, with a further four in the early stages of planning and design. While the redevelopment and expansion of crisis accommodation and refuges is not yet complete, it is anticipated that approximately 50 additional families and victim survivors will have access to accommodation, which also incorporates supports and services.

IMPROVING AFTER-HOURS SUPPORT

Most refuges are staffed Monday to Friday, during business hours only. Investment in after-hours support and funding for 12 family violence refuge services to operate after hours, enables refuges to provide a broader range of supports to victim survivors. This includes the ability to place families into the supported accommodation they need more quickly, including on weekends.

Eight services already receive after-hours refuge funding and the remaining four will receive the additional operational funding as their new core and cluster facilities are completed in 2019.

EXPANSION OF SEXUALLY ABUSIVE TREATMENT SERVICES PROGRAMS

The eligibility criteria for Sexually Abusive Behaviours Treatment Services programs has been expanded to allow access by young people aged 15–17. Previously, the program was only available to children and young people under the age of 15.

The Sexually Abusive Behaviours Treatment Services programs work with young people who are using problematic sexual behaviours, or sexually abusive behaviours, and their families. The services work with each child or young person to help them understand why they are using these behaviours, to acknowledge and address the harm caused and to help them change.

Since August 2017, \$2.9 million was provided over three years to respond to the demand for programs, and an additional \$2.7 million over two years was provided to train and support staff to work with young people aged 15–17.

“The new facilities will comprise the ‘core’ office and support building as well as the ‘cluster’ or independent unit accommodation for families experiencing family violence crisis.”

“Investment in after-hours support and funding for 12 family violence refuge services to operate after hours, enables refuges to provide a broader range of supports to victim survivors.”

SUPPORTING VICTIM SURVIVORS' ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND FINANCIAL SECURITY

FAMILY VIOLENCE FINANCIAL COUNSELLORS

Family Violence Financial Counsellors help vulnerable women access financial hardship programs and negotiate with creditors and debt collectors to protect assets from repossession. Funding for family violence financial counsellors is provided as part of Consumer Affairs Victoria's Financial Counselling Program (FCP) – a free, independent and confidential phone or face-to-face service delivered by community agencies across Victoria.

Eleven Family Violence Financial Counselling positions were funded in the *Victorian Budget 2017–18* to support victim survivors of family violence and economic abuse to recover financially. Over 4,000 victim survivors have accessed financial counselling under this program.

FAMILY VIOLENCE AND ECONOMIC ABUSE TRAINING

The Women's Legal Service Victoria and the Women's Information and Referral Exchange completed the design and development of family violence and economic abuse training for Victorian financial counsellors. Twenty-five training workshops were delivered to 179 financial counsellors, representing the majority of Victorian financial counsellors.

Funding has been committed until July 2021 to continue this training, which now forms part of the required professional development program for financial counsellors in Victoria. This will ensure that financial counsellors have the skills to navigate these complex family violence cases, supporting victim survivors to recover their economic independence sooner.

BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE, ACCOUNTABLE FAMILY VIOLENCE SYSTEM

The needs and experiences of people from diverse backgrounds and communities require responses that are inclusive and non-discriminatory. Responses must acknowledge that particular groups and communities are at greater risk of family violence, or experience family violence at higher rates.

VICTIM SURVIVORS' ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Victim Survivors' Advisory Council was established in July 2016, to represent the diverse experiences of people impacted by family violence. Membership includes representatives from the Aboriginal community, culturally and linguistically diverse communities (CaLD), people with disabilities, older Victorians, LGBTI communities, rural and regional communities, and young people. The council focuses on the diverse experiences of family violence from the victim survivor's perspective, and provides advice to the government about how to ensure effective, victim-centred family violence reforms.

The Victim Survivors' Advisory Council contributed to the family violence reforms in 2018 and provided advice about:

-
 The Orange Door implementation, including the site design, staff training and the client experience survey
.....
-
 Victoria Police family violence training and specialist family violence police units
.....
-
 Design for the new specialist family violence courts
.....
-
 Development of a primary prevention advertising campaign to stop violence against women 'Respect Women: Call it Out'
.....
-
 Introduction of the new Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme legislation
.....
-
 Development of Everybody Matters: Inclusion and Equity Statement
.....
-
 Development of Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way – Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families
.....
-
 Providing input through a Victim Survivors' Advisory Council nominated member on the Respect Victoria Board.

Partnering with victim survivors and people with a lived experience of family violence is critical to make foundational change in family violence policies, processes, relationships and power structures. Working with the Victim Survivors' Advisory Council has helped to build evidence of effective approaches for partnering with victim survivors to shape a service system that is client centred.

EVERYBODY MATTERS: INCLUSION AND EQUITY STATEMENT

Everybody Matters: Inclusion and Equity Statement is the Victorian Government's 10-year commitment to build an inclusive, safe, responsive and accountable family violence system. *Everybody Matters* outlines the pathway for system change to ensure that everyone has access to the same level of service, no matter who they are or where they go to access help. The Statement will be released in April 2019.

Family Safety Victoria engaged with a broad range of family violence service stakeholders and governance groups in 2018 to develop the statement, including the Diverse Communities and Intersectionality Working Group. Embedding a standard intersectional approach in the family violence service sector that is inclusive and equitable will ensure that we are making progress towards family violence service providers being able to better support people from diverse communities, including LGBTI communities, Aboriginal communities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities and people with disabilities.

“Everybody – with their unique characteristics and attributes – needs to be visible in the system”

– Family Safety Victoria stakeholder forum participant

“There was one counsellor who met me where I was, validated me and my experience, understood what it meant to be LGBTI and that made all the difference”

– LGBTI Pathways Mapping Project participant

INTERSECTIONALITY CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT

The Intersectionality Capacity Building project started in October 2018. The project focuses on building the capacity of family violence services and universal services to better understand, recognise and respond to the intersectional characteristics of all the people they support. This includes:

- ... Aboriginal communities
- ... culturally and linguistically diverse communities
- ... faith communities
- ... people with disabilities
- ... people experiencing mental health issues
- ... older people
- ... LGBTI communities
- ... women in or exiting prison or forensic institutions
- ... people who work in the sex industry
- ... people living in regional and rural communities
- ... male victims
- ... young people.

The Intersectionality Capacity Building project will build workforce capacity and partnerships to equip workforces that intersect with family violence to recognise and provide appropriate, inclusive and responsive services for all people with lived experience of family violence, by embedding an intersectional lens in family violence policy development, service redesign and service delivery.

The project will develop a suite of resources to support the broader family violence system to embed intersectionality into services and systems.

STRENGTHENING RESPONSES FOR ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

KOORI WOMEN'S PLACE

The Koori Women's Place started in February 2018. The two-year pilot program delivered by Djirra provides holistic support and services, and links Aboriginal women and their children to culturally appropriate services in Metropolitan Melbourne.

The Koori Women's Place offers a safe place for women to gather and participate in activities and provides a brief respite from the immediate and pressing impacts of family violence. Services include referrals to Djirra's legal service and supporting women with a variety of material aid. This may include phone credit, myki cards, food and fuel vouchers, feminine hygiene supplies, clothing and baby food.

Djirra has conducted a number of culturally safe workshops to a total of 51 participants. More than 170 Aboriginal women have accessed the Koori Women's Place.

ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY-DRIVEN PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION INITIATIVES

The *Victorian Budget 2017–18* provided funding to Djirra to continue to provide the following Aboriginal community-driven prevention and intervention initiatives:

SISTER'S DAY OUT

A three to four day workshop for Koori women. The program promotes women's safety by reducing social isolation, facilitating community networks and strong cultural connections, and raising awareness about the causes and impacts of family violence. Between July to September 2018 there have been seven workshops with 633 participants in total.

DILLY BAG

A two-day intensive personal development workshop to reduce Koori women's vulnerability to family violence and enhance their capacity to take on a leadership role in family violence prevention. From July to September 2018 there have been three workshops with 38 participants in total.

YOUNG LUV

This initiative provides a culturally safe space for young Koori women aged 13–18 to explore the dynamics of healthy relationships. This includes safe dating and online safety, and how to recognise dangerous behaviours or unsafe situations and know what to do. There have been 24 workshops with 210 participants in total.

The Royal Commission into Family Violence found that programs such as these demonstrate the way that early intervention in family violence can be creative, non-judgemental and effective.

