

Overview of the report

As at 1 November 2020


Jan Shuard PSM
Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor


For the full context and findings from our monitoring, we strongly recommend reading the report available at fvrим.vic.gov.au





Report foreword

- > Our monitoring was undertaken on the basis that this would be the final monitoring report. In that context we looked at overall progress since the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence handed down its findings in March 2016.
- > The report discusses implementation activity up to 1 November 2020 with two exceptions: the Family Violence Reform Rolling Action Plan and the 2020/21 Victorian Budget.
- > 2020 was an extraordinary year that tested the resilience and agility of the family violence system. Naturally coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic features throughout this report, and has its own dedicated chapter, given its impact on family violence, services and our monitoring.
- > Overall, our report notes that there has been substantial progress since the Royal Commission, but that there is much work to be done. We draw attention to areas that we suggest require further effort and attention, such as:

 **The need for improved data to understand the impact of the reform**

 **Greater focus on children and young people and adolescents who use violence in the home**

 **Implementation of the whole of government perpetrator accountability work program**

 **The need for ongoing expansion of safe housing options for victim survivors fleeing family violence.**

- > I am pleased to note that the Office of the Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor (FVRIM) has been funded to continue to the end of 2022.

Highlights

- > The impressive dedication and adaptability demonstrated by government agencies and the sector in response COVID.
- > All of those individuals and organisations that responded to my Call for Submissions, especially during such a challenging time (thank you to each and every one).
- > Speaking with the inspiring young people from Berry Street's Y-Change Team who are victim survivors of family violence and presented with such eloquence.
- > Feeling the commitment and passion of Family Violence Regional Integration Committees in driving change for their local and regional communities and being responsive and flexible in their approach.
- > The resilience and innovation of the Dhelk Dja Partnership Forum² where our Aboriginal community leaders strive to make real and lasting change for their people.
- > The passion and impressive work undertaken at Hume Central Secondary College embedding a whole of school Respectful Relationships model.
- > The Court Services Victoria approach that fully integrates the lived experience of a victim survivor of family violence in the design and delivery of court services at every level.





Chapter 1: What has changed since the Royal Commission?


Data highlights

 Over 1,500 Victorian schools signed on to implement Respectful Relationships 2017-2020

 25,000 information requests under the Family Violence Information Sharing (by key areas of government)

 3,453 reports generated by the Central Information Point

 7 perpetrator interventions available for diverse cohorts; Men's Behaviour Change Programs available in Arabic, Vietnamese and Mandarin, as well as English

 10,553 workers trained using the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Management (MARAM) Framework and the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme in 2019-20

Major achievements

Major achievements during monitoring period:

- > 23 recommendations implemented (bringing the total implemented to 166)
- > delivery of multiple primary prevention campaigns, including Respect Each Other: 'Call It Out' (COVID-19), May 2020
- > release of the first Gender Equality Baseline Report in November 2019
- > statewide rollout of the Family Violence Intervention Order online application form in the Magistrates' Court of Victoria in June 2020
- > opening of the Ballarat Specialist Family Violence Court in November 2019 and commencement of Moorabbin Magistrates' Court as a Specialist Family Violence Court in March 2020
- > opening of The Orange Door in the Central Highlands and Loddon areas in October 2020
- > enactment of the *Gender Equality Act 2020* in February 2020 and establishment of the Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner
- > articulation of a whole of Victorian Government perpetrator accountability work program in October 2020, including a redeveloped perpetrator outcome domain of the Family Violence Outcomes Framework.

Themes from submissions to the Monitor

Legislation as architecture of the reform

*"Maternal and Child Health services across local government are implementing **MARAM and Information Sharing** into policies and practice; including identification and screening for family violence risk assessment and management."*

— Municipal Association of Victoria

Funding as a foundation of the reform

"...the \$2.9 billion investment in development and services in the five years that followed represents a significant step forward in addressing unmet need for services and making the systemic changes that will underpin the achievement of better outcomes."

— Victorian Council of Social Service

Increased awareness and changing community attitudes

*"...community attitudes about family violence appear to be shifting, with a **greater understanding that violence is never acceptable** and that addressing it is a whole of community responsibility."* — cohealth

Dedicated agencies to drive change

"Respect Victoria...provides for the first time an institutionalised, research centric framework for planning, implementing and monitoring primary prevention." — AustralAsian Centre for Human Rights and Health

A strong focus on the diverse needs of victim survivors and perpetrators

*"The Royal Commission has provided more holistic, culturally safe, trauma informed, therapeutic services for **Aboriginal women, children, young people and men.**"* — Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency

Transforming practice within public sector agencies

"...the introduction of the [Family Violence Investigation Units] into most Victorian Police stations has been great...leading to a more appropriate response from the officers..." — Individual, Grampians Community Health

Chapter 2: Implementation reviews

Initiatives reviewed

The Orange Door creates a single area-based intake point for specialist family violence, perpetrator and child and family services.

