



Until every Victorian is safe

Third rolling action plan to end family and sexual violence

2025 to 2027

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In this document, 'Aboriginal' refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. 'Indigenous' or 'Koori/Koorie' is retained when part of the title of a report, program or quotation.

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Acknowledgements

We acknowledge Country

The Victorian Government acknowledges Victorian Aboriginal people as the First Peoples and Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land and water we depend on. We acknowledge and respect that Aboriginal communities have a rich heritage built on a strong social and cultural foundation that has endured for 60,000 years. We also acknowledge the significant disruptions and ongoing pain caused by colonisation.

We acknowledge the vital leadership role of Aboriginal communities, especially women, in addressing and preventing family and sexual violence. We are dedicated to working with Aboriginal people to eliminate family violence in all communities.

We want to rectify past wrongs and acknowledge the ongoing harm caused by colonisation. To this end, we are committed to self-determination and to supporting Truth and Treaty processes.

Commitment to supporting those affected by family violence

The Victorian Government acknowledges and supports those who have experienced violence, including adults of all ages, children, young people and members of our workforce. The work we do to prevent and respond to family and sexual violence is for them. It is guided by their experience, expertise and advocacy.

We remember and pay respects to those who did not survive and extend our respects to all of those who have lost loved ones to family and sexual violence.

We keep in mind all those who have been, or continue to be, affected by family or sexual violence, and recognise their continued courage and strength.

Family and sexual violence services and support

If you have experienced family violence or sexual assault and need immediate or ongoing assistance, contact 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732) to talk to a counsellor from the National Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence hotline.

For confidential support and information, contact Safe Steps' 24/7 family violence response line on 1800 015 188.

If you have an immediate concern for your safety or that of someone else, please contact the police in your state or territory, or call Triple Zero (000) for emergency help.

In Victoria, The Orange Door provides help for people who are experiencing family violence. It is not an emergency service. You can find your nearest location on [The Orange Door's Support near you web page](http://www.orangedoor.vic.gov.au/support-near-you) (www.orangedoor.vic.gov.au/support-near-you)



Foreword from the Minister for Prevention of Family Violence

Family and sexual violence cause enormous hurt and harm in our community.

Historically, the scale and impact of family and sexual violence was largely hidden and ignored. Violence was often downplayed, justified or seen as a 'private matter'. Victim survivors were too often left to fend for their own safety or find their way to grassroot specialist services.

The Royal Commission into Family Violence in 2016 marked a turning point. We heard from victim survivors and advocates, we witnessed their anguish and learned how violence had upended their lives and sense of safety. We were also humbled by their stories of recovery, healing and advocacy for change.

Victoria has now implemented all of the Commission's 227 recommendations. We matched our action with investment, providing over \$4 billion since the Commission to continue our efforts to end family violence.

Under our 10-year plan, *Ending family violence: Victoria's plan for change*, Victoria has transformed how it prevents and responds to family and sexual violence. This is something to be proud of.

Together, we have contributed to changes at a scale and pace rarely seen before in Australia. Thousands of people across the state have brought this change to life. People with lived experience and their families, advocates, workers, service providers and government have worked together to make Victoria safer.

But ending family and sexual violence is complex. Gendered drivers are deeply embedded in our society. While people who use violence are ultimately responsible for their choices, we know that violence can be harder to disrupt when people have experienced trauma, struggled with their mental health, substance use or gambling. This all sits alongside an ever-changing backdrop, with technology and social media continually throwing up new challenges that require us to adapt and change.

This rolling action plan reflects our next steps. Some of our actions pioneer new ideas. For example, immersing an entire community in violence prevention initiatives through the Respect Ballarat: A community model to prevent gendered violence.





We will build on what works. Guiding attitudes and behaviours in younger generations through respectful relationships education. Helping parents and carers navigate the complexities of an online world.

We will continue to listen to victim survivors – including children and young people – on how we can effectively protect them from harm. We will work to ensure victim survivors have a safe and stable home they can recover in. We will make sure they have greater access to services that support healing, recovery and justice.

People who use violence will be held accountable and supported to change their behaviour. We will deepen our understanding of perpetrator motivations, behaviours and tactics through research to make sure our interventions align with evidence of what works. Adults who present serious risk will be closely monitored and subject to intensive interventions. This includes through the justice system and strong laws that reflect the varied and often calculating ways violence is used (such as coercive control).

We will use different strategies to support young people who use violence and their families, which are therapeutic and non-stigmatising, but work hard to turn their behaviours around.

We will roll out a new risk assessment framework tailored to the needs of children and young people. The framework will make sure all services consistently and capably respond to and meet the needs of children.

We will look at how we can improve the regulation of alcohol and gambling. We know these factors can worsen the use of violence and the harm it causes.

Our work will strengthen the foundations of our family and sexual violence systems. This includes making sure:

- we are collecting and analysing the right data
- we have enough skilled and supported workers for our programs and services
- technology helps rather than hinders our efforts.

Every action in this plan has been developed with overarching principles that:

- centre lived experience
- reflect intersectionality and diversity
- uphold Aboriginal self-determination
- recognise our collective accountability to end violence.

We are grateful to the Victim Survivors' Advisory Council and other victim survivors, as well as to all the workforces, services and community groups that help to make Victoria safer.

I also want to thank those who took the time to share their insights and expertise to help shape this plan.

The Victorian Government remains deeply committed to this important work.

Together, we will not stop until every Victorian is safe, thriving and living free from violence.



The Hon. Natalie Hutchins
Minister for Prevention of Family Violence



Introduction

Introduction

This is the third action plan under *Ending family violence: Victoria's plan for change* (Ending Family Violence).

Under Ending Family Violence, Victoria has transformed how it prevents and responds to family and sexual violence.

However, ending this complex and persistent violence demands more from us. All of us. At every level of our community. In our public and private spaces.

We need to maintain focus and momentum in the areas we know are working well, while also being ambitious, curious and open to new ideas.

This plan sets out the direction we will take in our long-term efforts to drive down family and sexual violence. It also sets out the specific actions we will take over the next 3 years.

Many changes that began as recommendations from the Royal Commission into Family Violence (Royal Commission) have now become business as usual. This important work will continue.



Glossary

Key terms

In this plan, the words 'our' and 'we' refer to the **Victorian Government**. The term 'the government' also refers to the Victorian Government unless stated otherwise.

Table 1: Glossary of important terms in this plan

Term	Meaning
Aboriginal	Refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in Victoria. This is consistent with the Aboriginal-led strategy to end family violence, <i>Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way – Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families</i> . The terms 'Koorie', 'Koori' or 'First Peoples' are also used occasionally for specific programs and initiatives.
Adults who use violence	Used in response to stakeholder feedback, particularly from Aboriginal people, children's advocates and people who have experienced elder abuse. The term 'perpetrator' is used in some sections when talking about specific programs or responses to adult offenders.
Elder abuse	Refers to any act occurring in a relationship with an implication of trust that results in harm to an older person. The abuse may be: • physical • social • financial • psychological • emotional • social. It can also include mistreatment and neglect. Elder abuse is considered a form of family violence when it occurs between family members or people who share a family-like relationship. Elder abuse does not include professional misconduct or consumer scams.
Family violence	The use of violence by a current or former intimate partner or family member. This includes people who share a family-like relationship with the person they are harming. For example, it can include: • carers • chosen family • kinship connections for Aboriginal people.

