



Submission to the Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor

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Table of contents

Context for this submission	1
About our Partnership and Bayside Peninsula	1
Changes to our family violence system since the RCFV	2
The Orange Door	2
MARAM and FVISS	2
Intersecting sectors and workforces	3
Other changes to our system	3
System issues we have seen since the RCFV	4
Integration challenges within The Orange Door	4
Broader system integration challenges	5
Workforces challenges	6
Perpetrator accountability challenges	7
Changes to the client experience	8
Changes to our system that still need to occur	9
Family violence housing	9
Data collection across the system	10
Reform measures insufficiently progressed that require attention	11
MARAMIS implementation training	11
Adolescent family violence in the home	12
Improvements to the reform implementation approach	12
System impacts of COVID-19 (and modifications to take forward)	13
Our recommendations (full list)	14

Context for this submission

The Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor (FVRIM) is preparing its fourth (and final) report on how the Victorian Government and its agencies are implementing the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Family Violence (RCFV). Bayside Peninsula Integrated Family Violence Partnership (BPIFVP) welcomes the opportunity to provide our submission on what has changed, and what still needs to be done, to transform the family violence system in enduring and systemic ways, as we work towards a shared vision of ‘a future where all Victorians are safe, thriving and living free from family violence.’

About our Partnership and Bayside Peninsula

BPIFVP was established 2015. We exist to bring together the many disparate family violence services and the workforces and sectors that intersect with family violence into a meaningful partnership arrangement, to drive a more integrated ‘one system’ approach to dealing with family violence across our region. We provide local area leadership, advocacy and expertise to strengthen and improve our family violence system and end family violence.

BIFVP has representation from family violence services and cross-sector organisations and alliances whose work intersects with family violence response, early intervention and primary prevention. Our members are senior leaders involved in strengthening the family violence system and ending family violence in Bayside Peninsula.

Bayside Peninsula is an area defined by the Victorian Department of Human Services (DHHS). It covers the seven local government areas of Frankston, Glen Eira, Kingston, Mornington Peninsula, Port Phillip and Stonington, and suburbs from Port Melbourne to Portsea.

BPIFVP is one of 14 family violence partnerships or committees that exist across Victoria. These local area family violence system governance structures are integral to the success of the Victorian Government’s agenda to transform family violence under *Ending Family Violence: Victoria’s plan for change* (2016) and related policy.

BPIFVP’s role is especially relevant to the Victorian Government’s endeavours to maintain the integrity and intent of the RCFV to repair a fragmented system ‘from the ground up.’ BPIFVP is on that ground. Our Partnership is also well-placed to provide expert informed comment to the FVRIM on the reform implementation progress *from our unique local system perspective* – the focus of this submission.

BPIFVP members

- Anglicare Victoria
- Alfred Health
- Department of Education & Training
- Department of Health & Human Services
- Department of Justice & Community Safety
- Emerge Women & Children’s Support Network
- Family Life
- Good Shepherd ANZ
- JewishCare
- Ngwala Willumbong Aboriginal Corporation Ltd
- The Orange Door
- Olive’s Place
- Peninsula Community Legal Service
- Peninsula Health
- The Salvation Army Australia Territory
- South Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault
- Star Health
- Taskforce
- Uniting Vic.Tas
- Victoria Police
- VACCA
- Women’s Health in the South East
- WAYSS

Changes to our family violence system since the RCFV

The FVRIM wishes to know about the changes we have seen to our system since the RCFV. It is just over four years since the RCFV delivered its final report and recommendations to the Victorian Government. The Commissioners generated a ‘once in a generation’ opportunity to re/design and implement system-wide solutions to prevent family violence before it can happen, intervene earlier into family violence that is occurring, support victim survivors of family violence, and hold perpetrators to account.

BPIFVP can report significant reform progress in Bayside Peninsula since the RCFV concluded, especially with the release of *Ending Family Violence*, the establishment of Family Safety Victoria (FSV), and the commencement of a number of major system re/design initiatives. FSV has responsibility for ‘iconic’ system-wide reform measures such as The Orange Door, Multi-Agency Risk and Management Framework (MARAM), Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS), and workforces development. Most of these elements have progressed in our area over the last four years albeit to different degrees, reflecting changes (or changes-in-progress) to our system.

The Orange Door

The Orange Door integrates different service sectors into a single intake point, so that client information can be shared for appropriate service responses. The Orange Door has been conceptualised and designed as a new model of integrated intake and coordinated support between the services that are part of it. In The Orange Door are practitioners from family violence services, perpetrator services, child and family services, and Aboriginal services. FSV and DHHS work in partnership with the services in The Orange Door.

Bayside Peninsula was one of five areas included in the first-stage rollout of The Orange Door, with our support and safety hub opening in May 2018. There is now well-documented evidence that FSV worked to tight timeframes and rushed the implementation of this first stage.¹ While the opening of The Orange Door reflects an important inclusion to our family violence system – and the enormity of the task FSV faced in its establishment cannot be overstated – our support and safety hub opened in less than ideal circumstances. Only half of The Orange Door’s full-time equivalent positions were filled. It operated from a contingency location in Frankston for its first three months. It received every new police referral from day one, which generated an early case backlog. It started operating without structured opportunities built into its implementation for the ‘operational translation’ of high-level guidance materials from FSV.