KOORI WOMEN'S DIVERSION PROGRAM

The Koori Women's Diversion Program is a culturally safe program, which aims to prevent Koori women from having further contact with the justice system. Operating at Odyssey House, Loddon Mallee and Gippsland, 220 Aboriginal women have been referred to the program since it started in 2015 and 144 culturally appropriate workshops have been conducted. The Koori Women's Diversion Program designs programs and services that reduce the likelihood of offending or reoffending, and provides intensive case management and appropriate supports for Aboriginal women and their families.

WUNGURILWIL GAPGAPDUIR: ABORIGINAL CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AGREEMENT AND STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

Wungurilwil Gapgapduir: Aboriginal Children and Families Agreement and Strategic Action Plan was signed and launched on 26 April 2018. The *Victorian Budget 2018–19* committed \$53.3 million to support its implementation.

Wungurilwil Gapgapduir formalises the commitment between the Aboriginal community, child and family services sector and the Victorian government to a shared vision and objectives to ensure that all Aboriginal children and young people in Victoria are safe, resilient, thriving and living in culturally rich and strong Aboriginal families and communities.

Under the leadership of the Aboriginal Children's Forum, *Wungurilwil Gapgapduir* commits all parties to work in partnership to reform the delivery of child and family services by:

-
+ transitioning funding and responsibility for Aboriginal children to Aboriginal organisations
.....
- + improving the cultural safety of mainstream organisations' services
.....
- + strengthening the evidence base of what works for Aboriginal families
.....
- + building Aboriginal workforce capacity.

A strategic action plan has been developed to implement the agreement's priority areas and progress is reported to the Aboriginal Children's Forum.

New nation-leading initiatives have been developed to reduce the number of Aboriginal children in care and keep children who cannot live safely at home connected to their extended family, culture and community. Under the Aboriginal Children in Aboriginal Care initiative, two Aboriginal community-controlled organisations have been authorised to assume full responsibility for specified children on Children's Court protection orders.

The Aboriginal Children's Forum is also overseeing the transfer of case management of children in care from the Department of Health and Human Services and community service organisations to approved Aboriginal agencies.

VICTIM-CENTRED JUSTICE

FAMILY VIOLENCE LEGAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES

Family violence legal assistance services are delivered by community legal centres and Victoria Legal Aid. The services have continued to expand in response to the demand for Family Violence Intervention Orders and child protection matters through:

-
 Additional duty lawyer services for family violence and child protection matters and support for the implementation of the Specialist Family Violence Court model being rolled out at five Magistrates' Courts.
.....
-  Additional Victoria Legal Aid grants for legal assistance.
.....
-  Enhancing family violence-related legal help.
.....
-  Funding grants to 35 individual community legal centres over two years to support the delivery of family violence-related services
.....
-  Funding to a number of community legal centres, for up to two years, to deliver family violence-related services through Health Justice Partnerships or Integrated Services Grants.

Legal assistance is fundamental to ensure that victim survivors and children are safeguarded from imminent danger. This provides time to identify and plan other social and health supports which may need to be provided over the longer-term, and which also are likely to involve further legal assistance to establish longer-term protections.

Investment has increased the number of family violence-related legal assistance services available to meet the needs of people experiencing or at risk of family violence. Victoria Legal Aid has identified an increase in family violence-related calls to its Legal Help Line since July 2017. Legal Help provides free legal assistance to callers and is also able to triage callers to more specific legal advice, subject to the individual's circumstances and financial disadvantage.

Access to a duty lawyer allows the case to run more smoothly and more fairly than if people are self-represented. The funding also allows legal assistance to be provided to assist with the complex issues associated with family violence – including risk of homelessness, victim survivor and child safety and economic hardship. In more complex cases, Victoria Legal Aid will seek to provide a grant of legal assistance, which funds more extensive legal advice and representation.

Efforts to provide accessible family violence information to clients is supported through increased traffic to Victoria Legal Aid's website and use of Webchat services. This helps individuals to better understand their options. Community Legal Centres have also experienced similar increases in the number of people, principally victims survivors of family violence, who have sought their assistance.

Increased access and availability of funding for legal aid and assistance ensures that victim survivors are better represented and supported through the legal system and court processes.

YOUTH JUSTICE RISK SCREENING AND ASSESSMENTS

Youth Justice introduced family violence risk screening for all children and young people entering the Youth Justice system in February 2019. The screening recognises that many young people involved with the Youth Justice system have experienced family violence.

A December 2017 survey of young people involved with Youth Justice found that 45 per cent of participants identified themselves as victim survivors of family violence. Fifty-eight per cent had witnessed family violence – which in itself is a form of family violence against children. Thirty-three per cent had used family violence.

By incorporating the risk questions and indicators developed and implemented under the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework, Youth Justice systems have created an integrated family violence risk screening and assessment tool. This has been supported by the development of tailored Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework Practice Guidance and customised training for staff across community and custodial youth justice services. This will ensure that Youth Justice case management staff are trained to identify and assess family violence risk and better manage and support young people in the Youth Justice system who are victim survivors of family violence, or use family violence in the home.

FAMILY VIOLENCE RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

The Family Violence Restorative Justice Service provides restorative justice options for victim survivors of family violence. Restorative justice is a voluntary process, which helps victim survivors to voice their experiences, in order to heal, move forward from their experience of family violence and achieve their own sense of justice.

STRENGTHENED POLICE RESPONSES TO FAMILY VIOLENCE

FAMILY VIOLENCE INVESTIGATION MODEL

The Family Violence Investigation Model provides a specialist investigative response by a range of dedicated, police and support personnel including:

- ... family violence-specific training officers
- ... intelligence analysts
- ... police managers
- ... investigators
- ... court liaison officers
- ... clinicians and project personnel.

Victoria Police implemented the model in July 2018 to provide a specialised police response to family violence incidents. Dedicated investigators will receive advanced training in the nature and dynamics of family violence, and police linkages to the broader service system, to ensure that victim survivors receive a tailored, considered response. These investigators will take the time and actions required to support victim survivors and hold perpetrators to account in complex, high-risk cases.

Victoria Police has also developed a Family Violence Report, which will support general duties police who provide the initial response to family violence. The Family Violence Report contains questions to identify risks to the victim survivor and supports police to undertake a comprehensive risk assessment and develop an informed risk management plan. The report also contains questions to assess the type and severity of risk posed by the perpetrator, in order to guide the actions police take to address the harmful behaviour and minimise the likelihood of it reoccurring. Police across the state will use the Family Violence Report and receive training in risk assessment.

SPECIALIST FAMILY VIOLENCE ROLES

Victoria Police established the Family Violence Investigation Unit in July 2018. These specialist roles enable a tailored response to victim survivors according to the level of risk and harm they are experiencing, and the types of interventions required for the perpetrators. The Victorian Government has funded 415 positions under the Community Safety Statement to fulfil its commitment to the Royal Commission recommendations.

Family Violence Investigation Units will use an actuarial Family Violence Report, which will be fed into the broader service system via The Orange Door, to enable partner agencies to provide appropriate support to victim survivors. Police training and procedures will be aligned with procedures relating to sexual offences and child abuse to support a more integrated response.

Victoria Police specialist family violence roles include:

- ... 275 Detective Senior Constables, including 56 Sexual Assault and Child Abuse investigators
- ... 46 Family Violence Court Liaison Officers, from May 2019
- ... 21 Detective Senior Sergeants – family violence managers
- ... 42 Detective Sergeants – family violence supervisors
- ... 31 new education roles, comprising 21 Divisional Training Officers and 10 Centre for Investigation Training Officers
- ... 32 family violence analysts embedded into Family Violence Investigation Units
- ... 42 police lawyers to support new Specialist Family Violence Courts
- ... Six psychologists to support investigators' mental health and wellbeing
- ... Centre of Learning personnel and infrastructure at People Development Command.

PROVIDING RESTORATIVE JUSTICE TO VICTIM SURVIVORS

The new Family Violence Restorative Justice Service was launched in October 2018. The service provides restorative justice options to victim survivors of family violence, and assists victim survivors who have needs that are not met by other parts of the justice system.

Traditional justice responses are not tailored to victim survivors' individual needs and do not provide a forum for them to be heard on their own terms. The Family Violence Restorative Justice Service supports victim survivors to communicate about the harms they have experienced to an audience of their choosing, in order to heal, to move forward from their experience of family violence and to achieve a sense of justice.

The service is delivered by specialist trained staff who work with each victim survivor to fully understand their circumstances, assess their level of risk and develop a restorative justice process that is responsive to their wishes, situation and needs.

Victim survivors are referred to the service by partnering service organisations that are supported through processes, training, information and outreach to identify victim survivors who have needs that may be met by the service.