Term	Meaning
Family violence continued	Family violence is not just physical. It also includes: • emotional abuse • psychological abuse • sexual abuse • cultural abuse • financial abuse • neglect • threatening, coercive and controlling behaviours.
Gender-based violence	Violence that is used against someone because of their gender. People of all genders can experience gender-based violence. However, this term is most often used to describe violence against women and girls. This is because most gender-based violence is perpetrated by heterosexual, cisgender men against women, because they are women.¹ Gender-based violence is driven by rigid gender stereotypes, sexism and disrespect.²
Primary prevention	Primary prevention of family and sexual violence is a long-term agenda to stop violence before it starts. It targets the root causes of violence, which are grounded in gender inequality and harmful social norms. This involves addressing the ‘gendered drivers of violence’. Primary prevention works to change: • attitudes • norms • practices • structures • power imbalances. Our approach to primary prevention is underpinned by <i>Change the story</i>, Australia’s shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women.
Sexual violence or sexual assault	A type of violence where any sexual act is attempted or occurs without consent. Sexual violence can be a form of family violence. It can also be perpetrated outside of a family context.
Victim survivor, survivor and person who has experienced violence	Terms used to describe a person who has experienced family or sexual violence, including children and young people. ‘Victim survivor’ includes people who may identify more with the ‘victim’ or the ‘survivor’ term at different points. Some people may also feel they have progressed beyond being a survivor. The Victim Survivors’ Advisory Council guides us on the terms we use. We acknowledge that people harmed by family and sexual violence choose different ways to identify themselves and others.

Term	Meaning
Violence against women	Refers to violence: • directed at a woman because she is a woman • that affects women disproportionately.³ The term 'women' includes cisgender, trans and gender diverse women and sisters.
Young people who use violence	Refers to people under 18 years of age who use violence. This term recognises important developmental considerations and the very different service responses that apply to children and young people. It covers both violence against an intimate partner or in a family setting. We often use 'in the home' to refer to violence in a family setting.

Abbreviations

Table 2: Abbreviations used in this plan

Abbreviation	Meaning
ACCO	Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation
CSV	Court Services Victoria
DE	Department of Education
DFFH	Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
DH	Department of Health
DJCS	Department of Justice and Community Safety
FVIO	Family violence intervention order
FVISS	Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme
LGBTIQA+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex, queer and questioning, and asexual
MARAM	Victoria's <i>Family violence multi-agency risk assessment and management framework</i>
SFVC	Specialist family violence court
VicPol	Victoria Police
VSAC	Victim Survivors' Advisory Council



Building on
strong foundations

Building on strong foundations

Ending Family Violence is a 10-year plan that began in 2017. Ending Family Violence sets out the goals we want to achieve.

We use rolling action plans to outline the practical steps needed to meet these goals.

Rolling action plans let us create a strong foundation and then build on it based on new knowledge and evidence. We have already released 2 action plans to date.

The first action plan

In the first 3 years of the Ending Family Violence Plan (2017 to 2020), we focused on getting the foundations in place. Some of the highlights of this work are outlined in Table 3.

Table 3: Highlights of the first action plan

Highlight	Description
<i>Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way – Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families (Dhelk Dja)</i>	To address family violence experienced by Aboriginal Victorians, we entered into the Dhelk Dja Agreement in 2018. Dhelk Dja is an Aboriginal-led agreement between: • Aboriginal communities • Aboriginal services • government. Dhelk Dja builds on over 20 years of Aboriginal-led work to prevent and respond to family violence.
Prevention	To prevent violence before it starts, we established Respect Victoria. Respect Victoria is the only statutory agency in Australia dedicated to preventing family violence and violence against women. We also introduced the Respectful Relationships initiative in schools. Respectful Relationships promotes safe and healthy relationships to children and young people.
<i>Family violence multi-agency risk assessment and management framework (MARAM) and the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS)</i>	To intervene as early as possible, we trained frontline workers across many sectors to identify and share information about the risk of family violence. To do so, we created MARAM and FVISS. These groundbreaking tools now inform work across the country.

Table 3: Highlights of the first action plan continued

Highlight	Description
Centre of Learning for Family Violence	To respond effectively in moments of crisis, we set up Victoria Police Academy's Centre of Learning for Family Violence. Through the Centre, thousands of police have been trained on best practice responses to family violence reports.
The Orange Door	To make it easier for victim survivors to get the support they need, we created The Orange Door. The Orange Door is a free and visible, area-based service for people: • experiencing family violence • who need help with the care and wellbeing of children and young people.
Case management support and new therapeutic services for victim survivors	We expanded case management support and created new therapeutic services for victim survivors. We dedicated 40% of the funding for therapeutic interventions to children and young people. We set up new 'core and cluster' refuges. These give women and children: • independent unit accommodation • access to the immediate services they need.
Sexual Assault Crisis Line upgrade	To improve services for victim survivors of sexual assault, we upgraded the statewide Sexual Assault Crisis Line, which included an online chat option. The crisis line is run by Sexual Assault Services Victoria.
Adolescent Family Violence in the Home program expansion	To intervene with young people using violence, we expanded the Adolescent Family Violence in the Home program across the state. The program offers an early intervention model of care for young people aged 12 to 17 years who use violence.
Central Information Point	To hold adults who use violence to account and keep them visible, we created the Central Information Point. The Central Information Point creates a single report about a perpetrator of family violence from information held by: • police • courts • corrections • Child Protection. We increased access to: • men's behaviour change programs • individual case management placements in community correctional services.
Specialist family violence courts (SFVCs)	We designed and put in place a new model of SFVCs to: • support the safety of victim survivors • keep adults who use violence accountable.
Specialist family violence services skills development	We helped specialist family violence services develop the skills they need for this complex work. We did this to recognise, support and increase the number of people working to prevent and respond to family violence across Victoria.

The second action plan

From 2020 to 2023, we built on the strong foundations from the first action plan. Some of the highlights of this work are outlined in Table 4.

