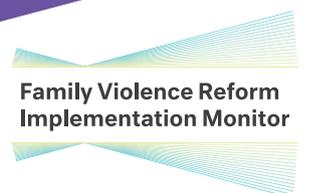


# Report of the Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor

As at 1 November 2018



### **Family violence services and support**

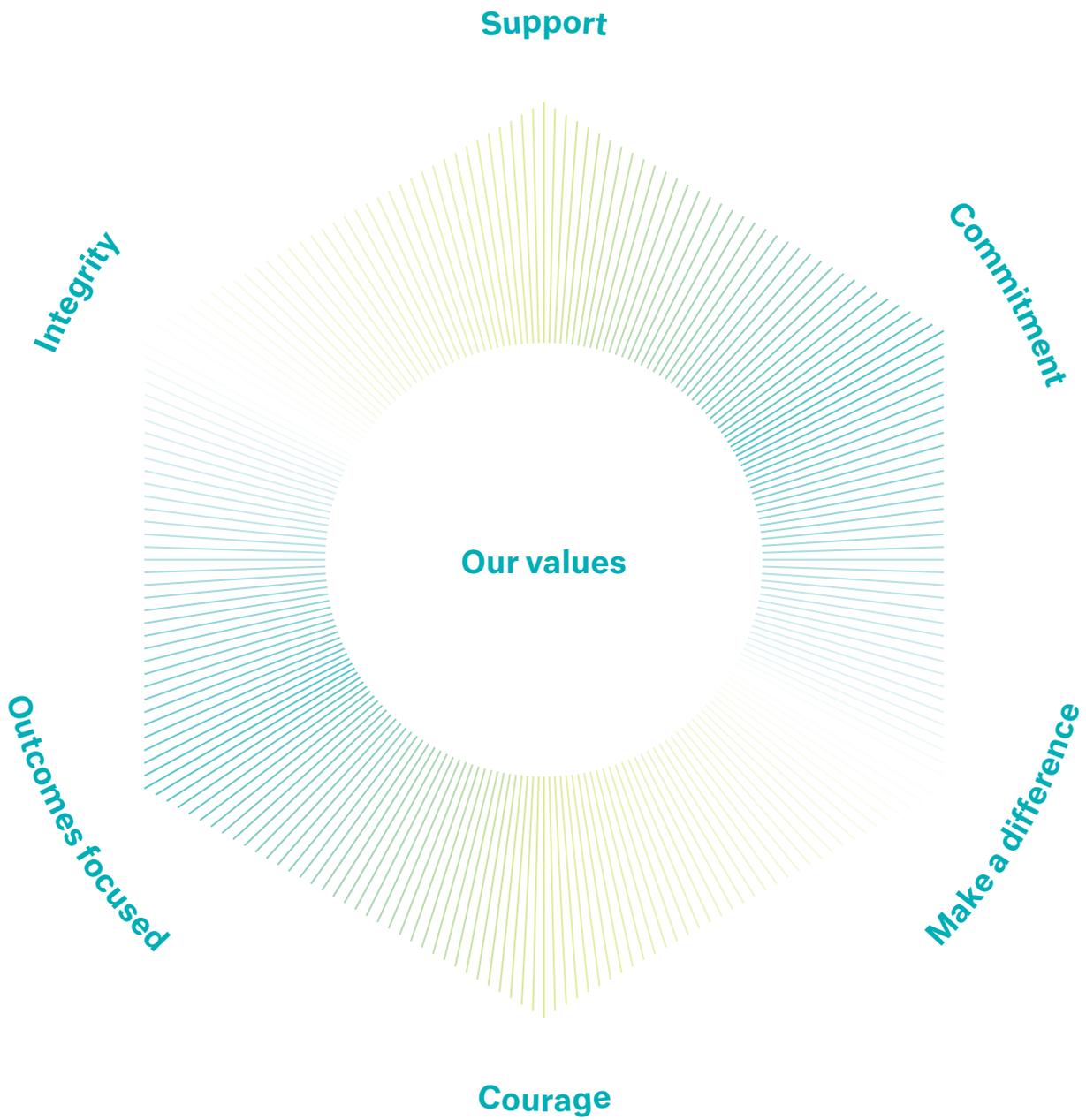
If you have experienced violence or sexual assault and require immediate or ongoing assistance, **contact 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732)** to talk to a counsellor from the National Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence hotline. For confidential support and information, contact Safe Steps' 24/7 family violence response line on **1800 015 188**. If you are concerned for your safety or that of someone else, please contact the police in your state or territory, or **call 000** for emergency assistance.

### **Aboriginal Acknowledgment**

The Victorian Government proudly acknowledges Victorian Aboriginal people as the first peoples and Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and water on which we rely. We acknowledge and respect that Aboriginal communities are steeped in traditions and customs built on an incredibly disciplined social and cultural order. This social and cultural order has sustained more than 60,000 years of existence. We acknowledge the ongoing leadership role of the Aboriginal community in addressing, and preventing family violence and join with our First Peoples to eliminate family violence from all communities.

# **Report of the Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor**

As at 1 November 2018



## Foreword

**When I was a young police officer, family violence dominated the night shift.** There was one call after another. On an average night in summer, a divisional van would attend seven or eight family violence incidents. Some of those would be repeat visits, going back to the same home three times in a night. We didn't particularly understand family violence, and we didn't have the tools to respond. We wanted to get in and out as quickly as we could and hoped we didn't get called back again that night.

**Forty years later, our community's response to family violence has completely changed.** The Royal Commission into Family Violence showed us the extent of this change. Years of work by advocates, family violence workers and other social workers, police, courts and the government has brought the truth to light. Family violence undermines the very foundations of our community. We cannot accept it. The Premier Daniel Andrews calls family violence 'the number one law and order issue in our nation'. While it disproportionately affects women and children, its impacts spread wide, cutting across all ages, socio-economic and demographic groups.

It has been nearly three years since the Royal Commission laid down its report, calling for reform. The government committed to sustained and effective action, system reform and, crucially, major investment. **I cannot overstate the complexity and significance of the reform the government is undertaking.** It is made up of many elements that on their own would each represent a major reform. It touches many other complex areas, including homelessness and drug and alcohol abuse. Such a significant reform has a very high risk profile, but also has the potential for major beneficial change.

My office was created to support the effective implementation of the reform. My approach to monitoring is described in Appendix A, and Appendix B lists key stakeholders I met with over the period to hear their voices and observations. I met with the Victim Survivors Advisory Council several times and speak to individual members regularly to get the direct input of people who have lived experience of family violence and of the family violence prevention and response system. I regularly meet with people in the community sector, people with extensive knowledge and experience of operating within this service system. I attended the Dhelk Dja Partnership Forum, to assist me to understand the experience, achievements and vision of Aboriginal people. I visited Support and Safety Hubs, talking to the workers on the ground. I meet with government agencies to understand what they do, how they understand their role, how they get confidence they are on track, and how they are guided by the voices of victim survivors.

I tabled my first report in May 2018. I found there were foundational issues that needed to be addressed to support such a major reform. I saw an understandable but excessive focus on process around acquitting the recommendations; and I saw a need for effective management of the risks arising from the urgency applied to implementation. The Premier's commitment to implement all of the recommendations of the Royal



**Tim Cartwright APM**

*Family Violence Reform  
Implementation Monitor*

Commission was an important policy statement to the community and the public service. However, sometimes the acquittal of the recommendations has been seen as an end in itself, rather than as a means to the desired outcomes that the recommendations and the government are seeking to achieve. I encouraged the government to take more time to build the strong foundations that are critical for long-term, sustainable change.

This year, as more parts of the reform moved into delivery phase, I sought to support the changes needed to build these foundations and address my first report's findings. I was guided again by the question: **what is best for current and future victim survivors?** And this year, also considered the parallel question: **what will break the cycle, and avoid people becoming perpetrators, victims or victim survivors?** I decided to choose areas of focus, to examine specific elements of the reform in more detail. My findings are laid out in this report.

Some work has been done on the foundational issues, but not enough progress on these issues has been made and it still remains difficult to measure progress of the reform. Government agencies have put in good work and their commitment is evident but this work is yet to be brought together effectively. Implementation is still largely siloed within agencies, and coordination is proving to be a challenge. Some of this is due to gaps in capability, some to issues with the governance framework, and some due to the enormous ambition of the reform. It requires a different way of working. Looking at the reform in totality can be overwhelming hence the tendency to stay siloed – to stay in the way we've done it before. Taking a new approach requires real leadership at all levels of government. This won't be easy but it is possible.

The impact of these issues is visible in the three areas I chose to focus on, particularly the need for a more systemic approach. I chose to look at Support and Safety Hubs (Hubs; branded as The Orange Door) as a focus area because they were the biggest element of the reform – biggest budget, biggest change, biggest profile, biggest risk. Introduction of the Hubs will affect most of the sector stakeholders involved in the family violence reform, and these stakeholders wanted me to look at them. I looked at primary prevention because this is what will end family violence, rather than just treat its impacts, and there was an opportunity to support this area of work as the government established its foundations. Finally, I chose voices of victim survivors because these are the people the reform is about, and I felt that the work to date, while impressive, had not fully satisfied the intention of the Royal Commission.

The implementation of the first five Support and Safety Hubs was rushed. I understand the urgency all too well, but would like to see the government take the opportunity before the next Hubs open to balance the advantages of maintaining momentum and opening quickly against the additional costs this approach incurs and the increased risks. The work on prevention

is looking positive, with the government having had more time to plan effectively. There is now an opportunity to greatly strengthen the coordination of prevention work before it moves into the next phase. While there are bodies with a prevention-wide overview, they do not have the authority to direct government agencies to ensure that prevention initiatives are implemented in the most effective way. The government's work to ensure the voices of victim survivors are heard is being managed with great care for the contributors. The government now needs to build on this and do more to ensure that it is getting the specific consultation inputs it needs. Similar to the other focus areas I examined, this could benefit from coordination across agencies and a systemic view.

These areas of focus also revealed other risks and issues in the reform. Workforce needs were always going to be a challenge, hence the development of a 10 year industry plan for family violence prevention and response. However, the heavy load the reform is placing on the workforce is proving to be a major issue that will impact most areas of the reform. In the community services sector, the workforce does not yet exist on the scale required. There are simply not the people with the required training to take on these roles. Some of the service sector organisations are very small and have had to build up their teams quickly, which presents significant challenges in recruitment but also training and management. Within the public service, the reform has resulted in two new agencies, new teams across the public sector, and a significant shift for the Department of Premier and Cabinet into implementation and portfolio and program management. The government needs to continue to develop its own workforce to ensure the effectiveness of the reform.

Much work is underway, with a description of some of the activity during the monitoring period on pages 2 to 5. Some of this year's activities are reflected in this report, but I have necessarily focused the resources of my office on the three key areas.

There are many positives. We are seeing shifts in how the system works. In the Hubs, disciplines are coming together at the front end. There are information services which weren't available before. The voices of victim survivors are becoming better heard. There are also collateral benefits. For example, many of the diverse communities now have a stronger voice not only in family violence reform but with the government generally. From my observations it seems that newspapers are focusing less on what the victim did, and more on the perpetrator. We can't measure this kind of change easily, nor can we isolate the impact of the family violence reform, but it is clear the Royal Commission and the government's reform are contributing to maturing these discussions in our community.

I have advised the Premier and the Minister for Prevention of Family Violence that I intend to leave the role of Monitor later this year. I thank the large number of people I have met with during my time as Monitor,

from government and non-government sectors, for their discussions, debate, willing engagement, and cooperation. I have been impressed and humbled by the commitment of all the people that I have met in this role.

**We've come a long way. We've got a long way to go. Ending family violence will take a generation or more.** As the government, the sector and the community face these challenges, we must always remember the people at the heart of this reform – the victim survivors of family violence – and our goal of becoming a community where family violence is a thing of the past.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Cartwright', with a stylized flourish at the end.

