



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



RESPONDING TO THE ROYAL COMMISSION

The Victorian Government launched Australia's first Royal Commission into Family Violence (royal commission) in February 2015 and tasked it with reviewing our state's response to family violence.

On 29 March 2016, the royal commission released its report, detailing a system that failed to keep victim survivors safe. Across programs, laws and policies, the 227 recommendations were directed at improving the current system, while also transforming the way that we respond to family violence going forward.

In response, the Premier committed to implementing every single recommendation. Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change (the 10 Year Plan) was released in November 2016, and sets out the long term vision of a Victoria free from family violence.

Importantly, this plan is underpinned by the necessary attention and investment.

Building on record funding of \$572 million as part of the Victorian Budget 2016-17, the Government announced an unprecedented \$1.91 billion to further support these once-in-a-generation reforms.

Responding to the royal commission is about more than acquitting recommendations; it is about keeping women and children safe, and holding perpetrators to account.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS

Over the past 12 months, work has been underway across government and key sector representatives and victim survivors to progress the ambitious reforms.

The release of the Family Violence Rolling Action Plan 2017-2020 (the Rolling Action Plan) in May 2017 outlines initiatives to be achieved over the short to medium term.

The information in this document sets out some of our key achievements over the past 12 months, captured under each of the four domains of the Outcomes Framework.

FAMILY VIOLENCE AND GENDER INEQUALITY
ARE NOT TOLERATED

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

PERPETRATORS ARE HELD TO ACCOUNT,
ENGAGED AND CONNECTED

PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO FAMILY
VIOLENCE IS SYSTEMIC AND ENDURING

OUTCOME 1: FAMILY VIOLENCE AND GENDER INEQUALITY ARE NOT TOLERATED

We know that a Victoria free from family violence begins by challenging the beliefs and behaviours that foster and condone family violence.

FREE FROM VIOLENCE

Free From Violence: Victoria's Strategy to Prevent Family Violence and All Forms of Violence Against Women (the strategy) was released in May 2017. The strategy sets out a long-term plan to end family violence and all forms of violence against women.

Between July and December 2017, extensive consultation was undertaken with the sector, government agencies and the Ministerial Taskforce to develop the Free From Violence: Victoria's Strategy to Prevent Family Violence and All Forms of Violence Against Women: First Action Plan 2018-2021 (Free From Violence Action Plan), which was released in February 2018. Immediate actions under the Free From Violence Action Plan are:

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+ expanding the prevention workforce
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- + scaling up successful and promising prevention activities
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- + building knowledge about what works in preventing family violence
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- + supporting Aboriginal communities to lead new approaches to prevention
.....
- + delivering the second stage of the major family violence behaviour change advertising campaign, encouraging bystander action.
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DEVELOPING THE PREVENTION WORKFORCE

Under the first Free From Violence Action Plan, \$3.8 million has been invested in the women's health sector to work with regional, local-level partners – such as local government, sporting groups and businesses – in the primary prevention of violence against women.

An additional \$1.48 million will go towards preventing family violence against women with disabilities and gaining a better understanding of what drives this violence.

TRIALLING NEW WAYS OF PREVENTING FAMILY VIOLENCE

The \$1.75 million Free from Violence Innovation Fund has been designed to support innovative family violence prevention activities. This fund will support community groups to trial and evaluate new approaches to violence prevention. This will provide a better understanding of what works to prevent violence across different contexts and communities.

INVESTING IN PARTNERSHIPS

Local governments play a critical role in the culture of their community. \$2.4 million has been invested to help local governments run prevention programs in their own communities. We have also invested a further \$4.57 million in partnerships with leading prevention agencies, OurWatch and Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety.

FAMILY VIOLENCE BEHAVIOUR CHANGE CAMPAIGN

The Family Violence Behaviour Change Campaign is a mass awareness campaign to promote positive cultural change and shift the attitudes that tolerate and condone family violence. In the first six months, the television advertisements reached over one in four Victorians, and the digital advertisements were viewed by over one million.

Our next tranche of television commercials is now commencing, with a focus on encouraging bystanders to take action.

STRENGTHEN RESPONSES FOR ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

Following the final report for the Healing and Time Out Services Review, a ground-breaking co-design project is underway, with Aboriginal communities leading the design of a family violence healing framework. The project commenced in September 2017 and is scheduled for completion in June 2018.

Additionally, the Victorian Budget 2017-18 allocated \$11.4 million over four years to improve prevention and early intervention in response to family violence in Aboriginal communities. This includes:

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+ the continuation and expansion of the Koori Women's Diversion Program
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+ delivery of three Aboriginal community-driven prevention and intervention initiatives delivered by Djirra (previously called the Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention & Legal Service) Sisters Day Out, Dilly Bag and Young Luv
.....
-
+ continued support for Aboriginal specific services offered by the Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria.

SUPPORTING MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITIES TO ADDRESS AND PREVENT FAMILY VIOLENCE

Under the 2016-2018 Family Violence Stream of the Capacity Building and Participation Grants program, there were 18 projects focusing on supporting multicultural communities to respond to family violence with initiatives to promote gender equality, prevention, safety and service access. An additional \$200,000 was provided for a further four prevention based projects under this year's grants round.

In 2016-17 inTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence received \$2.15 million to build its capacity as a specialist body and state-wide family violence service provider. This included funding to support inTouch's case management services and their expansion to support multicultural communities in rural and regional Victoria. The Victorian Government will continue to support inTouch as a specialist body and sustaining the enhanced service delivery required to meet ongoing demand for family violence services.

The Multifaith Advisory Group's Family Violence Working Group was established in 2016 to develop appropriate responses to family violence in faith communities. In December 2017, the working group committed to developing a Participatory Action Research project that would develop and implement pilot projects in line with evidence and led by select faith communities.

RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS

Respectful Relationships is a program that supports schools and early childhood education settings to promote and model respect, positive attitudes and behaviours, teaching children how to build healthy relationships, resilience and confidence.