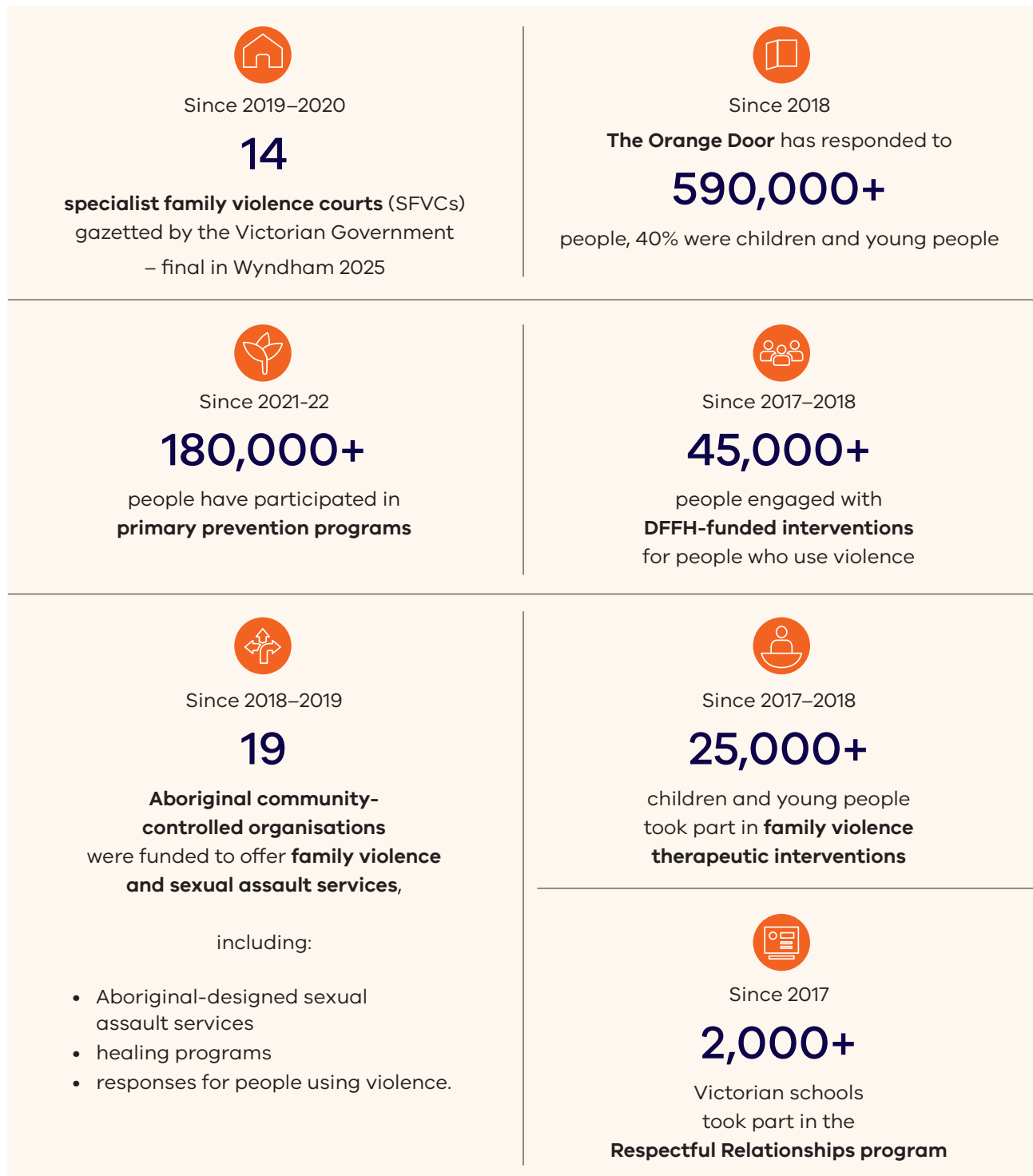
Table 4: Highlights of the second action plan

Highlight	Description
Orange Door network	We finished setting up the statewide Orange Door network. The network now has 18 primary sites and another 19 access points. It also has outposts in 27 community services. We also created the first Aboriginal-led access point, in line with our commitment to self-determination. In 2024, The Orange Door received 192,469 referrals.
Increased focus on people who use violence	We increased our focus on people who use violence. This included establishing the Place for Change program. This program that works with men who have used violence to help them: • change their behaviour • engage with support services • access secure accommodation services, which helps women and children stay safe at home.
More specialist family violence workers	We increased the number of specialist family violence workers to 2,500.
MARAM training and prevention initiatives	To the end of 2024, we ran over 332,000 sessions of MARAM or MARAM-aligned training. This training gives workers the critical skills they need to: • recognise the risks of family violence • take decisive action to intervene and protect people from harm.
Increased understanding of responsibility to prevent violence	We engaged Victorians in preventing family violence through over 250 initiatives in the places where they live, work, learn and play. More organisations, institutions and workplaces understand their responsibility to help prevent family violence. Community members are less likely to minimise, justify or condone family or sexual violence.



Key reform achievements

Figure 1: Important achievements from our reforms



Strong foundations

In the first 6 years of Ending Family Violence, we:

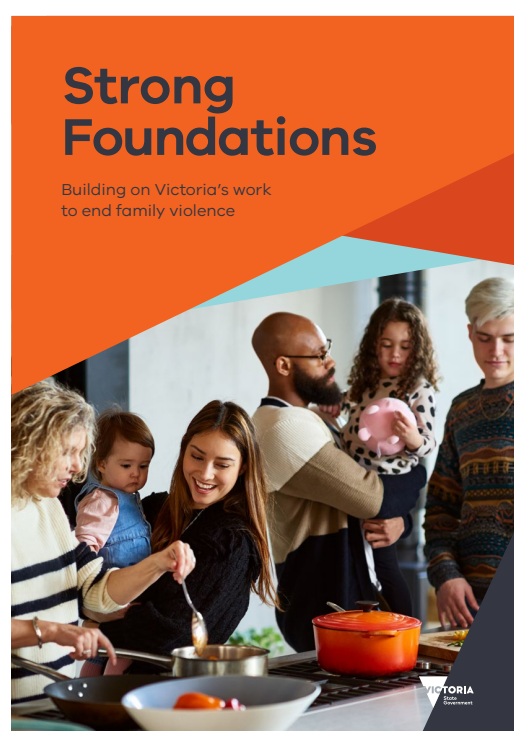
- carried out all of the Royal Commission's recommendations
- made big changes to the way we prevent and respond to family and sexual violence.

Our progress is highlighted in *Strong foundations: Building on Victoria's work to end family violence* (Strong Foundations). Strong Foundations was released in December 2023.

Strong Foundations reminds us that major change needs hard work and long-term commitment at the individual, community and system levels.

In Strong Foundations we set out our 5 priority areas for the next 3 years. These are to:

- drive down family and sexual violence
- focus on children and young people
- strengthen support for victim survivors
- respond to change
- understand and demonstrate our impact.



Unfinished business

During consultations for this plan, we received valuable feedback on the 5 priorities from:

- victim survivors
- community groups
- specialist support services
- organisations working to prevent and respond to family and sexual violence.

Consultation was also open to the public. Everyone was invited to share their views, including through:

- an online survey
- a call for written submissions
- targeted workshops and roundtables.



**...making sure that
all parts of the system...
work together to prevent
and respond to family
and sexual violence
so that we make change
for every victim survivor.**

In our consultations, we heard that the priorities set out in Strong Foundations were on target. We learned that there needed to be a greater focus on:

- people with diverse needs and identities in our community
- enabling self-determined responses by Aboriginal communities
- making sure Aboriginal people receive culturally safe services
- services that are safe, inclusive and accessible for people who use them
- working with people in a more holistic way, considering their family context and the needs of all affected family members, including the specific circumstances of children and older people experiencing family violence
- the accountability of adults who use violence, including for those who use coercive control (behaviour intended to make a person feel fearful, dependent and powerless)
- the continued work needed to implement the MARAM Framework and information sharing schemes, helping professionals from different sectors and services identify and manage family violence risk quickly and consistently
- making sure that organisations that prevent and respond to violence are effective and adequately funded
- making sure that all parts of the system – people, laws, policies, services, technologies and processes – work together to prevent and respond to family and sexual violence so that we make change for every victim survivor.