Specialist Family Violence Courts aim to reduce the trauma, delay and complexity associated with family violence related court proceedings.

Respectful Relationships education in schools develops students' social, emotional and positive relationship skills.

Areas for future focus

Delays due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic allowed The Orange Door — Central Highlands to be better prepared for service commencement. Consideration should be given to extending the pre-commencement phase for the remaining The Orange Door sites.

Ensuring a therapeutic experience for victim survivors requires continued priority being given to seeking the views of court users to understand whether they are benefiting from the model and to identify improvements. An explicit approach to capturing and using court user experience in an ongoing manner is required.

Evaluation findings suggest the focus of Respectful Relationships implementation has been on building internal school capability, with less activity on community partnerships. Further consideration should be given to effective engagement with parents and the broader community to strengthen program outcomes.

We applied implementation science methods (including stages of implementation analysis, and an analysis of implementation enablers and barriers) to review three programs (see left) within the family violence reform. The aim of these reviews was to provide:

- > a high-level description of the implementation process, with a view to understanding the pace, duration and key activities undertaken to date
- > insights into the implementation barriers and enablers encountered for each program
- > recommendations for how to enhance implementation processes for future initiatives, including strategies for addressing the known barriers.

Review findings

1. **Allocate ample time and resources to pre-commencement implementation activities** – for example, the delays associated with the opening of The Orange Door – Central Highlands allowed for effective planning, development of guidance and systems, and recruitment and development of workforces before opening.
2. **Stakeholder engagement needs to extend throughout the whole system** – for example, the reviews found that system-level stakeholder engagement was a key enabler for implementing the Specialist Family Violence Courts. The operating model for the courts recognised the role of other services involved with victim survivors and perpetrators.
3. **Develop planning documentation that provides a clear roadmap** – for example, The Orange Door – Central Highlands implementation schedule was the product of strong, integrated planning between partner organisations and was actively used to guide change processes.
4. **Implementation champions and dedicated leadership are essential** – for example, the Department of Education and Training has championed the Respectful Relationships program to schools and there are 34 regional roles supporting the implementation and embedding of the program.
5. **Commit to using data monitoring and review to drive continuous improvement** – for example, a commitment to using different forms of evidence drove continuous quality improvement at the Specialist Family Violence Courts. This included a comprehensive process and outcome evaluation that had begun at the time of the review and includes court user experience.
6. **Context is paramount, so focus efforts on maximising fit** – for example, the implementation of Respectful Relationships demonstrated clear efforts to maximise the fit between the program and the school setting. Attention was given to ensuring alignment between the program content and style, and the school curriculum and values.

Chapter 3: Workforce

The Royal Commission into Family Violence found there has **never been a comprehensive assessment of the workforce required** for the specialist family violence system and the implications for workforces in intersecting systems. It made **numerous recommendations relating to workforce**, including the need for the government to develop and implement a **10-year industry plan** to address ongoing shortcomings. Considered workforce planning was to be central to the family violence reform to ensure workforce needs could be met over the next decade.

Progress

Clear workforce strategic directions developed (including through a 10-year industry plan) and governance structures put in place

Census of workforces that intersect with family violence conducted in 2017 and 2019

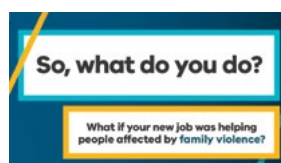
Creation of the Family Violence Jobs Hub and the 'So, what do you do?' recruitment campaign

New family violence qualifications and efforts to train more family violence trainers

Principal Practitioners at Department of Education and Training, Department of Justice and Community Safety, Department of Health and Human Services to lead capability building activities

Establishment of the Victoria Police Centre of Learning for Family Violence and the entire police workforce being training in family violence

Figure 3.3: 'So, what do you do?' recruitment campaign results



Recruitment campaign (27 May to 31 October 2020)



Source: Family Safety Victoria

Rollout of major initiatives with significant workforce implications: The Orange Door, MARAM, information sharing schemes

Foundational family violence training being rolled out to the entire Department of Justice and Community Safety workforce

Nearly 67,400 hospital staff trained through the Strengthening Hospital Responses to Family Violence program

Mapping the understanding of family violence and child wellbeing across education workforces

Key issues

- > Need for clearer and more effective governance structures and whole of government coordination.
- > Planning and monitoring processes need strengthening, with an emphasis on ensuring activities are appropriately sequenced and linked to outcomes and monitoring frameworks.
- > Very short term funding agreements are leading to the loss of staff and reform momentum, and there is a strong call for greater funding certainty.
- > Workforce health, safety, wellbeing and retention need further attention to ensure all other workforce development efforts are not compromised.