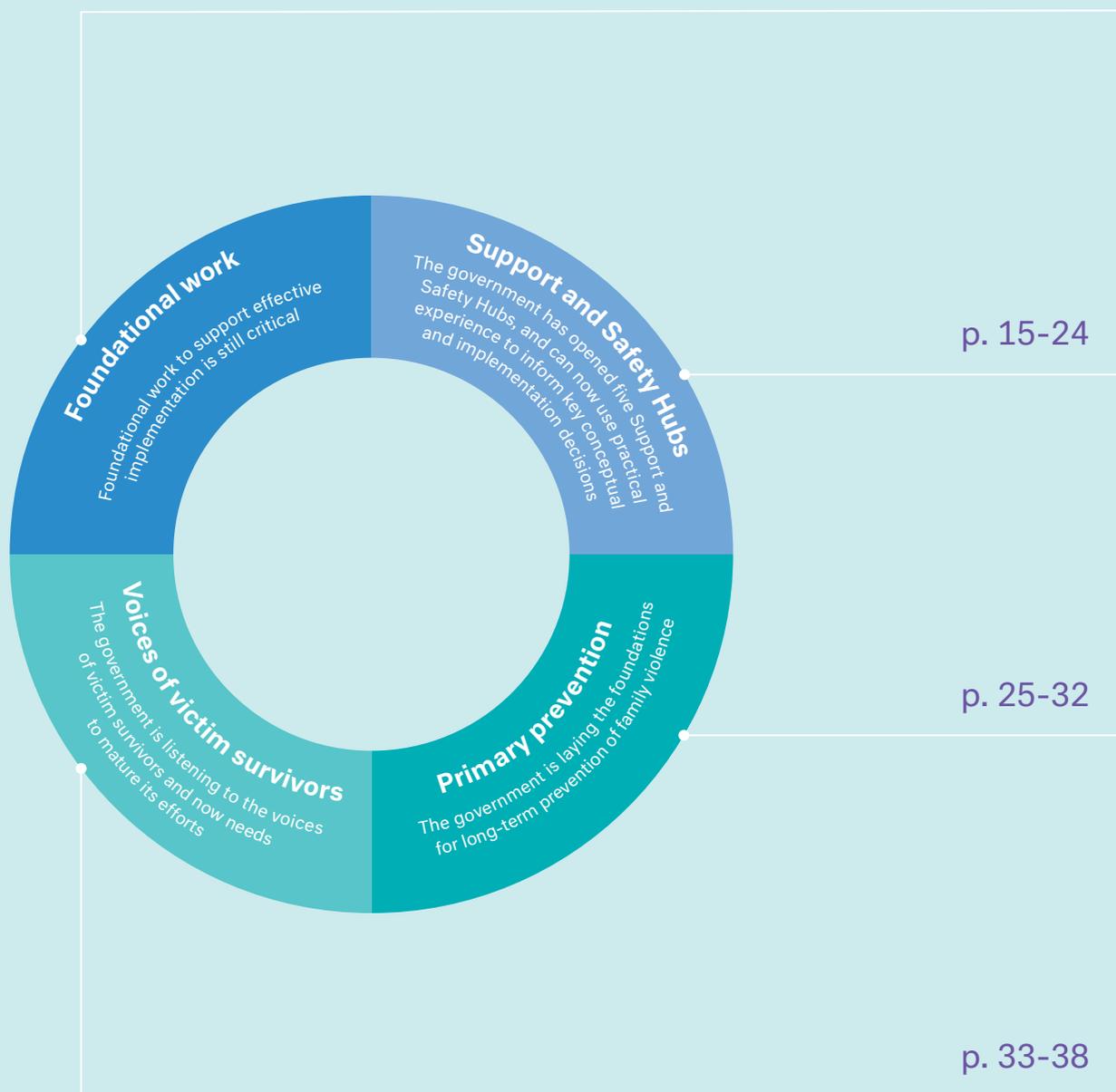
**Tim Cartwright APM**

Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor

# Structure of the report

This report focuses on foundational work and three areas of the reform, and identifies opportunities to improve the effectiveness of implementation.

p. 6-14



Each chapter of this report focuses on one of these broad themes, setting out the Monitor's observations and corrective action that should be taken to better ensure the reform is implemented successfully. Corrective actions are proposed in relation to each area at the end of each chapter.

Foundational work

Support and Safety Hubs

Primary prevention

Voices of victim survivors

FIGURE 1A

## Reform implementation activity during this monitoring period

1 November 2017–1 November 2018

As noted in the Foreword, much work has been done during the monitoring period.

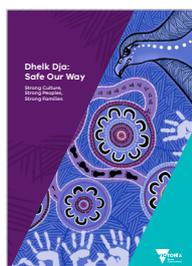
The body of this report focuses on activity undertaken in relation to foundational issues, the Support and Safety Hubs, primary prevention, and the voices of victim survivors – this is reflected in the relevant chapters. These were the monitoring priorities for this period (see Appendix A for discussion of how monitoring priorities were selected).

The following figure includes activity both in relation to these monitoring priority areas and in addition to them. It captures major activities and milestones. It does not include smaller activities, nor activities announced but not commenced, nor plans for future activities or funding. For more detail on the government’s acquittal of recommendations, refer to the Victorian Government public reporting website (last updated May 2018).<sup>1</sup>

RELATING TO OUTCOMES*	IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITY	
	Capacity building	Legislation
<p>Family violence and gender inequality are not tolerated</p>	<p>The <i>Family Violence Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework</i> was established in law as a legislative instrument under the <i>Family Violence Protection Act 2008</i> and commenced operation (27 September 2018).</p>	
<p>Victim survivors, vulnerable children and families, are safe and supported to recover and thrive</p>	<p>Family Safety Victoria funded the delivery of the HOW2 Program (which focuses on embedding LGBTI inclusive practices) for all family violence service providers. In 2018, approximately 30 organisations completed the program.</p> <p>The Enhanced Pathways into Family Violence Sector Roles program achieved all of its targets.</p>	

\* The government identified four broad outcomes for the reform in the 10 year Plan. Information about implementation activity was provided by the government using these categories.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.vic.gov.au/familyviolence.html>



*Dhulk Dja – Safe Our Way: Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families*



*Free from violence: First action plan 2018–2021*

## Other developments

1 000 Victorian schools are implementing the Respectful Relationships whole-school approach.

Second phase of 'Respect Women: Call it out' campaign, aimed at influencing bystanders' behaviour, launched (September 2018).

115 head leases and one long-term housing units secured for use by Family Violence services as part of the Family Violence Housing Blitz. This means that the Housing Blitz has delivered its target of 185 long term housing units, and 234 out of the target of 256 leases over two years.

The Annie North Women's Refuge in Bendigo opened (January 2018).

Four new core and cluster refuges under construction in Morwell, Werribee, Mildura and Mentone.

Specialist Family Violence Court model is being rolled out at Ballarat, Frankston, Heidelberg, Moorabbin and Shepparton Magistrates' Courts.

W/Respect new specialist LGBTIQ family violence service launched (September 2018).

The Disability and Family Violence Reforms Expert Advisory Group was established (March 2018), Victim Survivors Advisory Council representation added (October 2018).

## Strategies and reports

The new Aboriginal 10 Year Family Violence Agreement 2018–2028, *Dhulk Dja – Safe Our Way: Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families*, launched (October 2018).

*Primary prevention activity and infrastructure in Victoria* report, commissioned by the Office for Women, completed (October 2018).

*Free from violence: First action plan 2018–2021* launched (30 January 2018).

Launch of the *Enhancing Safety: Family Violence Strategy for the Victorian Corrections System 2018–2021* and the *Enhancing Safety Family Violence Action Plan for the Victorian Corrections System 2018* (March 2018).

Launch of the *Policing Harm, Upholding the Right: Victoria Police Strategy for Family Violence, Sexual Offences and Child Abuse 2018–2023* (December 2017).

*Responding to Family Violence in Prisons' guidelines* released (July 2018) providing new incident categories for reporting family violence incidences while in prison.

## Operational

Multicultural Affairs and Social Cohesion (MASC) Branch funded initiatives to test tailored primary prevention approaches in CALD communities. These included the Safer and Stronger Communities Pilot, Capacity Building and Participation Family Violence Grants and Innovating and testing what works - Support to Community-based Organisations. During the monitoring period over \$5 million of the total funding of \$14 million was spent.

Koori Women's Place Pilot Program, delivered by Djirra launched (February 2018). Program provides a safe space to meet and provide referrals to other services.

Umalek Balit (Koori Family Violence Court Support Program) commenced (October 2018).

Sister's Day Out workshops held with 633 participants to promote safety, facilitate cultural connection and raise awareness of the impacts of Family Violence for Koori women.

Young Luv workshops held on healthy relationships for 210 young Koori women between the ages of 13 and 18.

Dilly Bag personal development workshops held to reduce Koori women's vulnerability to family violence, attended by 38 women.

Fines Victoria established the Family Violence Scheme to support people affected by family violence - 590 applications received during monitoring period.

26 state-wide Family Violence Therapeutic Intervention Demonstration Projects held for women and children experiencing family violence.

Out of the Dark program delivered to women in prison to raise awareness of family violence, and how to recover from it - 163 women attended during the year.

FIGURE 1A

## Reform implementation activity during this monitoring period

1 November 2017–1 November 2018

RELATING TO OUTCOMES*	IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITY	
	Capacity building	Legislation
<p>Perpetrators are held to account, engaged and connected</p>		<p>All relevant amendments to the <i>Family Violence Protection Amendment Act 2017</i> commenced, introducing faster and simpler processes for serving family violence intervention orders, new measures to prevent abuse of the intervention order appeal process, allowing the use of pre-recorded evidence in proceedings for some family violence offences, and increased protection for children.</p>
<p>Preventing and responding to family violence is systemic and enduring</p>	<p>Victoria Police established the Centre of Learning for Family Violence.</p> <p>3 800 staff trained on Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme and Child Information Sharing Scheme.</p> <p>88 public health services participated in the Strengthening Hospital Responses to Family Violence initiative.</p> <p>120 senior leaders from Family Violence and related sectors across Victoria completed Leadership Intensives.</p> <p>Multi-jurisdictional Family Violence awareness program (Judicial College of Victoria) commenced (June 2018).</p> <p>Family Violence education programs to judicial members of VCAT (Judicial College of Victoria) commenced (November 2017)</p>	<p>Amendments to the Bail Act 1997 came into effect (May 2018).</p> <p>Amendments to the <i>Justice Legislation (Family Violence Protection and other matters) Act 2018</i> (August 2018) and <i>Residential Tenancies Amendment Act 2018</i> (September 2018) were passed by the Parliament.</p> <p>The Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme established with an initial tranche of entities subject to the scheme identified.</p> <p>The <i>Prevention of Family Violence Act 2018</i> was passed, establishing the newly created Respect Victoria as a statutory authority (September 2018).</p>

\* The government identified four broad outcomes for the reform in the 10 year Plan. Information about implementation activity was provided by the government using these categories.

## Other developments

## Strategies and reports

## Operational

Final report from the Expert Advisory Committee on Perpetrator Interventions submitted to government.

16-week residential healing program for perpetrators - Ngarra Jarranounith Place-, became operational (February 2018), taking 50 referrals during the period.

Victoria Police commenced implementation of the Family Violence Investigation Model (July 2018).

Corrections Victoria launched initiatives for perpetrators and victim survivors as part of its *Family Violence Action Plan 2018*. These included Men's Behaviour Change Program (completed by 468 men in the community), and the ChangeAbout program for prisoners who are perpetrators at high risk of re-offending.

Victoria Police aligned its risk assessment tool with the state-wide Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework.

The Disability Family Violence Interdepartmental Working Group established (July 2018).

Crime Statistics Agency 2016–2017 Family Violence Database established (December 2017).

*Building from Strength: 10-year Industry Plan for Family Violence Prevention and Response* was launched (10 December 2017).

*Responding to Family Violence Capability Framework* and the *Preventing Family Violence and Violence Against Women Capability Framework, Census of workforces that intersect with family violence* released.

Family Violence Contact Centre commenced operations at Melbourne Magistrates' Court (May 2018) and Geelong Magistrates' Court (September 2018).

Family Violence Restorative Justice Service pilot program opened (October 2018).

The Orange Door opened in four areas across Victoria. (Fifth opened after the end of the monitoring period).



*Building from Strength: 10-year Industry Plan for Family Violence Prevention and Response*

# Foundational work to support effective implementation is still critical

The family violence reform is and always has been an enormous undertaking. It is made up of several elements that on their own are significant reforms, such as the introduction of 17 Support and Safety Hubs across Victoria, the rollout of the specialist family violence courts, housing and refuge reforms, police reforms, or the new information sharing schemes. The size and complexity of the reform calls for coordinated implementation that is driven by a systemic approach. However, last year's report found that the government had not yet sufficiently taken a systemic approach to implementation, and highlighted a number of gaps in planning for the reform.

Since the first report, the government has done some work to address these gaps but planning remains insufficient for a reform of this nature. One aspect of planning that last year's report highlighted was the need for dependency mapping. The reform is a highly interdependent transformation of the family violence prevention and response system, and mapping these dependencies is a key step towards understanding the implementation process and developing an overarching implementation schedule and plan. While the government took steps to map dependencies, it has not mapped any at the whole-of-reform level. Similarly, while the government conducted work to identify strategic risks at a whole-of-reform level, the actual management of risks at this level has remained informal, which may mean strategic risks are not being managed as well as possible.

Developing a systemic approach is undoubtedly a difficult task. However, without it there remains a significant risk that decisions on major projects are being made without an understanding of their potential impact on the whole system, and that the resulting system will not work as effectively as possible or deliver the vision and outcomes outlined in *Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change* (the government's 10 Year Plan), by the Royal Commission into Family Violence and in the Dhelk Dja agreement.<sup>2</sup>

The government needs to remain committed to developing this systemic approach and to undertaking practical, effective planning activities. These will help reduce the risk of the implementation being less effective than the investment and commitment warrants.

## What we've seen

### The lack of systemic approach remains a major risk and is starting to have impacts

As discussed in last year's report, the government needs to take a systemic approach to design and implementation. This would require the government to determine at a high level what the desired reformed system would look like and how it would get there, including the key phases or stages along the way. A key piece of this work would be to determine how the various parts of the final system will work together. The government could then develop an implementation plan and schedule that would sequence components

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2 *Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way – Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families* (Dhelk Dja agreement) is the Aboriginal-led agreement between 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. See p. 40, Priority Four: System transformation based on self-determination principles.

appropriately. This would better inform its work around transitioning between old and new systems at a time of increasing service demand and to ensure victim survivors do not fall through the cracks.