Strengthening Women's Safety Package – a rapid boost when it was needed most

In May 2024, the Victoria Government announced a significant boost in its work to prevent violence against women.

The Strengthening Women's Safety Package:

- increased crisis and therapeutic services for victim survivors
- increased case management of high-risk perpetrators
- funded innovative programs to prevent violence against women.

The package moved beyond our ambitious agenda to put in place all 227 recommendations of the Royal Commission. It has continued to drive action at every stage:

- better responding to victims when violence occurs
- creating a stronger justice response that holds offenders to account
- continuing Victoria's world-leading prevention response – stopping violence before it starts.

We are determined to continue to innovate and offer support for victim survivors when they need it. We know the safety of women and children is counting on it.

Initiatives under the Strengthening Women's Safety Package have been included in this plan. One such initiative is the nation-leading Respect Ballarat: A community model to prevent gendered violence, being trialled in Ballarat by Respect Victoria.

Following a devastating period of violence against women in 2024, the Ballarat community came together to demand and create change.

We know community attitudes and beliefs reinforce behaviours which can contribute to family violence.

Alongside the community, and with a co-design process we are putting in place a model to address and prevent gendered violence - everywhere that people in Ballarat live, learn, work and play.



Guiding principles

Guiding principles

Our work and this plan are guided by a set of 4 core principles.

These principles are ongoing commitments that underpin our response to family and sexual violence.

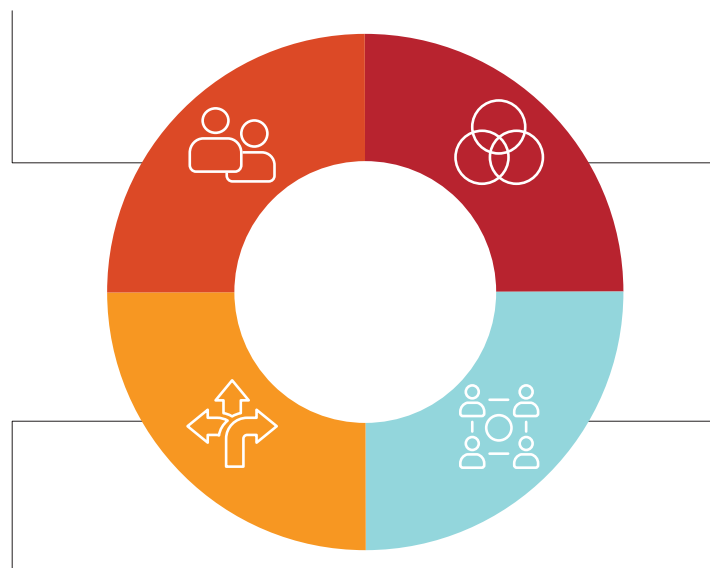
Figure 2: The plan's guiding principles

Lived experience

People with lived experience of violence have unique expertise to bring to our ongoing efforts to end family and sexual violence. They know the difficulties that come with escaping violence—having a safe place to live, getting intervention orders, making sure there is enough money for the essentials. They understand the road to lasting safety and healing can be long.

Intersectionality

We know that every person's experience of violence is different. It can be affected by a range of factors including age, gender, sexuality, ability, faith or language group—often a combination of these factors. Sometimes, a person's circumstances can make them particularly marginalised and vulnerable to violence, such as people who have been in prison, or who are on temporary visas.



Aboriginal self-determination

We are committed to Aboriginal self-determination and to supporting Truth and Treaty. Self-determination recognises the leadership of Aboriginal people in ending family violence in their communities. It promotes community involvement and ownership. It acknowledges Aboriginal people have the best understanding of their community's need and priorities.

Accountability

Holding adults who use violence accountable is critical to stopping violence. This principle also reflects the accountability that each person holds in addressing family and sexual violence. Family and friends, communities, community services, government and the private sector all have a role to play in ending family and sexual violence.



Lived experience

Actions right across this plan will be shaped by the lived experience of victim survivors in how they are designed, put in place and evaluated.

It is important to listen to victim survivors and to incorporate their lived experiences into program design, development and improvement.

— *Women with Disabilities Victoria*

People with lived experience of violence are central to our ongoing efforts to end family and sexual violence. They know better than anyone the challenges people can face when seeking safety from violence, such as:

- finding a safe place to live
- getting intervention orders
- making sure there is enough money for the essentials.

They understand the road to lasting safety and healing can be long.

Since 2016, we have benefited from the expertise of the members of the Victim Survivors' Advisory Council (VSAC). They have helped guide Victoria's strong approach to preventing and addressing family and sexual violence. Their views and guidance have been instrumental in developing this plan.

We have also listened to young people with lived experience of family violence, through VSAC and broader consultation.

We understand that special care is needed when engaging with children and young people. We are committed to finding ethical, trauma-capable ways of learning from them and hearing their views. This will not only work to empower children and young people but will also help improve the design of services to better meet their needs.

This plan also recognises the continued importance of supporting and empowering people with lived experience who work in:

- family and sexual violence services
- other roles in the broader services system.



Intersectionality

Intersectionality refers to the ways that different parts of a person's identity can result in overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation.

An intersectional lens can help us understand how this overlapping prejudice and discrimination can make it harder for some people to get the help they need.

We know that every person's experience of violence is different. It can be affected by a range of factors, including:

- age
- gender
- sexuality
- disability
- faith
- language group
- a combination of these factors.

Attitudes, systems and structures in society and organisations can create inequality and result in barriers and exclusion. This includes experiences of:

- stigma
- sexism
- racism
- homophobia
- transphobia
- intersex discrimination
- ableism
- ageism.

Multiple forms of discrimination can intersect to disadvantage some people even further. When these experiences combine, there is a greater risk of:

- people experiencing family violence
- people not getting the help they need due to systemic barriers
- social isolation.

Intersectionality reminds us of the benefits of policies and services being more inclusive, responsive and fair for all.

In the last few years, we have quickly scaled up services to prevent and respond to family and sexual violence. We will continue refining these services to make sure they work for everyone. This includes tailoring services to meet the particular needs of people and families.

Every Victorian should feel seen and understood in our plan to end family and sexual violence.



By ensuring an intersectional lens is applied across all priority areas and their relevant activities, this will ensure the next phase of Victoria's family violence work is truly supporting and engaging the most vulnerable in our community.

— *inTouch Multicultural Centre
Against Family Violence*



Aboriginal self-determination

Aboriginal communities and leaders in Victoria have been working for a long time to address the effects of family and sexual violence and intergenerational trauma on their people. They understand their communities best and what is needed to support them.

Their knowledge, strength and voices are crucial to achieving our goals. They must continue to be at the heart of efforts to end family violence and its devastating impact on Aboriginal people, families and communities.

Aboriginal-led programs that support people to heal their trauma in their own way and on their own terms are crucial for the wounds of trauma to heal. Central to healing is culture, which creates the foundation for identity, growth, and connection with community.