Recommendation 189 of the royal commission recognised the critical role that schools and early childhood education have in creating a culture of respect. It recommended the introduction of respectful relationships education into every government school from prep to Year 12, delivered through a whole-school approach and building on the model tested by the Department of Education and Training through Our Watch. In 2018, more than 1,000 schools are participating in the Respectful Relationships initiative.

The professional learning program for up to 4000 of Victoria's early childhood educators will be rolled out in 2018.

THE MARYBOROUGH EDUCATION

CENTRE'S EXPERIENCE OF THE RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS PROGRAM - CASE STUDY

David Sutton, Principal of Maryborough Education Centre has found that the Respectful Relationships whole-school approach has provided the school with the *"confidence and the language to take on issues around gender equity"*.

"The real strength of the initiative is looking at the school structure and then teaching the program knowing the values run through the entire school."

"It's one thing to teach kids the value of respect and gender equality, but it's another to truly live by what one teaches."

"It has been wonderful to see our students embrace the culture of respectful relationships that is growing within our school."

As part of a collaboration with a local artist, students recently researched and designed a new school mural.

"The conversations generated by this project showed how much our students have deepened

their understanding of gender equality and respect."

"By working together on the mural the students identified and respected the individual strengths of group members and acknowledged each person's unique contribution to the project."

The school has been leading the way on Respectful Relationships since the pilot program in 2015 and has seen real change. The school has also looked at how its processes might affect different people, which has led to the introduction of a range of new policies, including gender equity policies and a new uniform policy.

"The initiative has really generated a positive change at our school. We have a wonderful school culture that our staff and students can be very proud of because everyone here understands that the best relationships are built on respect."

OUTCOME 2: VICTIM SURVIVORS, VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ARE SAFE AND SUPPORTED

From better identifying and responding to early warning signs, to providing safety in times of crisis and supporting long-term recovery, we are significantly investing in the ways we support and respond to those who are experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, family violence.

SUPPORT AND SAFETY HUBS

The Support and Safety Hubs are a central part of Victoria's approach to addressing family violence.

The Hubs Statewide Concept was released in July 2017, outlining the intent, scope and roles of the Support and Safety Hubs.

Expert design workshops to inform the service model, look and feel of the physical hubs took place from July to December 2017.

Since then, Family Safety Victoria has consulted with victim survivors and families, to ensure their voices are reflected in the service's design. The recruitment of up to 150 positions was also completed to support the operation of the hubs.

Operations will commence over the next few months across launch sites in Barwon, Bayside Peninsula, Inner Gippsland, Mallee and North-East Melbourne areas, integrating existing referral points for victims and their families.

KEEPING FAMILIES SAFE

ENGAGING FAMILIES EARLIER, AND MORE EFFECTIVELY

The Victorian Budget 2017-18 included \$161 million to strengthen responses to vulnerable children and their families. Of this, \$29.2 million was allocated to Integrated Family Services to intervene earlier.

Building on the integration of ChildFIRST (Child and Family Information Referral and Support Team) into hubs, a new framework is being developed to embed an early intervention approach, with a focus on providing flexible and tailored support.

Work is also underway to ensure prevention services are meeting the needs of Aboriginal children and families.

IMPROVING AFTER-HOURS SUPPORT

Family Safety Victoria has developed a new statewide after-hours crisis response model.

In January 2018, an extra \$6 million over two years was allocated to local agencies to expand their services as part of the new model. This funding will ensure that victim survivors can access support – including face-to-face support – when and where they need it.

EXPANDING ACCESS TO FLEXIBLE SUPPORT PACKAGES

Since September 2016, over 8,000 flexible support packages have been provided to meet the needs of individual victim survivors. Funding has also been allocated for four new statewide providers to improve access to support packages for people from diverse backgrounds, including Aboriginal, multicultural and LGBTI clients.

FLEXIBLE SUPPORT PACKAGES - CASE STUDY



Jess*, a mother with four young children, was assessed as being at high risk of serious injury and death from her former partner, the father to her children.

During the relationship there were repeated family violence incidents, including both physical and sexual assaults. Jess and her children had moved over 25 times in an attempt to escape the violence, with the perpetrator continuing to search for them.

A Flexible Support Package assisted Jess with the costs of rent arrears, rent in advance and utility bills to ensure she, and her children, could relocate to a safer area and would not be evicted and become homeless. The funding has also assisted with school uniforms and the costs of child care, helping Jess's children to build a sense of normality.

The family's case manager continues to support the family with their safety and recovery needs, including ongoing safety planning and access to counselling for both Jess and her children.

Moving to a new property has made the family safer, reduced their likelihood of being found by the perpetrator and has helped them to become more settled in their new community.

**name has been changed*

ENHANCING SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

The Victorian Budget 2017-18 provided \$33.9 million to improve therapeutic responses – including counselling and trauma therapy – to victims of family violence and their children.

In May 2017, \$23 million was allocated over two years to trial 26 therapeutic projects that will provide support and build evidence on best practice responses to victims of family violence.

The pilot projects will expand options beyond the traditional model of crisis response, focusing on longer term recovery. Some of these projects focus on supporting children that have experienced family violence, while others focus on broader, whole of family response. Four of these projects are for Aboriginal families experiencing or recovering from family violence.

SAFE AND STABLE HOUSING

To make sure victim survivors have access to safe and secure accommodation, the government has invested \$285 million in the 2016-17 and 2017-18 Victorian Budgets to fund additional social housing and crisis accommodation.

In 2017, this funding secured housing for over 300 victim survivors by purchasing and head leasing new social housing properties. A further 52 women were supported through funded crisis accommodation and expanded the successful private rental assistance program. This investment will also deliver 110 public housing units for victim survivors, providing the stable foundations they need to rebuild their lives.

In March 2018, we announced more than \$4 million in extra funding for the Rapid Housing Program to ensure victims have access to stable housing when they need it.

UPGRADING FAMILY VIOLENCE REFUGES

The 2016-17 and 2017-18 Victorian Budgets provided funding to ensure that all 17 communal refuges are transformed to a core and cluster model over the next four years, ensuring greater capacity and better facilities for women and children. The 'core and cluster' model is designed to provide a safe environment with private units for families to live together, while still enabling residents to remain connected with their community, workplaces and schools.