The implications of these issues for our local family violence system, and for the client experience as they have moved through our system, are expanded upon later in our submission.

MARAM and FVISS

The RCFV final report (along with several recommendations) is unequivocal in its view that transforming family violence must begin with a system that has shared understandings of family violence and risk. Family violence literacy, along with consistent risk assessment and management, are critical enablers of reform; and in the reform’s implementation, these enablers have come in the shape of MARAM and FVISS.

¹ See for example the Victorian Auditor-General’s Office’s recent independent assurance report to Parliament on The Orange Door’s design, planning, operations and performance to date, released in May 2020; and FVRIM’s third report on the Victorian Government’s progress with the family violence reform, released in November 2019.

MARAM is for services, organisations, professions, workforces and sectors that collectively have shared responsibility for family violence risk assessment and management. Prescribed MARAM organisations are also required to align relevant policies, procedures, practice guidance and tools with the framework. FVISS enables workers in The Orange Door and other designated entities to share information about clients to facilitate a comprehensive risk assessment. MARAM and FVISS have been implemented together and are referred to as MARAMIS in our submission; and implementation has been in two stages, excluding an initial group of FVISS designated entities. The first stage commenced in September 2018; the second stage is expected to begin in early 2021, delayed because of the state of emergency to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. The second stage is expected to bring on board universal sectors and workforces, among them health, hospitals and education.²

Over the last two years, BPIFVP has seen a lot of MARAMIS implementation capability building in the region, such as training for organisational leaders, training for experienced family violence specialists, training for family violence specialists newer to the system, and sessions on collaborative practice. Many stakeholders from different parts of our system are starting to report increased understandings of, and confidence in, their specific MARAMIS roles and responsibilities, signalling early shifts our system towards a collective MARAMIS ‘mindset’. We are acutely aware, however, that shifting an *entire* system takes time. From our local system perspective, we see the need for the reform to *continue* to support our local area in building a MARAMIS culture that can be *embedded* across our system’s sectors, workforces and organisations. We return to this point later.

Intersecting sectors and workforces

In addition to MARAMIS-related workforces development, BPIFVP can comment on the rollout of a small number of other state-wide reform initiatives in our region, focused on specific sectors or workforces within our system whose core business intersects with family violence. These are the Specialist Family Violence Advisor Capacity Building Program (Stage 1) for the mental health and alcohol and other drugs sectors; and the Strengthening Hospitals Response to Family Violence initiative. Both initiatives are supporting their sectors or workforces to recognise and identify family violence, in different ways. The Specialist Family Violence Advisor Capacity Building Program provides the mental health sector and the alcohol and other drugs sector with access to specialist family violence expertise; Strengthening Hospitals Response to Family Violence supports hospitals to embed an evidence-based model for change, including alignments of policies and practices with MARAM.

Other changes to our system

BPIFVP wishes to comment briefly on two further (non-FSV led) state-wide initiatives that have changed, or are continuing to change, our system since the RCFV concluded. These are the Specialist Family Violence Courts (SFVCs) initiative of the Magistrates’ Court of Victoria; and the continued investment in Risk Assessment and Management Panels (RAMPs) coordinated by DHHS.

The RCFV recommended that SFVCs be established at 14 headquarter Magistrates’ Courts across Victoria. SFVCs provide support to victim survivors and promote perpetrator accountability through facility design and operation elements (e.g. separate entrances and exits) and by locating a team of specially trained magistrates, operational staff, family violence practitioners, partner agencies and other court-based

² Legislative and regulatory force is applied to MARAM and FVISS through the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008* (amendments in 2018) and the *Family Violence Protection (Information Sharing and Risk Management) Regulations 2018* respectively.

services at court, all working together to deliver integrated and coordinated responses. The 2017 State Budget allocated capital and operational funding for the first round of SFVCs in five locations, among them Moorabbin and Frankston in Bayside Peninsula. Moorabbin SFVC has been operating since March 2020, while Frankston SFVC is forecast to open in November 2020. It is still early days for Moorabbin's SFVC; however, BPIFVP is hearing positive reports about its integrated and coordinated responses; for example, its efficiencies around processing intervention orders (IVOs).

RAMPs are formally convened meetings held at the local level of agencies and organisations critical to the safety of women and children experiencing serious and imminent threat from family violence. There are 17 RAMPs across Victoria including in Bayside Peninsula. Each RAMP meets once a month to share information and take action to keep women and children at the highest risk from family violence safe. RAMPs are not a substitute for the existing local system but enhance integration. While RAMPs were piloted prior the RCFV, BPIFVP would like to acknowledge the ongoing positive impact of the initiative on our local system in bringing services together for a coordinated response, and the continued investment post-RCFV in RAMPs across Victoria as a critical element in local integrated family violence systems.

System issues we have seen since the RCFV

The FVRIM wishes to know about system issues that we have seen since the RCFV, especially given the changes to our system brought about by the implementation of state-wide reform pieces such as those described above. BPIFVP will now comment on integration challenges, workforces challenges, and perpetrator accountability challenges.