Looking forward

1. Actively work to clarify and improve communication about governance and coordination, including being clear about the role of Family Violence Regional Integration Committees in coordinating workforce development initiatives in regions.
2. Continue to improve the accuracy and usefulness of the workforce census.
3. Balance the autonomous delivery of MARAM across departments with more robust, central coordination and oversight of this foundational part of the reforms.
4. Urgently progress work to improve the wellbeing and retention of specialist family violence prevention and response workforces.
5. Prioritise process and practice alignment with the MARAM Framework in the women's prison system.
6. Ensure future workforce planning prioritises and sequences actions, and strengthen reporting of the implementation and impact of workforce activities.
7. Identify opportunities for longer term funding agreements with service providers, where appropriate.

Chapter 4: Children as primary victims

The Royal Commission into Family Violence found that, historically, **children and young people have been the 'silent victims' of family violence**. Despite the profoundly detrimental impacts of family violence on this group and the intergenerational cycles of violence it creates, there remains a lack of targeted resources to meet the specific needs of children who have experienced family violence.

Progress

A focus on the safety and wellbeing of children through MARAM and the information sharing schemes

Funding for therapeutic interventions (for victim survivors, including children) increased by 366% between 2014-15 and 2019-20

Efforts to improve the family violence capability of the child protection workforce including through Tilting Our Practice and practice guidance

Increased acknowledgement of children as primary victims of family violence through updated policies, practice guidance and training by Victoria Police, Youth Justice and The Orange Door

Creation of the Dheilk Dja Family Violence Fund to support Aboriginal-led responses and initiatives for Aboriginal families, including children

Court Support for Kids program offered at some courts – includes a trained children's worker

Figure 4.1: Number of children provided with a response at The Orange Door

 23,055 children provided with a response at The Orange Door in 2019-20

17% increase from 2018-19

Figure 4.3: Percentage of responses at The Orange Door and therapeutic services directed to children

Children represented 39% of people provided with a response at The Orange Door in 2019-20,

while 32% of therapeutic services were provided to children from September 2019 to June 2020

Source: Family Safety Victoria

Specialist Family Violence Courts designed with children in mind

Work to better support children in refuges – e.g. through the development of minimum practice and operational requirements and one-off funding for child related resources

2018 Wungurilwil Gagapduir: Aboriginal Children and Families Agreement between the Aboriginal community, Victorian Government and community service organisations to reduce the number of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care

Key issues

- > The currently available therapeutic services for children are unable to meet demand — that there are long waiting lists and significant service gaps.
- > Quality data about children affected by family violence remains a significant gap, and it is essential that this be addressed to effectively design, fund, deliver and understand demand for services.
- > Key workforces still don't feel confident working directly with children and ongoing capability building efforts are required, particularly in relation to key initiatives such as MARAM and the information sharing schemes.
- > There is not enough emphasis on intervening early, and being clear about the roles and responsibilities of all parties in ensuring that children receive the support they need as early as possible.
- > The 'voices of children and young people are still overwhelmingly missing' in the reform and in service design, according to Berry Street's Y-Change team of young people with lived experience of family violence.

Looking forward

1. Improve the availability of data about children's family violence-related experiences, including data about demand and wait times for services and outcomes for children following a service response.
2. Continue to invest in and refine capacity-building activities, including supporting workforces to engage directly with children as appropriate.
3. Clearly articulate and support the roles and responsibilities of all parties (family violence prevention and response systems and beyond) in supporting early intervention for children to keep them safe from family violence.
4. Work to incorporate the voices of children and young people in the design of policies, tools, guidance and training for staff about working with child victim survivors.
5. Further investigate stakeholders' concerns about the application of Australian family law in Victorian cases where family violence is a factor including consideration of the rate at which police apply to change a *Family Law Act 1975* order and the outcomes in these cases.