A statewide project control group and local user groups with sector representatives are being established to oversee this work. Planning and design work has commenced for the first four refuge redevelopments. This initiative also includes funding to construct two new refuges for Aboriginal victim survivors.

FINANCIAL SECURITY AND TENANCY REFORMS

To support victim survivors' economic recovery, up to 40 financial counsellors are delivering tailored assistance across 17 locations in Victoria.

Consumer Affairs Victoria is also leading the development of hardship provisions for victims across the banking, utility, insurance and superannuation industries. This work commenced with a forum in July 2017, with over 70 industry, government and consumer representatives in attendance.

To strengthen the security of victims who are renting, the government is working with police, tenancy workers and family violence workers to increase awareness of section 233A of the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997*. This enables victims with a family violence intervention order, who have a co-tenancy arrangement with the perpetrator, to enter into a new agreement that excludes the perpetrator.

Additionally, the Victorian Law Reform Commission is reviewing the provision of state-funded financial assistance to victims of family violence. The final report is due in July 2018.

ASSISTING ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES TO RESPOND TO FAMILY VIOLENCE

An allocation of \$3.6 million has been provided to support and build evidence on best practice responses to Aboriginal victims of family violence. These specific projects respond to the whole family and offer a range of interventions for Aboriginal families, including one-on-one counselling, group work, yarning circles and intensive case management.

The Victorian Budget 2017-18 included more than \$1.1 million over two years for the Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention & Legal Service (now Djirra) to pilot a Koori women's gathering place, launched in July 2017. A family violence support service for Aboriginal women in Melbourne, Djirra Women's Place offers a single entry point to local family violence services, wrap-around support and a safe place to recover from the impacts of family violence.

TRAK FORWARD PROGRAM - CASE STUDY



TRAK (Therapeutic Recovery for Adults and Kids) is a recovery program for victim survivors and their children, including access to a therapeutic recovery worker, group work, one to one coaching (in home or in refuge), and access to ongoing peer support.

The program is delivered by a partnership between Anglicare Victoria, Emerge Women and Children's Support Network and Stepping Up.

Finn* is a 3 year old boy who, when referred to the program, would either freeze and shut-down or have angry outbursts due to his past trauma. He would also re-enact perpetrator behaviours with female children, by seeking them out and physically hurting them.

Finn and his mum Sarah* attended the Peek-A-Boo Club™ with other parents and children who had survived family violence, while also receiving one to one in-home therapeutic support.

The group and therapeutic support assisted Sarah to develop strategies for Finn to deal with his emotions. Finn is now able to put his feelings into words and has found new ways to express himself. Finn now seeks out cuddles and soothing from his mum to calm himself, instead of acting out his emotions.

Finn and his mum are also attending an ongoing peer support group where Finn is learning new skills and developing friendships, marking a significant change.

Finn's relationship with his mother has significantly improved, setting them on a new trajectory towards recovery and healing.

When asked about what was most helpful, Finn's mum Sarah said:

"It made a big difference being able to break issues down into different areas and then plan actions into manageable steps without becoming overwhelmed"

The change has been positive for Sarah too. She has now enrolled herself in further studies in preparation for her long term goal of attending university. She is giving and receiving support from the other mums in the Peek-A-Boo Club™ and has reported she now feels part of a community.

Finn and Sarah are now connected, safe and on their path to recovery.

**names have been changed*

IMPROVED RESPONSES TO ELDER ABUSE

The royal commission found that elder abuse is largely invisible to the family violence service system, and is not recognised or addressed within the broader health sector. Consequently, elder abuse has been under-reported, unrecognised and not adequately responded to.

In response, the Government has funded five trial sites across the state for a new integrated model of care – working across the legal, health and aged care sectors – to strengthen elder abuse responses and create multiple entry points for older people, their carers and families.

As the integrated model of care is implemented, learnings from the trial, including workforce development, prevention, specialist elder abuse counselling and mediation services, will be important in helping us to better identify and respond to elder abuse.

To support the work of the integrated model of care, the government has also funded the establishment of ten local elder abuse prevention networks in each catchment area of the trial health services. As a group of agencies and community organisations who meet regularly, these networks are advancing key objectives including developing interagency protocols and raising awareness of elder abuse.

PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY EXPERIENCING FAMILY VIOLENCE

Women with Disabilities Victoria was funded through the Gender and Disability Workforce Development Program in 2016-17 and 2017-18 to build partnerships and provide training to disability workforces on the intersections between family violence and disability service systems, including the NDIS.

A forum was held in late 2017 to drive work between the government, specialist family violence services and the disability services sector to better respond to people with disabilities, including children, who are at risk of or experiencing family violence.

Hosted by Domestic Violence Victoria and Women with Disabilities Victoria, recommendations from the forum are being progressed through the new partnership.

A recommendation from the forum was to build the capacity of the family violence workforce to better respond to children and adults with disabilities.

Responding to this feedback, the government has allocated funding through an NDIS Information, Linkages and Capacity Building project to Women with Disabilities Victoria to provide training and help build the capacity of specialist family violence services.

Training of the family violence workforce will include the use of the Disability and Family Violence Crisis Response Initiative. This initiative supports women with disabilities and their children to access a family violence crisis accommodation response, while exploring longer term housing and support options. It also allows immediate supports to be put in place for women to remain safe in their own home.

PROVIDING LGBTI SPECIALIST SERVICES

An LGBTI family violence integrated services model has been established to address service gaps and deliver referral, counselling, peer support, prevention initiatives and perpetrator programs to LGBTI communities. The model partners include Drummond Street Services as lead agency, in partnership with the Victorian AIDS Council, Switchboard Victoria and TransGender Victoria.

IMPROVING RESPONSIVENESS AND INCLUSIVENESS FOR LGBTI COMMUNITIES

11 family violence service providers have been funded to undertake Rainbow Tick accreditation from March 2018 to improve whole of organisation inclusiveness of LGBTI communities.

Building on this, all funded family violence service providers will also undertake the HOW2 Program ('Rainbow Tick ready') training from March 2018.

Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria and Drummond Street Services have been funded to develop a training module addressing specific needs and risks within LGBTI relationships. The training will be piloted before being rolled out from mid-2018.

A faith-based family violence service provider network for inclusive services for LGBTI clients has been established. The network is developing a joint Rainbow Action Plan and will launch a public statement of support for LGBTI communities by mid-2018.

IHEAL FAMILY VIOLENCE RECOVERY SUPPORT PROGRAM - CASE STUDY



iHeal is a recovery program for, and driven by, victim survivors of family violence from diverse backgrounds, including multicultural communities, LGBTI communities and those living with a disability.

The program provides victim survivors with case co-ordination, individual and group peer support, and peer recovery and is delivered by Drummond Street Services in partnership with Merri Health, Victorian AIDS Council, TransGender Victoria, Switchboard and Blue Knot Foundation.

Key to the model is a strong focus on utilising the understanding and knowledge that survivors' lived experience brings to the recovery process.

Zanuba* is 38 years old from Pakistan. She married her Australian husband in Pakistan six years ago and came to Australia five years ago to join her husband on a sponsored spouse visa. Zanuba became a victim of family violence at the hands of her husband. After a severe incident, she left her husband. Zanuba and her son, Jaafar*, have since lived in supported accommodation.

Zanuba self-referred to Merri Health on the advice of staff at her local library. Zanuba was provided counselling, as well as case work support from the iHeal program. The iHeal Case Coordinator and Urdu speaking Recovery Support Worker (RSW) worked together to provide culturally appropriate family violence services.

The iHeal Case Coordinator has provided Zanuba with ongoing counselling and has supervised the RSW to provide the following case support:

- accompanying Zanuba to court to obtain an intervention order
- supporting her to report to police that her husband sexually assaulted her
- supporting her with transport to various places, including Royal Women's Hospital and her GP clinic, to collect evidence to support her Police report
- supporting her to obtain information on her visa status in Australia, providing access to financial support, housing and enrolment in a local school for her child
- assisting with access to child care
- linking her into the Hippy program so Zanuba can support her son to prepare for school
- linking her to a social group of her language, which helped her to make the decision to go to the Police to make her statement about the sexual assault
- providing support for her to get medical advice from her GP regarding her sleeping problems and anxiety
- enrolling her in English classes

**names have been changed*

VICTIM-CENTRED JUSTICE

ENHANCING THE RESPONSE OF COURTS TO FAMILY VIOLENCE

It is recognised that courts are often at the front line of the immediate response to family violence.

It's why the Victorian Budget 2017-18 included \$130.3 million over four years to fully implement five specialist family violence courts at the Ballarat, Frankston, Shepparton, Moorabbin and Heidelberg Magistrates' Courts, as well as a range of other court based reforms.

The key features of the specialist family violence courts include:

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+ all family violence matters are heard in specialist family violence courts by default
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+ related matters are heard together where possible
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+ resources are triaged based on risk assessment and need
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+ perpetrators are held accountable and interventions are made to prevent future violence
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+ integration with a wider set of family violence services
.....
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+ the establishment of specialist family violence teams that include specialist magistrates, family violence registrars, family violence co-ordinators, applicant and respondent practitioners, Koori support workers, interpreters and Court Network.
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Further features of the family violence reforms in the court system will include:

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+ building works on the Shepparton Magistrates' Court, as well as major and minor building upgrades at a number of other courts to improve victim safety
.....
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+ the development of the Magistrates' Court of Victoria Family Violence Vision Statement
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+ continued rollout of daily coordination meetings ahead of hearing family violence matters at a number of Magistrates' Courts across the state.
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In addition to the \$130.3 million for improving court responses, government has invested a further \$72 million in broader justice reforms to contribute to a victim-centred justice response, which includes:

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+ \$49.9 million for Victoria Legal Aid and community legal centres to help victims with family violence intervention orders and child protection matters
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+ \$9.4 million for the Family Violence Restorative Justice program
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+ \$12.6 million for Aboriginal family violence victims.
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FAMILY VIOLENCE RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

The Family Violence Restorative Justice Service is a new and innovative approach to helping victims whose needs have not been met by traditional justice approaches.

The development of the service has been guided by the Restorative Justice for Family Violence Framework that responds to recommendation 122 of the royal commission.

It involved speaking to over 60 people from across the judiciary, legal professionals, specialist family violence and support services, victim-survivors and restorative justice practitioners.

Restorative justice for family violence is centred on supporting victims to voice their experiences, enabling them to begin their recovery process.

It is victim-centred, with a strong focus on the needs, safety and wellbeing of victims.

The service will deliver restorative justice processes for victim survivors of family violence, including group conferencing, victim impact panels, facilitated conversations, and variations tailored to victim survivor needs.

The service is due to begin in mid-2018 and will be staffed by specially trained convenors and specialist support workers.

FAMILY VIOLENCE LEGAL SERVICES FOR ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

The Victorian Budget 2017-18 invested \$11 million over four years to the Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention & Legal Service (now Djirra) and the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service for culturally appropriate family violence legal services for Aboriginal communities.

This includes additional client support officers and lawyers to better respond to victim survivors and their children.

ADDRESSING UNFAIR FINES FOR VICTIM SURVIVORS - CASE STUDY



A new scheme, administered by Fines Victoria, has commenced to better support victim survivors of family violence when interacting with the fines system.

Implementing two key recommendations from the royal commission (112 and 113), the new, customised and standalone scheme will assist victim survivors within the infringements system.

The scheme is available to victim survivors who unfairly incur fines as a result of a perpetrator using their vehicle.

Previously, in order to apply to have their fines revoked, victim survivors were required to wrongly admit to committing the offence, or to nominate the driver, which could have placed them at risk. The new scheme allows eligible applicants to have the relevant fines withdrawn without naming the perpetrator, ensuring the debts do not contribute to the cycle of violence.

The scheme is administered by specialist trained staff, with applicants providing evidence including a statutory declaration, a family violence intervention order or a family violence safety notice, to show that the infringement occurred in the circumstances of family violence.

Serious road safety offences are not eligible for the family violence scheme because of the high risk they pose to public safety, including drink driving, drug driving and excessive speed.