Integration challenges within The Orange Door

The Orange Door in Frankston has just entered its third year of operation. While Bayside Peninsula's hub has been moving in a great direction overall, this has not been without its challenges. The hub model is intended to bring services together for integrated intake and improved coordination of response. The FVRIM reported last year, in its third report, that while foundation documents for The Orange Door do exist, the implementation for the first five hubs rushed ahead without structured opportunities built into the process for the 'operational translation' of such materials. Moreover, this piece of work was still outstanding at the time of preparing the FVRIM's third report.

BPIFVP can confirm that this situation *continues* to the current day. Those in Frankston's The Orange Door are still being tasked with operationalising a complex new model in an incredibly busy intake environment, without practical guidance or examples of integration and collaborative practice for the hub context – a task made all the more complex because the model is asking services that have historically been delivered by separate organisations, with distinct philosophical underpinnings to their service provision that have evolved over time, to integrate. What exactly does integrated practice in a hub look like?

Over the last three years, we simply haven't had enough opportunity for the operational and also the deeper philosophical conversations needed to bring three enormous sectors, and some of the other ones, together into an integrated model. How does this work? Especially when there are children involved, whether they are adolescents using family violence or children impacted by adult family violence. We have hub foundation documents, and integration enablers are in place too (such as MARAMIS). But the opportunity to enable the cultural and practice shifts for integration, the opportunity to arrive at shared and deeper understandings of where we're heading – that's the piece that's been missing. (BPIFVP member)

In May 2020, the Victorian Auditor-General's Office released its independent assurance report on The Orange Door to Parliament. This report is clear in stating that the missing operational translation piece has reached a critical juncture. In the absence of this piece, the report points to tailored operational processes and practices having been established by each hub as they have opened, and the risk such inconsistency poses to clients in not receiving the same quality of service across The Orange Door locations, which is the *opposite* of the intent of the hubs as formulated by the RCFV. The report recommends that FSV seeks to improve the consistency of hub operations and practices by refining and finalising the *Support and Safety Hubs: Integrated practice framework* (which has been in interim form since April 2018) so it includes the practical detail needed to support practitioners on how to operationalise the hub model.

In response, FSV has committed to undertaking this piece in collaboration with the sector, with an expected completion date of December 2021. In the meantime, FSV will work with the sector to develop and deliver 'practice development support and training' informed by positive examples of integrated practice, by December 2020. BPIFVP looks forward to both initiatives getting underway for The Orange Door in Frankston; however, we wish to impress upon the FVRIM that both are urgently needed *now*, given the Frankston hub is already in its third year of operation, and will be in its fourth year by the scheduled release date of the refined and finalised Integrated Practice Framework.

Recommendation 1 That FSV brings forward the timeframe for the refined and finalised *Support and Safety Hubs: Integrated practice framework* and completes this work no later than March 2021. That FSV builds into the implementation process of the framework adequate structured opportunities to enable the cultural and practice shifts that need to happen for integrated and collaborative practice, including opportunities to find common ground on the philosophical underpinnings of the different services.

Broader system integration challenges

The operational expectation of The Orange Door is integrated intake from a range of referral sources to make it easier for clients to find and access the services they need. The Orange Door does not replace specialist services and/or services from other supports, but are intended to facilitate a less fragmented and more streamlined experience of the system for clients who need services and supports. Services and supports include case management, men's behaviour change programs, counselling services, legal services, housing services, mental health, and alcohol and other drug services, to name but a few.

The Orange Door in Frankston reflects a significant investment and design element introduced to Bayside Peninsula's integrated family violence system. The focus over the last three years on The Orange Door's establishment and operations has sometimes meant an 'unevenness' in attention paid to the other parts of our local system. BPIFVP has feedback from clients that moving from The Orange Door to the system can still feel clunky, which once again is the opposite of what the hubs are designed to do. For instance, the early days of The Orange Door saw delays in the service response for children who sometimes got 'lost' between integrated intake and coordination with a system *already* in place beyond the hub. From our local system view, we would like future reform activities related to The Orange Door to have a more balanced focus on, and provide more balanced support to, achieving integrated intake *and* integrated service delivery from a *whole-of-system* perspective.

We make a similar point in relation to the newly established SFVC in Moorabbin. The focus of the SFVC is to achieve greater consistency in family violence functions and services across the court, with a team of specially trained Magistrates, operational staff, family violence practitioners, partner agencies, and other court-based services in place to deliver a coordinated response – including culturally safe responses for

Aboriginal people experiencing family violence. BPIFVP has received positive feedback from clients about the SFVC's family violence functions and services in the short time that it has been operational, in relation to processing IVOs for instance. We would, however, like see the SFVC operating in ways that are less 'insular' relative to the rest of the system. System integration of the SFVC in Moorabbin and the soon-to-be opened SFVC in Frankston is an opportunity for Bayside Peninsula going forward, through mechanisms such as the recently established court users group and the inclusion of a court representative on the BPIFVP.

Recommendation 2 That the Victorian Government and its agencies leading the reform keep 'front of mind' that system-wide initiatives such as The Orange Door and SFVCs always 'land' in local area systems *already* in place; and that facilitating and achieving local area system integration by working with BPIFVP and other area-based integrated family violence governance structures must be fundamental re/design and implementation considerations.