Chapter 5: Safe housing

The Royal Commission into Family Violence found that **housing pathways were 'blocked up'** and not flowing as intended, with a **lack of viable long-term housing options** to allow people to 'exit' the system and get on with their lives.

Progress

Large investments in housing and various strategies released – e.g. Family Violence Housing Blitz, Victoria's homelessness and Roughing Sleep Action Plan, recent Big Housing Build announcement

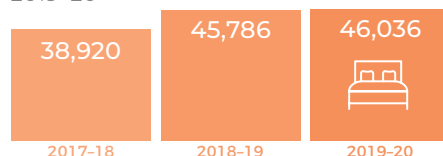
Safe at Home options – Flexible Support Packages and the Personal Safety Initiative – are widely supported. In 2018–19, 8,635 Flexible Support Packages were delivered, exceeding the target number of packages by 30%

Victoria's Social Housing Supply Requirements to 2036 released, indicating the need for at least 1,600–1,700 social housing units to be built every year for 10 years (however social housing stock has not increased accordingly)

Private Rental Assistance Program has offered 12 months of rental assistance to some households experiencing family violence

Investment in crisis accommodation including the refuge redevelopment program to support the 'core and cluster' refuge model

Figure 5.2: Nights of refuge accommodation provided, 2017–18 to 2019–20



Source: Family Safety Victoria

Figure 5.3: Social housing waiting list



Source: Victorian Housing Register and transfer list

Table 5.1: New social housing allocations, including family violence cases

Year	New allocations (all)	New allocations (family violence)	FV allocations as % of all new allocations
2015-16	3,848	15	0.4%
2016-17	3,540	360	10%
2017-18	2,812	385	14%
2018-19	2,770	439	16%
2019-20	2,378	331	14%

Source: FVRIM analysis of Department of Health and Human Services allocations data

Key issues

- > We did not find a strategic approach to housing that considers all parts of the system and pathways to longer-term housing for different cohorts.
- > Some important data relating to demand, supply and housing needs and outcomes is not readily available.
- > There is a chronic shortage of social housing and other long-term affordable housing and this has implications for victim survivors at every stage of the housing pathway.
- > Need to strengthen the Safe at Home approach, including through a stronger focus on perpetrators to enable women to remain safely at home.
- > Victim survivors continue to be placed in motels due to demand for crisis accommodation not being able to be met, and these victim survivors need more support.

Looking forward

1. Conduct an analysis of the system-level housing requirements at each stage of a victim survivor's journey and identify client-centred solutions.
2. Strengthen perpetrator accountability systems to support more victim survivors to be able to confidently remain in their own homes.
3. Urgently work to improve data on housing supply and demand, and movement through the housing system for victim survivors of family violence to support more informed monitoring and decision making based on a real understanding of client experiences.
4. Monitor a range of housing outcomes. For example, the number of victim survivors who are able to stay at home or return home, and for how long, through Safe at Home approaches; and outcomes for particular cohorts such as adolescents, male victim survivors and victim survivors on temporary visas.
5. Put in place short-term measures to improve the experiences of victim survivors who must still be housed in motels as crisis accommodation and continue to seek more appropriate and sustainable options.

The issues identified cannot be solved by the family violence sector alone. They require broader housing system reform.

Chapter 6: Perpetrator accountability

The Royal Commission into Family Violence found an **insufficient breadth and diversity of perpetrator interventions and too few interventions to meet demand**. The Royal Commission also noted that holding perpetrators to account is a basic function of the family violence and justice systems.

Progress

Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme and Central Information Point described as 'game changers' in understanding and managing risk

Revised minimum standards for men's behaviour change programs

Family Violence Investigation Units and a reformed police response at Victoria Police

Funding provided to trial various perpetrator interventions to build the evidence base

Family violence practitioners in Magistrates' Courts

Release of the whole of Victorian Government perpetrator accountability work program to support a 'web of accountability' (Figure 6.3)

Figure 6.3: Web of accountability for perpetrators



AOD = alcohol and other drugs; FV = family violence; RAMPs = Risk Assessment and Management Panels

Source: Victorian Government (2020); Family Violence Reform Rolling Action Plan 2020-2023

Development of the Court Mandated Counselling Order Program

Investment during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic to relocate perpetrators away from the family home