WORKING WITH CORRECTIONS CLIENTS

Almost a quarter of male prisoners and offenders, and two-thirds of female prisoners and offenders, have a history of being family violence victims. In recognition of this, Corrections Victoria has undertaken a number of activities over the last 12 months, including:

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+ reviewing current processes for identifying female offenders at risk of, or with a history of, family violence and responding through therapeutic interventions and education programs
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+ integrating the Family Violence Identification Form into case management procedures at the two women's prisons, Dame Phyllis Frost Centre and Tarrengower, as of February 2018. For unsentenced prisoners who do not receive any other assessment, the form provides a safety net that ensures they have an opportunity to disclose experiences of family violence
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+ the Court Integrated Services Program Remand Outreach Pilot working with the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre and Tarrengower to ensure that safety plans and referrals to family violence service providers are completed for remanded and sentenced women
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+ increasing the number of women receiving family violence and sexual assault counselling, as well as expanding services for specialist trauma counselling to women exiting prison from remand or being supervised by Community Correctional Services post-release
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+ undertaking a successful pilot, Beyond the Violence, in Community Correctional Services. This is an eight week program that enables women to voice their experiences of family violence and the impact on them and their children
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+ completing work to identify service needs of culturally and linguistically diverse victims
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+ participating in the 18 Risk Assessment Management Panels across Victoria and working on whole-of-government reforms.
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STRENGTHENED POLICE RESPONSES TO FAMILY VIOLENCE

Victoria Police is committed to continuing to improve how it understands, polices and ultimately prevents these crimes.

Late last year saw the launch of Policing Harm, Upholding the Right: Victoria Police Strategy for Family Violence, Sexual Offences and Child Abuse 2018-2023. The strategy provides the framework for the next stage in Victoria Police's reform agenda, encompassing implementation of the royal commission's recommendations.

The strategy identifies four main priorities, each with performance measures to assess the impact of progress.

At the same time, the strategy recognises the need for flexible and tailored responses in ensuring the safety of victim survivors, and increased accountability for perpetrators.

VICTORIA POLICE FAMILY VIOLENCE CENTRE OF LEARNING

The Victoria Police Family Violence Centre of Learning was launched in December 2017 and is a key foundation of police reform. The centre is staffed with police educators and training experts, with division training officers to join the centre by mid-2018. These officers will deliver family violence training and professional development activities across the organisation. The centre is also undertaking an analysis of the education requirements force-wide.

NEW FAMILY VIOLENCE ROLES

In August 2017, Victoria Police established 38 new police lawyer roles to prosecute family violence intervention orders on behalf of victims in courts across Victoria. These roles will also support operations of the new specialist family violence courts, as they are progressively rolled out to five Magistrates' Court locations.

NEW INVESTIGATIVE MODEL

Victoria Police has developed a new investigative model to provide an enhanced and specialised response to family violence incidents. The model is being implemented by 415 new specialist detective roles, working in Family Violence Investigation Units and Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Teams across the state.

KOORI FAMILY VIOLENCE POLICE PROTOCOLS

Victoria Police is continuing to expand the implementation of Koori Family Violence Police Protocols. Protocols were established in Warrnambool in October 2017 and in Morwell in January 2018, joining Bairnsdale, Ballarat, Darebin, Dandenong, Mildura, Shepparton, Swan Hill and Wimmera.

Victoria Police has also developed an e-Learning education package for all Victoria Police employees on 'Understanding Family Violence in Aboriginal Communities'. The package was developed in consultation with Aboriginal communities and the training is now mandatory for police across Victoria.

L17 PORTAL TO SUPPORT CHILD PROTECTION WORKERS

An automated IT system, known as the L17 Portal, was established this year to enable child protection workers to process police reports of family violence incidents. This system will save child protection workers time and help ensure a faster, more comprehensive response to family violence.

ROUTINE SCREENING FOR FAMILY VIOLENCE DURING PREGNANCY

The Department of Health and Human Services has commenced routine screening for family violence during pregnancy in seven hospitals, with a further rollout planned. This work is key to addressing the increased risk of family violence beginning or escalating during pregnancy. The royal commission found that at least 11 per cent of women admitted to hospital as a result of intimate partner violence assaults were pregnant.

OUTCOME 3: PERPETRATORS ARE HELD TO ACCOUNT

The key to driving down the incidence of family violence is holding perpetrators to account for their actions.

ENSURING PERPETRATOR ACCOUNTABILITY

In November 2017, Victoria Police recruited 32 new intelligence analysts. These new analysts form part of the new Family Violence Investigative Units to assist police in targeting serious and repeat offenders.

Under the new model, detectives will proactively investigate historical family violence cases, and focus on cases involving victims who are particularly vulnerable.

Corrections Victoria has also developed a number of multicultural-specific perpetrator programs with specialist community-based providers, to build further capacity when responding to incidents of family violence in multicultural communities.

In response to the royal commission, the Sentencing Advisory Council released the report *Swift, Certain and Fair Approaches to Sentencing Family Violence Offenders* in October 2017, recommending a faster response to breaches of community correction orders by family violence offenders and fast-tracking relevant charges. Further, the council recommended increasing the monitoring of compliance and the 'visibility' of family violence offenders before the court.

This – in addition to trials being undertaken by the Magistrates' Court – will help inform the Government's response to the Sentencing Advisory Council report.

FAMILY VIOLENCE PERPETRATOR INTERVENTION GRANTS PROGRAM

The Family Violence Perpetrator Intervention Grants Program has made available more than \$1.58 million for organisations to seek up to \$400,000 in funding to pilot new interventions for perpetrators of family violence in Victoria. The grants are for projects that deliver innovative and targeted interventions to help ensure perpetrators of family violence are being held to account.

STRENGTHENING THE SKILLS OF CHILD PROTECTION PRACTITIONERS

The Department of Health and Human Services has revised child protection advice and procedures for working with perpetrators of family violence to ensure the workforce have the necessary skills in intervening and dealing with perpetrators of family violence. The focus of the new procedures has been to keep the perpetrator accountable, while supporting the protective parent and children through improved safety planning.