Workforces challenges

The Victorian Government's plans for family violence workforces is detailed in *Building from Strength: 10-Year industry plan for family violence prevention and response*. FSV's Centre for Workforce Excellence is currently overseeing the first rolling action plan of this policy, which includes a broad range of workforces development initiatives, among them the MARAMIS training activities, all geared towards the vision of a system that is flexible, dynamic, and person-centred, working together to respond to the complexity and harms of family violence, and to prevent it from occurring in the first place.'

Building workforces capability across the system – including strengthening specialist workforces – is a key priority of *Building from Strength*. One outcome attached to this priority is that the system has well-rounded workforces that are prepared to identify, assess and manage risk, and can understand the role they have in response as well as early intervention and primary prevention. A second outcome is that specialist workforces can attract, recruit and retain skilled practitioners, 'when and where they are needed.' A third outcome relates to enhancing the 'training architecture' so that *all* workforces can be provided with high-quality content and courses for the skills and knowledge needed to build capability across the system.

From BPIFVP's perspective, one of the biggest and most consistent system issues over the last four years has been recruiting to our system's workforces. The scale and pace of reform is considerable. The 'training architecture' across the state is not where it needs to be as yet for educational and training pathways into our workforces that can meet demand for people; this means finding the people we need with the right skills, experience and leadership for our workforces is a constant challenge. Our region has some exciting partnerships and innovations for improved pathways into our workforces. The Enhanced Pathways Project is increasing the number of social work student placements in family violence. The Family Violence Social Work Graduate Year Program is providing support to social work graduates to help attract and retain them as workers. But building the workforces capability that we need across the system for *this* reform, in terms of practitioners and leaders right across the intervention continuum, is going to take time.

It's a finite resource out there in terms of who can be recruited to the organisations that make up our system. It's going to take time to build that kind of workforce capability. But we need it now, as an enabler in the reform's success in the long term. (BPIFVP member)

We understand that the Centre for Workforce Excellence has just commenced implementing the first rolling action plan of *Building From Strength* and look forward to seeing effective and fit-for-purpose local

area solutions to our workforces challenges. In the meantime, we would like to see immediate solutions to two specific workforces challenges in our region. These relate to TOD, which to this day remains not fully staffed; and to the parts of our system that provide services and supports to perpetrators, where there is a critical shortage of skilled workers.

Recommendation 3 That the Victorian Government immediately provides an injection of funding to boost education and training pathways into the parts of our system where skilled capable workers are required for responding to perpetrators. That dedicated positions are funded for The Orange Door in Frankston to support and mentor new workers coming into the hub, including graduates.

Perpetrator accountability challenges

Holding perpetrators to account and keeping them in view are important cornerstones for a transformed family violence system. From BPIFVP's perspective, this is an area of reform work that is seriously lagging. Over the last four years, and when compared with other reform areas, we have seen relatively little in system-wide re/design, investment and implementation that is specific to perpetrator accountability.

A system-wide approach would keep perpetrators in view and hold them to account *throughout* the entire system, not only 'down the track' with the police or courts. A system-wide approach could have elements such as evidence-based case management, therapeutic services, and other services and supports to help reduce the risk of further perpetration. We know from the FVRIM's third report late last year that FSV had commenced work on a whole-of-system 'reform package' to help the Victorian Government meet its reform objectives to holding perpetrators to account, and that the strategy release date was in 2020. We are yet to see such a strategy released or implemented in Bayside Peninsula, or anywhere else in Victoria.

We all deal with men every day. We need a system that's broad enough to deal with different cohorts of presenting problems and different risk levels. Basically, what we have is a tightly held view of what constitutes the evidence base – men's behaviour change programs. We've seen little projects dotted around, a bit of case management for instance, but it's predominantly men's behaviour change programs. There needs to be more options and ways of intervening for men built into our system. (BPIFVP member)

As it stands, when it comes to perpetrator accountability in this reform, 'It feels like we're not remotely there.' For another BPIFVP member, the longer the lag time for system-wide reform measures on perpetrator accountability, the higher the risk that perpetrators are even 'less in view' than prior to the RCFV – the opposite of the RCFV's intent. Put simply, we urgently need a state-wide whole-of-system perpetrator intervention strategy; and we think this is one of the biggest opportunities for the reform's next phase.

In the meantime, BPIFVP understands that FSV is currently leading work on developing evidence-based perpetrator focused tools and practice guidance as part of the MARAM suite of resources. The non-specialist assessment tool and practice guides will be finalised in October 2020, while the specialist assessment tool and practice guides will be finalised in December 2020. BPIFVP looks forward to these materials being available, and to a program of workforces capability development that will necessarily be required to upskill our system's workforces on this important component of MARAMIS.

Recommendation 4 As a matter of urgency, that FSV implements its state-wide whole-of-system reform package for holding perpetrators to account, and that this strategy includes fully-funded options for local areas to keep perpetrators in view throughout their *entire* system – meaning options for evidence-based responses to reduce perpetration risk that go beyond ‘single lens’ men’s behaviour change programs.