The service is not available to victim survivors who are currently considered to be at high risk of further abuse and whose case is currently being considered by a Risk Assessment and Management Panel, or to those who are involved in an ongoing serious criminal matter until the matter is finalised. During the pilot period, the service will not be able to meet the needs of victim survivors who require an interpreter due to the increased risk presented by the introduction of another party to the process, and Royal Commission into Family Violence findings in relation to the use of interpreters.

The service will be continuously monitored, evaluated and refined. Insights gained from the evaluation and further consultation will inform the expansion of the Family Violence Restorative Justice Service from 2020 to include a greater number of victim survivors and those whose situations and needs are more complex.

ENHANCING THE COURTS' RESPONSE TO FAMILY VIOLENCE

SPECIALIST FAMILY VIOLENCE COURTS

The Shepparton Magistrates' Court opened a new Family Violence Court Division in October 2018 to provide a specialist support service for family violence matters in the Hume and Goulburn regions and to improve the court experience for victim survivors. The Specialist Family Violence Court in Shepparton is anticipated to commence operation this year. The Magistrates' Court of Victoria will continue to roll out the Specialist Family Violence Court model at Ballarat, Frankston, Heidelberg and Moorabbin. This significant development forms part of the government's Specialist Family Violence Integrated Court Response, following a \$130.3 million investment over four years in the *Victorian Budget 2017-18*.

Specialist family violence courts enable specialist magistrates to hear all family violence matters. They have applicant and respondent practitioners, who undertake family violence risk assessments, safety planning, provide advice and make appropriate referrals. The family violence courts enable magistrates to ensure perpetrators are held accountable and the appropriate interventions are made to prevent future violence. This includes Family Violence Intervention Orders and ordering male perpetrators of family violence to attend Men's Behaviour Change Programs.

DIGITALLY ENABLED COURT RESPONSE

Twenty new multimedia screens have been installed across six court locations in Victoria, including the Melbourne Magistrates' Court.

The screens are situated in court waiting areas to provide information for court users to help them understand the court process. The multimedia screens show information about:

- ... the hearing process
- ... safety at court
- ... the Family Violence Intervention Order process.

MELBOURNE CHILDREN'S COURT: DEDICATED FAMILY VIOLENCE ROLES

The Melbourne Children's Court has established three new roles to support children and young people at risk of family violence:

- ... a family violence applicant worker
- ... a respondent worker
- ... an intake worker.

These dedicated family violence roles are designed to assist young people and families in situations where adolescents are using violence in the home. The aim is to increase the early identification of people at risk of family violence.

DOMAIN

3

PERPETRATORS ARE HELD TO ACCOUNT, ENGAGED AND CONNECTED

Early intervention prevents escalation—people, including children and young people, at risk of using family violence are identified early and provided with effective early interventions.

Perpetrators are accountable for their behaviour—people are supported to recognise factors contributing to their violent behaviours and provided with tools and strategies to act differently, preventing reoffending.

Perpetrators are held to account—perpetrators of family violence face timely and appropriate consequences.

Perpetrators are in view—perpetrators are engaged and connected to relevant agencies. Collaborative approaches and information sharing infrastructure support systemic responsibility for holding perpetrators to account.

WHAT HAS CHANGED IN THE LAST THREE YEARS?

Prior to the Royal Commission into Family Violence, there were limited avenues and efforts to address perpetrators' accountability, and individual risk factors, and keep them in view of the system.

Breaches of intervention orders were often not prosecuted, and Men's Behaviour Change Programs could only provide limited levels of support and appropriate assistance to perpetrators. Over the past three years, we have continued to progress work towards accountability and keeping perpetrators in view. We have also expanded and increased the available interventions and responses to perpetrators of family violence.

CENTRAL INFORMATION POINT

The Central Information Point started operations in 2018 to service The Orange Door locations in Victoria. The secure, statewide Central Information Point consolidates critical information about a perpetrator or an alleged perpetrator into a single report for frontline workers to quickly determine family violence risk assessment and management. The Central Information Point also empowers victim survivors to make decisions about their safety. Data is gathered from the Magistrates' Court of Victoria, Victoria Police, Corrections Victoria and the Department of Health and Human Services (Child Protection).

MEN'S BEHAVIOUR CHANGE PROGRAM

The Men's Behaviour Change Program (MBCP) now has 4,000 available places, which is a 100 per cent increase from 2015–16. The standards for MBCP providers have been improved to maintain best practice programs, including enhanced partner contact. More interventions have been trialled to engage with perpetrators who are from diverse communities, or have complex needs. Ngarra Jaranouith (Aboriginal Family Violence Men's Behaviour Change Program) was launched in November 2017, to provide culturally appropriate intensive programs for Aboriginal male perpetrators of family violence.

EXPERT ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON PERPETRATOR INTERVENTIONS

The Expert Advisory Committee on Perpetrator Interventions was established in November 2016 to ensure the diversity of programs, services and initiatives that respond to perpetrators of family violence in Victoria. The Committee provided advice on the interventions that hold perpetrators to account, including how to strengthen current practice guidelines around how child protection practitioners engage with perpetrators of family violence. The Committee was established to ensure that perpetrators are held to account, engaged and connected. The Committee concluded its work in mid-2018.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS?

REVISED MEN'S BEHAVIOUR CHANGE PROGRAM MODEL

Family Safety Victoria introduced a revised Men's Behaviour Change Program model in July 2018, developed in consultation with No to Violence and Domestic Violence Victoria. As at 31 December 2018, 2,370 participants have received the enhanced service.

The new model responds to key recommendations made by the Royal Commission into Family Violence and includes:

-
+ Increasing behaviour change program duration from 12 to 20 weeks
.....
-
+ Additional support for victim survivors and their families
.....
-
+ Ensuring all family violence workers are able to share vital information with partner community services, such as specialist victims' agencies
.....
-
+ Greater coordination with the broader community services sector.
.....

STRENGTHENING SYSTEM COORDINATION AND PROVISION FOR FAMILY VIOLENCE PERPETRATORS

The Department of Health and Human Services, Family Safety Victoria and the Magistrates' Court of Victoria have been engaged in a project to improve the access to services for family violence perpetrators. The project's intended outcomes are for perpetrators to have access to the appropriate services needed to respond to Counselling Orders and Community Corrections Orders and that they engage with these services for maximum benefit. Improved interventions are intended to reduce the incidence and severity of family violence, resulting in victim survivors feeling safer over time.

The project has focused on Department of Health and Human Services -funded services available for perpetrators involved with specialist family violence courts, with the potential to extend these responses to other Magistrates' Courts. It aims to connect efforts to improve perpetrator interventions across Family Safety Victoria, the Magistrates' Court of Victoria and the relevant Department of Health and Human Services program areas. This initiative has already begun breaking down silos across agencies, leading to closer coordination with a whole-of-system approach.

FAMILY VIOLENCE PERPETRATOR INTERVENTION GRANTS PROGRAM

The Victorian Government has committed \$1.75 million for grants that deliver innovative and emerging models of best practice in perpetrator interventions for people in contact with the justice system.

Five trial programs have commenced work with Aboriginal communities, women and gender diverse perpetrators, fathers, and men with reinforcing factors such as substance abuse and problem gambling. These programs will be evaluated to contribute to an evidence base on what works in the justice system to engage and respond to target cohorts. The aim of the program is to address service gaps, build system integration, improve behaviour change and keep perpetrators in view and accountable.

MAKING aMENds: BECOMING A BETTER DAD



The Centre of Non-Violence in Bendigo has implemented the Making aMENds: Becoming a Better Dad program. The aim of the program is to motivate men to change by enabling them to develop an understanding of how their use of violence affects their children.

Based on the premise that men who use coercive control have been conscripted into certain ways of thinking and acting, it uses a narrative approach and restorative practices. The voices of children provide examples of what a 'good dad' does. Making aMENds is underpinned by the Centre for Non-Violence's integrated family violence program, which works with men, women and children.

The program is designed for men who have perpetrated family violence, are fathers of children under 18 years, and who are either the subject of current criminal or civil proceedings, are in the community supervised by community corrections, or have recently transitioned from prison or community corrections.

The program has four components:

- ... Individual support, case management and case coordination to access resources including housing and assessment for group readiness
- ... A narrative therapy-informed 16-week group program focusing on the men's role as fathers that seeks to 'restore' father-child relationships
- ... Partner or ex-partner contact while men are connected to the program to ensure risk management and safety
- ... Family liaison that works therapeutically with the partner or ex-partner and the children.