This planning and scheduling work would support flexibility, with decision-makers being able to make informed decisions around risk, investment, and changes to the plan and sequencing of implementation activities. Without such an approach, individual implementation agencies may work towards different results, and the resulting system may not fit together properly. In some instances, the introduction of parts of the reform could increase service disparities or replicate service gaps where communities, including diverse communities, are currently under-served, or create additional bottlenecks in service delivery.

Last year's report found that the government had taken the first steps of a systemic approach – articulating a vision and outcomes for the reform – but it had not done enough to allow the development of a useful implementation plan. This is a key step in the planning process. It does not need to be overly detailed nor does it need to cover every single piece of work being conducted under the auspices of the reform. It does, however, need to be sufficient to allow progress to be measured (including the major shifts anticipated and when these will occur) to alert governance bodies to risks and allow them to intervene. It should capture the key elements of the final system, the programs of work being conducted to get there, and how these programs of work impact each other. While several possible work programs had been developed for different publications, they were not consistent with each other, and they did not clearly align with the reform's outcomes or vision. There was not a clear understanding of how the various parts of the system would work together.

An outcomes framework is currently being progressed. The reform outcomes are listed in the 10 Year Plan, and indicators for some of these outcomes are listed in the *Family Violence Rolling Action Plan 2017–2020* (the Rolling Action Plan; published May 2017), although not all are complete. Further work is needed to complete the outcomes framework and to identify how far each of the outcomes will be progressed at the 10 year mark and at key points throughout (such as annually).

Once the outcomes framework is finalised (and even in its current form), it will be a useful tool in making decisions about the order in which work should be done, or choosing how to use scarce resources. The intention to use this framework to inform the implementation is in line with better practice, and has the potential to significantly improve the effectiveness of implementation going forward. However, an outcomes framework is not a substitute for an implementation plan.

Work was undertaken during 2018 to try to progress a systemic approach. However, it is still not clear how the family violence system will operate after the reform is implemented, how the various parts of it will work together, and how it will get to this final system. A clear set of the main work programs and

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- 3 A program is 'a temporary, flexible organisation structure created to coordinate, direct and oversee the implementation of a set of related projects and activities in order to deliver outcomes and benefits related to the organisation's strategic objectives', Axelos Limited (2017), *Managing Successful Projects with PRINCE2*, 6th edition, p. 12.
- 4 A dependency is a relationship between two activities such that the completion or initiation of one is reliant on the completion or initiation of another. These can be mandatory, preferential, external or internal. For further discussion of dependencies, see Project Management Institute (2013) *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK Guide) – Fifth Edition*, p. 158.
- 5 The term critical path refers to the minimum project duration and the sequence of tasks that must be done on time if a project or program is to be completed in the minimum amount of time required. If the durations, start dates or end dates of tasks on the critical path change, the completion date of the project will be impacted. The critical path helps the project or program manager and team focus their efforts on the most important work packages. It also serves as a reference tool for monitoring and reporting progress and adjusting resources as needed. For further discussion of the critical path method, see Project Management Institute (2013) *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK Guide) – Fifth Edition*, p. 176.
- 6 The Central Information Point centralises key information held by government agencies about a perpetrator into a single report, to support better risk assessment and management. The Central Information Point is made up of an IT platform and data custodians and is supported by new information sharing laws. Its establishment was recommended as part of the Royal Commission into Family Violence under recommendation 7. See Royal Commission Into Family Violence (2016), *Summary and Recommendations*, p. 47.

how they relate to each other is still not available. The government's reporting system is focused on projects and recommendations, and provides information to governance bodies on the status of projects (and individual recommendations). It does not, and in its current form cannot, provide an overview of whether progress is being made towards outcomes and benefits. Understanding how the delivery of such a large and complex reform is going requires a type of reporting more often seen in program management, which focuses on the progress towards the achievement of outcomes and benefits.<sup>3</sup>

The relationships between different pieces of work being done by different agencies at different times across the reform can have a significant impact on the delivery and achievement of outcomes and, therefore, must be considered at a systemic level. The need for the government to identify these relationships – called dependencies<sup>4</sup> – was highlighted in last year's report, as they determine the reform's critical path<sup>5</sup>, and are necessary to develop the reform's implementation schedule. Without understanding them, there is a risk that pieces of work will be done in a highly risky order or in a way that misses opportunities to get the most benefit for victim survivors.

The new Central Information Point (referred to as the CIP)<sup>6</sup> supporting the Support and Safety Hubs is an example of major dependencies and sequencing impacting on effective implementation. The ongoing development of the Central Information Point is highly dependent on the replacement or renovation of a number of government databases and case management systems, which are run by separate government agencies. This represents a strategic risk, as it has the potential to delay or impact the reform reaching the desired outcomes, and this risk should therefore be formally considered by the Victorian Secretaries Board Sub-Committee on Family Violence Reform (VSB sub-committee). In addition, there are significant risks associated with the introduction of further Hubs and the maturation of the existing the Hubs while the Central Information Point is being developed.

The capacity of the Central Information Point will need to increase as further Hubs come on board. Interim solutions are in place as it is developed, but careful planning and sequencing will be required to ensure existing systems can meet demand while new systems are built and tested.

Another example is that the first Hubs commenced operations prior to the finalisation and implementation of the *Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework* (MARAM). MARAM is intended to replace the Victorian Family Violence Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework (referred to as the Common Risk Assessment Framework, or the CRAF). The government chose to open the Hubs before implementing MARAM, so an interim comprehensive risk assessment tool (ICRAT) was used in the Hubs from their commencement. Hubs practitioners were provided with risk assessment and management training (through CRAF training). The use of an interim risk assessment tool has required training and other implementation activities. An option where MARAM was in place before any Hubs opened – and therefore, ICRAT was not necessary – should have been mapped out, allowing decision-makers to weigh up the pros and cons of various options and make a decision that balanced speed, efficiency and outcomes.

At the time of the last report, only a limited number of dependencies had been identified, mostly within individual agencies' reform activity. Since then, some further work has been undertaken within agencies and at a whole-of-reform level. Family Safety Victoria<sup>7</sup> has drafted a Dependencies Management Policy to further support capability building in the management of dependencies. The Department of Premier and Cabinet has led work to map dependencies between agencies or those with a whole-of-reform relevance.

The Department of Premier and Cabinet collected existing registers of dependencies from within agencies, and has advised that it conducted quality assurance and analysis on those registers. It engaged a consultant and held one workshop with agency representatives in September 2018 with the intention of mapping whole-of-reform dependencies and identifying any unknown unknowns. The workshops were intended to focus on preferential relationships (where although it is not impossible to initiate the dependent task before the preceding one is complete it is highly desirable) and constraint relationships (such as availability of scarce resources) for logical dependency identification. A further intention was to look at opportunities for sequencing activities to achieve better outcomes and efficiency.

No whole-of-reform dependencies were identified and there is still no map of the major interdependencies between the key elements of the reform. The government advised the outcome of this workshop was that 'given the level of implementation activity already underway and the number of recommendations implemented, traditional project management relationships between preceding and succeeding tasks do not exist at a strategic level'. The government advised that, following the workshop

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<sup>7</sup> Family Safety Victoria is an Administrative Office attached to the Department of Health and Human Services, with dedicated responsibility for delivery of key family violence reform, including the Hubs.

‘it was clear that programs having a substantive impact on other programs should be managed as risks’ and that a dependency map of the whole reform would be ‘too complicated to be an effective management tool’.<sup>8</sup>

The government also prepared a schedule of all the implementation activities for the reform, which is an amalgamation of all the individual schedules for the reform’s projects and recommendations. This was called an overarching implementation schedule and was described as outlining which programs link to initiatives under the 10 Year Plan, with the timing of delivery. However, it did not offer a meaningful representation of the order in which activities should be undertaken. It was overly detailed (containing activities for all the projects and recommendations) but did not fully map out milestones for many activities, nor was it validated through dependency mapping.

While developing a systemic approach is complex and takes time, the work to date has not been sufficient and it has not addressed the issues raised in the first report. Its absence has started to impact the reform. For example, the siloed approach puts unnecessary pressure on time-poor sector stakeholders, who are called on to provide the same input to many different committees or bodies.

Agencies are facing challenges in recruiting enough skilled workers due to sector-wide shortages of suitably skilled, qualified and experienced staff, which is a key limiting factor for the reform. Individual agencies cannot solve it in isolation. *Building from Strength: 10 Year Industry Plan for Family Violence Prevention and Response* (the Industry Plan) includes a number of strategies to attract, recruit and retain workers in the family violence field. Some work to implement the strategies has commenced. However, the Rolling Action Plan for the Industry Plan has been delayed, along with funding decisions which means that many necessary activities to address this key risk have not commenced. The risk of not having sufficient workforce available for all areas of the reform (as well as other reforms to the broader social services system in Victoria in an environment of increasing demand) needs to be reflected in the timing of the implementation of constituent parts of the reform, such as (but not limited to) the Hubs.

### Management of risk still needs significant improvement

Despite its high risk profile, there has been no formal strategic risk management undertaken at a whole-of-reform level since the start of the reform. The government has identified interagency or whole-of-reform/strategic risks twice, but risk management has not progressed past identification into regular, formal risk management. Risks and associated mitigations have not been clearly allocated to specific agencies, teams or individuals. There is no regular reporting on risk mitigation actions for strategic risks. There is risk management for projects but these do not capture those risks that apply or arise at an interagency, strategic or whole-of-reform level. This lack of active, formal whole-of-reform risk management for over two years is concerning given the size and complexity of the reform.

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<sup>8</sup> The government provided these comments in correspondence to the Monitor, received 9 January 2019.

There appears instead to be a preference for dealing with issues as they emerge. Some of these issues might potentially be prevented or mitigated through effective risk management, leading to a more effective implementation of the reform.

Interagency, strategic and whole-of-reform risks have been identified by the government. An interagency risk register was developed in late 2017. However, review of meeting papers from key whole-of-reform governance bodies such as the VSB sub-committee and the Family Violence Steering Committee indicate that it was not a regular agenda item. Risk management requires that risk registers are regularly reviewed for changes in risk profile and completion of mitigation activities. The identification of emerging risks should be an ongoing activity, particularly when the reform is so complex and multifaceted. Risk management at a project or program level is not a substitute for strategic whole-of-reform risk management. Although mitigation activities were identified for the interagency risks in 2017, it is not clear that these have been implemented, or whether they have sufficiently mitigated against the risk.

In 2018 the government conducted more work to identify strategic risks to the whole-of-reform. With support from the Victorian Managed Insurance Authority (VMIA), the government conducted workshops with implementation agencies to identify these risks. While this process has identified some important strategic risks, it was a repeat of the risk identification phase, when the government should have prioritised actively managing the already identified interagency risks.

### Governance arrangements are not meeting the needs of the reform

It is often unclear where and how key decisions have been made that impact the whole reform or interdependent elements of it. Papers and records of decisions show that governance bodies are often being called on to endorse a single option rather than being provided with a range of options to make a decision on. The VSB sub-committee has the capacity to focus on risks to strategic outcomes, major interdependencies, and the reform's critical path. However, the reporting the VSB sub-committee received during the monitoring period was basic project reporting on a list of projects with little strategic information.

To support the reform, particularly strategic decision-making by the VSB sub-committee, the government established an Interdepartmental Committee on Family Violence (IDC) with a whole-of-reform purview. The IDC comprises representatives from most of the implementing agencies (Respect Victoria is not represented on the IDC<sup>9</sup>). During the monitoring period, it was well attended and provided a forum for discussion and debate as well as a chance for the Department of Premier and Cabinet to consult with agency representatives. At the end of 2018 the IDC did not yet have final terms of reference, which suggests that its role and purpose is not yet clear. It is not fully incorporated into the overall governance structure

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9 Noting that Respect Victoria was only fully established in the latter half of 2018.

of the reform – no governance bodies have reported to it and it did not report directly and regularly to the VSB sub-committee. It does not have many of the typical structures of a decision-making body such as clear scope of authority or appropriate escalation processes. Clarifying these aspects of the IDC could address some of the issues with the broader governance structure for the reform. It could fulfil many appropriate roles, including leading the dependency mapping and strategic risk management. Including Respect Victoria as a member of the IDC would increase the IDC’s coverage of the reform and give an important voice to prevention work.

There are still gaps between the governance structures described in the Royal Commission’s report and the current governance arrangements. For example, the bipartisan parliamentary committee, which is needed to build consensus in Parliament and provide ongoing stability for the reform is not yet in place. While there are representatives from some Regional Family Violence Integration Committees<sup>10</sup> on some of the key governance committees, the regional committees are not fully integrated into the governance structure, which is necessary to ensure the regional view is being clearly heard. For example, their reporting lines within the reform, their scope of authority, escalation processes and up-and-down communication channels remain unclear.

