



Support & Safety Hub

Interim Arrangements between Support and Safety Hubs and Risk Management Panels

Operational Guidance - April 2018

Aboriginal acknowledgement

The Victorian Government proudly acknowledges Victorian Aboriginal people as the First Peoples and Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and water on which we rely. We acknowledge and respect that Aboriginal communities are steeped in traditions and customs built on an incredibly disciplined social and cultural order. This social and cultural order has sustained up to 50,000 years of existence. We acknowledge the ongoing leadership role of the Aboriginal community in addressing and preventing family violence and join with our First Peoples to eliminate family violence from all communities.

The Orange Door

The Orange Door The public branding of the Support and Safety Hubs is The Orange Door. 'The Orange Door' and 'Support and Safety Hub' terms are used interchangeably across policy and communication materials.

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Preamble

The public branding of the Support and Safety Hubs is The Orange Door. The Orange Door and Support and Safety Hub terms are used interchangeably across policy and communication materials.

This operational guidance (guidance) was developed by Family Safety Victoria (FSV) to support the relationship between the Support and Safety Hubs (Hubs) and the Risk Assessment and Management Panels (RAMPS) from the establishment of the Hubs.

The intent of the guidance is to ensure practical supports are in place for the Hub workers and RAMPs, and that there is a shared understanding of roles and expectations. The guidance has been developed in the context of the first six months of the operation of Hubs, with the expectation that key learnings will provide the opportunity to further inform how Hubs and RAMPs work together to ensure that women, children, and young people are safe, and that perpetrators are kept in view.

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Background

The Victorian Government has committed to implementing all 227 recommendations of the Royal Commission into Family Violence and to delivering on the vision described in *Roadmap for Reform: Strong families, Safe children*.

A key recommendation of the Royal Commission and the Roadmap for Reform was to establish a network of Support and Safety Hubs (Hubs) across Victoria to provide a new way for women, children and young people experiencing family violence, and families in need of support with the care, development and wellbeing of children and young people, to access coordinated support from community, health and justice services.

Hubs will be accessible, safe and welcoming to people, providing quick and simple access to the support and safety they need. The Hubs will also focus on perpetrators of family violence, to keep them in view and connect them to services that assist in holding them accountable for their actions and changing their behaviour.

Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change released in November 2016, sets out the Victorian Government's commitment to establish a network of Support and Safety Hubs across all 17 Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) areas by 2021. The Hubs will be central to Victoria's approach to addressing both family violence and ensuring child safety and wellbeing. The Hubs will also form a critical part of the broader service system response.

The *Support and Safety Hubs: Statewide Concept* (Statewide Concept) released in July 2017 describes the intent, scope, key functions and roles of the Hubs and how the Hubs will contribute to the vision and aspirations of Victoria's Plan for Change and Roadmap for Reform. It outlines what the Hubs will deliver across the state as part of the future service system; the approach government is taking, and a number of principles for the design of the Hubs.

Family Safety Victoria (FSV) will oversee the establishment of the Hub network and provide local leadership, facilitation, oversight and infrastructure management in collaboration with Local Hub Establishment Groups and local Hub Leadership Groups who will lead the implementation and management of the Hubs in each area.

The Victorian Government has committed to the initial establishment of five launch sites in the DHHS areas of Mallee, Barwon, Bayside Peninsula, Inner Gippsland and North-East Melbourne from early 2018, with Hubs in all 17 DHHS Areas by the end of 2021.

Family Safety Victoria (FSV)

Family Safety Victoria (FSV) was established in July 2017 and is Australia's first government agency dedicated to the prevention of family violence. FSV will deliver key initiatives to help protect, support and identify risk for those impacted by family violence and hold perpetrators to account. FSV is also coordinating access to services that support vulnerable children and families.