— Balit Durn Durn Centre (VACCHO)

In the context of a national crisis of violence against Aboriginal women and children, the 2024 Senate Inquiry into Missing and Murdered First Nations Women and Children reaffirmed the need for genuine partnership with Aboriginal communities to enable self-determination. It emphasised the need to address the systemic drivers of violence – including racism, discrimination and intergenerational trauma – to support the safety and dignity of Aboriginal women and children.

Self-determination underpins Dhelk Dja, which is an Aboriginal-led agreement with the Victorian Government to address family violence in Aboriginal communities. Dhelk Dja's vision is for Aboriginal people to live free from family violence. It commits services and government to work together to make sure Aboriginal people, families and communities are stronger, safer, thriving and free from family violence.

Dhelk Dja is supported by 3-year action plans. The second of these action plans is due to finish in 2025. The third 3-year action plan (2026 to 2028) will be developed by the Dhelk Dja Partnership Forum using a collaborative, Aboriginal-led agreement-making process.

Dhelk Dja is an important step in a longer journey. This journey will continue as we move towards Truth and Treaty.



Accountability

Accountability emerged as a strong theme in our consultations and in the national conversation about family and sexual violence in recent years. This principle highlights the accountability of adults who use violence.

To truly eliminate family violence, we need to place those who are at the root of the problem in the centre of the frame – those who choose to use violence.

— *Victim Survivors' Advisory Council,
Strong Foundations*

Holding adults who use violence accountable is critical to stopping violence. This principle also reflects the accountability that each person holds in addressing family violence. It cannot be up to victim survivors and advocates to solve this problem.

The Victorian Government will hold itself accountable by meeting our commitments and achieving our goals around ending violence.

Accountability must be upheld at every level. We must all do our part.

This involves:

- providing education to prevent violence
- funding frontline services
- making sure our laws work as intended
- being transparent when reporting on our performance.

Police have an important role in protecting victim survivors from harm and making sure people who use violence are held accountable for their actions.

Specialist services are also vital in turning policies into action by giving direct support to communities. They need to maintain high service and practice standards and continue to train and support their staff to be the best they can be. This includes making sure their services are culturally safe, accessible and responsive.

Beyond these, we all have a role to play in ending family and sexual violence, including:

- the broader range of community services
- the private sector
- communities
- family and friends.

An inter-connected system of accountability wherein the government, the broader service system, community, and society work together, alongside individuals' change making journeys, [is critical] to stop family violence.

— *No to Violence*



Our approach



Our approach

Innovating, expanding and refining

To create a world with no family or sexual violence, we must have ambition, persistence, and the courage to try new things.

Some of the actions in this plan are bold and innovative. They will challenge us to do things differently. For example, Respect Victoria's Respect Ballarat, a community model which tasks the entire community with actively preventing gender-based violence.

Other actions push us to keep adapting, expanding and refining the way we work to better meet the needs of people affected by violence. This involves building on some of the transformational changes we have made over the last decade.

A unified roadmap

With this plan, we create a single, unified roadmap for addressing family and sexual violence, and all forms of violence against women.

This plan brings together work of other relevant strategies and plans, including:

- *Free from violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women* (Free from Violence)
- *Everybody matters: Inclusion and equity statement* – sets out our vision for a more inclusive, safe, responsive and accountable family violence system
- *Framing the future: Second rolling action plan (under Building from strength: 10-year industry plan for family violence prevention and response)* – actions to strengthen and support the family violence workforce.

By bringing together actions from primary prevention, inclusion and workforce plans, we can embed these critical efforts in broader reform. This makes sure they are visible, sustained and coordinated drivers of long-term change. We are strongly committed to these important reforms, which will continue to guide our progress.

This plan also includes initiatives from the Strengthening Women's Safety Package (announced in May 2024). These initiatives will strengthen our ambitious agenda to:

- keep women and children safe
- hold people who use violence to account
- stop violence before it starts.



A deep commitment to self-determination

Consistent with Aboriginal self-determination, actions under Dhelk Dja will remain separate to this plan.

The actions under Dhelk Dja have been developed by Aboriginal people for Aboriginal people, in partnership with the Victorian Government.

These actions are monitored by the Dhelk Dja Partnership Forum, which includes:

- community-led Dhelk Dja action groups
- Aboriginal community-controlled organisations (ACCOs)
- the Victorian Government.

This plan includes an action to make sure that our broader work to prevent and respond to family and sexual violence is respectful, inclusive and culturally safe for Aboriginal people. This action is designed to complement Dhelk Dja's work.

Many of the other actions in this plan also aim to make services work better for Aboriginal people, as we continue to build a system that is more inclusive, better able to respond to individual needs, and driven by skilled and knowledgeable workers.