### The government still needs to build its capability to better support implementation of the reform

To be able to transform the family violence prevention and response system, and meet community expectations raised by the 10 Year Plan, the reform needs to be carefully coordinated. The complexity and interrelatedness of the proposed reform indicated a need for program management specialists with experience in complex implementation of social policy.

In 2018 the government expanded the Department of Premier and Cabinet’s Family Violence Branch, creating a new organisational structure for the Branch including new roles and functions. The main area of expansion was to build up its Enterprise Portfolio Management Office (ePMO). The team responsible for the development of the outcomes framework was also expanded. The ePMO is a key team for the reform as it takes the lead on system elements including whole-of-government planning, risk management and reporting and as such needs strong program management and implementation capability. The ePMO also has the opportunity to lead continuous improvement in the capability of project teams across all agencies involved in the implementation of the reform, for instance through leading better practice in reporting and risk management.

It is too soon to know whether the restructure and additional resources have improved the effectiveness of the whole-of-reform work undertaken within the Family Violence Branch. There is a public service-wide capability issue around program management skills for implementing large social policy reform.<sup>11</sup> Developing a workforce with the experience and expertise required

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10 Regional governance arrangements are discussed in the Royal Commission into Family Violence (2016), *Volume VI Report and Recommendations*, p. 104.

11 Shergold, P (2016), *Learning from failure: why large government policy initiatives have gone so badly wrong in the past and how the chances of success in the future can be improved*, Australian Public Service Commission, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.

will take time and sustained effort but this effort must continue. Project and program management disciplines contain many useful tools to manage complex implementation of social policy and their adoption by the public service will improve the effectiveness of implementation and outcomes of the reform.

## What should happen now

**The government must complete the work it started in designing the end family violence prevention and response system, and use this to plan the remainder of the implementation.** This will include determining how all the different elements of the reform fit together to create a new system. While this does not have to be overly technical or detailed, it must give enough information for agencies to understand how their components will fit into the end system. The government must then identify the major relationships/dependencies between different elements of the reform, and make decisions on how it will best manage these. This will then allow the development of an overarching schedule for the whole of the reform that oversight bodies (including the VSB sub-committee) can use to inform decisions (such as investment decisions), monitor how well the reform is being implemented, and act when risks and issues arise.

Developing a systemic approach requires in-depth, collaborative and difficult planning work, involving all the delivery agencies. To achieve this, the government would likely benefit from identifying the major elements making up the reform and using this to design the end system. This would involve:

- grouping the current reform implementation activities into large programs of work
- identifying dependencies between the programs, and options for sequencing, scheduling and investment
- working out how these work programs fit together to develop a high-level design of the end system.

While undertaking this work it will be important to consider that:

- Some planning work has already been done in various government agencies and is currently in existing planning and strategy documents.
- As more is learned through implementation, the end system design will likely need to change. It should be regularly updated as elements of the reform are evaluated for effectiveness, and to ensure the model reflects the current situation.

**The government must start managing the strategic risks to the reform.**

The government should take its new strategic risk register and apply a formal risk management approach, including:

- a clear point of accountability for strategic risks, which has decision-making authority and seniority to address these risks

- regular discussion, monitoring and decision-making by this body in relation to live risks
- clear and appropriate escalation processes of risks in line with agreed tolerance thresholds<sup>12</sup>
- clear allocation of responsibility for mitigation actions, and regular review of whether these mitigation actions are occurring and whether they are effectively reducing the risk
- annual or semi-annual review of the risks.

**The government must review its governance arrangements across the reform to ensure they meet the needs of the reform.** This should include:

- a structure of decision-making across the reform, including at which level different types of decisions will be made – for example, some decisions are appropriately made by a project manager, other decisions at Cabinet
- a clear definition of what each governance body is responsible for, and how governance bodies intersect including escalation and reporting processes
- a single point of accountability for the whole of the reform, which would receive reports from governance bodies across the reform and authority to direct the reform
- consideration of whether key internal decision-making bodies have appropriate membership.

**The government must continue its efforts to increase its implementation and program management capability.** Suggested steps to achieve this include:

- recruiting or seconding in program and project managers with strong experience in implementing social programs and projects that have delivered change and resulted in the development of new products or services
- using expertise and relevant better practice from other current reforms, such as major infrastructure works
- providing additional training in program management.

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<sup>12</sup> A tolerance is the permissible deviation above and below a plan's target without escalating the deviation to the next level of management. There may be tolerance levels for time, cost, quality, scope, benefits and risk. Axelos Limited (2017), *Managing Successful Projects with PRINCE2*, 6th edition, p. 388.

# The government has opened five Support and Safety Hubs, and can now use practical experience to inform key conceptual and implementation decisions

The Royal Commission into Family Violence recommended a number of new approaches to better address family violence, including how the system responds to and supports people who experience family violence. A major change to the response system was the proposal to introduce 17 Support and Safety Hubs (the Hubs) across Victoria. The intention of the Hubs, as described by the Royal Commission, was that in each of Victoria's Department of Health and Human Services regions there would be a single area-based, highly visible intake point. This was to make it easier for victim survivors of family violence to find help quickly.

The government adopted the proposal to open Hubs, making it a key part of its 10 Year Plan. The Hubs are arguably the flagship element of the reform. They are highly visible to the community, and they represent the greatest allocation of funding to date under the reform, having received funding commitments for the establishment and operation of all 17 planned Hubs. The introduction of the Hubs represents a major change to the existing system, becoming the first point of contact for most victim survivors and requiring mature partnerships and relationships with many other organisations. They are connected with many other elements of the reform, and there are a lot of dependencies. The Hubs bring together staff from different service delivery agencies to work collaboratively, which is a new endeavour for the response services (family violence services, child and family services, and perpetrator services).

While the government has decided to transform the response system, its lack of systemic planning for the whole of the reform (as described in chapter one) makes it difficult to scope the role of the Hubs in the future system. It also makes it hard to determine with confidence and clarity the impact they will have on the existing system.

The government had very challenging deadlines to open Hubs. It opened five in 2018<sup>13</sup>, and plans to open three more in 2019. It opened the Hubs using a foundational service model with the intention to mature the Hubs to the full service model over time. At this stage, it is not clear that the government has a sufficiently detailed plan of how it will get the open Hubs to the full service model, where they can produce the intended outcomes. It is also not clear whether there is a sufficiently robust plan for the full rollout of all 17 Hubs.

It is still very early days for an initiative as significant as the Hubs. The first five Hubs have only been open for a short time – the first opened in May 2018 and the fifth in November 2018. At this early stage, it is too soon to have the information necessary to make a reliable assessment of how well the Hubs are performing, and whether they can, over time, perform at the level required to provide the desired outcomes.

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13 The fifth Hub was opened in inner Gippsland on 20 November 2018. This was outside the 2018 monitoring period, which runs from 1 November 2017 to 1 November 2018.

## Without an overall system design, the role of the Hubs within the system remains unclear

The available planning documents for the Hubs provide a high-level understanding of what they are meant to do. They are intended to provide:

- a more visible contact point so that people know where to go for support
- help for people to identify family violence, and child and family safety and wellbeing issues
- advice based on the latest risk assessment tools and best available information
- specialist support and tailored advice for families and children, family violence victims and perpetrators
- a strong focus on perpetrator accountability
- an approach across the spectrum of prevention, early intervention and response
- connection and coordination of access to support
- a system-wide view of service capacity, client experience and outcomes.

The Hubs are one part of the broader family violence system, alongside other elements including downstream services, prevention activities, the new family violence specialist courts, and perpetrator intervention. As discussed in chapter one, the government is yet to do the work to fully define and articulate what the final family violence prevention and response system will look like. Efforts have been made to fully understand and clarify the interactions the Hubs will have with a range of elements of the system – including through the Support and Safety Hubs: Statewide Concept (the Statewide Concept paper) and the Support and Safety Hubs Service Model (the service model). Now that some Hubs are open and operating it may be easier to articulate and provide more clarity around their role and what the interrelationships with the broader system look like in a practical way. The Hubs' design allows for flexibility. It is therefore not too late to design the broader system and then take steps to ensure the Hubs fit into it. This work cannot be done solely by Family Safety Victoria – it is a whole-of-government task requiring central leadership.

## Five Hubs are open and delivering services, and they hold lessons for setting up the next Hubs

As shown in Figure 2A Family Safety Victoria has opened five Hubs. According to the Hubs Client Relationship Management (CRM) system, as at early November, the open Hubs had created 20 451 cases.<sup>14</sup> Of these, 12 464 related to a single adult and 7 987 related to single children. There were 946 requests made to the Central Information Point and 889 reports generated to support risk assessment and risk management of family violence cases.

Opening the first five Hubs was an enormous undertaking, especially for a new agency. With so much work needing to be done – including developing

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14 A case is opened for each individual; not for each family. One incidence of family violence may result in multiple cases being opened. In the absence of unique identifiers, it is not possible to tell whether some cases included in this number refer to the same individual. There are still some issues which are being addressed around the consistency and accuracy of data entry into the CRM.

an operating model, locating and fitting out appropriate accommodation, developing new IT infrastructure such as the CRM and the Central Information Point, developing new policies and procedures, and recruiting a new workforce – this was an inherently risky venture. The government's initial goal to open the first Hubs by the end of 2017 imposed a very challenging time frame given that Family Safety Victoria only came into existence in July 2017. This urgency exacerbated the inherent risks and introduced further risks and issues, especially around recruiting a suitably experienced workforce and acquiring fit-for-purpose locations to deliver the service safely. These issues delayed the opening of the five Hubs by between five and 12 months from the original intention to open all five before the end of 2017.

Family Safety Victoria took a number of actions that helped to mitigate these risks, it:

- implemented a foundational model for the Hubs, so that the first Hubs provide a subset of the full set of core functions envisaged in the Hubs concept design
- established a set of minimum requirements that a Hub had to fulfil before being opened for operation, for example, each Hub had to have a minimum viable workforce recruited before opening – this included consideration of total staff numbers, as well as ensuring that key roles (specialists and managers) were filled
- adopted a 'soft launch' approach to opening each Hub, without major public announcements, to help manage demand
- designed the Hubs concept with the flexibility to allow for growth and consideration of local needs through a phased and evolving approach to development and implementation
- has collected lessons learned as implementation progresses and it opens Hubs, to act on and inform future planning.

The open Hubs have brought together workers who have not previously worked together in a single team. Family Safety Victoria has reported that, anecdotally, this has been a positive experience in collaboration. Hub practitioners have also anecdotally reported that they have found Central Information Point reports helpful, and in particular that access to the information about perpetrators has strengthened risk assessment and management practice, and they can see direct benefits for clients from a more integrated approach.

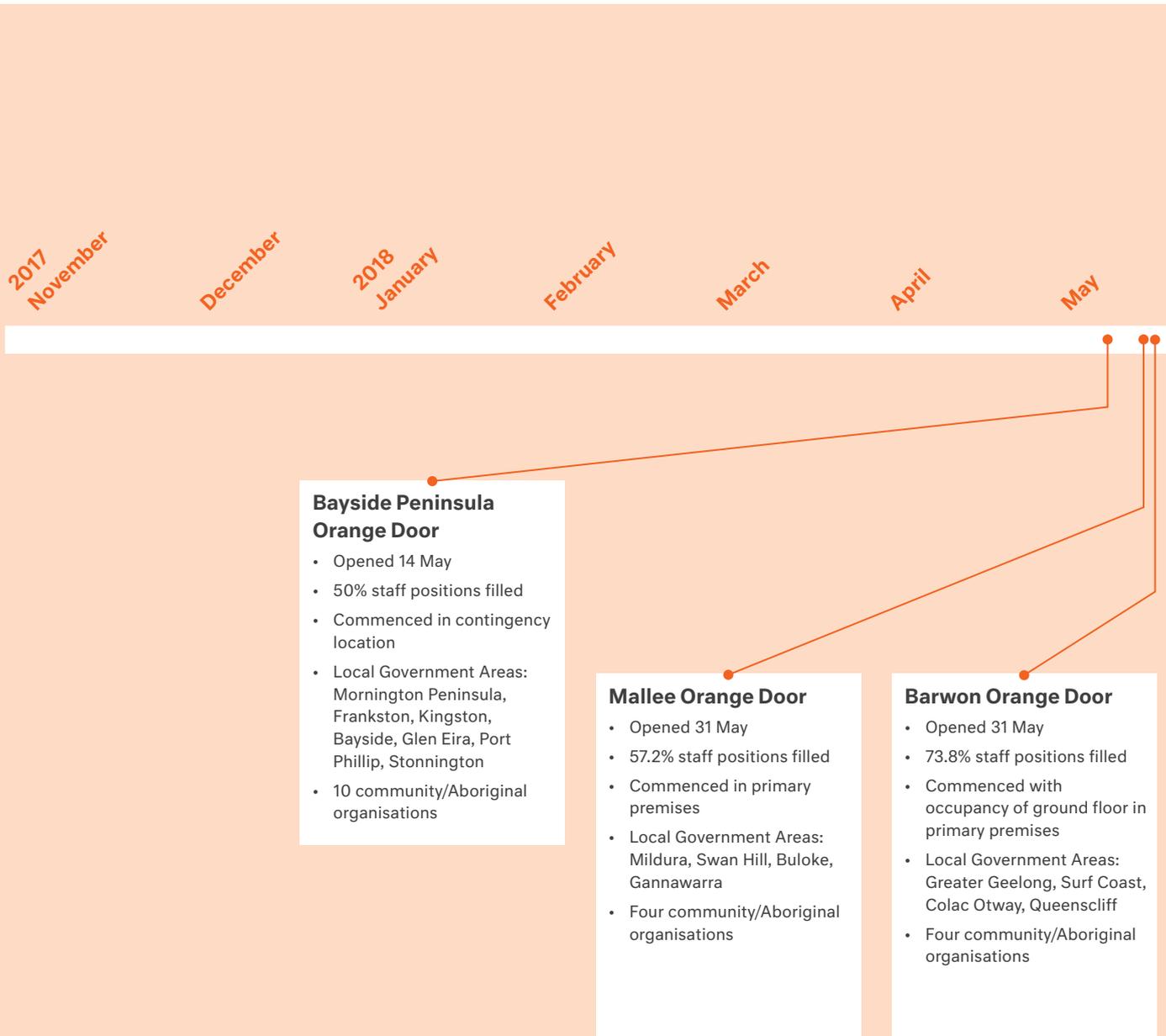
Family Safety Victoria has made a significant effort to make the client experience of the Hubs safe, welcoming and positive. There is a strong but discreet security presence, child friendly areas, and culturally appropriate features. Family Safety Victoria completed the initial approach to the physical design in consultation with people who had lived experience of family violence, and with stakeholders from across the specialist family violence, community, health and justice services.