One group has completed the program and a second group is underway. The third and final group commenced in February 2019, bringing the total number of recipients to approximately 36.

CROSS-SECTOR COORDINATION FOR ADULT MALE PERPETRATORS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE



The cross-sector coordination program is run by Bethany Community Support in Geelong, through their new Centre for Family Violence Prevention. The program facilitates a multi-agency, accountability response to adult male perpetrators of family violence, by coordinating care around the primary causal and reinforcing factors.

There has been no capacity to address a perpetrator's re-enforcing factors in the past, while also maintaining a clear focus on their primary causal factor. The program specifically addresses this key gap in service delivery for adult male perpetrators of family violence across the Geelong area.

Program recipients are men referred to Bethany Community Support by Victoria Police, Corrections Victoria or The Orange Door. The program is also open to men who self-refer and who present with two or more reinforcing factors.

The services available to participants include:

- ... Men's Behaviour Change Programs
- ... case management
- ... fathering programs
- ... alcohol and other drug treatment
- ... homelessness and housing support
- ... gambling education and counselling
- ... employment and training support
- ... financial counselling.

The cross-sector coordination program caters for up to 100 men. Twenty-two men have already engaged with the program and there are currently 19 active participants.

CORRECTIONS VICTORIA FAMILY VIOLENCE INITIATIVES

CORRECTIONS VICTORIA FAMILY VIOLENCE STRATEGY

Corrections Victoria continues to be involved in a number of family violence-related reforms. *Enhancing Safety: Family Violence Strategy for the Victorian Corrections system 2018–2021* was released in March 2018, with the associated *Action Plan 2018*. Key family violence initiatives from the strategy include:

Delivering Men’s Behaviour Change Programs to offenders in the community and in prison. The programs are designed to improve the safety and welfare of victim survivors, by changing the attitudes and behaviour of men. A total of 773 men started a Men’s Behaviour Change Program in 2017–18, with 468 participants completing the program.

The ChangeAbout program is a therapeutic intervention for perpetrators of family violence who are identified as being at moderate or high risk of reoffending. The program is accompanied by family safety planning and a support service offered to current and previous partners of participants.

Programs and services for culturally and linguistically diverse perpetrators. During 2017–18, three Family Violence Information sessions have been delivered in: Vietnamese and Arabic at the Metropolitan Remand Centre; Vietnamese and Chinese at the Fulham Correction Centre; and Vietnamese at the Marnngoneet Correctional Centre.

The Indigenous Prisoner Support Program provides weekly outreach legal services for Aboriginal women in prison, in relation to family violence. This culturally safe service proactively assists Aboriginal women to make choices that will protect their safety and resolve legal issues that are impacting their lives.

The Tuning into Respectful Relationships program assists prisoners to understand what a respectful relationship is, and to develop strategies to enhance respectful relationships. The program commenced in October 2018 at Melbourne Remand Centre and Dame Phyllis Frost for unsentenced prisoners. One program is being delivered weekly at each location.

The Out of the Dark program has been completed by 163 female victim survivors in prison. The program assists women to identify family violence and the impact it can have on their life. It also raises awareness about support services. Out of the Dark covers topics that support recovery from the family violence experience, including building relationships with children and other family members, self-empowerment and building self-confidence and self-esteem.

Specialist Trauma Counselling focuses on helping women to recover from sexual assault within the context of family violence. This includes managing symptoms, trauma recovery, empowerment programs and physical therapies. The counselling service is available to all women in prison and women post-release from remand and in Community Correctional Services.

The *Responding to Family Violence in Prisons* guidelines were released in July 2018, along with three new incident categories on the Prisoner Information Management System. The new categories enable prison officers to flag and share information with other agencies regarding threats, abuse, and breaches to Family Violence Intervention Orders. Information can be gained from the contact prisoners have with family members in the community, such as telephone calls, visits and mail. From 1 July to 1 December 2018, there were 113 Family Violence incidents recorded and referred to Victoria Police, most of which were attempted or actual breaches of Family Violence Intervention Orders.

IMPROVING SUPPORT AND RESPONSES FOR DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

PERPETRATORS FROM DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS AND WITH COMPLEX NEEDS

Family Safety Victoria has established a range of new community-based interventions for perpetrators from diverse backgrounds and with complex needs, following a \$4.8 million allocation in the *Victorian Budget 2018–19*.

Statewide case management for perpetrators is being trialled, to provide a response for perpetrators who are difficult to engage or ineligible for a Men's Behaviour Change Program. The trial includes dedicated Aboriginal and LGBTI service provision. The new model offers more flexible, tailored interventions that coordinate a range of services, including mental health, drug and alcohol and housing. As at 31 December 2018, approximately 900 clients have received this case management response.

The government is also trialling perpetrator interventions to respond to critical service gaps and develop new ways to work with perpetrators with complex needs. This includes people with cognitive impairment and learning difficulties, fathers, culturally and linguistically diverse people, LGBTI, Aboriginal communities, and females.

Seven trial programs are underway and seek to target men with a cognitive impairment, Aboriginal fathers, women who use force and recently arrived migrants and refugees.

ABORIGINAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROGRAM

The Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria continues to deliver the Aboriginal Dispute Resolution Program. The program helps to empower Victorian Aboriginal communities to resolve their own disputes through culturally appropriate training. The Aboriginal Dispute Resolution Program aims to minimise the impact of lateral violence and give communities the tools to understand and effectively manage conflict themselves.

HEALING AND STRENGTHENING PROGRAM FOR ABORIGINAL MEN.



The Health and Strengthening Program for Men is delivered by Dardi Munwurro in Coburg, in partnership with the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service

The program focuses on breaking the cycle of family violence, crime and imprisonment by supporting Aboriginal men to recognise intergenerational trauma, understand cycles of violence, commit to behaviour change, heal their spirit and develop a positive vision for their lives.

The Health and Strengthening Program provides a range of interventions for two age groups: 18– 25 years and 25 years and over. Each group participates in:

- ... a five-day healing camp
- ... tailored therapeutic support post camp
- ... case management and mentoring support from an elder, including fortnightly check-ins
- ... follow-up legal assistance
- ... a Men's Behaviour Change group
- ... a follow-up camp after nine months to build a family violence free personal narrative and to develop a plan for the next stage of the healing journey.

These activities address parenting and fathering issues where appropriate.

45 men have already been referred to the program, with at least 27 men attending the camps. The five-day healing camps were held in the Mildura and Robinvale areas.

WANGAN NGOOTYOONG (RESPECT)



The Wangan Ngootyoong program delivered by the Gunditjmara Aboriginal Cooperative in the Barwon South West area, supports Aboriginal men to stop their use of violence and abuse.

The program is based on a case management, therapeutic model that uses a cultural group design. Wangan Ngootyoong is delivered by a consortium of Aboriginal community-controlled organisations including Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation, Kirrae Health, and the Dhauwurd Wurrung Elderly and Community Health Service. The program is an innovative approach that is person centred, offers local solutions, and delivers timely and connected services.

Case management is interactive and dynamic, with an emphasis on ongoing risk analysis, safety planning and decision-making supported by accountable practice. Case management includes assessment, planning, implementation, monitoring and review within the health service system.

The aim of the program is to strengthen outcomes for participants and their children through the integration and coordination of service delivery. Collaboration within the consortium will also strengthen and help embed services within the community, supporting Aboriginal self-determination.

At this stage 16 men have been referred to the program, with eight clients currently active.

#ALLOFUS



#AllofUs delivers Integrated Service Responses to perpetrators who are cisgender women (heterosexual, bisexual and lesbian), transgender and gender diverse people.

Delivered by Drummond Street Services in Carlton, for the North West Metropolitan area, the project addresses a current service gap in the system and assesses perpetrators' underlying and often complex co-existing issues and identifies individual drivers for change. It then tailors a service response that manages risk, increases safety for families and creates opportunities for perpetrator accountability and behaviour change. The program will also engage and support victim survivors when beneficial, appropriate and safe to do so, to provide ongoing recovery support.

#AllofUs provides individual assessment and coordinated interventions including:

- ... case management
- ... cognitive behavioural therapy
- ... adapted men's behaviour change interventions
- ... mental health services
- ... drug and alcohol services.

The new program has been delivered to women at the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre, including those on remand. It is intended that the program will operate in the community with these women after release, and their victim survivors will also be engaged where appropriate.