FSV is responsible for establishing the Hubs, as well as:

- enhancing existing specialised services for victims of family violence including children, so that the right assistance is available at the right time

- implementing the family violence information sharing scheme (FVISS) and risk assessment and management framework, supported by a Central Information Point (CIP) connecting police, corrections, the courts, DHHS and services to keep victims safe
- delivering the 10-Year Family Violence Industry Plan and houses the new Centre for Workforce Excellence, to build workforce capacity and capability in partnership with the sector
- building an understanding to embed responsiveness to diverse communities across the family violence reforms
- leading engagement with sector, victim survivors, diverse communities and the Victorian community as a whole across all reforms and initiatives
- enhancing perpetrator responses.

About the operational guidance

Operational guidance documents have been prepared to describe the relationships and agreed processes between Hubs and key elements of the service systems which support families and individuals experiencing family violence, and families where there are concerns about the safety, development and wellbeing of children.

Purpose of the operational guidance

This operational guidance (guidance) has been developed by FSV in consultation with Domestic Violence Victoria (DVVic) and Victoria Police, and was informed by discussion with RAMP Coordinators and RAMP Chairs at a workshop held in January 2018.

The purpose of this guidance is to provide information about the functions and operations of Hubs and RAMPs, and the agreed arrangements between these elements of the family violence service system. This guidance is intended to support Hubs and RAMPs in the initial stage of Hubs implementation, and will be reviewed in late 2018.

This guidance outlines:

- roles, responsibilities and key contacts between the RAMPs and Hubs
- how the relationship between Hubs and RAMPs will be developed
- processes for referrals between Hubs and RAMPs
- information sharing processes to support the relationship between Hubs and RAMPs

The guidance aims to support service delivery arrangements and practice which:

- increases the understanding of Hub workers and RAMP Coordinators about their respective roles and supports a high level of collaboration
- ensures that there is a consistent approach by Hubs and RAMPs in the launch areas to ensure that people can easily access the Hub and RAMPs where appropriate
- ensures that the experience of accessing the appropriate range of supports and assistance is as seamless as possible for women, children and young people
- ensures that processes are in place to keep perpetrators in view and held to account.

Status of this operational guidance

The content of this document has been prepared by FSV to support the delivery of services through the Hubs and to support effective referral pathways between Hubs and RAMPs. Once agreed by key stakeholders these arrangements will be followed by Hubs and the RAMPs.

Family Safety Victoria, RAMP Working Group and Local Hubs Leadership Groups (Local Leadership Groups) will be responsible for ensuring that the processes outlined are followed.

Key stakeholders

- RAMPs – DVVic RAMP Statewide Coordinator , RAMP Coordinators and RAMP Co-Chairs
- Victoria Police
- Local Hub Leadership Groups
- FSV - Family Violence Policy and Programs; and Hubs Statewide Policy and Design and Operations

How this guidance relates to existing policies and practices

The guidance should be read in the context of legislation relevant to family violence, and relevant organisational policies for RAMPs and Hubs in relation to family violence. This guidance does not replace or override the key responsibilities of the RAMPs and Hubs in the launch areas. The organisations will continue to operate within existing legislation and the relevant policy and practice frameworks.

It is acknowledged that the RAMP program is independent to the Hubs and has its own governance, reporting and continuous improvement mechanism. Therefore, all reviews of this operational guidance must involve the RAMP Working Group.

RAMPS and FSV will update their respective websites, manuals and guidelines to reflect the arrangements agreed to in this guidance document.

Review of operational guidance

This document outlines statewide requirements and provides guidance to support the commencement of Hub service delivery across the five Hub launch sites. It is recognised that this guidance needs to be developed iteratively, informed by the lessons we learn from the first six months of Hub implementation as well as further policy and practice work lead by Family Safety Victoria in partnership with key stakeholders across government and the service system.

It is intended that the next iterations of statewide guidance will be in place by the end of 2018 and will incorporate key learnings, practice innovation, IT enhancements and legislative changes, impacting on the operational arrangements between the Hubs and RAMPs.