FIGURE 2A

## Timeline for the first tranche of Support and Safety Hubs

Current State as at 1 November 2018

<b>84.3%</b>	<b>94.5%</b>	<b>20 451</b>	<b>7 987</b>
Recruitment completed across all Orange Door sites.	Staff participated in induction training (as at 1 November).	Cases were created. A case is opened when a person (adult or child) has been screened and identified as requiring a response.	Cases created related to children. Depending on the client's circumstance the Hub response may be by phone, email, face to face or a combination of these.

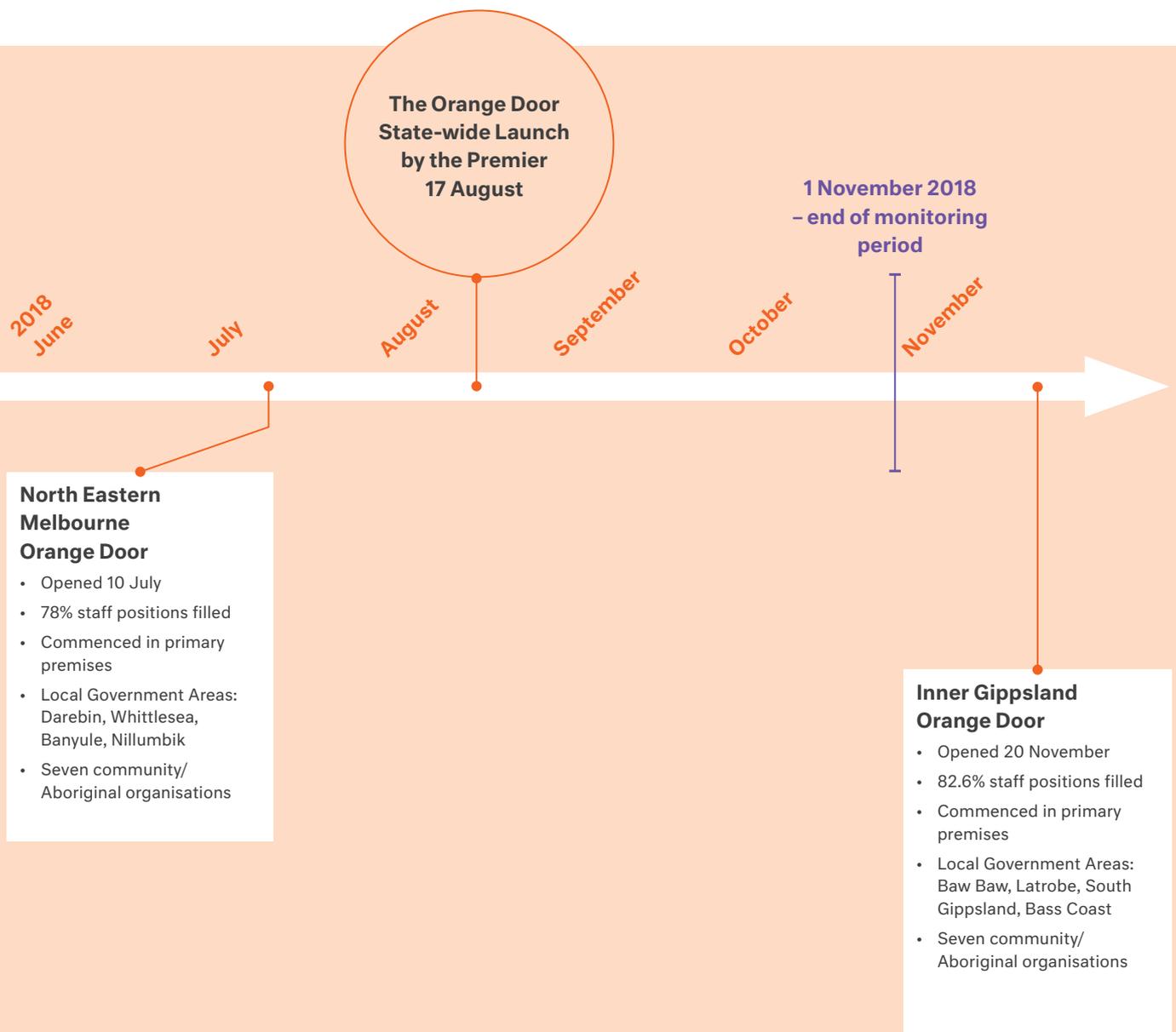


946

Requests were made to the Central Information Point.

889

Requests delivered to support risk assessment and risk management of family violence cases.



To inform the development of the service model and practice approaches through understanding user needs, Family Safety Victoria engaged The Australian Centre for Social Innovation (TACSI) in November 2017 to lead a project to refine the client experience design of Hubs, in preparation for the launch of the first five in early 2018. TACSI worked with members of the Victim Survivors Advisory Council (VSAC) to design the project. TACSI used a variety of methods to engage with potential clients of the Hubs to understand what aspects of the design would impact them and make their experience more positive.

Family Safety Victoria is collecting lessons learned during the implementation so far from a range of stakeholders including workers in Hubs.<sup>15</sup> It is using these to inform future planning. While it cannot act on all issues immediately, Family Safety Victoria keeps all lessons learned in a register to ensure they are not forgotten. Early emerging themes reflect the extensive change management challenge of the reform and relate to IT infrastructure, service demand, workflow, environment, and new practice guidelines and staff wellbeing. Family Safety Victoria is also communicating its response to issues and lessons with its partners and key stakeholders, which is good communications practice. Family Safety Victoria is evaluating the Hubs, and has engaged independent consultants to conduct the first stage of a multi-year iterative evaluation plan. The first stage of evaluation will look at the establishment, operations and initial service offering of the first four Hubs.

Family Safety Victoria has already started using some lessons learned. For example, the last Hub of the first tranche, Inner Gippsland, experienced delays in identifying and leasing a site. However, drawing on lessons from the experience of the first four Hubs, partner agencies continued to progress their recruitment, which meant there was more time to train the workforce, and for workers to get familiar with each other and the Hubs model. In addition, workforce recruitment for Inner Gippsland was prioritised so that over 80 per cent of positions were filled before opening. This was a good way to mitigate some of the risks of managing service demand and recruiting a new workforce by better preparing them for when the Hub opened.

There are particular lessons from the first tranche of Hubs that should be thoroughly considered in relation to the next Hubs. The initial planned time frame for the first five Hubs was insufficient to locate appropriate premises, negotiate leases and prepare for service delivery. The next tranche of Hubs are planned to be opened within 12 months from the announcement on 4 October 2018. As part of the lessons learned, Family Safety Victoria has adjusted elements of Hub implementation time lines. However, these revised targets remain ambitious and there is still considerable risk associated with these revised time frames.

There are anecdotal reports that the interface between the Hubs and the surrounding service provider agencies is not yet working smoothly. The introduction of a Hub may draw workforce from the surrounding service delivery agencies, reducing the capacity of these agencies to respond to

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15 Most of the workforce within a Hub are workers from a range of agencies who remain employed by their agency. They are not directly employed as staff. There are also Family Safety Victoria staff in Hubs.

demand at least temporarily, and potentially leading to the Hub's workers trying to fill the gap. In some cases, Hub practitioners are undertaking end-to-end support with clients. While this may be appropriate in some circumstances, it needs to be carefully monitored and managed by the Hubs and from an overall system perspective.

Some sector stakeholders have expressed concerns that the Hubs service model has not been sufficiently informed by specialist family violence knowledge, particularly in ensuring that it has sufficient precedence in the family violence risk assessment process. The Statewide Concept paper, the service model, interim integrated practice framework and other supporting guidance have been informed through a range of co-design, consultation and engagement processes involving specialist family violence expertise through practitioners and their agencies, peak bodies, academics and the relevant research and evidence. In practice, however, the risk that the highest risk cases will not be correctly identified or managed must continue to be actively monitored.

Family Safety Victoria is aware of the issues and concerns expressed by stakeholders and has been open and transparent in acknowledging them. It is working to improve operations in the open Hubs through additional staff training around the CRM and the Central Information Point. Improvements to the CRM are also underway. Family violence risk assessment and management processes in the Hubs have been strengthened by the use of the Tools for Risk Assessment and Management (TRAM), but this has led to the shared understanding of risk across the service system becoming more challenging in the interim period before the introduction of MARAM. Some Hubs still need to recruit staff, with the Hubs having on average around 84 per cent of planned staffing as at 1 November 2018. Some guidelines and frameworks for opening the Hubs were interim only and should be completed as a matter of priority to improve the effectiveness of Hubs' operations.

### The government has yet to articulate how and when it will get the open Hubs to full operations

According to the Statewide Concept paper, the Hubs are ultimately intended to provide:

- an initial contact point
- screening and multi-disciplinary triage
- immediate crisis response
- specialist multi-disciplinary risk assessment and management (including safety planning)
- multi-disciplinary needs assessment and planning
- connections to supports and services that meet people's needs and preferences
- support to navigate different elements of the system (e.g. courts, housing, counselling)

- monitoring of people’s engagement and outcomes with all service providers to increase accountability of the system for individual cases.<sup>16</sup>

The Statewide Concept paper further explained that full functionality will not be available in all Hubs on day one of operation: ‘The operation and delivery across the state will be scaled up incrementally, with a subset of core functions being rolled out in the five launch areas in 2017. The intention is that all of the functionality of the Hubs described in the Statewide Concept paper will be operational across the state in the future’.<sup>17</sup> The government has not yet articulated how far into the future full functionality lies. The service model describes the foundational model for the first five launch areas.

There is a clear intention from Family Safety Victoria to mature the Hubs to the full functionality. The Statewide Concept paper committed to a ‘carefully supported transition over time for the Hubs to achieve this full vision and aspiration’. Family Safety Victoria plans to open another three Hubs in 2019 based on this foundational model with a number of enhancements, and intends to continue to develop all Hubs to achieve the longer term vision set out in the Support and Safety Hubs Statewide Concept. Planning for evolving the model should continue and expand to allow stakeholders to understand when key transitions to the full model will be in place at the various Hubs.

Until there is clarity around the stages of transition to reach full operational functionality it will remain challenging to assess the performance of these Hubs, and to establish when it is reasonable to expect improvements in outcomes for families in areas served by Hubs.

### A sufficient rollout plan for all 17 Hubs is needed

There is currently no estimated time frame for when the Hubs element of the system will be fully rolled out, operating at the full service model and therefore able to deliver the outcomes in the government’s 10 Year Plan. The Rolling Action Plan commits to the 17 Hubs being operational by 2021 but does not indicate when they can be expected to be operating at the full service model, or when outcomes can be expected.

The main Hubs planning documentation comprised:

- the Statewide Concept paper, which outlines the vision for the Hubs once fully implemented
- stage plans, which divide the total number of Hubs into four tranches
- a time line for when tranche 3 and 4 Hubs (the remaining nine Hubs) will be opened.

These were supported by sub-project plans, additional project documentation, service models, and the interim integrated practice framework and associated guidance.

Given the time frame and complexity of implementation, it was a pragmatic approach to break the implementation up into these stages to make the work more manageable. The stage plans provide the greatest level of detail.

<sup>16</sup> Victorian Government, (2017) Support and Safety Hubs: Statewide Concept paper, p. 12.

<sup>17</sup> Victorian Government, (2017) Support and Safety Hubs: Statewide Concept paper, p. 5.

The plan for the first tranche of Hubs has been marked ‘implemented’ and the plan for the second tranche has been developed, and forms the basis for current implementation activity. It covers the period 1 July 2018 to 1 December 2019. Any incomplete tasks from the first stage plan have been rolled over into the second stage.