#AllofUs aims to engage with up to 30 perpetrators and 60 victim survivors. One program has taken place, with 10 of the 16 women enrolled completing the program. Women who have completed the program (including one woman who has been released from prison) are now receiving individual support through the Integrated Service Response.

STRENGTHENING MEN'S BEHAVIOUR CHANGE PROGRAMS

ABORIGINAL FAMILY VIOLENCE MEN'S BEHAVIOUR CHANGE PROGRAM

The Ngarra Jarranounith Place is a culturally appropriate behaviour change program for Aboriginal male perpetrators of family violence. The program was launched in November 2017, with the first intake of clients starting in February 2018.

The 16-week intensive program is designed to support men who use or are at risk of using family violence to make positive changes in their lives through healing and behaviour change.

EXPANDING POLICE CAPACITY AND RESPONSE TO FAMILY VIOLENCE

ENHANCED TECHNOLOGY FOR VICTORIA POLICE

Victoria Police started a 12-month trial of body-worn cameras in October 2018 for the purpose of taking a digitally recorded evidence-in-chief statement from a victim survivor at a family violence incident. Using body-worn cameras aims to avoid victim survivors having to re-live the trauma of family violence incidents when they provide evidence at court. It also provides a more accurate and real-time representation of a victim survivor's emotional state and the impact of the family violence perpetrated against them.

Epping and Ballarat police stations are participating in the trial, together with the divisional Family Violence Investigation Units. The court locations impacted by the trial are Heidelberg Magistrates' Court, Ballarat Magistrates' Court and Melbourne Magistrates' Court. Once the body-worn cameras trial is completed, an evaluation report will be prepared to inform decision making about the future direction of the initiative.

Victoria Police is working collaboratively with Court Services Victoria, Victoria Legal Aid, the Office of Public Prosecutions and the Department of Justice and Community Safety, including Corrections Victoria to ensure broad stakeholder engagement in the trial.

The *Justice Legislation Amendment (Family Violence Protection and Other Matters) Act 2018* supports the use of body-worn cameras for recording statements in family violence matters and allows these statements to be used by victims as their evidence-in-chief.

PERPETRATORS WITH A COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT (PILOT)



'Alan' was referred to a Men's Behaviour Change Program (MBCP) following an incident with his girlfriend where ongoing verbal abuse escalated into physical violence. An intervention order was put in place to prevent contact with his ex-partner; however, he is currently able to see their daughter for supervised access visits. Alan reported significant mental health and drug and alcohol issues and has been diagnosed with ADHD.

Alan was referred to a trial program designed to work with perpetrators with cognitive impairment, where he was assessed as having a significant undiagnosed communication disorder. Alan began attending the modified Men's Behaviour Change Program, which included a mix of face-to-face and group sessions and received referrals to counselling, speech and language services. The program aims to make perpetrators accountable for their use of violence and provide an opportunity to make sustained change to their behaviour, in addition to providing dedicated ongoing support to victim survivors to assess and manage risk.

Alan benefitted from the slower pace and structured breaks within the group, which helped him with communication, attention, concentration and fatigue. Alan engaged in the group process and is now showing evidence of increased awareness of his behaviour. He recognises patterns of verbal abuse as family violence, its impact on others and shows insight into the responsibilities he has as a parent to be non-violent. Alan continues to be motivated to change and has reported that instead of responding in a violent, abusive or controlling way he has started to 'try calming myself down'.

"I take a deep breath and get out of the situation, walk away for couple minutes I take a few deep breaths."

DOMAIN

4

PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO FAMILY VIOLENCE IS SYSTEMIC AND ENDURING

Initiatives to respond to family violence are accessible and available in the right place at the right time. Prevention activities are coordinated and universal—the support system is easy to navigate and services are available to people when and where they need them, at all times of the day and night. Prevention activities occur across all key settings.

Initiatives to respond to family violence are person-centred—services are personalised, flexible, culturally relevant and reflect individual and family choices, need and circumstances, particularly for diverse communities and those with complex needs.

The system is united, integrated and joined-up—services work together and share information to provide a coordinated quality response to people and families, informed by dynamic risk assessment and sensitive to people's diverse needs. The system supports effective and evidence based prevention efforts.

The workforce is properly recognised and effectively responds, understands risk and need and is skilled to prevent family violence—the workforce is supported through new career pathways, fair conditions and a commitment to enhanced wellbeing and safety, and is skilled to meet people's diverse needs.

WHAT HAS CHANGED IN THE LAST THREE YEARS?

The existing family violence system was complex and difficult to navigate among the many services and systems, including justice and legal services, police, specialist family violence services, housing, child protection and other health services.

A whole-of-government approach to the family violence reform is required to transform how we prevent and respond to family violence. This has involved fundamental changes to underlying structures and systems, to ensure that all service systems are able to identify, assess, manage and respond to victim survivors and perpetrators, and deliver better outcomes for those affected by family violence.

RESPECT VICTORIA (AS NOTED UNDER DOMAIN 1)

Respect Victoria was established under legislation on 4 October 2018 as an independent statutory authority focused on the primary prevention of family violence and violence against women in Victoria. Respect Victoria will deliver on commitments in *Free from Violence* (Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women) focusing on two key areas of this strategy: Research and evaluation, and community engagement.

FAMILY VIOLENCE MULTI-AGENCY RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework has been redeveloped, to ensure all relevant services can contribute to the identification, assessment and management of family violence risk. The Royal Commission identified the need for better identification of family violence risk to keep perpetrators in view of the system. Over 800 organisations covering 35,000 workers are now prescribed to align their policies, procedures, practice guidance and tools to the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework.

FAMILY VIOLENCE INFORMATION SHARING SCHEME

The Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme was introduced in 2018. The scheme removes barriers to information sharing and allows information to be shared between agencies and entities to assess and manage family violence risk.

LAW REFORM

A range of significant law reforms have taken place to improve the justice system's effectiveness in protecting and responding to victim survivors, and holding perpetrators to account. The law reforms include: improving the process of serving family violence intervention orders in the *Family Violence Protection Amendment Act 2017*; empowering courts with the *Justice Legislation Amendment (Family Violence Protection and Other Matters) Act 2018*; amendments to the *Bail Act 1977*, ensuring that bail decisions actively consider the risk that the accused person may commit family violence offences, and the introduction of mandatory family violence training for all bail justices; and amendments to the *Residential Tenancies Act 2018*, which provide further protections in relation to family violence.

10-YEAR INDUSTRY PLAN

Building from Strength: 10-Year Industry Plan for Family Violence Prevention and Response outlines the government's vision to build workforce capacity and capability, and to equip workers across the specialist family violence, primary prevention, community services, health, justice and education and training sectors to prevent and respond to family violence. A targeted campaign to attract future workforces to the family violence sectors, development of accredited training, support for students, professional development and leadership programs have commenced since the plan was launched in 2017.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS?

FAMILY VIOLENCE MULTI-AGENCY ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework, was established and embedded under Part 11 of the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008*. The first round of organisations were prescribed under the framework in September 2018, including The Orange Door, Maternal and Child Health Services, and specialist family violence and sexual assault services, alcohol and drug and mental health services, Magistrates' and Children's Court, and Corrections Victoria.

The aim of the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework is to increase the safety and wellbeing of Victorians, by ensuring that all relevant services are contributing effectively to the identification, assessment and management of family violence risk. The prescribed organisations are required to align their policies, procedures, practice guidance and tools with the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework.

The framework sets minimum requirements for understanding the level and nature of family violence risk including roles and responsibilities for:

-
+ screening
-
+ risk assessment
-
+ risk management

Professionals and organisations will be supported through these changes with new tools, operational practice guidance and training.

A new online system hosting the Tools for Risk Assessment and Management (TRAM) under the framework was developed and rolled out to The Orange Door sites in July 2018. The system is now being tested at selected specialist family violence services.

FAMILY VIOLENCE MULTI-AGENCY RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK



Responding to the Royal Commission's recommendations to recognise child victim survivors as victims in their own right, the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework directs that each child should be individually assessed for family violence risk.

To support this practice, a dedicated family violence risk assessment tool supported by new practice guidance and training has been developed for child victim survivors under the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework. The Tools for Risk Assessment and Management online platform hosts the framework's assessment tools and was released for The Orange Door sites across Victoria. Selected specialist family violence services are currently testing the tools.

The Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework risk assessment tools include specific questions about presentation and experiences of family violence risk for Aboriginal communities, people from diverse communities, young and older people. As professionals use these tools, we will continue to build the evidence-base about experiences of family violence risk across these communities, which can inform future understanding and responses.