Dispute resolution

Every effort should be made to resolve any issues locally without escalation where possible. It is anticipated that Hub workers and RAMPs Coordinators and RAMP Chairs will work proactively with each other to resolve any difficulties or disputes that may arise in relation to the agreed relationships and processes.

Any issues which impact on the implementation of these agreed arrangements which cannot be resolved by the relevant workers should be raised with the Hub Centre Manager and the RAMP Chairs. Any issues which cannot be resolved at the local level will be referred to FSV and a resolution process will be initiated, with key stakeholders.

Disputes which highlight more general and statewide systemic issues may result in a review of the operational guidance.

Learning and continuous improvement

The role and operation of the Hubs will not be static or fixed at one point in time. Just as the practice in Hubs will be informed by emerging needs and evidence, committed to continuous improvement, the design and implementation of Hubs will continue to develop and be informed by community needs, co-design, and practice learnings.

In 2017, the RAMP Statewide Coordinator implemented a statewide biannual continuous improvement cycle and completed a process evaluation in December 2017, involving all 18 RAMPs across the State. A further independent process and outcome evaluation of RAMPs will be undertaken in 2018 which will involve all key stakeholders including input from victim survivors.

Responding to the needs of diverse communities

The Hubs and RAMPs will work together to develop specific strategies and service arrangements to ensure that people who have specific needs and require more tailored responses, including members of Aboriginal communities, people from CALD backgrounds, LGBTI communities and people with disabilities receive quality services through the Hubs.

Key documents:

- The Support and Safety Hubs Service Model
- Hubs Interim Integrated Practice Framework
- RAMPS Operational Guidelines

About Support and Safety Hubs

The Hubs are a new way for women, children and young people experiencing family violence, and families who need support with the care, wellbeing and development of children and young people to access coordinated support from social, health and justice services.

The Hubs will seek to be culturally safe and respectful of Aboriginal people, meet the diverse needs of the Victorian community and be accessible for people of all ages.

The Hubs will bring together access points for family violence services, family services and perpetrator/men's services. They will bring together existing referral points for victims and perpetrators of family violence (including police L17 referral points), and children and families in need of support (Child FIRST).

The Hubs when fully established will provide:

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

The Support and Safety Hubs service model (2017) builds on the vision and aspirations as articulated in the Support and Safety Hubs State-wide Concept and provides further refinement of the scope and

functionality It details the baseline requirements, processes and operational specifications for the foundational Hubs model for the five launch areas and how this evolve over time.

The Hubs represent a shift in our approach, and are a critical part of our whole-of-system reform.

The functions of the Hubs will scale up over time and will also play a role in improving the service system because of the unique perspective they will develop on community needs, and service capacity, capability and responsiveness.

Hubs will be open during business hours 9.00am-5.00pm Monday to Friday each week (excluding public holidays). After hours services will continue to be provided by Safe Steps, the Men's Referral Service and Child Protection.

About the Risk Assessment and Management Panels (RAMPs)

RAMPs are responsible for developing and implementing multi-agency action plans for individual high risk cases to lessen or prevent serious threat to a woman and her children's life, health, safety or welfare, and to increase perpetrator accountability.

RAMPs generally receive referrals from case management services which are working with women or families where there are concerns that there is a high risk of harm that is not adequately mitigated by the current range of interventions. A summary overview of the operation of the RAMPs is provided at Attachment 1, and additional detail can be found in the RAMP Operational Guidelines (updated 2018).

Given the intensive nature of the RAMP response, RAMPs have limited capacity, and referrals to RAMPs are screened to identify priority cases for consideration by the RAMP. Where referrals are not accepted for a RAMP response, the RAMP Coordinator provides advice to the referring service regarding possible additional interventions to reduce the level of risk for those involved.

While there will be some changes to RAMP referral processes in areas where the Hubs are established, no other changes in relation to the current membership and operation of the RAMPs are envisaged as a result of the establishment of the Hubs and this guidance.

The new referral processes from Hubs to RAMPs are described in more detail in the section below which describes the agreed arrangements between RAMPs and Hubs as they are established.