For the longer time frames, there is little planning information as yet. While it is appropriate to wait to develop a stage plan until closer to its commencement, a realistic overarching rollout plan for all 17 Hubs could now be developed and used to measure progress.

## What should happen now

**Once the final family violence prevention and response system is designed, the government must return to the overarching concept for the Hubs and revisit whether it fits into this system.** As the broader system design matures, Family Safety Victoria will need to continue to:

- provide effective input about the Hubs into the design of the family violence prevention and response system, based on practical experience from implementation of the current Hubs
- retain a flexible approach to its understanding of the ultimate goal in this complex reform environment – as this understanding matures, the constituent parts including the Statewide Concept paper must be updated in line with the revised end state
- review and update planning documentation for the Hubs to reflect this revised Statewide Concept.

**Different options for scheduling the opening of the remaining Hubs need to be considered by the appropriate governance body.** The options should show how different implementation time frames would balance the urgency to open Hubs and the benefit of having them in new locations against the increased risks and costs associated with that timing. Setting overly ambitious time frames for opening Hubs may increase cost, without any benefit, as some things like recruiting and retaining a suitable workforce or locating suitable premises may not be possible. The Hubs may also encourage reporting of family violence and lead to an increase in demand for services. Therefore, the government needs to consider allowing time for the development of capacity in surrounding support services before opening a Hub, and consider the maturity of the other parts of the system as part of location selection.

**The government must articulate how it will get the open Hubs from the foundational operating model to the full service model as articulated in the Statewide Concept paper.** This should include space for each individual Hub to determine its community's approach to the operating model. To get the best service the government should:

- develop and implement a plan for how it will mature the open Hubs from the foundational model to full service model – there are different options for how to do this including whether to open all 17 Hubs using the foundational model and then mature them, or to mature the open Hubs before opening further Hubs
- consider community needs and existing family violence services in the local area when deciding what level of maturity each individual Hub needs to be opened at – some communities may need a Hub as soon as possible using the foundational model, while others may be better served by taking the time to implement the full service model.

**The government must articulate an overarching rollout plan for the Support and Safety Hubs system.** The government has the opportunity to use the existing Hubs to assist its plans for the broader rollout and to identify how the Hubs will fit into the reformed family violence prevention and response system. Such a plan should include:

- the intention for when the full service model would be implemented, with defined steps and time lines to do this
- when key decisions would be made, such as selection of the next round of sites, and what the decision criteria will be
- the impact of the delays to date on the whole rollout
- how it will manage dependencies with other aspects of the family violence reform, including workforce development and other limiting factors
- how central coordination will balance the workload needs of the management of already open Hubs and the opening of new Hubs
- the timing for key IT transitions, and the risk management processes to manage these
- the impact of increasing demand, both from more Hubs opening, and as a result of other parts of the reform especially prevention activities that contribute to the growing awareness of family violence.

# The government is laying the foundations for long-term prevention of family violence

The Royal Commission into Family Violence identified primary prevention as a critical element of addressing family violence. It is vital in stopping family violence before it starts. The Royal Commission recommended that the government develop a prevention strategy, open a prevention agency, and roll out Respectful Relationships education in all government schools. It advocated for long-term investment, an industry plan to develop the necessary workforce, and a whole-of-community approach with coordinated activities, as evidence shows that prevention activities do not work in isolation. It highlighted the need for prevention activities with a specific focus on diverse communities.

The government committed to taking a prevention approach. The outcomes framework for the reform includes a key outcome that ‘all Victorians are safe, thriving, and live free from family violence’.<sup>18</sup> It developed a prevention strategy in May 2017 – *Free from Violence: Victoria’s strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women* (Free from Violence) – which is based on a strong evidentiary framework, and has started delivering work under this strategy. It created Respect Victoria, a dedicated prevention agency, which 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. The rollout of Respectful Relationships education began in 2016 and is well advanced. In October 2018 the Dhelk Dja agreement was launched, and includes Aboriginal-led prevention of family violence as a strategic priority.<sup>19</sup>

While a lot of activity is occurring with oversight within government agencies, it is being delivered by several separate agencies. The Office for Women in the Department of Premier and Cabinet is accountable for acquitting the government’s work under Free from Violence, but there is no governance body authorised to coordinate and manage the prevention work as a whole. This governance gap could undermine the effectiveness of prevention activities as they require more coordination than other types of intervention and have a much longer lead time before having an impact.

Evidence shows that sustained effort is necessary to achieve outcomes, and interventions will not have population-level impact if they are not mutually-reinforcing and followed through. The importance of primary prevention to achieving outcomes, and its long time frames for both implementation and impact, mean this area must remain a priority for the government.

See Box 3A for a discussion on what primary prevention is, and how it differs from early intervention and response.

18 Victorian Government (2016), *Ending Family Violence: Victoria’s Plan for Change*, p. 11.

19 Victorian Government (2018), *Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way – Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families*, p. 36.

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BOX 3A

## What is primary prevention?

Primary prevention is a health promotion approach that aims to prevent violence from happening in the first place. It works by identifying the deep underlying causes of violence – the social norms, structures and practices that influence individual attitudes and behaviours – and acting across the whole population to change these, not just the behaviour of perpetrators.<sup>20</sup>

Primary prevention focuses not on the individuals affected by the problem but on the contribution ‘made by organisations, communities and wider institutions,

and their shared responsibility for addressing the problems concerned’.<sup>21</sup> Some examples of family violence primary prevention activities include Respectful Relationships education, gender equality action in sporting clubs, and public campaigns such as Respect Victoria’s ‘Respect Women: Call it Out’ campaign.

Primary prevention is distinct from early intervention and crisis response activities that aim to stop violence from escalating or recurring.<sup>22</sup>

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20 Victorian Government (2017), *Free from Violence: Victoria’s strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women*, p. 3.

21 Kim Webster and Michael Flood (2015), *Framework foundations 1: A review of the evidence on correlates of violence against women and what works to prevent it*, p. 60. Companion document to Our Watch, Australia’s National Research Organisation for Women’s Safety (ANROWS) and VicHealth (2015), *Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia*.

22 Victorian Government (2017), *Free from Violence: Victoria’s strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women*, p. 3.

## What we've seen

### The government has taken an evidence-based approach to prevention, and is working to fill the gaps in evidence

The drivers of violence against women and their children, and the factors that reinforce violence, are now well-known. There is a large overlap between violence against women generally, and family violence specifically. However, the factors that drive family violence differ for some cohorts of people who experience it. For many diverse communities, there is a lack of research that identifies the specific drivers of family violence for that particular group. Once drivers are identified, evidence-based prevention programs and activities can be developed and trialled to address them. When effective strategies for a cohort have been identified, the final step will be to determine how they can be scaled up and whether they will work across different settings.

The evidence base for preventing violence against women and their children is well developed and is based on national and international research. It is captured in *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia*.<sup>23</sup> Change the Story is underpinned by a literature review as well as extensive consultation with researchers, practitioners and policy makers from across Australia. This evidence relates to:

- what factors drive violence against women and their children
- how these factors operate at different levels of society
- what works to prevent violence against women and their children
- what infrastructure is needed to undertake and sustain a prevention approach
- evidence from other prevention work on how to effect population-level change, specifically tobacco cessation and road safety.

The specific drivers of violence against women and their children are:

- condoning of violence against women
- men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in public life and relationships
- rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity
- male peer relations that emphasise aggression and disrespect towards women.

Free from Violence is based on Change the Story and therefore activity conducted under the strategy is designed to be consistent with the evidence base in terms of taking a gendered approach to addressing family violence.

The evidence base for other forms of family violence is not complete or comprehensive. It is at different levels of maturity for different communities.

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23 Our Watch, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) and VicHealth (2015), *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia*.

For example, the evidence base for family violence against the LGBTIQ community is at the level of an analysis review of existing research into causes of violence, which was completed in October 2017.<sup>24</sup> In comparison, for family violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children it has developed to the point where an evidence-based framework to support action has been developed. In 2018 Our Watch published *Changing the Picture: A national resource to support the prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children*. The research underpinning this resource found that the drivers of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children are:

- the ongoing impacts of colonisation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- the ongoing impacts of colonisation for non-Indigenous people and in Australian society
- gendered factors — both gender and inequality in a general sense, and specific gendered drivers of violence that are a consequence of colonisation.

The government is aware of the gaps in the evidence base, and has outlined its plan for filling them in *Free from Violence*. Victoria's contribution to this evidence building will have significant impacts nationally and internationally. Work funded by other jurisdictions is also contributing to building this evidence base.

### The government has made reasonable progress on its primary prevention work

The government has prioritised primary prevention as a key piece of work within the reform. It has embedded prevention in its outcomes framework. It has committed to, and started spending, \$50.7 million (over four years) on primary prevention. It has developed a prevention strategy, *Free from Violence*, and a first three-year action plan underpinning this.<sup>25</sup> The government has established Respect Victoria, an independent statutory authority dedicated to the prevention of family violence. The government's progress on this issue is significantly enhanced by a pre-existing commitment by Victorian public health agencies at all levels to the work of primary prevention, particularly the women's health sector, local government and VicHealth.

The breadth of prevention work across Victoria is significant. There is more prevention work occurring in Victoria than ever before. There is work in research, capability building, testing of new approaches, engaging with diverse communities, behaviour change communications campaigns, school programs, building prevention networks (such as Partners in Prevention and the Elder Abuse Prevention Networks) and community-based funding for direct participation. Victoria is piloting a range of different interventions that are primarily direct participation programs.

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24 Our Watch in partnership with Dr Philomena Horsley and GLHV@ARCSHS, La Trobe University (2017), *Primary prevention of family violence against people from LGBTI communities – An analysis of existing research*.

25 Victorian Government (2018), *Free from Violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women, First action plan 2018–2021*.

In some instances, the government has started to build on what works and scale up. The Respectful Relationships education program is an example of this. The Municipal Association of Victoria has a role funded by the government to support local councils to deliver, partner with and lead gender equality and prevention work in their communities. The government has also funded communities of practice among primary prevention practitioners, which help to build capacity and capability.

### The government must embed and sustain prevention work

To reduce the incidence of family violence, primary prevention work needs to be sustained over the long term. The World Health Organization recognises that prevention is ‘likely to require a long-term effort, involving perseverance, commitment and a high level of leadership and political will, as well as specific financial and human resources and careful monitoring of progress’.<sup>26</sup>

The government has sought to ensure primary prevention work is sustainable. It has established an independent statutory body, which gives a strong opportunity to embed prevention work. It has also adopted the phased approach described in *Change the Story*, sequencing actions to sustain progress. *Free from Violence* has three phases that prevention work needs to move through to achieve and see outcomes – short, medium and long term phasing as follows:

- building on what works and scaling up
- strengthening whole-of-community efforts and actions
- maintaining efforts and getting results.

This phased approach is supported by the government’s intention to develop rolling action plans that will reflect new knowledge and evidence. The first action plan under the strategy has been released. It is focused largely on the first phase – building on what works and scaling up. For prevention efforts to be successful, the government must maintain its commitment, focus, and funding through all of these phases. The government is testing prevention work across a wide range of settings, and its work is in the early stage of determining what is successful and should be scaled up. As discussed in section 3.4, work must be evaluated as a suite of interventions in a coordinated manner in order to know what can be effectively scaled up.

The government also needs to communicate the long-term time frames of prevention work effectively. It is estimated that it will take sustained, significant investment for at least 10 years before this work results in the incidence of family violence plateauing, and it will only start to fall in the very long term.<sup>27</sup> This is a longer time frame than the reform. Working towards a goal this far away is challenging, but not impossible.

The government’s ability to sustain the prevention work is also dependent on other activities, in particular, building the specialist workforce. For example, consistent, coordinated education and training for the current and future family violence prevention workforce needs to be provided by TAFEs and

<sup>26</sup> Kim Webster and Michael Flood (2015), *Framework foundations 1: A review of the evidence on correlates of violence against women and what works to prevent it*, p. 62.

<sup>27</sup> Our Watch (2017), *Counting on Change: A guide to prevention monitoring*, p. 3.

a range of other institutions. These institutions will need to work closely with the specialist family violence sector.

### Prevention work needs to be better coordinated and mutually reinforcing

Prevention work needs to address the drivers of family violence and reinforcing factors, through ‘multiple and reinforcing strategies implemented at different levels of the social ecology’.<sup>28</sup> Experience in population-level prevention approaches in other policy settings (including tobacco cessation and road safety) indicate that prevention actions are most likely to work when they are mutually reinforcing. Further, population-level prevention needs to reach all groups in our society, which requires a range of different techniques.

The government is delivering many different family violence prevention initiatives and activities in different settings (as discussed on page 28). The Office for Women in the Department of Premier and Cabinet<sup>29</sup> and Respect Victoria are jointly responsible for leading the implementation of work under the strategy, with the Office for Women holding primary responsibility for three of the five pillars of the strategy, and Respect Victoria holding primary responsibility for the other two. Specific activities under Free from Violence are being delivered by:

- the Office for Women
- Respect Victoria
- the Department of Education and Training
- Family Safety Victoria
- the Multicultural Affairs and Social Cohesion division in Department of Premier and Cabinet.