Changes to the client experience

The FVRIM wishes to know about the client experience of the family violence system and how this has changed since the RCFV. BPIFVP has both positive and less positive examples of the client experience.

We have feedback from The Orange Door that the Aboriginal client experience has improved over the last few years, demonstrated by a greater demand from Aboriginal communities for family violence and family services. We have feedback from other parts of our system that our response to LGBTIQ communities and people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities is also moving in the right direction, in terms of more awareness and strengthened understanding of the different manifestations of family violence and the service and support needs of people from these communities. Our system still has a way to go, and we continue to build our capability as a system for these contexts. We have feedback from partners that the flexible support packages have made a significant difference to victim survivors in moving through crisis. Whether it’s getting locks changed or security lights put in once a perpetrator has been removed from home, access to this package is helping clients in small but meaningful ways.

Feedback from parts of our system in relation to client experience of police is less positive. We continue to hear from victim survivors who remain reluctant to report IVO breaches because they experienced insensitive or inappropriate handling of their incidents in the first instance, and are anxious that the follow up will be no different. We know of one victim survivor who was told by police that an IVO breach was not ‘serious enough’ even when there were situations of stalking and threats involved. Time was spent by a specialist family violence worker connecting this woman to another station with a specialist family violence officer, to ensure a more positive experience for her. Examples such as these tell us that *all* parts of the system, and *all* parts of every workforce, need to be brought along in this reform if we are to realise the intent of the RCFV for a transformed system.

Feedback from parts of our system in relation to the client experience of the Magistrates’ Court of Victoria and different federal court systems (Federal Circuit Court of Australia, Family Court of Australia) is also less positive, when these courts systems intersect in the lives of victim survivors. We know of victim survivors who feel they are ‘stuck in limbo’ between different court systems, unable to finalise an Interim Order for years and move beyond crisis to recovery, for instance. See our case example that follows (over).

Case example – Jasmine* feels ‘stuck in limbo’

Jasmine was married in Goa, India in November 2012. Jasmine arrived into Melbourne in December 2012 on a tourist visa pending a spousal visa her (now ex-)husband applied for. On arriving Jasmine lived with her in-laws, and was unemployed until 2014. Often Jasmine was demeaned and undermined by her in-laws, making derogatory comments about her educational background and ethnicity, and she had no financial support from her ex-husband or his family. Pressure was applied on her to get a job to provide to the household. As soon as she was employed, her ex-husband resigned from his job.

Jasmine suffered physical abuse, emotional abuse and financial abuse. Jasmine would be frequently strangled by her (now) ex-husband, receive aggressive and derogatory comments from him and his family, and was pressured to sign for a bank loan valued at \$700,000. Jasmine’s ex-husband and family then re-financed the loan for \$1.3 million after the original loan was used to build adjoining rental properties for Jasmine’s ex-husband’s brother in law, her ex-husband and Jasmine to live in. Jasmine moved with her ex-husband into one of the properties just before becoming pregnant, however four days after giving birth to their daughter, Jasmine’s ex-husband demanded Jasmine and the baby to leave, while calling the police to report a domestic incident. Instead, Jasmine’s ex-husband left with police to return later with other family members to remove Jasmine and the baby. Jasmine and the baby escaped to the local hospital.

Jasmine filed for an IVO soon after, in October 2017; however, after five adjournments in the Magistrates’ Court, Jasmine is still waiting to have an Interim Order confirmed to a Final Order with a hearing in August 2020. Furthermore, Jasmine has not been able to access legal aid throughout the court process due to her ex-husband calling all of the community legal centres for himself, therefore causing a conflict of interest for Jasmine to receive independent legal aid. As well, Jasmine’s assets appear (on paper) to be worth the value of the prior mentioned loan her in-laws re-financed the rental properties on, as the loan is in Jasmine’s name. However, Jasmine does not receive any financial benefit from the two properties nor does she live in either; she has not been able to receive a settlement nor is she confident she will receive any settlement if and when the assets are addressed in the Federal Circuit Court. The property settlement along with finalising a divorce has been pending since December 2017, due to neither party being able to afford a required Family Assessment ordered by the Court. Jasmine currently lives in transition housing with her two year old daughter, with limited funds and an outstanding legal bill with one family law firm out of three, of \$35,000+. Jasmine works casually a few hours one day a week for the Call Centre at Public Transport Victoria.

* Jasmine is a pseudonym. This case example is drawn from a victim survivors’ lived experiences and has been significantly de-identified while retaining core relevant facts of the case.

Changes to our system that still need to occur

The FVRIM wishes to know about the most critical changes to our system that still need to occur going forward with the reform. Our discussion has already highlighted the huge gap in system-wide perpetrator accountability measures for Victoria; this must be prioritised as a major reform system change piece going forward. Our discussion has also identified the intersection between the Magistrates’ Court of Victoria and different federal court systems, and the negative impact these systems can have on victim survivors as they move between them. Finding a way through this could be another important area of work to include in the reform program to the future. BPIFVP would now like to discuss two further areas of work to focus the reform going forward: housing for those fleeing family violence, and data collection across the system.