EXPERT ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON PERPETRATOR INTERVENTIONS

The Expert Advisory Committee on Perpetrator Interventions was established in November 2016 to provide advice on the initiatives that should be available in Victoria to respond to perpetrators of family violence. The committee has provided advice on a range of matters relating to perpetrator accountability, including:

-
+ the principles that should inform all perpetrator interventions
-
+ the design, trial and evaluation of new perpetrator interventions
-
+ the design of targeted interventions for diverse communities and perpetrators with complex needs.
-

The committee will provide its final report to government in mid-2018.

TESTING AND EVALUATING NEW INTERVENTIONS

In December 2016, \$4.6 million over three years was allocated across three sites for the trial and evaluation of the Caring Dads pilot by Melbourne University.

The three year trial began in June 2017. With sessions on parenting skills and the importance of respectful relationships, the program’s central focus is on making sure participants fully understand the impact of family violence.

SUPPORT FOR MEN’S BEHAVIOUR CHANGE PROGRAMS

ADDRESSING DEMAND ON MEN’S FAMILY VIOLENCE SERVICES

In September 2016 \$5.3 million was allocated to strengthen community-based responses to perpetrators of family violence, including for men’s behaviour change programs (MBCPs).

Government is working closely with No To Violence and MBCP providers to expand the workforce and develop a long-term workforce strategy, including delivering a short course to train 194 entry-level MBCP facilitators. This strategy will enable the sector to deliver a range of perpetrator interventions, as well as ensuring a sustainable workforce.

The Victorian Budget 2017-18 provided a further \$49.5 million to community based responses to perpetrators of family violence. This funding includes \$24.1 million over two years for MBCPs.

ENHANCING THE STANDARDS FOR MBCP PROVIDERS

The minimum standards for MBCPs were reviewed and updated in consultation with the sector and other key experts in December 2017. Implementation of the new standards will commence from 2018-19.

ABORIGINAL FAMILY VIOLENCE MEN’S BEHAVIOUR CHANGE PROGRAM

Ngarra Jarranounith was launched late last year. The government invested \$3 million in the Victorian Budget 201-18 over four years, to support the intensive residential diversion program for Aboriginal male perpetrators of family violence.

Delivered by Dardi Munwurro, an experienced provider of men’s behaviour change programs, this is a 16 week residential program for family violence perpetrators with a focus on preventing re-offending, parenting and life skills.

OUTCOME 4: PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO FAMILY VIOLENCE IS SYSTEMIC AND ENDURING

To transform how we prevent and respond to family violence, our reforms must be supported by strong foundations, including our workforce, information systems, legislation and funding arrangements.

STRENGTHENED FAMILY VIOLENCE RISK ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The redevelopment of the Family Violence Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework (also known as the Common Risk Assessment Framework) was recognised by the royal commission as a foundational element of the Victorian reforms.

In June 2017, a consortium was engaged to undertake the redevelopment the framework. Consultation and engagement with a wide range of sectors is underway to progress:

-
+ the re-development of risk screening and assessment tools
.....
-
+ development of a comprehensive, system-wide framework for risk assessment and management, including operational guidance, providing clear roles and responsibilities and minimum standards across sectors working with family violence.
.....

The framework has also been embedded in legislation, with amendments to the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008*, to empower the relevant Minister to approve the redeveloped framework and ensure compliance by organisations and agencies to better identify, and respond to family violence.

The Victorian Budget 2017-18 committed \$30 million over two years towards implementing the redeveloped Framework.

SHARING INFORMATION AND WORKING MORE EFFECTIVELY

INFORMATION SHARING REFORMS

To ensure family violence cases are not slipping through the gaps, new legislation has been passed to create a purpose-built information sharing scheme, authorising a select group of entities to share information with one another.

The scheme commenced on 26 February 2018 and is an important reform in improving the way we identify and manage risk to keep victims safe and perpetrators in view. A select group prescribed information sharing entities can now request and share information relevant to assessing and responding to family violence risk. These comprise specialist family violence organisations (including MBCPs), ChildFIRST, specified child protection staff, Victoria Police, Corrections, the Magistrates' Court, Children's Court and those working at Support and Safety Hubs.

The entities were chosen based on the core role they play in assessing and responding to family violence risks, their understanding of family violence and the ability of their workforce to be trained quickly and operate in a well-regulated rule-based environment.

A range of implementation activities have been developed, including:

-
+ development and release of the Ministerial Guidelines
.....
-
+ training for relevant staff
.....
-
+ \$5.4 million over four years to support organisations in implementing the information sharing reforms
.....
-
+ a review undertaken by Monash University of the first two years of the scheme's operation, as required within the legislation.
.....

A phased approach to implementation has been adopted to ensure workforce readiness and sector capacity. Further organisations will be prescribed later in 2018 and beyond.

CENTRAL INFORMATION POINT

The Central Information Point centralises key information held about a perpetrator by Court Services Victoria, Victoria Police, Corrections Victoria and the Department of Health and Human Services into a single report.

By giving frontline workers access to crucial information in a single report, they will be able to make better informed decisions about a person's safety much faster.

NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ORDER SCHEME

The National Domestic Violence Order Scheme commenced operation across Australia on 25 November 2017. The scheme was created to ensure that domestic violence orders made in any state or territory are automatically recognised and enforceable across Australia.

IMPROVING OUR RESPONSE TO FAMILY VIOLENCE THROUGH STRENGTHENED LAWS

In May 2017 Parliament passed new legislation to deliver better protection to victim survivors and improve the justice system's response to family violence. The *Family Violence Protection Amendment Act 2017* will implement 11 recommendations of the royal commission and a range of other reforms. Reforms in the Act include:

-
.....
..... faster and simpler processes for serving family violence intervention orders, providing safety to victim survivors and their children more quickly
.....
.....

-
.....
..... new measures to prevent abuses of the intervention order appeal process to prevent perpetrators from using legal processes to delay justice and commit further abuse
.....

-
.....
..... allowing pre-recorded evidence to be used in some proceedings for family violence offences to provide greater support and comfort for victim survivors as they seek justice through the courts
.....