The framework
for our actions

The framework for our actions

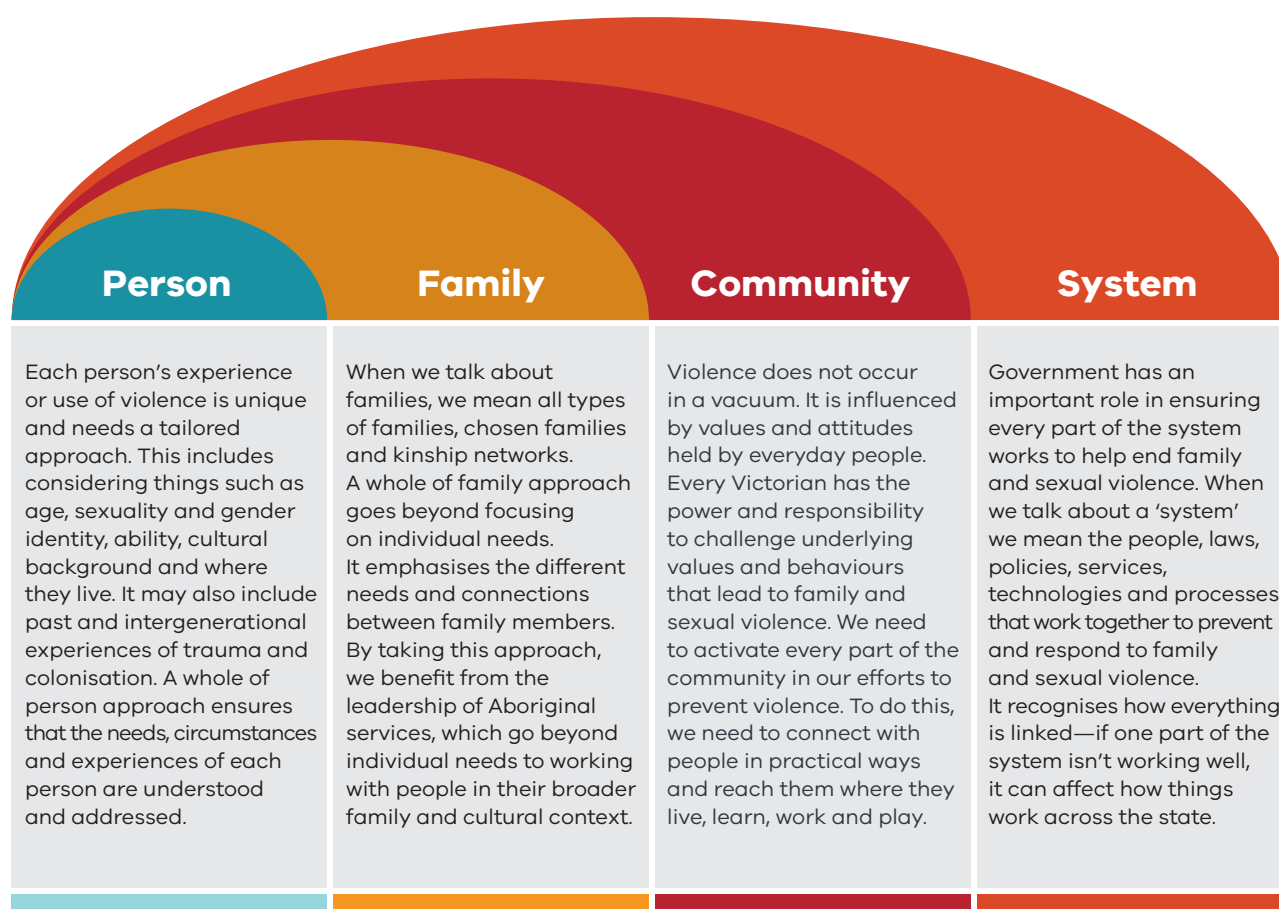


Figure 3: Our focus areas

The actions in this plan are set out in 4 focus areas (see Figure 2):

- Focus area 1: Whole-of-**person** approach
- Focus area 2: Whole-of-**family** approach
- Focus area 3: Whole-of-**community** approach
- Focus area 4: Whole-of-**system** approach.

This framework recognises that the work to end family and sexual violence needs action at all levels.

Focus area 1:

Whole-of-person approach

A whole-of-person approach creates a system that understands and adapts to what people need.

Victim survivors need services to be flexible, specialised and wrap around their daily life.

Interventions for people who use violence are most effective when they are tailored to the person's characteristics and circumstances.

We also need to recognise that a person's identity and life experiences can shape their beliefs and attitudes about family and sexual violence.

Support for victim survivors will always be at the centre of our work

We will help victim survivors of family and sexual violence:

- connect with specialist support
- have more confidence in the criminal justice system.

This includes trialling Justice Navigators in a new and more coordinated way. This should help survivors of sexual assault who connect with the justice system get the advice and support they need.

We are building a system that can respond to the needs of diverse communities, through targeted services and programs for:

- women from multicultural migrant and refugee communities
- LGBTIQ+ victim survivors
- victim survivors with disability
- women and gender diverse people who have been in prison.

The justice system should enable victim survivors to access support, consider and act on their reporting options, secure a justice outcome (if that's what they want) and recover.

— Sexual Assault Services Victoria

Working Together – Strengthening family violence support with multicultural communities

Every Victorian should have access to safe, inclusive support if they experience family or sexual violence.

Victim survivors from multicultural communities often face extra hurdles, such as language barriers or a lack of culturally safe services. This puts them at greater risk of harm.

The Working Together program addresses this by making it easier for multicultural community organisations and specialist family and sexual violence services to – like the name says – work together.

The program helps make sure that victim survivors and people using violence from multicultural communities can get help that is safe, tailored and culturally responsive.

The program also includes:

- an awareness raising campaign on where and how to get help
- workforce capacity building for funded agencies.

The Working Together program has funded 29 projects over 2 phases.

Phase 1:

- 12 projects to build stronger connections between family violence services and multicultural community organisations.

Phase 2:

- 10 projects to build stronger connections.
- 7 projects starting in 2025 to improve integration with sexual violence services and raise awareness of available support.





Addressing the specific needs of children and young people

Since the Royal Commission, we have been improving the family violence system to be more child and youth centred.

There are now therapeutic supports and refuges that have been designed for the needs of children and young people as victim survivors.

We are better at recognising that each person's risks and needs can be different, even among siblings. For example, The Orange Door conducts risk assessments for each child in a family affected by family violence.



The service system must recognise young people as victim-survivors and help-seekers in their own right...

— *Centre for Innovative Justice, Melbourne City Mission, Youth Affairs Council Victoria and Berry Street Y-Change*



Children and young people are being positioned as being 'agents of generational change' – but the burden of breaking the cycle of family violence cannot solely rest on our shoulders. We need access to age-appropriate, youth specific supports that don't leave us to bear the brunt of expensive, often out of reach healing and recovery supports.

— *Conor Pall, Deputy Chair, Victim Survivor's Advisory Council*

This work has led to change in organisations that interact with children and young people, including:

- police
- schools
- maternal health nurses
- specialist family violence services.

These organisations have had to shift their thinking and practice to make sure children and young people are recognised as victims in their own right.

Children and young people continue to describe feeling disempowered and ignored by a family violence system that has not always seen them as victims in their own right.



We need a system that consistently wraps support around children and young people, no matter their age, stage or development. We want children and young people to have agency in decisions about risk, safety planning, healing and recovery.



Children are not a homogeneous group, and their individual circumstances need to be considered when assisting their recovery from family violence.

— *Centre for Excellence
in Child and Family Welfare*

Over the next 3 years, we will make sure the needs of children and young people are recognised and prioritised. We will do this both in our efforts to prevent violence and in our response to it.

We are developing new MARAM practice guidance and tools specifically for identifying and managing family violence safety risks to children and young people. This will help over 6,000 organisations and 400,000 professionals across Victoria (including Victoria Police) to be consistent and coordinated in addressing the needs of children and young people who are victim survivors. This guidance will also enable coordinated responses to young people who use violence.

We will continue to innovate and improve the counselling and therapy available for children and young people to support their recovery from family and sexual violence. This will help them not only rebuild their lives but thrive.

We will refine and embed the approach to children and young people who use violence in the home or display harmful sexual behaviours. We will invest in developmentally-appropriate and therapeutic services to help children and young people get the supports they need.

We will also expand and improve responses to peer-to-peer sexual harm in schools, including harm that occurs online.

Supporting children, young people and their families

In 2023, the Victorian Government announced the establishment of a new Children's portfolio to improve equity, access and outcomes for Victorian children and families. It puts the needs of the child at the centre of a better-connected system.

The Children's portfolio brings together important system touchpoints that were spread across different departments and policy areas, including:

- maternal and child health
- early childhood education
- statutory and non-statutory children and family services
- supports for children and young people leaving care services.

This builds on Victoria's work under *Roadmap for reform: Strong families, safe children* to shift the children and family services system's focus from crisis response to prevention and early intervention.

There is also work in progress to expand the Aboriginal-led child and family service system. *Wungurilwil Gapgapduir: Aboriginal children and families agreement* ('strong families' in Latji Latji) is an agreement between:

- the Aboriginal community
- the Victorian Government
- community service organisations.

Wungurilwil Gapgapduir sets out a strategic direction to reduce the number of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care by building their connection to culture, Country and community.





Trauma-capable services for people who use violence

We will work with people who use violence in ways that address the specific factors contributing to their behaviour.

This includes:

- challenging harmful beliefs and attitudes towards women
- addressing past trauma
- providing support when there is drug and alcohol dependence or gambling
- making sure there are enough workers with the right skills and capabilities to do this complex work.