Family violence housing

BPIFVP can report that there has been significant progress over the last couple of years in Bayside Peninsula’s refuges redevelopment initiative, with one refuge completed and a second in the final stages of construction. There has also been a strengthening of our crisis responses around housing through Safe Steps, as demonstrated by a more efficient and integrated ‘flow through’ to accommodation for women and children escaping family violence. These are positive and welcome changes to our local system.

While there has been some prioritising of family violence on social housing registers, we do need to see more focus on post-emergency options to support the journey from crisis to recovery. These options include transitional housing for women and their children, where women can settle for a long enough period of time to make decisions about their future; and longer-term housing support for women and their children, where women and their children can continue on their recovery journey.

As a local system, we are still struggling to move women and children from a refuge or crisis situation into longer-term stable and secure housing. It's fundamentally a supply issue here. And the longer women and children remain in short-term accommodation, the more challenging it is for them to move from crisis to recovery. Unstable and insecure housing impacts on women's employment prospects; it has implications for children's educational and social development; it compounds existing socio-economic disadvantage. Bayside Peninsula needs a well-resourced housing solution from the next phase of the reform, one that can be integrated into our system's holistic response to family violence crisis *and* recovery, including trauma-informed perspectives.

Recommendation 5 That FSV works with us to design and implement a housing strategy for Bayside Peninsula that is part of our integrated system response to family violence crisis *and* recovery. That this strategy is based upon trauma-informed principles that can support clients in moving through crisis to recovery, including their re-engagement with community following their family violence experience.

Data collection across the system

From our perspective, having an infrastructure in place for the collection of data that can help inform our decisions for an effective integrated system is something we'd like to see coming out of the next phase of the reform. Currently, we have multiple data systems across sectors, workforces and organisations that 'don't really talk to each other.'

Strengthening Family Violence Regional Integration – A Monitoring, Research and Evaluation Framework for Family Violence Regional Integration Committees is a report developed by University of Melbourne. The report is the result of a collaboration between the University and Victoria's 14 family violence regional integration partnerships or committees, including BPIFVP. The collaboration, known as RICKIE (Regional Integration Committee Key Information and Evidence), occurred from 2019–2020. It was supported through philanthropic funding and Domestic Violence Victoria.

RICKIE sought to increase the capability for evidence-informed decision making among Victoria's family violence regional integration partnerships or committees, which will in turn lead to more integrated responses, improved safety for victim survivors, and increased perpetrator accountability. With RICKIE's completion, Victoria's regional integration partnerships or committees now have clear framework that can enable the systematic collection of data that are meaningful to have across local systems and will support evidence-informed decision making. This framework now needs to be progressed.

As a first step, we'd like FSV to work with Victoria's family violence regional integration partnerships or committees to implement the RICKIE framework. Important considerations for this initiative include (but are not limited to) navigating the privacy issues related to data collection collaboration and making sure the partnerships or committees have the level of data literacy and data capability and capacity needed for shared data endeavours.

Recommendation 6 That FSV works with Victoria’s family violence regional integration partnerships or committees to progress the RICKIE data collection framework and support the systematic collection of meaningful local area data for informed family violence system integration decision making. This work must include implementation actions to build local system data literacy, capability and capacity for collaborative data collection and use.

Reform measures insufficiently progressed that require attention

The FVRIM wishes to know about reform measures that are insufficiently progressed and require ongoing attention in the next phase of family violence reform. Our discussion has already highlighted recruitment to our system’s workforces as an ongoing consistent challenge. Building workforces capability across the system – including strengthening specialist workforces – must therefore receive continued focus and investment in the next part of the reform. Our discussion has also identified the need for ongoing reform attention to integration within The Orange Door, as well as to a more balanced focus on integrated intake and integrated service delivery from a *whole-of-system* perspective. BPIFVP would now like to discuss two further reform measures that we think are insufficiently progressed and require ongoing attention: MARAMIS implementation training and adolescent family violence in the home.

MARAMIS implementation training

MARAMIS implementation training has been delivered in Bayside Peninsula for around two years now. From our perspective, this rollout will require more robust long-term thinking from FSV and the Centre for Workforce Excellence going forward. The success of such a critical enabler of the reform requires sound planning, clear communication and accountability among prescribed organisations. Unfortunately, components of the rollout of MARAM have not featured these requirements and have instead created significant difficulties for alignment efforts of prescribed organisations.

There has been a lack of, or unclear, communication to regional governance structures and prescribed organisations on expectations, available resources and training associated with MARAM alignment. This has created confusion within the system, made resources and training challenging to access, and made it difficult to maintain momentum with MARAM implementation activities. Prescribed organisations are at vastly different stages of the alignment continuum; this impacts attempts to utilise the FVISS, contribute to collective risk management, and coordinate service responses for victim survivors. Clear expectations, timing and milestones for alignment are missing. Moreover, the staggered rollout of MARAM tools and guidance materials has made alignment efforts for prescribed organisations difficult and risks a lapse in commitment to, and momentum for, alignment. The release of the MARAM *Organisational Embedding Guide* in July 2020 is over two years after Tranche 1 organisations were prescribed under MARAM.