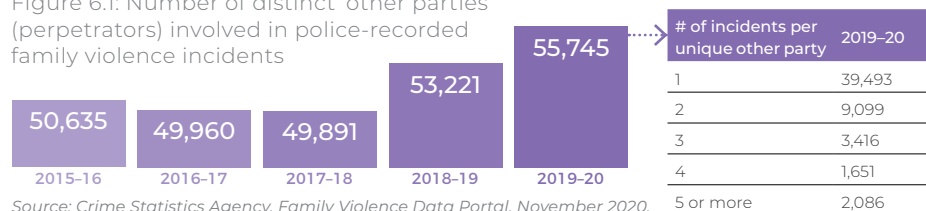
Key issues

- > Widespread concerns about extent of perpetrators' family violence intervention order breaches (48,071 breaches in 2019-20) and a perceived inadequate system response to this.
- > Some victim survivors are misidentified as perpetrators and there are difficulties with remedying this in official Victoria Police records.
- > Not enough is known about the effectiveness of perpetrator interventions, and there is a need for sustained commitment to building the evidence base.
- > The need for more perpetrator programs given the long waitlists for men's behaviour change programs.
- > Identified need for a clearer strategy and a more joined up system to keep perpetrators accountable.

Looking forward

1. Action the whole of Victorian Government perpetrator work program as a matter of urgency.
2. Find opportunities to coordinate the management of higher risk perpetrators beyond the existing Risk Assessment and Management Panels.
3. Seek to understand stakeholders' concerns about the enforcement of family violence intervention orders and family violence safety notices, from the perspectives of policing and sentencing.
4. Build on the outcomes of the perpetrator accommodation initiative to consider ongoing options to support removing perpetrators from homes.
5. Reconsider the differing needs of the young adult cohort (18- to 25-year-olds) within perpetrator interventions — they most likely require a different response.
6. Learn from the broader intervention response of the holistic approach taken by Dardi Munwurro in working with Aboriginal men who use violence.

Figure 6.1: Number of distinct 'other parties' (perpetrators) involved in police-recorded family violence incidents



Source: Crime Statistics Agency, Family Violence Data Portal, November 2020.

Chapter 7: Adolescents who use violence in the home

The Royal Commission into Family Violence identified that adolescents who use violence in the home **require a specialised and systemic response** and recommended that programs with successful trials should be expanded.

Progress

Adolescent violence in the home is recognised as a distinct form of family violence requiring a tailored response in, for example, the Victoria Police Code of Practice and MARAM

The Building the Evidence project conducted by Family Safety Victoria in partnership with the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare to better understand the nature of youth violence in the home and the approaches that work

Adolescent Family Violence Program delivered by three providers (no statewide expansion since the Royal Commission) to each support 80-100 families per year

Trial of 'restorative family meetings' as part of the Adolescent Family Violence Program – not continued

Over half of adolescent aggressors of family violence had prior contact with police as a victim survivor of family violence (including as a witness), or with courts as a protected person on a family violence intervention order *Source: Crime Statistics Agency*

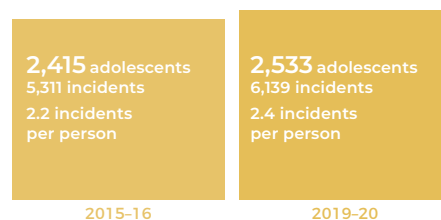
Of Adolescent Family Violence Program participants, 61% had a diagnosed mental health issue, 30% had a substance use issue, 80% had witnessed violence between other family members *Source: Adolescent Family Violence Program evaluation*

Youth refuge service model under review

A range of responses offered through the courts and youth justice, including the Children's Court Youth Diversion service and family support services

Figure 7.2: Growth in the number of distinct adolescent (aged <18 years) family violence offenders and the number of adolescent family violence incidents

+ 5% in distinct adolescent offenders
+ 16% in family violence incidents



Source: Crime Statistics Agency, December 2020.

Key issues

- > Limited availability of the Adolescent Family Violence Program, yet there is high and growing demand, including for those aged outside the 12-17 target age group.
- > There are insufficient crisis response options, including adolescent accommodation and support to accompany police attending these incidents.
- > Restorative justice responses were recommended by the Royal Commission as a beneficial approach but the 2019 trial had issues and the program did not continue. There is agreement that more work should be done in this area.
- > The complexity of issues that adolescents and families are experiencing mean that appropriate responses commonly require coordination between many sectors and services such as housing, child protection, child and family services, mental health services, police and The Orange Door, where it exists.