Guiding principles of the RAMPS are:

- Perpetrator accountability and threats posed by perpetrators
- Best interests of victim-survivors and their children
- Respect for culture
- Child focused response
- Confidentiality and information sharing
- Strengthening the family violence service system response
- Multi-agency commitment and collaboration
- Accountability of RAMPs

Each RAMP is supported by a funded coordinator position. The RAMP functions and the role of the RAMP Coordinators will not change with the establishment of the Hubs. The key responsibilities of RAMP Coordinators during the assessment and intake phase are:

- Provide a point of contact to referring agencies regarding RAMP referrals to be made through The Hub or local specialist family violence agency, and the process that should be followed
- Receive RAMP referrals from Hubs and specialist family violence agencies based on an assessment of serious threat and the capability of the existing response system to mitigate that threat.
- Complete or work with Hubs, specialist family violence services and/or the individual woman (where safe and possible to do so) to gather any additional information to complete the RAMP Referral.
- Confirm that the woman is provided notice of information collection, sharing and informed consent has been sought regarding the referral to the RAMP where safe and possible to do so. Where notice is not provided, or consent not obtained from the woman, reasons for making a RAMP referral without notice or consent must be documented.
- Review completed RAMP referrals and make a preliminary assessment of whether cases should proceed to a RAMP for consideration or not, including whether notice was provided, or consent was obtained from the woman and reasons why (if not)
- Inform Hubs and the referring agency (if outside the Hubs) of the outcome of the referral following confirmation by the RAMP Chairs. Where the woman is aware of the RAMP referral and it is safe and possible to do so, the referring agency, the Hub or specialist family violence service case worker must advise the woman on the outcomes of the RAMP referral and whether or not she was able to receive a RAMP response.

Referral pathways

The Hubs will receive referrals from a range of other services and professionals. These referrals may be made by email, telephone or in writing. Referral processes will be developed between the Hubs and key services to help identify which clients should be referred to the Hub and the referral information required by the Hub. Hubs will also accept self-referrals, and respond to enquiries made by friends, family members or concerned community members.

Referrals made by police in relation to family violence incidents will be transmitted to Hubs through the L17 portal. Hubs will receive L17 referrals for female victims of family violence, children and all perpetrators. Police L17 referrals for male victims will be sent to the Victims Support Agency and where the police assess a child at risk of significant harm, referrals will be sent directly to Child Protection. The Hub workers will have access to the L17 Portal to view, track and redirect referrals, update client information and share information with other services.

Referrals to RAMPs

There will be no change in the referral path for referrals to RAMPs in areas where a Hub is not yet established.

Changes in the RAMP referral path where a Hub is operating

As the integrated intake service for the area, the Hub will operate as the first screening point for referrals to RAMPs for all cases **except** those which are case managed and referred by a Specialist Family Violence agency.

The first response in managing risk for a victim is not a RAMP response. Assessment and risk management strategies should always be put in place as the first response.

Referrals will be made to RAMPs through the Hub where:

- the usual Hub screening and assessment process identifies that a woman and her children are at serious threat from family violence (death or serious injury is likely to occur without intervention) and where the 'normal' system response alone is unable or unlikely to mitigate risk below serious threat
- a referring agency/individual (other than a specialist family violence agency) believes a woman and her children are at serious and imminent threat from family violence (death or serious injury is likely to occur without intervention), and where the 'normal' system responses alone are unable or unlikely to mitigate risk below serious threat (this will include 'RAMP flagged' L17 referrals from Victoria Police).

Referrals to RAMPs from Specialist Family Violence (SFV) case management services:

Where a RAMP response may be required the SFV services will liaise directly with the RAMP Coordinator, and if agreed the referral will be directly lodged on RISS by the SFV service.