All of this means we are nowhere near the cultural and practice shifts that need to be embedded in our sectors, workforces and organisations for a collective MARAMIS ‘mindset’ across our system.

One other unexplored opportunity of MARAMIS implementation training is around capability building on the application of intersectionality to family violence response. Evidence-based risk factors associated with family violence are integrated into the package of tools and guidance materials of MARAM. These risk factors are an essential part of the ‘structured professional judgement’ promoted by the framework – an approach that includes victim survivor’s own assessment of risk and safety alongside practitioner assessment of evidence-based risk factors and information obtained through information sharing processes. The application of intersectionality is recommended by MARAM as well, to help practitioners

understand the unique and specific family violence contexts of those who engage with our system, and how lived experiences of perpetration and victimisation are driven by macro-level intersecting structures of privilege and oppression. The MARAM Practice Guides state:

... using intersectional analysis can inform your understanding of how forms or systems of oppression or domination can overlap and create structural inequality, barriers or discrimination for individuals or communities that can exacerbate the impacts of their experience of family violence risk. (Foundation Knowledge Guide, p. 31)

Input from different parts of our local system tell us that there is strong appetite to learn more about how the application of intersectionality works in family violence response as practice.

Recommendation 7 That FSV and the Centre for Workforce Excellence approach all future rollout of MARAMIS implementation training and associated resources with more robust long-term thinking and planning as well as clearer communication to all parts of the system that have specific MARAMIS roles and responsibilities.

Adolescent family violence in the home

Since the RCFV concluded, we have seen number of small projects in Bayside Peninsula that respond to adolescent family violence in the home. Included here are the DHHS-funded Keeping Families Safe Program through Peninsula Health, which also participated in a Monash University research project, *Investigating Adolescent Family Violence in Victoria: Understanding experiences and practitioner perspectives*; The Alfred Foundation – Alfred Health’s scoping work on adolescent family violence in the home (for the upper part of our region); and Family Life’s and Taskforce’s Reboot Program, a family-based response to adolescent family violence in the home.

From BPIFVP’s perspective, we have barely scratched the surface with adolescent family violence in the home. We would like the next part of the reform to develop and invest in a state-wide whole-of-system initiative for responding to this manifestation of family violence, including early intervention and primary prevention components, so together we can continue to contribute to the fledgling evidence base of adolescent family violence in the home.

Recommendation 8 That FSV designs and implements a state-wide whole-of-system reform strategy for adolescent family violence in the home; and that this strategy encompasses the entire intervention continuum i.e. from crisis response to early intervention and primary prevention.

Improvements to the reform implementation approach

From our local system perspective, we suggest two areas for improvement in the Victorian Government’s approach to reform implementation.

The RCFV report makes it clear that a fundamental transformation of the family violence system as we know it will require effort over the long-term, together with long-term resourcing to all parts of the system being designed, redesigned and reformed. The RCFV report is clear in stating that while the reform’s success depends on multiple initiatives, these initiatives must be coordinated and integrated rather than implemented in piecemeal manner. From BPIFVP’s experience, while not all of the reform is being experienced as piecemeal e.g. the sustained investment and rollout of The Orange Door. There are nonetheless a number of important initiatives that continue to be designed and implemented in such a

way. These include the disappointingly small amounts of investment in adolescent family violence in the home, and the short-term funding cycles that seem to be the norm for primary prevention work. They also include a segmented approach to deeper capacity building work in sectors and workforces that intersect with family violence. We have made a start with alcohol and drugs, mental health and hospitals, but what about a coordinated state-wide initiative for the full range of intersecting sectors and workforces? For the reform's next phase, we would like to see the Victorian Government and its agencies shift their approach to re/design, implementation and funding away from piecemeal towards a longer-term integrated view.

Recommendation 9 That the Victorian Government and its agencies shift away from short-term funding models for primary prevention towards more long-term thinking and investment.

We appreciate the role the Victorian Government and its agencies have taken in leading this 'once in a generation' change process for family violence in our state. We would like to see engagement between 'central' and 'local' levels strengthened going forward, to maximise the contributions of our local area expertise and leadership to this reform. One solution is to embed Victoria's family violence regional integration partnerships or committees within state-wide reform governance structures, as these local governance arrangements play such an important role in supporting implementation of the reform in their local area systems.

The State-wide Family Violence Integration Advisory Committee, made up of the family violence regional integration partnerships or committees from across the state, currently contributes to the achievement of reform objectives through routine engagement with FSV and participation on the Family Violence Advisory Group (formerly the Family Violence Steering Committee). We see these activities as pivotal for 'vertical integration' between 'central' and 'local' levels. They facilitate clear communication pathways, meaningful opportunities for regular consultation, and the contributions of local area perspectives to reform re/design and implementation.

Recommendation 10 That Victoria's 14 family violence regional integration partnerships or committees continue to be directly connected to the reform re/design and implementation processes through their relationships between FSV (via the State-wide Family Violence Integration Advisory Committee) and participation in relevant state-wide reform committees.