We also need to explore new and different ways of blocking pathways to violence. This includes intervening early to support children and young people who have experienced or witnessed violence. This will help them recover and reduce the risk of violence becoming normalised for them.



...early intervention with children and young people entering the system will promote healing and behaviour change.

— *Safe Steps Family Violence Response Centre*

We are investing in programs for adults who use violence, including specialist programs for:

- fathers
- people from multicultural communities
- people with disability
- Aboriginal people through Aboriginal-led men's programs.

These programs can help to break or prevent generational cycles of violence.



To end family violence in a generation we must advance research and practice simultaneously, including exploring innovative approaches to working with men.

— *No to Violence*

By conducting a thorough research study into perpetrators, we will better understand their behaviours and motivations. This will inform our programs for people who use violence and make sure that:

- positive changes to their behaviour continue
- their family members stay safe.

Changing Ways – Coordinated support to prevent further harm

Morag lives with her 10-year-old son, Oliver. Oliver's father, Ronaldo, has a serious history of family violence, substance abuse and unstable housing.

A Child Protection referral to Changing Ways raised concerns about Ronaldo. They did not know where Ronaldo was.

Changing Ways practitioners quickly helped Morag create a safety plan and find emergency housing.

To find Ronaldo, Changing Ways worked with housing services and Victoria Police's Family Violence Investigation Unit. They found Ronaldo at a motel. Changing Ways offered him intensive case management supports, including a phone, to address his substance abuse and housing needs.

The practitioners did not confront Ronaldo immediately about his use of family violence. Instead, they monitored his behaviour using coordinated information sharing. The Changing Ways Family Safety Contact Worker played a key role, assessing Ronaldo's risk and working closely with Morag and Oliver to keep them both safe.

Over 8 months, Changing Ways kept Ronaldo engaged with multiple services. They persevered through a 6-week period when Ronaldo withdrew and stopped accessing services. A standard program would have closed his case. Given Ronaldo's history and risk profile, closing his case could have led to serious harm to Morag and Oliver.

Instead, with Changing Ways' continued support, Ronaldo returned to alcohol and other drug services and completed his rehabilitation. Because of this, Ronaldo is ready to start a men's behaviour change program to learn how to build safer contact with his son.

(Names have been changed to protect privacy)

Our actions

Table 5: Area 1.1 – Support for victim survivors is at the centre of our work

Number	Action	Lead agency
1	Deliver innovative case management responses for adult victim survivors from multicultural communities and with complex needs to support their safety and recovery from family violence. (Strengthening Women's Safety Package initiative)	Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH)
2	Implement a new Justice Navigator pilot in 2 areas to support victim survivors of sexual violence to navigate support, recovery and justice options. (Strengthening Women's Safety Package initiative)	DFFH
3	Expand the Aboriginal sexual assault program so that more Aboriginal adults, children and young people can access culturally appropriate healing and get the support they need. (Strengthening Women's Safety Package initiative)	DFFH
4	Provide family violence workers in courts with training and professional development to strengthen intersectional approaches when working with court users to better support Victoria's diverse community.	Court Services Victoria (CSV)
5	Facilitate and encourage early access to family violence and sexual assault support services for multicultural communities through targeted communication and multilingual resources that encourage help-seeking and easier system navigation.	DFFH
6	Support the Family Violence Justice project to improve family and sexual violence responses to women and gender diverse people in the criminal justice system, including those exiting prison.	DFFH
7	Support family and sexual violence services to provide safe and inclusive responses to LGBTIQ+ victim survivors.	DFFH
8	Implement a new administrative financial assistance scheme to better support victims of violent crime, including family violence, to access financial assistance.	Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS)
9	Strengthen legal supports for migrant, refugee and Aboriginal women, including women misidentified as the primary aggressor, through a targeted boost in funding to specialist community legal centres. (Strengthening Women's Safety Package initiative)	DJCS

Table 6: Area 1.2 – Addressing the unique and specific needs of children and young people

Number	Action	Lead agency
10	Enhance access to therapeutic supports in care services to help children and young people recover and heal from trauma and help stop the intergenerational cycle of violence.	DFFH
11	Embed coordination and service responses to young people who use violence to more effectively engage them to change their behaviour through the ongoing Adolescent Family Violence in The Home program.	DFFH
12	Expand the Safe Socials program to partner with the Victorian peak body for sexual assault and harmful sexual behaviour services to further support schools to respond to student-to-student sexual abuse and harm, including harm that occurs online.	Department of Education (DE)
13	Co-design accessible information materials with children and young people on how they can receive help for family violence.	DFFH
14	Develop a justice approach for children and young people who use family violence that ensures interventions and responses across the justice system are appropriate and effective for young people.	DJCS
15	Increase service delivery through targeted funding to expand age-appropriate counselling and therapy for children and young people through family violence therapeutic interventions to support their recovery from family violence. (Strengthening Women's Safety Package initiative)	DFFH
16	Provide tailored, youth-specific case management approaches for young people (aged 15 to 19 years) who are homeless due to family violence.	DFFH

Table 7: Area 1.3 – Developing trauma-capable services for people who use violence

Number	Action	Lead agency
17	Increase access to programs and services for people using violence through additional service delivery to: • support behaviour change • increase participant accountability for their actions and behaviour • keep people using violence in view while increasing victim survivor safety. Includes: • case management for high-risk perpetrators • flexible brokerage for perpetrator accommodation services to help victim survivors stay at home safely • intensive and coordinated responses to people who pose a serious risk of family violence, incorporating trauma capable service delivery, including through the Changing Ways serious risk program • post-participation follow-up for men's behaviour change program participants to help embed behaviour change and provide additional opportunities for support. (Strengthening Women's Safety Package initiative)	DFFH
18	Deliver culturally-tailored men's programs which take a holistic approach, with a focus on healing alongside accountability, including: • culturally-adapted men's behaviour change programs with a focus on holistic healing • the Aboriginal-led Changing Ways program, a family violence initiative designed for Aboriginal men which acknowledges the interconnectedness of family members and the impact of violence on everyone involved.	DFFH
19	Deliver a perpetrator study that will examine the evidence across the justice and community-based perpetrator intervention systems, including service gaps and challenges, to identify the most effective system-wide interventions. (Strengthening Women's Safety Package initiative)	DFFH and DJCS

Focus area 2:

Whole-of-family approach

Recognising a person's family history and context is important for many people experiencing family and sexual violence. By family, we mean families in all their forms, chosen families and kinship networks.

By taking this approach, we benefit from the leadership of Aboriginal services. These services go beyond individual needs to work with people in their broader family and cultural context. This approach emphasises the different needs and connections between family members.

[O]ur approaches will benefit everyone in Victoria – Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, and will inform Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal services. We want to ensure that our specialist expertise, wisdom, and our whole of family and whole of community approaches are adopted across the system to create a future where everyone can heal, address their trauma and live free from violence.

— Koori Caucus members,
Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way



The Orange Door

Our ongoing commitment to The Orange Door is fundamental to the whole-of-family approach.

Before the Royal Commission, police could refer a family to 4 different services following a family violence incident. People did not know where to go for help before things reached crisis point. There was no clear public access point. Families could end up being sent from one referral to another with no actual progress.