Looking forward

1. Acknowledge and build understanding of the complex issues surrounding adolescents using violence in the home, such as substance misuse, disability, previous experiences of family violence and mental health issues.
2. Expand the Adolescent Family Violence Program or other specialist therapeutic programs to ensure statewide access, and consider service responses for both younger (8-12 years) and older (18-24 years) age groups.
3. Ensure sustainable funding for the Adolescent Family Violence Program.
4. Consider a further, carefully designed and implemented trial of restorative justice options for adolescents and their families.
5. Improve the immediate crisis response when adolescents use violence in the home, including trialling options such as Jesuit Social Services' proposal to have social workers accompany police officers.
6. Develop a coordinated system approach and service response for adolescents who use violence in the home, including workforce capacity building and referral pathways into therapeutic services.

Chapter 8: Voices of victim survivors

The Royal Commission into Family Violence acknowledged the importance of allowing the **voices of victim survivors** to be heard. It recommended that victim survivors' experiences should **directly inform service planning and evaluations** of services' performance, to **contribute to system improvement**.

Progress

The Victim Survivors' Advisory Council was established in 2016 and currently has 15 members with lived experience of family violence. The Valuing the Lived Experience project reviewed the council's work and made a series of recommendations for improvement. During 2020, Family Safety Victoria worked with the council on its role and operations.

The Magistrates' Court of Victoria's Family Violence Consultant is one example of a lived experience practitioner being embedded within an organisation to help shape policy, processes and practices. The role provides input across the court's reform activities, including practical advice from a victim survivor's perspective of how people use the system and how service delivery can be improved.

In developing Victoria Legal Aid's Client First Approach to providing legal assistance within the Specialist Family Violence Court model, they have adopted a progressive and comprehensive approach to including the voices of clients, which includes both victim survivors and perpetrators, into their work.

Domestic Violence Victoria's Experts by Experience framework (pictured right) was launched in 2020 to support services to provide opportunities for victim survivors to influence policy development, service planning and practice, and it includes 10 principles for best practice useful resource to support engagement with victim survivors.

Looking forward

1. Collect stories of recent client experiences to inform ongoing service review and development for the significant reform initiatives such as The Orange Door, Specialist Family Violence Courts, the police response and adolescent family violence services, among others.
2. Ensure ongoing engagement with victim survivors throughout the development and implementation of approaches so they can clearly see how their experiences and input have informed policy development and service delivery.
3. Explicitly and appropriately seek the voices of children and young people with experience of family violence as part of any broader mechanisms.
4. Victim survivors, including children and young people, should have a voice in any future monitoring approaches for the reform, and should be consulted about what form that takes.

Figure 8.1: Experts by Experience framework



Source: Domestic Violence Victoria and The University of Melbourne.


Chapter 9: COVID-19 response

Government responses

- > **Reorganisation** of the public service – including the creation of the Crisis Council of Cabinet and eight cross-government ‘missions’
- > Establishment of a new **Family Violence System and Operations Group** to monitor the impacts of COVID-19-related family violence responses and to ensure strong information sharing and coordination
- > Production of **data products** for different audiences (e.g. Family Safety Victoria’s Weekly Family Violence Data report for the Minister for Prevention of Family Violence and others)
- > Development of specific **plans and guidelines** (e.g. Department of Health and Human Services issued the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Plan for the Victorian Community Services Sector)
- > **Forums and briefings** for the sector (e.g. COVID-19 Primary Prevention of Family Violence sector forum led by Respect Victoria)
- > \$40.2 million **investment**
- > Pivot to **remote working** and service delivery

7 million interactions* with **Respect Each Other: Call It Out [COVID-19] Awareness Campaign** May-June 2020 (*including TV, online, radio)

Source: Respect Victoria



Changes that should continue

According to submissions to the Monitor, stakeholders were broadly supportive of the continued availability of remote working, training and service delivery.

“Responding to COVID-19 through telehealth and phone counselling has demonstrated that not all therapeutic services need to be delivered face to face. Victim/survivors of family violence can become exhausted — physically, emotionally and financially — from having to attend multiple agencies for multiple appointments.” — cohealth

“...the increased use of video technology, more victim survivors can be offered a choice in how they appear at their court hearing and can appear virtually if they choose to do so.”
— Magistrates’ Court of Victoria

“Offering services online has allowed for greater reach of our programs and services with the ability for more children, women and families to participate.” — Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency

“The ability to do training online has been wonderful as I live in rural Vic and it is a long drive to the city and takes up a lot of my week.”
— Individual, Grampians Community Health

Sector responses examples

In March 2020, when the first Stay at Home restrictions were announced, many **men’s behaviour change programs** were temporarily suspended. Where a program was suspended, many services adapted their response to provide phone and email support to clients who were unable to attend programs, and continued risk assessment and family safety contact services. Some providers went on to provide online programs.