Referral Process

Referral to RAMP through a Hub will be undertaken as follows:

- Where Hub workers have assessed that a RAMP referral may be warranted they will:
 - request a CIP Report
 - develop and implement an immediate safety plan
 - provide or facilitate any required crisis responses
 - activate of an emergency response where required e.g. assistance to move to safe location, safe accommodation, coordinating safety responses with VicPol (e.g. FV unit)
 - conduct a comprehensive family violence risk assessment where it is safe to do so

- ensure that the victim/survivor is provided notice of information collection and sharing, and informed consent has been sought where it is safe and possible to do so. Where notice is not provided, or consent not obtained from the victim/survivor, reason for making the RAMP referral without notice or consent will be documented.
- The Hub workers will also make an allocation to a Specialist Family Violence agency for case management (this will occur through Hub service allocation process, with prospective RAMP cases being identified as high priority for allocation)
- The RAMP referral will be forwarded to the Hub Advanced Family Violence Practice Leader (AFVPL) who will determine whether to progress the referral to the RAMP.
- The AFVPL will assess the referral for a RAMP response and consult with the RAMP Coordinator
 - If deemed suitable the AFVPL will lodge a RAMP Referral on RISS
 - If not deemed suitable the AFVPL will provide advice and secondary consultation to the Hub worker regarding risk assessment and management strategies
- For all cases, Hub workers will continue to conduct required assessment, risk management and initial planning, and monitor the case until the relevant services are fully engaged.

If the case is referred for a RAMP response by the AFVPL, but it is not accepted by the RAMP, the AFVPL will provide advice to Hub workers about alternative risk management strategies and interventions.

The Hubs will apply the internal protocols for the management of high risk cases which are below the 'assessed risk threshold' for referral to the RAMP, and for cases referred to the RAMP which are not accepted for a RAMP response.

The flow chart at Attachment 3 summarises the referral pathways from Hubs to the RAMPs.

Referrals from RAMPs to Hubs

Although it is likely that a client or family who is receiving a RAMP response will already be well connected to case management and other support services, there may be occasions where a RAMP Coordinator and/or RAMP member agency member refers a RAMP case to the Hub for additional or alternative support services. This may include:

- occasions when the RAMP Coordinator refers women and children who have not been accepted for a RAMP response to receive further assessment and connection to services through the Hub, or
- where the RAMP identifies additional needs which are not being addressed, such as for children or for additional supports identified during the course of the RAMP response.

Information sharing between Hubs and the RAMP

The effectiveness of the working relationship between Hubs and RAMPs will be underpinned by dynamic information sharing to support risk assessment and risk management, to promote the safety of women, children and young people, and to optimise perpetrator accountability.

As employees of agencies which are recognised as Information Sharing Entities (ISEs), RAMP Coordinators will be able to share information in accordance with Section 5A of the Family Violence Protection Act (FVPA) in line with the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS). Other relevant privacy legislation will apply.

Hubs will provide the following information to the RAMPs:

In relation to clients being referred for a RAMP response, or for clients being assisted through the RAMP:

- Information required for referral to the RAMP, including information about current and past service connections
- Any relevant information from a Central Information Report (CIP Report) on the perpetrator
- L17 referral information and any other information available from referring or supporting agencies
- Other reasonable requests for updated and/or additional information
- Any relevant risk assessment and management plans, and associated information generated by the Hub.

RAMPs will share the following information with Hubs

- Advice about whether referrals to RAMP made through Hubs are accepted
- Advice from the RAMP when the RAMP response has been concluded.
- Required referral information if the RAMP is requesting service from a Hub
- Other reasonable requests for updated and/or additional information

Note: CIP Reports will only be made available to Hub workers, who will be authorised to share relevant information from the CIP Report with other services, under the relevant legislation (FVPA) and in accordance with the FVISS.

The Hub workers will store client records, CIP Reports, and information received from the RAMP and other referring agencies on the Hub CRM (Client Relationship Management IT platform).

Co-ordination

In the five launch areas each of the RAMP auspice agencies are also Hub partner agencies, providing a number of workers to Hubs team, all of whom will retain their current line management arrangements.