-
.....
..... increased protections for children subjected to family violence.
.....

The different reforms are coming into effect as the necessary supports, such as training and infrastructure, are in place.

Consultation with key stakeholders has begun on the next round of legislative reforms that will address a further number of justice-related royal commission recommendations.

The *Bail Amendment (Stage One) Act 2017*, which includes amendments to address recommendation 80 of the royal commission, and broader reforms to tighten our bail system, was passed by Parliament in June 2017 and a number of provisions in the Bill will commence on 21 May 2018. These reforms will ensure that the safety of victim survivors and the community are a central consideration in decisions about bail.

New legislation was also passed in October 2017 to ensure police officers can legally use body-worn cameras in their daily duties. These new laws allow for the operational testing of 200 body-worn cameras, to be carried out by police in Epping and Ballarat in April 2018. This is the first stage of implementing the royal commission's recommendation 58, for a trial and evaluation of using body-worn cameras to record statements in family violence matters, and allowing these statements to be used by victims as their evidence-in-chief.

WORKFORCE TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

FAMILY VIOLENCE INDUSTRY PLANNING

Building from Strength: 10-Year Industry Plan for Family Violence Prevention and Response (Building from Strength) was released on 7 December 2017. Building from Strength aims to sustainably shift the way we prevent and respond to family violence and violence against women. At its core, is the creation of a system where specialist family violence and primary prevention sectors work together with community services, health, justice, education and training sectors to respond to the complexity of family violence. It outlines the directions and immediate priority actions to lay the groundwork for sustained and enduring change. A series of three-year rolling action plans will follow, building on what works, incorporating emerging evidence and responding to changing family violence and primary prevention systems.

FAMILY VIOLENCE WORKFORCE CENSUS




Victoria's first family violence workforce census was open for responses in April and May in 2017. The census gave workers the opportunity to have a voice on the key issues affecting them and to help shape Building from Strength.

The census had a strong take-up response from a broad range of professions across relevant sectors.

The census collected data on demographics, role, qualifications and experience, job satisfaction and career pathways. Importantly the census collected data on family violence-related training, levels of confidence in identifying and responding to family violence and support required to ensure a more effective response. Data collected from the census has informed the directions and immediate actions included in Building from Strength. The census will be conducted every two years with the next scheduled to be held in 2019.

FAMILY VIOLENCE CAPABILITY FRAMEWORKS

The Responding to Family Violence Capability Framework and Preventing Family Violence and Violence Against Women Capability Framework (capability frameworks) were released in December 2017, alongside Building From Strength. The capability frameworks encompass all workforces that intersect with family violence. They provide a clear articulation of the skills and knowledge required to:

-
 engage in primary prevention of family violence and violence against women
.....
-
 respond to victim survivors including children and young people
.....
-
 respond to perpetrators of family violence.
.....

The capability frameworks are intended for use by a wide range of audiences, including government, education and training providers, sector leaders, management and human resources in organisations. The capability frameworks are the first iteration and are living documents. As we build understanding of broader forms of family violence, new evidence can be incorporated.

FAMILY VIOLENCE PRINCIPAL PRACTITIONERS

Family violence principal practitioners have been employed in the Department of Justice and Regulation, Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Education and Training.

These positions were recommended by the royal commission, and will build family violence capability, lead reform across the departments and support the key priorities identified by the royal commission and the 10 Year Plan.

The principal practitioners will support models of practice that recognise intersectionality and address vulnerability, trauma and disadvantage.

STRENGTHENING RISK ASSESSMENT AND CASE MANAGEMENT FOR CHILD PROTECTION PRACTITIONERS

The Department of Health and Human Services has also improved child protection guidance to support early intervention with families at risk of family violence, who are outside statutory reporting requirements. This ranges from preventing escalation to more intensive child protection intervention, as well as improving the development of safety plans. Throughout 2017, child protection practitioners continued to be co-located within Multi-Disciplinary Centres with Victoria Police and Centres Against Sexual Assault. These child protection practitioners provide support to victim survivors of family violence and sexual assault.

In 2017 the Department of Health and Human Services commenced an initiative to link specialist family violence workers with specialist child protection practitioners, in order to improve risk assessments, case management and enhance Child Protection's knowledge of the family violence system. In addition, Child Protection employed 12 family violence senior practitioners to improve practice and embed necessary cultural reform.

MEASURING THE COST OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

The government commissioned a project to measure the cost of family violence in late 2016, with a final report released in May 2017.

This initiative involved examining the costs of services to support victims and keep perpetrators to account, as well as the financial impacts of pain and suffering, loss of income and other economic costs caused by family violence.

In 2015-16 the report estimates that the total annual cost of family violence in Victoria was \$5.3 billion.

This initiative also identified opportunities to improve data collection and support annual reporting on the cost of family violence by departments and agencies, to ensure robust, consistent measurement. This forms the basis for ongoing data reform work across government.

FAMILY VIOLENCE DATA

The royal commission's vision was for a family violence system that is adaptive and based on evidence. To achieve this, comprehensive data needs to be collected across multiple agencies to inform system design, policy development, funding priorities, service planning and research.

On 6 December 2017, the Crime Statistics Agency launched the 2016-17 Victorian Family Violence Database update, improving the evidence base available to the community, family violence sector and government.

DEVELOPING A DEMAND MODELLING TOOL TO SUPPORT PLANNING





A demand modelling tool has been developed to better understand the drivers of family violence services.

Building on existing models and approaches, this tool forecasts demand for support services for victim survivors and allows for more sophisticated demand modelling to support a more responsive, person-centred system.

Further work is underway to refine and advance this tool, including improvements to the quality of data underpinning it.

SUPPORTING FAMILY VIOLENCE LEGAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES

The Victorian Budget 2017-18 allocated \$49.9 million for family violence legal assistance services. This funding provides for:

-
 the continuation of family violence legal initiatives and grants for community legal centres
-
 additional duty lawyer services to support the rollout of the specialist family violence courts at five Magistrates' Courts across Victoria
-
 the expansion of family violence duty lawyer services to respond to current and projected demand
-
 additional grants of legal aid in child protection matters
-
 additional grants of legal aid in family violence intervention order proceedings.
.....