Safe Steps Family Violence Response Centre responded quickly to develop an online access point through a web chat function. In July 2020, shortly after launching, the service was receiving on average nine contacts per day. The dominant use was by victim survivors experiencing an escalation of family violence with limited options for safety due to the Stay at Home restrictions, including young people aged 17–22. Phone contacts to Safe Steps also increased during 2020.

Some future considerations based on our analysis

1. Enhance the quality and availability of data about the family violence service system that can be used by government and the sector.
2. Review the emergency response planning and capabilities of the family violence system – including consideration of primary prevention preparedness in a disaster context.
3. Develop staff wellbeing strategies for remote working and digital service delivery.
4. Determine an appropriate balance between remote and face-to-face service delivery, acknowledging that remote service delivery does not suit everyone.

Chapter 10: What remains to be done?

Looking forward

Based on an assessment of progress against the system limitations identified by the Royal Commission, we have identified priority areas for future focus:

Governance - Ensure timely implementation of new governance arrangements to deliver strong, coordinated oversight and decision making for the reform, and the meaningful engagement of non-government system partners in governance.

Data, evaluation, performance and outcomes - Identify ways to improve data collection and to make service supply, demand and outcomes data readily available to ensure reform transparency and enable timely decision making and support system planning.

Service integration - Ensure alignment and (appropriate) integration in the ongoing design and delivery of interrelated reform initiatives including The Orange Door, legal assistance, Specialist Family Violence Courts and perpetrator accountability mechanisms to improve responses for victim survivors and perpetrators.

Perpetrator accountability - Ensure perpetrators remain 'visible' and are held to account through action to design and deliver a range of programs to meet service demand and create a joined-up accountability system.

Children and young people - Support a systemic shift that acknowledges and responds to the independent needs of children and utilises the voices of children and young people in service design and delivery.

Workforce - Continue to grow and develop the specialist family violence and primary prevention workforces needed to support the service system and strengthen development of the broader workforces that intersect with the family violence system.

Housing - Improve housing access by addressing known issues through a clear strategy and by adopting a whole of government approach to enable more victim survivors to remain in their own homes.

Prevention - Shift the focus to preventing family violence to reduce the harm experienced by the community and demand for response services by ramping up prevention efforts and research, and through creating a coherent, coordinated and well-resourced prevention architecture.

"While there are complex whole of government governance structures in place to oversee the family violence reforms, these are difficult to navigate and have not translated into effective implementation of the reform agenda."

— Domestic Violence Victoria*

"The lack of a clear shared vision for service integration and collaboration has been clear within Orange Door locations...these lessons should be used to develop a more integrated system response across all family violence interventions."

— No to Violence*

"...it is still common across the family violence response system for the focus of interventions to be on the choices and actions of victim-survivors rather than perpetrators."

— Domestic Violence Victoria

"...the investment in therapeutic services for infants and children is still inadequate to meet express demand...there continues to be a lack of focus on the impact of family violence on children in the absence of visible injuries, resulting in the trauma and mental health impact of the violence on children being left unaddressed until it manifests much later."

— Berry Street*

"Access to safe housing and crisis accommodation is a continuing weakness in the family violence service system."

— Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency*

Primary prevention is "the only way in which the overall prevalence of family violence (and therefore demand) can be reduced."

— Respect Victoria*

*Selected quotes from submissions to the Monitor

Chapter 10 continued: What remains to be done?

Royal Commission recommendations remaining

As at 1 November 2020, there were 61 recommendations remaining in progress

Figure 10.1: Number of Royal Commission recommendations remaining 'in progress' by responsible minister

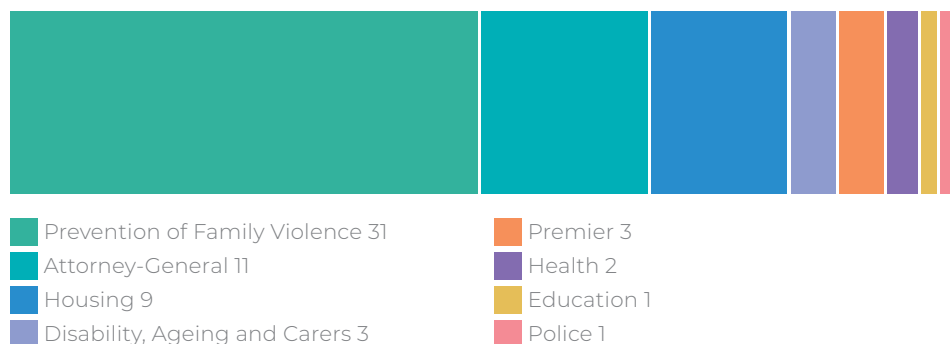


Figure 10.2: Number of Royal Commission recommendations remaining 'in progress' by coordinating entity