There is therefore a strong need for coordination and whole-of-prevention governance in the reform. There is currently no governance body or forum for managing the family violence prevention work as a whole. The Office for Women is accountable for Free from Violence, including developing future action plans and acquitting against the current action plan. While such reporting is essential to monitoring progress, it is not sufficient to govern the whole family violence prevention portfolio in a coordinated way.

Cross agency coordination of prevention activities relies on officers from the different agencies attending each other’s meetings. This is an important activity and should be continued as it meets a number of needs. However, it relies on the lead agency for a particular area of prevention work seeking the attendance of representatives of other agencies, and on these representatives being authorised to take appropriate action.

There are two governance bodies with a whole-of-prevention purview: the Ministerial Taskforce on the Prevention of Family Violence and Other Forms of Violence Against Women, and the Interdepartmental Committee on Gender Equality and Prevention. These are largely used as forums for seeking

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28 Kim Webster and Michael Flood (2015), *Framework foundations 1: A review of the evidence on correlates of violence against women and what works to prevent it*, p. 70.

29 The Office for Women moved from the Department of Health and Human Services to the Department of Premier and Cabinet under machinery of government changes announced in late 2018.

specialist advice and input, conducting stakeholder consultation and sharing information. An overarching accountable body with a whole-of-prevention purview, and the authority to make decisions or take action to address risks and issues at this level would improve the likelihood that the government's prevention work is effective and integrated into the whole reform.

Another critical reason for coordination is to ensure that the wide range of initiatives are evaluated under a shared framework so that conclusions can be made at a population level. The government has been developing a monitoring and evaluation framework for the Free from Violence strategy. This framework will be implemented in 2019 and will help draw together the various pieces of prevention work that are underway. Applying consistent short-term indicators across initiatives so that findings can be made at a population level, which will then support scaling up of successful initiatives will be critical to this.

## What should happen now

The government must maintain its evidence-based approach to implementation. The effectiveness of primary prevention is not revealed for some time after the prevention work is done. Therefore, it is necessary to take an approach that is strongly supported by evidence to ensure investment in prevention is effective. To do this, the government will need to:

- continue to build the evidence base for preventing family violence, prioritising gaps in relation to diverse communities
- continue to implement programs in line with the evidence base, and move from trialling programs into the scaling up phase
- embed continuous improvement into implementation so that changes are made as more is learned
- implement the long-term infrastructure, and secure funding needed to ensure prevention work is embedded and sustained.

The government should better coordinate the various family violence prevention activities underway across the reform. The careful planning that runs through, and connects, the 10 Year Plan, the first Free from Violence action plan and the evaluation plan, puts the government in a strong position to take a long-term approach and lead on this reform. Careful coordination and management of the implementation of these activities across sectors and settings is critical to the success of prevention approaches. In order to do this, the government could:

- draw together the family violence primary prevention activities across government into a single body or program of work
- introduce a governance body responsible for overseeing this program of work, such as a prevention steering committee, with the authority and scope to direct the implementation agencies (not just monitoring and advising)

- keep the activities and projects in the existing agencies, but allow them to be directed by the prevention steering committee
- establish tolerances for escalating risks, issues, and decisions from the agencies to the prevention steering committee, and from the prevention steering committee to either the gender equality and prevention IDC or the family violence IDC and/or the VSB sub-committee
- ensure key agencies, including the Office for Women and Respect Victoria, are involved in designing and delivering these governance arrangements.

# The government is listening to the voices of victim survivors and now needs to mature its efforts

A key aspect of the Royal Commission's proposal for how to improve Victoria's response to family violence was to ensure that victim survivors' perspectives directly inform the design and management of the services and system. The Royal Commission recommended that the Victorian Government and agencies that respond to family violence identify and develop safe and constructive ways to ensure that the voices of victims are heard and inform policy development and service delivery. This means incorporating input from victim survivors at every stage of implementation and as part of continuous improvement, in the planning, design, delivery and evaluation phases. As implementation progresses, feedback from victim survivors will be a key indicator of how effective implementation has been and how well the reformed system is working.

From the start of the reform, the government has sought to listen to and include the voices of people with lived experience of family violence and those who have extensive knowledge about the family violence prevention and response service system, including from diverse communities. The main way that government agencies access voices of victim survivors is through VSAC but there are other ways that agencies consult victim survivors.

The government is yet to fulfil the vision set by the Royal Commission of victim survivor engagement being fully embedded across policy development, implementation and service delivery. It is committed to victim survivor voices being placed at the heart of the family violence reform and driving policy development, implementation and service delivery, and it has some of the foundations it needs to do this, but it does not yet have sufficient mechanisms in place to fully meet this commitment. VSAC is an important mechanism but cannot provide the breadth of voices needed. The government has advised that it intends to further strengthen engagement with victim survivors across the reform.

Ensuring comprehensive consultation with diverse communities is very challenging, however, the government has shown a clear commitment to do so. It is aware of some key gaps in consultation with these communities and is working to address them, advising that it is a priority for 2019. Consultation with victim survivors and people with a lived experience of family violence needs to be well considered and requires a highly developed skill set and the adoption of a trauma-informed approach.

Coordination of the consultation that is occurring across the relevant agencies could provide opportunities for the information and data captured, and lessons learned to be shared. As the government builds its experience in this type of consultation, it should prioritise mechanisms to capture the voices of diverse groups of victim survivors, and be able to assure the community that this is occurring. Agencies should carefully consider what their consultation needs are, and how to best ensure these reflect the voices of victim survivors.

## What we've seen

### The government is consulting victim survivors, mainly through the Victim Survivors' Advisory Council

Government agencies have consulted victim survivors to inform a comprehensive range of policy development and service delivery relating to the family violence reform and system.

Government agencies have primarily engaged with victim survivors through VSAC, which has involved seeking the input of VSAC as a whole, or having specific VSAC members sit on a committee or body. A summary of VSAC's consultation contributions is shown in Box 4A.

VSAC is made up of 12 members who have all been impacted by family violence, including victim survivors. Its membership was selected with the intention to represent the diverse experiences of people impacted by family violence. The first monitoring report noted that VSAC is an innovative way of consulting victim survivors. It has amplified the voices of its members. It has developed the capability of some of its members as advocates and policy commentators, making them more able to engage effectively with the bureaucracy and the community. It provides a safe and accessible way for government agencies to consult victim survivors. For example the Support and Safety Hubs project has been informed by the voices of lived experience (outside VSAC) with VSAC taking an advisory role to support government in its intention to hear the wider voices of lived experience. This is an appropriate and effective way to use VSAC.

Government agencies have also engaged with victim survivors independently of VSAC. A summary of this is shown in Box 4B.

Government agencies have indicated they have activities planned to consult victim survivors beyond VSAC. For example, the Department of Justice and Community Safety has advised that it will be including the views of victim survivors for the evaluation of the Family Violence Restorative Justice Service. In addition, the Department of Justice and Community Safety has also established a dedicated family violence evaluation resource, and developed an Evaluation Strategy and an Evaluation Framework Policy to support a structured approach. The evaluation of a number of the family violence activities will include, where appropriate, evaluating the impacts of the reform on victim survivors. The Department of Education and Training has advised there will be a representative from a victim survivors' organisation on the advisory group for the development of accredited training.

## Government agencies have engaged extensively with VSAC during the monitoring period

VSAC and its members have been extensively consulted on a comprehensive range of family violence reform activities by most government agencies responsible for implementation.

Examples of consultation include:

- Family Safety Victoria engaged with VSAC to help shape the direction and design of the Support and Safety Hubs. VSAC has provided feedback and guidance on various aspects of the Hubs, including the logo and branding, the user experience of The Orange Door website and the service delivery model. VSAC members participated in the client experience design project, which explored factors that promote a safe, positive and culturally appropriate client experience, and the development of client satisfaction feedback measures.
- VSAC has been consulted on a range of initiatives regarding the courts and justice system, including:
  - the use of pre-recorded statements of complainants as evidence-in-chief in family violence proceedings
  - the design of a service delivery model for a family violence contact centre for court users
  - the design principles for and use of technology in specialist family violence courts
  - the Court Services Victoria outcomes framework to advise on desired outcomes and the best ways to measure these.
- VSAC's input has been sought in developing frameworks and strategies, including Family Safety Victoria's diversity and inclusion strategy, the redevelopment of the Victorian *Family Violence Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework* and the *Family Violence Information Sharing Guidelines*.
- VSAC members' voices have been embedded in the behavioural change advertisement campaigns and directly captured in the Lived Experience VSAC Video Interviews and the 'Everybody Matters' Inclusion and Equity Statement video.
- VSAC members have attended and shared their stories at the launches of The Orange Door;

Respect Victoria; *Victoria Against Violence*<sup>30</sup>; the *Building from Strength: 10-Year Industry Plan*; Strengthening Hospital Responses to Family Violence Project; and presented at numerous conferences around Victoria, all with the aim of raising awareness of family violence and embedding the voices of victim survivors at the centre of this reform.

- VSAC members delivered induction training for Orange Door staff, helping workers to understand the impacts of family violence firsthand.

A member of VSAC sits on the following governance and advisory bodies:

- Family Violence Steering Committee
- Social Services Taskforce
- Industry Taskforce
- Chief Magistrates' Family Violence Taskforce
- Ministerial Taskforce for the Prevention of Family Violence and other forms of Violence Against Women
- Roadmap Implementation Ministerial Advisory Group
- Family Violence Housing Assistance Implementation Taskforce
- Expert Advisory Committee on Perpetrator Interventions
- Family Violence Housing Assistance Implementation Taskforce – Support Services Working Group
- Diverse Communities and Intersectionality Working Group
- Support and Safety Hubs Statewide Reference Group
- Roadmap to Reform Ministerial Advisory Group (RIMAG) Strong Families, Safe Children Working Group
- The Orange Door Statewide Reference Group
- Board of Respect Victoria.

Source: Family Safety Victoria

Family Safety Victoria has engaged an external consultancy to review how the voices of victim survivors are being heard to inform policy development and service delivery across the current family violence reform. This is an acknowledgement of the need for continuous improvement in this space, and illustrates further the government's commitment to meaningful consultations with victim survivors. An interim report, due in early 2019, is expected to include an assessment of current engagement with victim survivors, a gap analysis of current mechanisms being used, and recommendations to enhance engagement with victim survivors across the reform.

### The government has not yet fully embedded mechanisms to ensure victim survivors' voices are heard and guide policy development and service delivery

The consultation undertaken to date does not yet meet the vision expressed by the Royal Commission into Family Violence or committed to by the government in the 10 Year Plan and in its publication *Voices of Hope* (2017).

The current approach needs to be built on as the reform implementation progresses and new elements of the service system become operational. As mentioned, VSAC is a small group comprising 12 members. It cannot be representative of the breadth of experience of victim survivors. While it includes representatives from a variety of age groups, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, it is not representative of all victim survivors' experiences or views and thus additional approaches and mechanisms for receiving feedback from victim survivors need to be embedded across the reform to inform ongoing service delivery.

During the initial implementation period many government agencies have used VSAC for a significant proportion of their consultation needs. Going forward, agencies need to ensure that they are tailoring their approaches to consultation with victim survivors. Agencies that have more well developed engagement strategies and are using other methods to ensure the voices of victims inform policy development and service delivery improvements should consider sharing their expertise.

A key message of the Royal Commission's report was the need to improve services to those least served especially diverse communities. If the government is not hearing from these diverse groups it will not know if the reform is working for all. This is further recognised in the strategic priorities outlined in the Dhelk Dja agreement.<sup>31</sup> Ensuring comprehensive consultation of diverse communities is very challenging, and the government has shown a clear commitment to doing so. The government is aware of the current gaps in representation and is working to address them.

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30 Victoria Against Violence is an annual campaign that coincides with the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence campaign.

31 Victorian Government (2018), *Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way – Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families*, p. 35.

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BOX 4B

## Government agencies have engaged with victim survivors independently of VSAC during the monitoring period

Examples during the monitoring period include:

- The Magistrates Court has engaged a victim survivor consultant to provide input across its reform work and speak with operational staff for change management purposes.
- The evaluation of the Department of Health and Human Services' Family Violence Housing Blitz included two surveys of 188 clients and 102 clients respectively, and in-depth qualitative interviews with 10 clients.
- Video content in Child Protection's (within the Department of Health and Human Services) e-learning modules developed by the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) includes the voices of Aboriginal young people in relation to experiences of family violence.
- A victim survivor was involved in the development of the Strengthening Hospital Responses to Family Violence initiative. A victim survivor continues to sit on a project advisory group for this initiative, to provide advice on how hospitals can maximise their engagement with the voices of victims.
- Family Safety Victoria engaged a co-design specialist, ThinkPlace, and VACCA to develop a holistic healing framework for Aboriginal communities experiencing or at risk of family violence. This project enabled Aboriginal Victorians with lived experience of family violence to contribute their cultural knowledge and understanding of trauma and healing to inform and strengthen approaches to holistic healing for their communities.
- Family Safety Victoria engaged TACSI to run a workshop with LGBTIQ people who have experienced family violence to inform its LGBTIQ Pathways Mapping Project – a project to build understanding of key gaps and barriers in the family violence services system for LGBTIQ people. This included production of a video giving voice to people from LGBTIQ communities who have experienced family violence.
- Family Safety Victoria conducted a series of eight community conversation workshops with the 11 Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Groups and their communities to inform the development of *Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way – Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families*.
- The Department of Education and Training engaged a victim survivor advocate program supported by Women's Health East to consult with victim survivors in developing the schools' policy and practice guidance for the Supporting Student Cohorts Affected by Family Violence Initiative.