System impacts of COVID-19 (and modifications to take forward)

The devastation of the COVID-19 pandemic has confronted all Australians with the serious weaknesses of our social protection systems. Globally and domestically, people living in poverty and without a safe place to call home have been shown to be at far greater risk of being hit by the multiple effects of the COVID-19 pandemic – in health, social and economic terms. This is certainly the case for women and their children escaping family violence or forced to live with their perpetrators during lockdown. Travel restrictions household stress, and lack of housing are a potent mix of circumstances that place women in danger.

Since March 2020, the state of emergency brought about by the global COVID-19 pandemic has impacted our local integrated family violence system in a number of ways. We can report that our family violence response has intensified and also become more complex. For instance:

- adolescent family violence in the home has increased;
- refuge demand remains high but with less capacity to meet demand because of restrictions around shared facilities;

- there is more response work being by phone, from specialist family violence court support to working with men, and clients seem to be adapting to this (some men prefer it) while workers are finding strategies to keep conversations safe (with victim survivors);
- the backlog for men's groups continues to grow because groups cannot be run;
- elder abuse is mostly likely being under-reported during COVID-19 due a lack of awareness and understanding among cross-sector services of this manifestation of family violence;
- housing demand is high but without capacity to meet demand because of ongoing supply issues, while housing workers do not have time to meet a range of complex support needs including family violence.

From a whole-of-system perspective, the impact of COVID-19 has brought out our system strengths. We are seeing improvements in collaborative practice by way of new relationships between services, while resource sharing has become more of a feature of our work.

The impact of COVID-19 has shown up our system weaknesses too. We saw that our system transitioned somewhat unevenly to using technology-based platforms for service delivery, highlighting differences in capacity and access. For some workforces and organisations, the transition came smoothly; for others, it took longer to put the necessary supports in place to transition to more technology-based ways of working. We must remember that a 'digital divide' exists for clients, too. Going forward, we will need to remain on the 'front foot' in addressing equity issues around technology capacity and access – for our system and our clients alike – should technology-based ways of working under COVID-19 restrictions continue in the longer term.

We have also seen how technology-based ways of working under COVID-19 restrictions are starting to 'ruffle' a few assumptions about the best way to provide services, by questioning a certain historical privileging of 'face-to-face' modes over other delivery modes. This is not an entirely negative thing, for we suggest that COVID-19 restrictions might indeed be offering our system some *opportunities* for innovation, partnership and collaboration that otherwise would have taken longer to emerge, had a global pandemic not occurred. We would like to see this spirit of system innovation, partnership and collaboration continue, and be supported to do so, in the next phase of the reform.

Our recommendations (full list)

Recommendation 1 That FSV brings forward the timeframe for the refined and finalised *Support and Safety Hubs: Integrated practice framework* and completes this work no later than March 2021. That FSV builds into the implementation process of the framework adequate structured opportunities to enable the cultural and practice shifts that need to happen for integrated and collaborative practice, including opportunities to find common ground on the philosophical underpinnings of the different services.

Recommendation 2 That the Victorian Government and its agencies leading the reform keep 'front of mind' that system-wide initiatives such as The Orange Door and SFVCs always 'land' in local area systems *already* in place; and that facilitating and achieving local area system integration by working with BPIFVP and other area-based integrated family violence governance structures must be fundamental re/design and implementation considerations.

Recommendation 3 That the Victorian Government immediately provides an injection of funding to boost education and training pathways into the parts of our system where skilled capable workers are required

for responding to perpetrators. That dedicated positions are funded for The Orange Door in Frankston to support and mentor new workers coming into the hub, including graduates.

Recommendation 4 As a matter of urgency, that FSV implements its state-wide whole-of-system reform package for holding perpetrators to account, and that this strategy includes fully-funded options for local areas to keep perpetrators in view throughout their *entire* system – meaning options for evidence-based responses to reduce perpetration risk that go beyond ‘single lens’ men’s behaviour change programs.

Recommendation 5 That FSV works with us to design and implement a housing strategy for Bayside Peninsula that is part of our integrated system response to family violence crisis *and* recovery. That this strategy is based upon trauma-informed principles that can support clients in moving through crisis to recovery, including their re-engagement with community following their family violence experience.

Recommendation 6 That FSV works with Victoria’s family violence regional integration partnerships or committees to progress the RICKIE data collection framework and support the systematic collection of meaningful local area data for informed family violence system integration decision making. This work must include implementation actions to build local system data literacy, capability and capacity for collaborative data collection and use.

Recommendation 7 That FSV and the Centre for Workforce Excellence approach all future rollout of MARAMIS implementation training and associated resources with more robust long-term thinking and planning as well as clearer communication to all parts of the system that have specific MARAMIS roles and responsibilities.

Recommendation 8 That FSV designs and implements a state-wide whole-of-system reform strategy for adolescent family violence in the home; and that this strategy encompasses the entire intervention continuum i.e. from crisis response to early intervention and primary prevention.

Recommendation 9 That the Victorian Government and its agencies shift away from short-term funding models for primary prevention towards more long-term thinking and investment.

Recommendation 10 That Victoria’s 14 family violence regional integration partnerships or committees continue to be directly connected to the reform re/design and implementation processes through their relationships between FSV (via the State-wide Family Violence Integration Advisory Committee) and participation in relevant state-wide reform committees.