Although the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework represents a shift in practice, the benefits of the new tools and child-focused assessments are starting to be realised. In the early stages of implementing the online tools, 'Wendy', a practitioner at The Orange Door, conducted a family violence risk assessment for an adult victim survivor who had seven children.

Wendy followed the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework practice direction that each child needs to be assessed as a victim survivor in their own right and completed an individual assessment for each of the seven children, using the online tool.

Wendy acknowledged that the shift in practice was challenging and took more time, but in doing a separate assessment for each child, she uncovered pertinent risk information she would not have otherwise known. Wendy has had many years of experience in family violence risk assessment yet realised that she would not have known the difference in risk levels between each child and their differing experiences of family violence had they not done the individualised assessment.

Crucially, further information about the children's mother's level of risk was also obtained. Many perpetrators of family violence involve children to directly or indirectly target women as mothers or carers. These tactics include denigrating mothers in front of their children, making their child witness the violence or involving them in the violence, and undermining and attacking the mother-child bond. Assessing each child informed the risk management actions that were taken for the children and their mother, including safety planning and further service engagement, as well as the required interventions for the perpetrator.

INFORMATION SHARING

FAMILY VIOLENCE INFORMATION SHARING SCHEME AND THE CHILD INFORMATION SHARING SCHEME

The Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme commenced in 2018. The scheme allows information to be shared between prescribed Information Sharing Entities (ISEs) to assess and manage family violence risk, by removing barriers to information sharing. Relevant perpetrator information can also be shared with an adult or child victim survivor under the scheme, and victim survivors can use this information to manage their own safety.

Between February and September 2018, an initial group of ISEs (including Corrections Victoria, Victoria Police, specialist family violence services, and The Orange Door areas), received Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme training. The training was rolled out to approximately 2,000 practitioners, organisational leaders and workers in these entities.





In September 2018, additional organisations were prescribed as ISEs including Child Protection, maternal and child health services, mental health and alcohol and other drug services, and youth justice services. At this time, the Child Information Sharing Scheme was also introduced for a similar set of organisations to enable prescribed organisations and services to share information to promote the wellbeing and safety of children.

The two information-sharing schemes enable organisations and sectors to work together wrapping around children and families to share information and assess and manage risk to understand their needs, and identify and address risks earlier, before they reach crisis. The information-sharing schemes are an important enabler for broader system reforms, including The Orange Door.

An integrated training package focused on the Family Violence and Child Information Sharing Schemes, including an introduction to Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework, was delivered to 2,000 workers from October–December 2018. The two-day, face-to-face, multi-sector training program was held in seventeen locations across Victoria.

The sharing of this information has assisted Information Sharing Entities in providing services and support to victim survivors and children.

Information that has been shared includes:

- 
copies of intervention orders
(current and previous)
- 
applications for intervention orders
- 
applications to vary, extend or revoke
intervention orders
- 
criminal court outcomes, criminal bail
status and custody status.

ALIGNING WITH THE CHILD INFORMATION SHARING SCHEME

The new Child Information Sharing Scheme enables prescribed organisations and services to share information to promote the wellbeing and safety of children. Although many services already work together to do this, the new scheme makes it easier for professionals to support children, young people and families get the help they need as early as possible, and prevent harm occurring. The Child Information Sharing Scheme commenced in September 2018 and complements the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework and the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme.

The Family Violence and Child Information Sharing Schemes are aimed at removing barriers to information sharing to allow professionals to work together across the service system to make more informed decisions and better respond to the needs of children, families and other people, including those experiencing family violence. The Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework will guide information sharing under both information-sharing schemes wherever family violence is present.

A combined implementation approach is being used for these reforms, including through training and change management activities. The three inter-related reforms will be applied in an integrated way to respond to a range of wellbeing and safety needs and risks for children, families and victim survivors of family violence.

Together, these reforms create a more collaborative and integrated system that will help improve safety and wellbeing outcomes for all Victorian children and families, including victims of family violence.

CHILD PROTECTION PRACTITIONER GUIDELINES AND TRAINING

The Department of Health and Human Services has reviewed, strengthened and implemented risk management practice guidelines for the child protection workforce on family violence matters.

The practice guidelines relate to the L17 Family Violence Portal, used by Victoria Police and the Department of Health and Human Services, which allows for the sharing of risk assessments and historical reports of family violence to better respond to and prevent further family violence. An independent evaluation of the training program found positive shifts in family violence practice and practice leadership to support safer outcomes for children and families.

The Department of Health and Human Services has also implemented a family violence training program for child protection practitioners, which involves a two-day in-person training session and a suite of e-learning modules. Ninety-five per cent of all child protection practitioners had completed the family violence training at the end of 2018.

WORKFORCE TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

STATEWIDE INCLUSION ADVISORS

Statewide Inclusion Advisors is an initiative aimed at building capacity in family violence services and the targeted service areas to increase identification and responses to family violence. They lead in the documentation and dissemination of good practice and improving access and inclusion of people with disabilities, LGBTI people and women exiting prison experiencing family violence. The advisors support the strengthening of collaborative relationships between the targeted services and family violence services including The Orange Door.

LGBTI Inclusion Advisor

The LGBTI Inclusion Advisor is based at Domestic Violence Victoria. The advisor plays an important statewide capacity-building role in connecting family violence services across the state with LGBTI organisations, in particular with the new specialist LGBTI family violence service W/ Respect. The LGBTI Inclusion Advisor is working closely with the nineteen family violence service providers undergoing Rainbow Tick accreditation and supports the broader family violence service sector to enhance LGBTI inclusion and to establish collaborative working relationships with LGBTI-specific services.

Disability Inclusion Advisor

The Disability Inclusion Advisor role will be piloted at Domestic Violence Victoria in partnership with Women with Disabilities Victoria. This role will lead the development of practice guidance and document good practice to improve the inclusion of people with disabilities in family violence services and improve identification and response to family violence by disability services at a statewide level. The Disability Inclusion Advisor will contribute to and support the use of key frameworks and practice guidance such as the Department of Health and Human Services Disability Action Plan and the Code of Practice for family violence specialists. The role will build new capacity-building activities and initiatives for family violence specialist services in working with people with disabilities. This role will also support the strengthening of relationships between disability services (including NDIS) and with family violence services (including The Orange Door).

The Disability Inclusion Advisor will also inform government approaches on bridging family violence, disability and NDIS reform initiatives in Victoria to support service system response. They will work closely with the Disability Practice Leaders in the established regions, who will be able to feed into good practice guidance and implement some of the practice at a local level. This role provides a sector-based statewide position that can identify key themes and critical gaps, in order to make an informed response.

Inclusion Advisor for Women in and Exiting Prison

The Inclusion Advisor for Women in and Exiting Prison is located at the support and advocacy service provider Flat Out. The advisor will play a key role in raising awareness of the circumstances and complex needs of women who have been in prison and experienced family violence. The advisor will contribute to systemic advocacy and social change and build the capacity of the family violence and generalist service systems to respond effectively to women who have been in prison.

The Inclusion Advisor for Women in and Exiting Prison will work across the state and will build relationships with family violence specialist services and local community services. This role will commence in early 2019. Some of the key responsibilities of the advisor will include providing secondary consultations to individual services, developing and delivering flexible training packages, and developing promotional and informational materials to support effective responses for women in or exiting prison who have experienced family violence.

FAMILY VIOLENCE INDUSTRY PLANNING

Building from Strength: 10-Year Industry Plan for Family Violence Prevention and Response outlined the government's plan to equip and support workers to prevent and respond to family violence. Key initiatives include:

-
+ Six statewide leadership intensive workshops, bringing together public sector thought leaders, academics and the social service sector to explore managing change in a complex environment
.....
-
+ A targeted campaign (2018–2020) to attract future workforces to the specialist family violence sector and primary prevention sectors
.....
-
+ The Enhanced Pathways into Family Violence Sector Roles project to facilitate student placements in community services sector organisations which provide family violence services. The program includes training for supervisors to enhance their competence and confidence in working with students and new workers entering the sector. The program features ten capability building coordinators employed in the sector to support student placements and develop formal partnerships with education providers
.....
-
+ The Fast Track Professional Development Program was undertaken as a pilot program to test intensive upskilling of specialist family violence workers to progress into senior leadership roles
.....
-
+ The establishment of specialist Family Violence Advisor roles across Victoria to provide specialist expertise to mental health and alcohol and other drug services across the 17 Department of Health and Human Services areas
.....
-
+ Accredited family violence prevention and response courses to meet the skills and knowledge requirements across a broad range of workforces, are currently under development, and will be delivered by TAFEs and Registered Training Organisations from 2019.