Given the role that Hubs will play in risk assessment and managing family violence risks, including making referrals to the RAMPs (from Hub intake and on behalf of external service providers), strong working relationship between RAMP Coordinators and Hubs will be essential.

The inclusion of RAMP Coordinators in the Hubs staffing structure will not alter their role or functions as outlined in the RAMP Operational Guidelines. RAMP Coordinators will continue to work closely with specialist family violence case managers and case management services.

RAMP Coordinators will continue to be managed through their current employing agencies.

RAMP Coordinators being identified as an independent entity working with Hubs teams will benefit RAMPs and RAMP Coordinators:

- RAMP Coordinators will have a line of sight of processes and functions provided by Hubs, including a view of the capacity of various case management services (through Hub allocation process). This would support the role that RAMP Coordinators have in service planning and referral for the many cases which are referred to the RAMP but not accepted for the RAMP response.
- RAMP Coordinators will have access through the AFVPL to request and receive CIP Reports, to gather information about a perpetrator when required (e.g. prior to a RAMP meeting).
- RAMP Coordinators will have direct access to the Hub CRM to source relevant information about current and past service provision to people referred for a RAMP response.

- RAMP Coordinators will have direct access to the expertise within the Hubs team – including the Practice Leadership team.
- RAMP Coordinators can work closely with Hubs teams to build the capacity of Hub teams to assess effectively for RAMP.
- The AFVPL will have a key role in supporting the management of high risk cases assessed by the Hub. This will complement the work of the RAMP Coordinators and will provide opportunities to support risk assessment and planning for cases not accepted for a RAMP response.
- RAMP Coordinators will be provided with the opportunity to participate in Hub training.
- RAMP Coordinators will be offered the opportunity to be based at/co-locate at Hub facilities on a part-time basis.

As an independent entity working with Hub teams it will be expected that the RAMP Coordinator will:

- Be listed on team lists for Hubs but be consider independent entity working within the Hub
- Work with the Practice Leaders Team to provide advice and input on consultation and training activities with the wider Hub Teams on matters relating to RAMP
- Abide by Hub policies and procedures, including the CRM Use and Access Agreement and agreed arrangements for the request and use of CIP Reports.

It is expected that the RAMP Coordinator and the Hub AFVPL will develop a co-operative working relationship as the two key liaison contacts regarding the assessment and management of high risk cases in the area.

Shared information, training and development programs

There will be opportunities for RAMP Coordinators and Hub workers to share relevant training opportunities such as legislative reform, CIP and the new family Violence Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework. Joint training will provide opportunities for workers to network and develop strengthened working relationships to support effective and seamless service delivery.

Governance and input to local service system development

Governance

It is anticipated that the Local Leadership Groups will have a role in monitoring the effectiveness of the arrangements between Hubs and the RAMPs, and will provide strategic advice and support service system development to enhance the management of high risk situations. If issues are raised that may impact on the operations of RAMP they must be referred to the RAMP Statewide Coordinator for practice advice and procedural direction. The RAMP statewide program is delivered in partnership with Victoria Police, any changes to RAMP operational guidelines must be approved by both Victoria Police and FSV.

The RAMP is a statewide coordinated program supported by DV Vic through the RAMP Statewide Coordinator who has a development, coordination and monitoring role. The RAMP Statewide Coordinator is a member of the RAMP Working Group which includes FSV and Victoria Police. The role of the working group is to:

- Support the consistent operation of RAMPs statewide;
- Identify and work to resolve practice issues as they arise;
- Support local RAMP Coordinators, Co-Chairs and Members to effectively undertake their roles and responsibilities;

- Facilitate relationships and practice sharing across RAMPs through regular forums with RAMP Coordinators and Co-Chairs
- Provide the RAMP Steering Committee with updates about RAMP operations.

The RAMP Statewide Steering Group provides oversight and strategic direction regarding the Risk Assessment and Management Panel (RAMP) program. Membership includes representatives of the Department of Justice and Regulation, Magistrates' Court of Victoria, DHHS, Family Violence service providers, and the members of the Working Group.