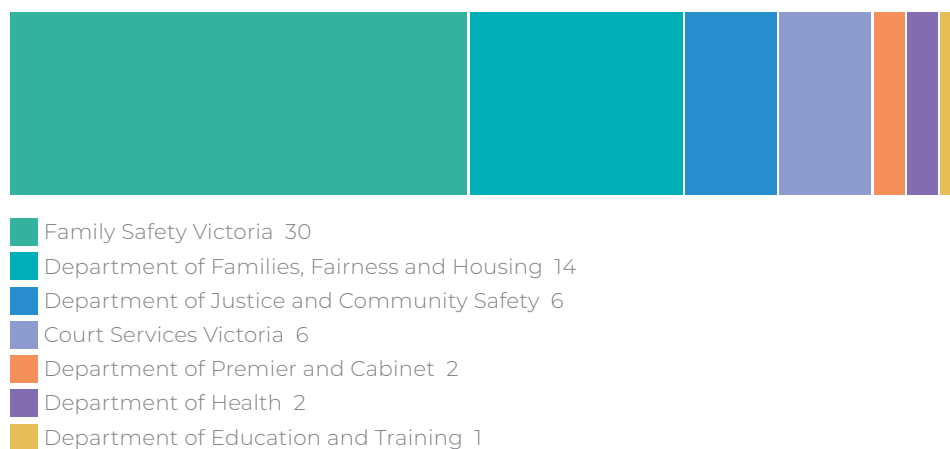
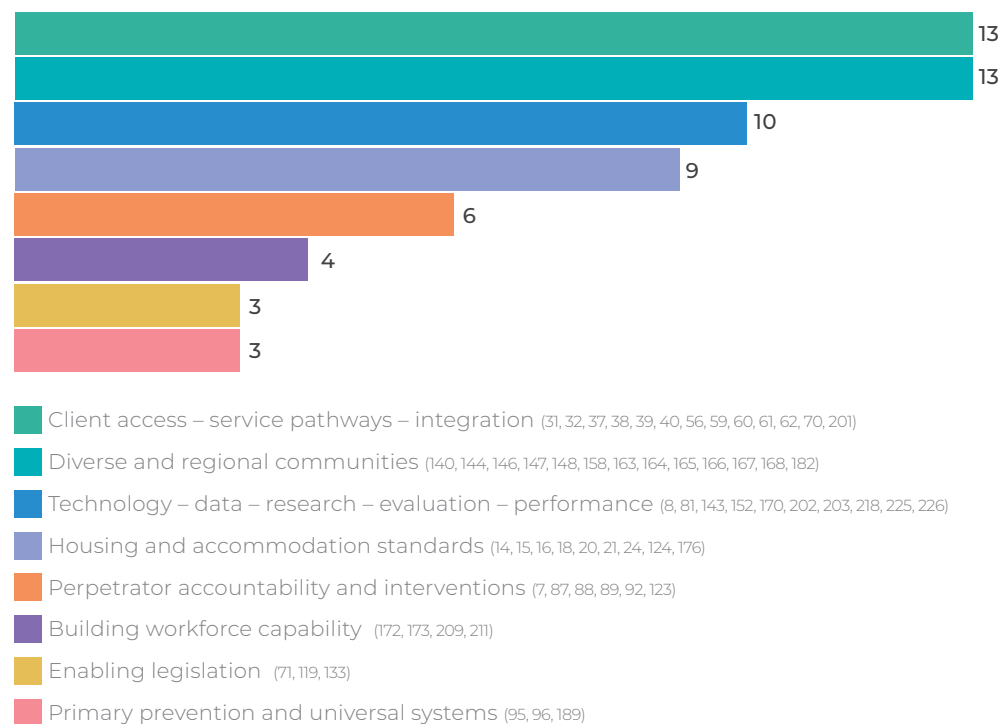


Figure 10.3: Number of Royal Commission recommendations remaining 'in progress' according to theme



For the full context and findings from our monitoring, we strongly recommend reading the report available at fvrim.vic.gov.au

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