HEALTH CARE INITIATIVES

AMENDMENTS TO THE *PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELLBEING ACT 2008*

The *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* was amended to require councils to include, as part of their annual municipal public health and well-being plans, measures to prevent family violence and respond to the needs of victim survivors. In May 2017, the Municipal Association of Victoria published a guidance document for local government: *Family Violence and Municipal Public Health and Well-being Planning*. The guidance provides practical steps councils can take through local leadership, planning service provision, and as an employer.

DATABASE FOR GENERAL PRACTITIONERS

The Department of Health and Human Services developed a database to enable general practitioners to more readily access details of health practitioners with family violence expertise to inform patient referrals. The database lists psychiatrists, psychologists, drug and alcohol practitioners and other professionals with family violence expertise.



TIMELINE OF KEY ACTIONS

				Djirra Women's Place was launched by the Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention & Legal Service	
		Victoria Police launched an e-Learning education package for all Victoria Police employees on 'Understanding Family Violence in Aboriginal Communities'		Establishment of the Family Violence Branch in the Department of Premier and Cabinet	
		\$23 million was allocated over two years to trial and evaluate 26 therapeutic projects to provide support and build evidence on best practice responses to victims of family violence		Family Safety Victoria was established	
		Victoria's first prevention of family violence and violence against women strategy, Free from Violence, was launched	The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission launched a guideline for service providers that outlines the legal obligations of organisations and staff providing services and accommodation to people experiencing family violence	Support and Safety Hubs Statewide Concept released – outlining the intent, scope, key functions and roles of the Support and Safety Hubs	Beyond the Violence program commenced at Tarrengower Prison. Beyond the Violence is an 8 week program that provides a framework for women to voice their experiences of family violence and the impact on them and their children
		The Family Violence Rolling Action Plan 2017-2020 is launched, outlining the government's record investment of \$1.91 billion in family violence services and reform		Consumer Affairs Victoria commenced work on improving provisions for victims across the banking, utility, insurance and superannuation industries	Improvements made to the Family Violence Flexible Support Packages Guidelines to address issues raised by the sector and in early evaluation findings
		Minister for Mental Health announced allocation of \$17.3 million over four years to continue specialist family violence advisors on an ongoing basis in alcohol and other drugs and mental health services across the state	The <i>Bail Amendment (Stage One) Act 2017</i> was passed by Parliament. Amendments were made to the Bail Act 1977 to address royal commission recommendation 80 and to tighten our bail system	Cultural Change in Prisons Grants were provided to all prisons to implement site-specific projects focused on increasing family violence awareness and driving cultural change	The Swift, Certain and Fair Approaches to Sentencing Family Violence Offenders Report by the Sentencing Advisory Council was provided to the Attorney-General
	The Victims of Crime website was updated to promote the Victim Support Agency as the primary source of assistance for male victims of family violence			Corrections Victoria expanded specialist trauma counselling to women exiting prison from remand or being supervised by Community Correctional Services post-release	Victoria Police established 38 new police lawyer roles to prosecute family violence intervention orders
Leading Schools commenced implementation of the Respectful Relationships whole of school approach			A Bill to establish a family violence information sharing regime received Royal Assent on 14 June 2017		
FEBRUARY	MARCH	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST

2017

		Over 1,000 schools signed on to the Respectful Relationships whole school approach, with 864 Partner Schools joining the 151 Leading Schools across the Government, Catholic and independent sectors					
		The Magistrates' Court of Victoria's Family Violence Vision Statement released	Building from Strength: 10-Year Industry Plan for Family Violence Prevention and Response released		\$10.7 million over two years allocated to agencies in the 12 non-hub launch areas to process L17 police referrals for victims		
		Ngarra Jarranounith Place was launched	The Responding to Family Violence Capability Framework and Preventing Family Violence and Violence Against Women Capability Framework were released		Koori Family Violence Police Protocols established in Morwell		
		The National Domestic Violence Order Scheme commenced operation across Australia, ensuring that domestic violence orders made in any state or territory are automatically recognised and enforceable across Australia	The legislative framework for the Children's Court Youth Diversion service commenced		Funding agreements commenced for the Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service and Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service to expand appropriate family violence legal services for Aboriginal communities		New behavioural change campaign launched with a focus on encouraging bystanders to take action
	Launch of the Enterprise Reporting and Project Management System, allowing departments and agencies to manage the implementation of their reform work in a collaborative environment	Victoria Police recruited 32 intelligence analysts in family violence teams	Policing Harm, Upholding the Right: Victoria Police Strategy for Family Violence, Sexual Offences and Child Abuse 2018-2023 launched by Victoria Police		Consultation with Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Group on the development of the next Aboriginal 10 Year Family Violence Plan		Corrections Victoria's second Family Violence Strategy, for 2018-2021, and Action Plan released
Co-design project commenced, with Aboriginal Communities leading the design of a holistic healing approach and framework to family violence	The Family Violence Restorative Justice Framework was published following an extensive consultation and co-design process with key stakeholders	The first tranche of legislative amendments to improve the justice system's response to family violence commenced	The Victoria Police Centre of Learning for Family Violence was established		An additional \$6 million over two years (2017-18 and 2018-19) was allocated to local agencies to expand their services, under the new statewide after-hours crisis response model	The Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme commenced	
Trials and evaluation commence for testing new approaches to deliver culturally responsive, high quality maternal and child health services for Aboriginal families	Koori Family Violence Police Protocols established in Warrnambool	Launch of the Victoria Against Violence Campaign, reaching over one in four Victorians	Crime Statistics Agency released 2016-17 Family Violence Database			Free From Violence: Victoria's Strategy to Prevent Family Violence and All Forms of Violence Against Women: First Action Plan 2018-2021	The Indigenous Family Violence Partnership Forum progressed the development of the new Aboriginal 10 Year Family Violence Plan by endorsing a high-level framework, including a definition of self-determination in a family violence context, guiding principles and strategic priorities.
SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	

2018

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

Family Violence Branch
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