Source: Based on information provided by government agencies.

## Coordination of input from victim survivors could increase its usefulness

As discussed, consultation with victim survivors in relation to the reform is occurring across the government. There are also many other bodies that collect feedback directly from victim survivors, such as the Victims of Crime Consultative Committee, the Victims of Crime Commissioner, the Commission for Children and Young People, and the Office of the Public Advocate. There may be opportunities to share information or at least coordinate consultation activities to make the most of victim survivors' efforts to share their stories.

There may be challenges in sharing consultation outputs. If so, better practice experience in designing consultations with victim survivors could be shared. This would help build the government's capability in consulting victim survivors. As the reform shifts from implementation into ongoing service delivery, having embedded ways of capturing the breadth of voices will be increasingly important to ensure that the system is delivering outcomes, including an improved quality of response to victim survivors.

## What should happen now?

**The government must continue its effort to improve how the voices of victims are heard and inform policy development and service delivery.**

The government has been innovative in creating and supporting VSAC, and should now continue to build its experience, striving for continuous improvement. Some steps that could be taken in the next year include:

- Review the Peer Academy report, due early 2019, and implement recommendations made to enhance engagement where appropriate.
- Use other sources of engagement, outside of VSAC. Family Safety Victoria should share its experience from working with VSAC to help other agencies feel confident in using different forms of engagement while ensuring the safety of victim survivors.
- Make targeted efforts to identify and fill the current gaps in consultation, especially in relation to diverse communities.
- Consider which engagement mechanisms work best in the implementation phase versus delivery phase, including whether they capture current experiences of the system.
- Coordinate the use of victim survivor consultations across the reform and the government more broadly. This could include creating a space where consultation by different agencies can be shared, compared or combined.

## Next steps

This report builds on the story from my first report. I have maintained my focus on the reform's foundations, as these continue to be the highest risk to its success and hold the greatest potential for improvement across the whole reform. Throughout the monitoring period, I have also actively monitored emerging risks and opportunities, and sought to provide ongoing support and advice to the implementation agencies to provide systemic improvements in program and project management.

As the government moved into the delivery phase for many of its key initiatives, I chose to also look at three of the higher risk significant initiatives. These were major pieces of the reform that were moving into delivery and they had significant potential to impact the achievement of outcomes.

There were many areas of the reform I could have chosen to focus on. To get a better outcome from monitoring, my office focused on particular prioritised areas rather than spreading limited resources too thin. I prioritised the areas I would monitor based on my assessment of what is best for victim survivors, and breaking the cycle of abuse. That doesn't mean that the other reform areas are not important. For example, the effectiveness of implementation may be impacted by the proportion of investment allocated to respective key groups (such as children or people with disabilities) or the proportion of investment allocated to key phases of the family violence cycle (such as crisis intervention or recovery). They are, and should be, monitored by others, including through internal monitoring by government and targeted monitoring by other external agencies. I am committed to working with, and continuing discussions with, these other forums. One key area that I will watch with interest is how the Dhelk Dja Partnership forum monitors the implementation of their agreement with government.

During my remaining time as Monitor I will continue my thematic approach. I have specifically chosen focus areas that are not only higher risk, but that will also enable me to see whether the foundational issues I have previously identified are impacting effective implementation, and how the government will address this. I will also continue to monitor emerging risks and may return to the foundational issues during the year if my assessment of the issue warrants it.

I do not underestimate the challenge that remains for the government, nor do I doubt the significant effort and commitment from the individuals working to make the reform a reality. The work on the reform remains ambitious and ground breaking. The lessons learned will have long lasting impacts in Victoria's family violence landscape, but also in other reforms, in social policy practices, and in other jurisdictions. The work done so far is already changing the way things are done – for example, how the government includes the voice of lived experience in policy design and service delivery – and I am sure benefits like this will continue to emerge.

# Monitor's Approach

## The role of the Monitor

*Ending Family Violence – Victoria's Plan for Change* (the 10 Year Plan) sets out an ambitious reform program. The size and complexity of this reform, requiring new and innovative ways of working, make this a high risk reform. The role of the Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor (FVRIM; the Monitor) was established to mitigate against some of these risks, and to provide the Victorian people and Parliament with an independent assessment of the progress of the government's implementation of the reform.

The Monitor is established under the *Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor Act 2016* (the Act) as an independent officer of Parliament. The Monitor's functions are set out in section 14 of the Act. An effective monitoring approach must reflect the nature of the reform being implemented and the capacity of the Monitor's office (as determined by the government). Given the size, risk profile and complexity of the implementation, the Monitor took a risk-based approach to monitoring.

Monitoring is an effective form of risk mitigation when it is done in a manner that enables those who are responsible for implementation to address issues as they arise, to ultimately improve outcomes, and successfully and effectively implement the reform.

To this end, the Monitor aims to act as an early warning system for risks and issues in implementation that could mean the reform is less effective for victim survivors now and in the future.

The Monitor does not have the power to direct the government or implementing agencies, and does not have decision making authority.

The Monitor's first report to Parliament was tabled in May 2018. The first report highlighted issues relating to the absence of an adequate whole-of-reform implementation plan. This was the biggest risk to the success of the reform and therefore, corrective actions were proposed to improve the foundations for the government wide implementation activities.

## Values of the Monitor

The Monitor is driven by a set of core values, which are outlined on the inside cover of this report. The values are embedded in the Monitor's approach, including stakeholder engagement and the messages communicated about the reform.

Specifically, the values of the Monitor are to:

- exercise **integrity** by reporting independently on the implementation of the reform
- be **supportive** and constructive in approach and advice to the government
- demonstrate **commitment** to the reform through perseverance and continuing to push the government to do better
- demonstrate **courage** in delivering frank and fearless advice

- be **outcomes-focused**, considering what is best for current and future victim-survivors and what might break the cycle of family violence
- reflect on how best to utilise the role to **make a difference**.

### Monitoring approach

Monitoring occurs alongside implementation, rather than after completion. The findings and conclusions are constrained by the extent of progress on each focus area. The Monitor's intention is to offer useful observations that may improve the effectiveness of the reform implementation and to alert the government to emerging risks and issues.

The size of the reform means that it is not possible to monitor everything.

To give Parliament and the community an indication of the effectiveness of implementation, the Monitor chose to focus on key areas for the monitoring period 1 November 2017 to 1 November 2018 (the date set by legislation). The areas selected were:

- corrective action suggested in the Monitor's first report
- Support and Safety Hubs
- primary prevention
- voices of victim survivors.

The Monitor held workshops with representatives from the family violence and family services sectors and with VSAC to identify areas of the reform they recommended monitoring this period.

In addition to the concerns highlighted by VSAC and sector representatives, the selected monitoring focus areas were based on careful consideration of:

- possible level of impact on the experiences of current and future victim survivors
- level of risk involved if this is not implemented well
- delivery time frame within current monitoring period
- longevity of impact
- impact on whole-of-reform outcomes
- level of funding involved
- resources of the Monitor's office.

Monitoring in this period was based mainly on qualitative data gathered from:

- consultations with agency staff on the progress of implementation, particularly around any changes to time frame or budget, the reason for delays, and the level of collaboration
- consultations with community groups and victim support groups on whether the implementation plans are meeting their needs, and whether there are any early indicators of effectiveness

- attendance at two VSB sub-committee meetings, all IDC meetings, most meetings of the Family Violence Steering Committee and a large number of other key governance meetings
- a review of key documentation from implementation agencies, meeting papers, minutes and records of decisions for key governance bodies.

FVRIM also gathered information and formed views through observations and interactions with stakeholders.

For each chosen focus area monitoring activity looked at what had been done in the monitoring period, and on identifying risks to progress and the achievement of outcomes.

### Why progress is not being reported by reference to the 227 recommendations

To report on progress, monitoring activity compares reform activity against milestones, sequencing and expectations set out in the government's implementation plan. However, as explained in the first report, the government's nominated implementation plan<sup>32</sup> does not map out the actions and associated time lines, indicators and measures of progress necessary to support progress monitoring at a whole of reform level.

Until a sufficient plan is developed with appropriate regularly reporting against the plan, it is not possible for either government or the Monitor to clearly show how much of the reform has been completed or how close it is to achieving the intended outcomes. The government has set out the intended outcomes in its 10 Year Plan. An implementation plan is required to demonstrate how far each of the outcomes should be progressed during each year of the 10 year planned implementation.

The 227 recommendations made by the Royal Commission into Family Violence are an important source of guidance in planning the work needed to transform Victoria's family violence system. The government has publicly committed to implementing all 227 recommendations. Therefore it is appropriate for the government to have a plan and a process for determining when it can say that particular recommendations have been acquitted to the standard required by their relative priority within the overall program of reform work. However, the recommendations do not individually or in aggregate describe how to implement the reform as a whole-of-system change. Nor do they represent the whole of the reform envisaged in the 10 Year Plan.

As discussed in the Monitor's first report to Parliament, acquitting recommendations is less important than taking a systemic approach, which involves an understanding of how all the constituent parts of the family violence system are interrelated, and will work together over time to improve outcomes for current and future victim survivors.

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32 The government's nominated implementation plans under section 5 of the *Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor Act 2016* are: *Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change* and the public recommendation acquittal at <https://www.vic.gov.au/familyviolence/recommendations.html> (last updated 1 May 2018).

In the absence of a suitable plan to monitor progress against, the Monitor has chosen an approach that best fulfils the intention of this role – provide support for the implementation phase through effective monitoring, particularly through the identification of risks and communication to the government about these risks and possible mitigations. This outcomes-focused approach is intended to provide the best possible support for the reform and best possible reporting to Parliament and aligns with the Monitor’s core values.

This report summarises the findings from the monitoring activity undertaken, which has focused on specific areas, and therefore cannot include an assessment of the progress or completion of the 227 individual recommendations.

## Appendix B

The Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor would like to thank the following organisations, committees and stakeholders for their time.

*Names of people and organisations generally reflect their status during the monitoring period.*

Bethany Community Support  
Central Highlands Integrated Family Violence Committee  
Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare  
Chief Magistrate Peter Lauritsen  
Chief Magistrate's Family Violence Taskforce  
Connect Health and Community  
Council to Homeless Persons  
Court Services Victoria  
Deborah Glass OBE, Victorian Ombudsman  
Department of Education and Training  
Department of Health and Human Services  
Department of Justice and Regulation  
Department of Premier and Cabinet  
Department of Treasury and Finance  
Dhelk Dja Partnership Forum, formerly the Indigenous Family Violence Partnership Forum  
Djirra (formerly Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service)  
Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria  
Domestic Violence Victoria  
Domestic Violence Victoria's Members Forum  
Elder Abuse Prevention Networks  
Family Safety Victoria  
Federation of Community Legal Centres  
Georgie Crozier MLC, Shadow Minister for Prevention of Family Violence  
InTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence  
Jan Logie MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary to the Minister of Justice (Domestic and Sexual Violence), New Zealand Parliament  
Judge Sara Hinchey, Victorian State Coroner  
Justin Mohamed, Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People

Liana Buchanan, Commissioner for Children and Young People  
Magistrates' Court of Victoria  
Mallee District Aboriginal Services  
Mallee Sexual Assault Unit  
No To Violence / Men's Referral Service  
Office for Women, formerly the Office for Prevention and Women's Equality  
Office of the Premier of Victoria  
Our Watch  
Professor Cathy Humphreys, University of Melbourne  
Respect Victoria  
Ron Iddles OAM APM, Community Safety Trustee  
Rosie Batty  
Rowena Allen, Victorian Commissioner for Gender and Sexuality  
Safe Steps  
Seniors Rights Victoria  
Sven Bluemmel, Victorian Information Commissioner  
The Hon. Gabrielle Williams MP, Minister for Prevention of Family Violence  
The Hon. Gavin Jennings MLC, Special Minister of State  
The Hon. Marcia Neave AO, Commissioner, Royal Commission into Family Violence  
The Hon. Natalie Hutchins MP, Minister for Prevention of Family Violence  
The Sexual Assault & Family Violence Centre, Geelong  
Victim Survivors' Advisory Council  
Victoria Legal Aid  
Victoria Police  
Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency  
Victorian Auditor-General's Office  
Victorian Council of Social Services  
Victorian Primary Care Partnerships  
Western Integrated Family Violence Committee  
Women With Disabilities Victoria  
Women's Health Victoria  
Women's Legal Service



**Accessibility**

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Design by Ography.

Printed by Waratah Group, Port Melbourne.

Printed on Splengorgel – FSC Certified Paper.

ISBN 978-0-6483252-2-2 (Print)

ISBN 978-0-6483252-3-9 (PDF)

March 2019

**Report of the Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor As at 1 November 2018**