Local level service integration

The Hubs will have a key role in fostering a more integrated service system at the local level, and will develop strong working relationships with core services and a wide range of related services.

A number of interface agreements and protocols have been developed with key services to support the development of a well-connected and integrated supports. The connection between Hubs and the RAMPs will be critical to ensure that high risk situations are managed in the best possible way.

The Service System Navigators, employed by Hubs, will have a key role in monitoring the effectiveness of interface agreements, and will provide reports to the Local Leadership Group on system issues.

In each Hub area the Local Establishment Group (Local Establishment Group - LEG) will bring together a wide range of local services and stakeholders which have an interest in the effective operation of Hubs. This will include services which interface with Hubs, and the LEGs will have a key role in providing advice on improving connections and capacity within the local service system. It is very likely that RAMP core and associate member agencies will be members of the LHEG, and this will provide a source for the RAMP Statewide Coordinator to gather input on the effectiveness of local interface arrangements and to propose improvements.

Statewide review of service integration

The Statewide Reference Group will comprise statewide services and organisations which have a key interest in the effectiveness of Hubs. This group could have a role in identifying opportunities for improving connections between Hubs and RAMP.

Attachment 1: Risk Assessment and Management Panels

A RAMP is a formally convened meeting of key local agencies and organisations that works together to promote the safety of women and children most at risk of experiencing serious threat from family violence. There are 18 RAMPs operating across Victoria.

The role of a RAMP is to:

- comprehensively assess the safety of individual women and children experiencing a serious threat from family violence; and
- develop coordinated action plans across participating agencies to lessen or prevent serious threat to an individual's life health, safety or welfare.

RAMP meetings are held monthly or more frequently if required. A RAMP meeting will continue until all new and active cases listed for that meeting have been heard. On average, RAMPs are expected to cover 5 new cases per meeting in addition to reviews of existing active cases.

There are 18 funded RAMP Coordinators in Victoria, each employed by a local family violence agency to:

- Accept and recommend acceptance of referrals (in consultation with chairs)
- Organise RAMP meetings
- Keep records of RAMP meetings
- Liaise with RAMP member agencies
- Complete accountability reports to DVVic and DHHS
- provide feedback to their Regional Integration Committees on key systemic issues arising in their regions.

Each RAMP has two chairs – a senior member of Victoria Police and a senior manager from a specialist family violence agency. Both chairs attend all meetings and:

- Support decision making
- Chair meetings
- Monitor completion of action plans
- Review RAMP performance
- Contribute to partnership development

RAMP core member agencies are Victoria Police (co-chair plus a representative senior police member), specialist family violence service (co-chair plus a victims advocate from a women's case management service), DHHS child protection, DHHS housing, men's family violence services, Child FIRST, mental health, drug and alcohol services, community corrections.

Associate members are agencies which bring particular specialist knowledge or information to the RAMP, and include Aboriginal agencies and advocates, acute health services, Centrelink, community health services, disability services, education/ schools representative, housing and homelessness services, legal services, maternal and child health services, including enhanced maternal health programs.

Core member agencies are expected to be represented at all RAMP meetings, while associate members attend meetings only on request, when their specialist knowledge is required.

Both core member agencies and associate member agencies nominate a senior representative to attend RAMP meetings. These representatives are expected to have the appropriate knowledge, skills, experience and authority to give effect to the intentions and functions of the RAMP, and decision made at RAMP meetings.

The RISS web-based information sharing and record management system enables the lodgement of referrals directly to the RAMP Coordinators via an online portal, and supports the processing of referrals, multi-agency risk assessments, and administration and record keeping for RAMP meetings.

Attachment 2: Associated Reform

New risk assessment and information sharing arrangements

Responding to Recommendation 1 of the Royal Commission into Family Violence, a new Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework is being developed and will be used by Hubs and related services. The new framework will address issues and gaps in the current Framework that were identified by the Royal Commission, the Coronial Inquest into the death of Luke Geoffrey Batty and the 2016 Monash Review.