EXPANSION OF INITIATIVES LED BY ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

PREVENTING THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE ABORIGINAL FUND

The Preventing the Cycle of Violence Aboriginal Fund provides \$2.7 million over two years (2018–2020) to Aboriginal-led organisations and community groups to run family violence prevention and early intervention projects. The fund aims to achieve respectful, culturally rich, strong and healthy relationships for Aboriginal children, young people, families and Elders.

Eleven Aboriginal-led organisations and community groups will receive funding in early 2019 through the first round of grants. The first-time funding will support the delivery of community-designed initiatives, such as resilience camps, returning to country, men's gatherings, awareness campaigns and messaging through sport. The organisations are based throughout Victoria with the initiatives working at a local, regional and statewide level. An Aboriginal-led evaluation of these initiatives will contribute to a greater understanding of family violence prevention and early intervention in Aboriginal communities.

ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY INITIATIVES FUND

The government allocated \$1.1 million to the Aboriginal Community Initiatives Fund in the *Victorian Budget 2018–19* to implement local Aboriginal-led initiatives that prevent, reduce and respond to family violence in Victorian Aboriginal communities.

This is the first time that the total annual funding allocation has been increased since 2006, signalling the Victorian Government's commitment to assisting Aboriginal communities to respond to family violence.

INCREASED INCLUSIVITY FOR LGBTI COMMUNITIES

LGBTI INCLUSION TRAINING AND ACCREDITATION

All family violence service providers across the state have been funded to undertake the HOW2 Program to ensure inclusive practice and service delivery for all victim survivors of family violence. The program is delivered by Rainbow Health Victoria and supports organisations to develop and implement LGBTI inclusive practices and to prepare for full Rainbow Tick accreditation.

Following the initial group of 11 service providers that commenced the training in March 2018, a second group of eight family violence service providers were selected to undertake the accreditation from mid-2018.





Rainbow Tick accreditation consists of six standards against which services can be formally accredited to demonstrate LGBTI inclusive practice and service delivery. Accreditation of at least one key service in each Department of Health and Human Services region will significantly enhance the inclusiveness of the sector to ensure that all victims of family violence can access the help and support they need. LGBTI people seeking help from those services can be confident that service staff will be respectful, welcoming and have an understanding of how family violence may be impacting them and their family members.

This initiative is supported by a new statewide LGBTI Inclusion Advisor at Domestic Violence Victoria who will work with the organisations seeking accreditation to link them into LGBTI services – in particular, the new specialist LGBTI family violence service W/Respect.

Rainbow Health Victoria has also developed an LGBTI family violence training module for family violence service providers to address the specific risks and relationship dynamics relevant to LGBTI communities, their families and people using violence. Those services undergoing Rainbow Tick accreditation are being supported to incorporate this training across their organisations.

W/RESPECT – LGBTI FAMILY VIOLENCE SPECIALIST SERVICE

W/Respect was launched in September 2018. W/Respect is an integrated LGBTI specialist family violence service that functions in partnership with four LGBTI specialist organisations:

-
 Queerspace (hosted by Drummond Street Services)
-
 Thorne Harbour Health (formerly Victorian AIDS Council)
-
 Switchboard Victoria (supported by Q Life)
-
 Transgender Victoria.

W/Respect’s role is to support people in LGBTI communities with lived experience of family violence, and to build the capacity of the integrated family services and specialist family violence system. The W/Respect consortium provides case management, counselling, flexible support packages and recovery programs. It is responsible for the development of a range of resources to support LGBTI people experiencing family violence, as well as providing information to family violence service providers and other professionals about family violence against LGBTI people through its website.

The establishment of a dedicated service and targeted information for people in LGBTI communities addresses a key gap identified by the Royal Commission. The service will enable greater identification and reporting of family violence by people in LGBTI communities, and more inclusive and appropriate responses. There is strong demand for the service from LGBTI community members as well as family violence services seeking specialist advice and secondary consultations.

FAITH-BASED FAMILY VIOLENCE SERVICE PROVIDERS IN SUPPORT FOR LGBTI CLIENTS

On 30 August 2018, ten faith-based family violence service providers launched a joint Statement of Support for LGBTI clients, pledging their commitment to ensuring inclusive and non-discriminatory service delivery. This initiative responds to the Royal Commission’s Recommendation 169.

The organisations include: Anglicare Victoria, Vincent Care Victoria, Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand, Salvation Army, McAuley Services for Women, Jewish Care, MacKillop Family Services, Uniting (VicTas) Church, Sacred Heart Mission and Good Samaritan Inn.

The ten organisations have also committed to continuing to work towards LGBTI inclusion, including the HOW2 Program and undertaking Rainbow Tick accreditation.

The Statement of Support for LGBTI clients and a commitment to inclusive practice by these leading faith-based services is an important step towards addressing a key barrier to the reporting of family violence against people in LGBTI communities: the fear of discrimination as a result of *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* exemptions for faith-based services. LGBTI people seeking help can now be confident that these organisations will not rely on those exemptions and are actively working towards more inclusive practices. A short video has been produced to promote the initiative and assist the sector understand its significance.

BUILDING RESPONSIVENESS TO THE NEEDS OF CULTURALLY DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

The government committed \$1.95 million over three years to inTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence in 2018–19 to build the responsiveness of the family violence sector, mainstream and universal services to the needs of culturally diverse communities. This funding also supports inTouch to build the capacity of multicultural, ethno-specific and faith-based organisations to recognise family violence, respond and refer appropriately to disclosures of family violence, as well as play a leadership role in informing family violence policies and reforms on issues affecting Victorians of culturally diverse and faith backgrounds.

FAMILY VIOLENCE DATA

FAMILY VIOLENCE DATABASE UPDATE

The Crime Statistics Agency released the 2017–18 Victorian Family Violence Database update in December 2018. The update includes two new data sources: the Coroners Court and Ambulance Victoria.

The Victorian Family Violence Database is a unique, whole-of-government statistical data collection, which brings together key family data sources into one interactive portal available to decision-makers and the public. The database is a key resource to the Victorian Government, family violence service sector and the community in understanding the interactions Victorians have with a range of justice and human services that respond to family violence. It is a crucial information asset during the historic levels of reform occurring within the family violence service sector.

The Victorian Family Violence Database includes data from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2018 from a range of Victorian government agencies. The data relates to:

- ... family violence incidents recorded by police
- ... family violence intervention orders
- ... emergency department presentations
- ... Ambulance Victoria attendance at family violence incidents
- ... family violence services for women and children, and male perpetrators
- ... legal services provided by Victoria Legal Aid
- ... family violence related-deaths reported to the Coroners Court of Victoria.




FAMILY VIOLENCE DATA PLATFORM PROJECT

The body of work formerly known as the Family Violence Index project is now led by Respect Victoria and redeveloped as the Family Violence Data Platform Project. The Family Violence Data Platform Project will be used to measure Victoria's progress in preventing family violence and violence against women. It will provide a guide for policy-makers, researchers and practitioners working in the sector to track population-level progress towards change. The platform will be informed by a framework that advises on available data sets, where gaps exist, and the processes needed to gather this information.

IMPROVING LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONSES

REDESIGNED FAMILY VIOLENCE REPORT

Victoria Police has reviewed and redesigned the Family Violence Report (known as the L17 Form). The Family Violence Report serves multiple purposes:

-
 Initial risk identification for immediate intervention.
-
 Preliminary investigation of an incident.
-
 Capture of key information for broader service response.






Victoria Police has revised the Family Violence Report and associated processes to address the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Family Violence and coronial inquests, the findings of academic research, the criteria under the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework and broader reform directions.

The revised Family Violence Report will enable the timely and accurate identification of family violence cases where there is an increased risk of future family violence, requiring additional assessment and intervention under the Family Violence Investigative Model. Through the combined use of the risk assessment and professional judgement, the government can work towards ensuring that appropriate criminal, civil and referral options are provided to victim survivors.

LAW REFORM







FAMILY VIOLENCE PROTECTION AMENDMENT ACT 2017

The following reforms included in the *Family Violence Protection Amendment Act 2017* came into effect over the past twelve months:

-
 Faster and simpler processes for serving family violence intervention orders, providing safety to victim survivors and their children more quickly.
.....
-  New measures to reduce abuses of the intervention order appeal process by preventing perpetrators from using legal processes to delay justice and commit further abuse.
.....
-  Allowing pre-recorded evidence to be used in some proceedings for family violence offences to provide greater support and comfort for victim survivors as they seek justice through the courts.
.....
-  Extension of first mention dates for Family Violence Safety Notices to 14 days.
.....
-  Increased protections for children subjected to family violence, including a requirement that the court consider whether there are any children who have been subjected to family violence committed by the respondent before making either an interim or a final family violence intervention order.

JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (FAMILY VIOLENCE PROTECTION) ACT 2018

In August 2018, Parliament passed the *Justice Legislation Amendment (Family Violence Protection and Other Matters) Act 2018*, responding to six recommendations of the Royal Commission into Family Violence. Reforms in the Act include:

-
 Extending the therapeutic treatment order regime to young people aged 15–17, to enable the Children’s Court to order attendance at appropriate programs.
.....
-  Enabling the trial of a scheme allowing complainants to give a recorded statement for later use as their evidence-in-chief in proceedings for family violence offences.
.....
-  Establishing and supporting the rollout of the Specialist Family Violence Court Division in the Magistrates’ Court of Victoria.
.....
-  Enabling family violence intervention order applications to be filed online. This supports the rollout of an online application across Victoria.
.....
-  Empowering courts to make interim family violence intervention orders on their own motion, in criminal proceedings.
.....
-  Including dowry-related abuse and forced marriage as statutory examples of family violence in the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008*.

The remaining reforms in the Act will commence in stages as affected stakeholders complete the work necessary to implement each reform, such as IT changes, new practices and procedures, staff training, community education and new or upgraded infrastructure.

The amendments supporting the trial of the recorded evidence-in-chief scheme commenced on 3 October 2018. The scheme is being trialed by trained police officers from the Ballarat, Ballarat North, Ballarat West and the Epping Police Stations using body-worn cameras. There will be an independent evaluation of the trial, to determine whether the scheme is retained permanently and rolled out statewide.

CHANGES TO THE BAIL ACT

Amendments to the *Bail Act 1977* in 2017 formed part of the government's response to the Coghlan Bail Review, undertaken in response to the Bourke Street tragedy in 2017. Legislative changes included addressing Recommendation 80 of the Royal Commission into Family Violence, ensuring that making decisions on bail actively consider the risks that accused persons may commit family violence offences if released.

The Coghlan Bail Review also recommended that bail justices receive specialised training in family violence. This training has now been made mandatory for all bail justices and the Department of Justice and Community Safety Family Violence Principal Practitioner has provided training to 90 bail justices.

TENANCY REFORMS STRENGTHENING THE SECURITY OF VICTIM SURVIVORS

Parliament passed the *Residential Tenancies Amendment Act 2018* in September 2018. The Act provides further protections in relation to family violence and strengthening the security of victim survivors who are renting. This includes reforms to:

-
+ Allow the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) to consider any evidence of family violence it believes relevant when providing access to family violence protections.
.....
- + Allow family violence-related applications to be heard by VCAT within a specified time.
.....
- + Provide that a parent or guardian of a child who is a victim survivor of family violence may apply under the family violence provisions.
.....
- + Empower VCAT to adjudicate terminations of tenancies in situations of family violence.
.....
- + Prohibit unfair tenancy database (blacklist) listings for victim survivors of family violence.

-
+ Enable a notice to vacate to be challenged in the context of family violence.
.....
- + Provide the ability to apportion liability in the context of family violence where a perpetrator is a co-tenant.
.....
- + Protect victim survivors of family violence against liability resulting from a perpetrator who is not a co-tenant.
.....
- + Include an option for VCAT to serve notices and documents on a perpetrator of family violence.

NATIONAL FAMILY LAW REFORM

A national Law, Crime and Community Safety Council (now Council of Attorneys-General) Working Group was established through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) to consider the impacts of the proposed changes to the family law system by the Commonwealth Government. The Victorian Government chaired two working groups with the Commonwealth, reporting to the Council of Attorneys-General on 23 November 2018. The Law, Crime and Community Safety Council Working Group provided advice on:

-
+ Options for improving the family violence capabilities of professionals working in the family law and family violence systems.
.....
- + Guidance for family violence risk assessment and management in the justice system.

The Department of Justice and Community Safety has also convened a working group with the Department of Health and Human Services, Family Safety Victoria the Department of Premier and Cabinet, and the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department to develop a proposed approach to reducing fragmentation between the family violence and family law systems.

ENHANCING COURT RESPONSES

JUDICIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Ongoing judicial education in relation to family violence knowledge and skills is crucial to support the judiciary in maximising safety for victim survivors and holding perpetrators of family violence accountable for their actions.

The Judicial College of Victoria is undertaking a strategic approach to family violence education to ensure that it meets the needs of the jurisdictions and the requirements of recommendations 120, 175, 215 and 216 of the Royal Commission into Family Violence. This strategic approach has a number of aspects:

-
+ The development of a three-year family violence education plan (2018–2021). This plan has been designed for the Magistrates’ Court with aspects that are available to judicial officers in all jurisdictions. The plan aligns with the Family Safety Victoria industry framework and proposes a three-tiered approach to family violence education for magistrates: foundational, advanced and expert. It incorporates the Judicial College of Victoria’s Family Violence Bench Book, Family Law Manual and other publications that are relevant to family violence.
.....
- + Family violence education strategy for VCAT that reflects the ways in which family violence presents in the Residential Tenancies and Guardianship Lists, and combines existing electronic resources with face-to-face programs to cover four modules of family violence knowledge and skills.
.....
- + Specialist Family Violence Court education: The Judicial College of Victoria developed a three-day family violence education program for the multi-disciplinary team at the Shepparton Magistrates’ Court’s Family Violence Court Division. The first day of that program took place on 23 November 2018.
.....
- + The Judicial College of Victoria has also continued to update the Family Violence Bench Book, Family Law Manual and other publications to reflect the significant changes to the law in this area.

FAMILY VIOLENCE CONTACT CENTRE

The Family Violence Contact Centre started in May 2018 and has diverted over 10,000 enquiries. Data shows that the centre largely deals with transactional matters, with less than three per cent of enquiries needing to be transferred back to the registry who manage the day-to-day operations of the court. The project has alleviated daily pressures in the court as well as improving accessibility to court services for those experiencing family violence with the average wait time being less than one minute.

REVIEW OF LISTINGS PRACTICES

The Magistrates’ Court of Victoria has reviewed current family violence listing practices across locations, including how matters are listed in the court for hearing (staggered listings) and how many matters can be listed for hearing on any given day (capping and benchmark listings). Work has also been undertaken to incorporate family violence intervention orders into the Electronic Mention Diary, which enables Victoria Police and Court Coordinators to better manage family violence lists.

COURT RESPONSES IN DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

UMALEK BALIT

The Melbourne Magistrates' Court launched Umalek Balit in November 2018. Umalek Balit is a culturally safe and relevant program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families who come to the Melbourne Magistrates' Court for family violence-related court proceedings. The program offers support, information and referrals to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families about family violence intervention orders, family violence-related criminal matters and the Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal.

Umalek Balit also has a Koori Women's and a Koori Men's Family Violence Practitioner with specialist cultural and family violence knowledge. The practitioners provide services to court users who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, are a non-Aboriginal partner or family member of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person, or have Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children.

The practitioners work with applicants and respondents to guide them through the court process, including family violence-related intervention orders, and criminal or Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal matters. It aims to increase the court's capacity to respond to Koori court users, respond to risk factors that impact on Koori court users and integrate with service providers to improve access to court services.

LGBTI PRACTITIONERS

The family violence Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) Practitioner team commenced in November 2018 at the Neighbourhood Justice Centre. The team helps to ensure a dedicated response to inclusive services by prioritising victim safety and offender accountability. LGBTI practitioners promote trust and understanding between the Victorian Courts and LGBTI communities, ensuring confidence in a fair and equitable court response.

The LGBTI Family Violence Practitioner team is currently based at the Neighbourhood Justice Centre. There are also outreach components to other Melbourne Metropolitan Courts with an ability to provide secondary consults to remote courts within Victoria.

CONCLUSION

This report presents a snapshot of the significant achievements made across the family violence reforms, both in 2018 and more broadly, in the three years since the Royal Commission into Family Violence.

We have achieved many significant milestones in our reform journey, and we will continue to work closely with victim survivors, the sector and across government as we deliver these once-in-a-generation reforms in order to achieve our vision of a Victoria free from violence.



**THREE YEARS ON FROM THE ROYAL
COMMISSION INTO FAMILY VIOLENCE**

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