The use of the new Framework will result in greater awareness of information relevant to family violence risk assessment and management, to better protect victims and hold perpetrators to account. It will ensure that:

- all parts of the service system have a shared understanding of risk
- workers have the skills and a framework to guide appropriate action
- there is a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of other parts of the system to coordinate and implement safety and accountability planning.

The launch of Hubs will use an interim framework to support the assessment process before the new Framework is finalised and rolled out more broadly later in 2018.

RAMPS and Hubs will use the redeveloped Risk Assessment and Management Framework when completed later in 2018. In the interim Hubs will use the Interim Comprehensive Risk Assessment Tool (iCRAT) which is a tool based on the Common Risk Assessment Framework (CRAF). In the interim RAMPs will continue to use the CRAF.

The Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme

On Monday 26 February the Family Violence Information Scheme (the Scheme) came into effect.

The Royal Commission into Family Violence recommended that Victoria introduce a specific family violence information sharing regime to provide clear authority for those prescribed to share information relevant to family violence risk assessment and management. The Scheme also helps to address recommendations from the Coronial Inquest into the Death of Luke Geoffrey Batty to identify and remove barriers to information sharing.

The Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS) has been introduced to remove existing legislative, regulatory and cultural barriers to information sharing between agencies providing support to individuals and families who are experiencing family violence. The FVISS is based on the *Family Violence Protection Amendment (Information Sharing) Act 2017* (see further details in Attachment 2).

The new information sharing arrangements will allow greater information sharing to keep women and children safe and hold perpetrators to account for their actions. Under these arrangements consent does not need to be given by perpetrators for their information to be shared.

The laws will work in practice by creating a 'trusted zone' of government agencies and funded organisations who can request information from each other to undertake risk assessment and risk management for adult and child victim survivors of family violence.

Under the scheme, a 'trusted zone' of government agencies and funded organisations will be able to request information from each other to help identify and manage risks for victim survivors of family violence, and for families where there are concerns regarding child wellbeing.

A select group of practitioners who are prescribed information sharing entities can now request and share information relevant to assessing and managing family violence risk, in accordance with the Scheme. The initial tranche will include workers in:

- State-funded specialist women's family violence services (including refuge staff), men's family violence services (including Men's Behavioural Change Programs), and sexual assault services
- Community-based Child Protection, co-located in the Hubs team.
- Child FIRST (excluding broader family services).
- Corrections
- Victoria Police
- Victims Support Agency
- Support and Safety Hubs
- Magistrates Court of Victoria
- Children's Court of Victoria
- Risk Assessment and Management Panels.

Training has been delivered to women's and men's Specialist Family Violence Services, Child FIRST, community based Child Protection, Victoria Police, Courts Victoria and Sexual Assault Support Services, and Hub launch sites have been prioritised in the training scheduling.

See Ministerial Guidelines, fact sheets and other tools developed by Family Safety Victoria on the Information sharing and risk management page.

Supported information sharing within the Hubs

In addition to the provisions of the FVISS, the new Part 5B of the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008* enables Hub workers to share information with each other and use a common database for the purpose of undertaking Hub functions.

Central Information Point

A new way of bringing data together to keep perpetrators in view will be available to support the operation of Hubs. The Central Information Point is one of the most transformative parts of key reforms to help keep women and children safer. The CIP centralises key information held by government agencies about a perpetrator into a single report to support better risk assessment and management.

Hub workers will be able to request CIP reports to assist with the assessment of risk. The CIP will produce reports for frontline workers that bring together the most critical and current information about perpetrators from Courts, Corrections, Victoria Police and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). This will make it easier for professionals to assess the risk perpetrators pose to women and children and provide timely support.

The CIP will be refined through continuous iteration over the first two years of operation, and it is envisaged that in the future capacity will be scaled up to provide access to other services.

Attachment 3: New referral pathways to RAMPs from Support and Safety Hubs – showing roles and actions