This was not an effective system for Victorians who needed help.

The Orange Door changed this. It brings together services that can wrap around a family, getting them the help they need.

The Orange Door helps:

- people experiencing and using family violence
- parents and carers who need help with the care and wellbeing of children and young people.

In doing so, The Orange Door looks at the risks, needs and experiences of all family members and creates a tailored plan to help them.

An interdisciplinary team works together to address immediate safety and child wellbeing concerns, while also connecting people to services that address their longer-term needs. This can include specialist case management support through family violence services and family services, as well as longer-term interventions for people using violence. It can also include a broader range of supports such as help to secure housing, access drug and alcohol services, or to get legal assistance.

We created the Central Information Point and a statewide client database for The Orange Door so that practitioners can access accurate and up-to-date information about all family members. This means The Orange Door practitioners can make better informed decisions and create more effective and tailored strategies for their clients.

We have also supported each Orange Door through an unprecedented investment in senior practice leadership. Each Orange Door network provides Integrated Practice Support, which is delivered by Practice Leaders. Each area-based partnership includes the following Practice Leaders:

- Aboriginal Practice Leader
- Victim Survivor Practice Leader
- Adult Using Family Violence Practice Leader
- Integrated Practice Leader
- Child and Young Person Practice Leader.

The senior roles help guide practitioners in their work with different family members.

Many of the actions in this plan will continue to strengthen and improve The Orange Door, which is still a relatively new and evolving model.

Our actions will include:

- continuing to strengthen Orange Door practitioners' ability to support children and young people
- helping services within and outside of The Orange Door (such as schools) work better together – so families can get the help they need more quickly and get seamless and coordinated support
- creating a new program to better identify and respond to elder abuse
- continuing to develop Orange Door partnerships so agencies can offer the community an integrated service.

The Orange Door – Connecting people and families to care and safety

The Orange Door has changed the way services can connect to and help people and families.

A staff member from The Orange Door proactively reached out to the Wilson family, who were attending the Magistrates' Court after a family violence incident. The Wilson family is:

- Paul Wilson – father
- Beth Wilson – mother
- Sally – 7 years old
- Tommy – 2.5 years old.

The family were supported by different practitioners who were all part of the same integrated team. The Orange Door practitioners and the Wilson family worked together to:

- review the family's service history
- complete family violence risk assessments
- complete child wellbeing assessments
- identify the family's current support needs.

They found that Paul's use of violence and coercive control, along with the harm caused to Beth, negatively affects the family's safety, stability and routines.

The family wanted to prioritise accessing longer-term support. With Paul and Beth's consent, practitioners completed child wellbeing assessments and checks for each child. A practitioner contacted Sally's school and Tommy's maternal child health nurse (MCHN) for more information.

Sally's school said that they had noticed changes in Sally's behaviour and school attendance over the past 6 months.

Tommy's MCHN shared they had completed appointments with Tommy up until his 12-month visit. The MCHN had not been able to contact the Wilsons to schedule Tommy's 2-year visit.

After The Orange Door practitioners completed their assessments, they spoke to the Wilson family about their possible options for longer-term supports and referrals. The Wilson family chose the following actions:

- Paul was referred to a local men's behaviour change program to address his use of violence.
- Beth declined a referral for family violence case management as she felt well supported by her community at this time.
- Beth created a safety plan with the help of practitioners. The safety plan helped Beth identify a safe person that she and the children could go to if she felt unsafe. She arranged to leave a bag with her and the children's belongings with the safe person in case they needed to leave quickly. Beth also planned how she and the children would travel to the safe place. She had hidden some money that she could use if they ever needed to leave quickly.
- The family was referred to a local Integrated Family Service program for longer-term parenting support.

The Orange Door's integrated approach has meant all family members can get the supports and services they both need and choose. It has also kept Paul's use of violence in view.

A picture that was so hard to join up before The Orange Door has become a natural way of working.

(Names have been changed to protect privacy)



The Orange Door's integrated approach has meant all family members can get the supports and services they both need and choose.

Baby Makes 3 – Supporting equality from the start

Engaging families to prevent violence before it starts

Families play an important role in preventing violence before it starts.

Parents and caregivers can guide young people through early relationships and online environments, helping them develop respectful and safe interactions.

There is an opportunity to promote respectful and equitable relationships when someone becomes a parent for the first time.

We will help new parents challenge gendered expectations and model healthy relationships. By doing this, we can positively influence the beliefs, attitudes and behaviours of the next generation.

Becoming a parent is a major life change. It is also a powerful moment to talk about equality at home.

Baby Makes 3 is a primary prevention program that helps families build equal and respectful relationships by challenging gender stereotypes.

Baby Makes 3 gives health professionals like midwives and maternal child health nurses tools to have meaningful conversations with new parents about:

- respect
- gender equality
- safety
- preventing family violence.

For First Nations communities, Baby Makes 3 is offered through Balit Booboop Narrkwarren ('Strong Bubba and Family'). Trained Community Champions yarn with families about family roles, kinship, connection and sharing the load.

Balit Booboop Narrkwarren works with:

- Koori maternity services
- Aboriginal community-controlled health organisations
- local councils
- perinatal services.

Baby Makes 3 has also tailored approaches for LGBTQIA+ and multicultural families, promoting wellbeing and prevention in ways that reflect their unique experiences and strengths.



Keeping families safe and housed

We help families when violence occurs.

We will continue to improve refuge and crisis accommodation options for victim survivors at immediate risk of harm, including through completion of the refuge development and build program.



Too many women and children are becoming homeless due to family violence – in the current housing crisis, and with family violence occurring at alarming rates, it's time to think differently and actively change the system to support them to stay safe at home.

— Jocelyn Bignold, Chief Executive Officer
McAuley Community Services for Women,
Safe at Home launch

We are committed to initiatives that support victim survivors to access a range of safe accommodation options beyond the point of crisis.

The Safe at Home program (launched in March 2025) helps victim survivors stay in their own homes if it is safe to do so. Safe at Home removes the burden of leaving the home from the victim survivor by offering the whole family wraparound supports. This includes supporting the adult using family violence through:

- case management services
- flexible funding so they can find alternative accommodation.

In addition, Personal Safety Initiatives (PSIs) provide tailored security upgrades to improve safety and stability at home.

Women and children who can stay together in stable accommodation of their choice are more likely to feel safe, be financially secure and keep important community connections.

Children and young people can also continue their education, bringing them both short and long term benefits.

We are using all the levers within our control to build more social and affordable housing and house as many people as soon as possible.

The Big Housing Build and Regional Housing Fund will invest:

- \$5.3 billion to build 12,000 new social and affordable homes
- \$1 billion to build more than 1,300 social and affordable homes in rural and regional Victoria, respectively.

This includes providing 1,000 homes for family violence victim survivors through the Big Housing Build.

As at June 2024, social housing allocations for victim survivors were the highest they have been since the Victorian Housing Register started.

In addition, 10% of all new social housing will be built for Aboriginal Victorians.

We are also investing in new specialised accommodation options for young people on their own. This will give an extra 130 young people in need of housing a safe place to live. These accommodations will be within integrated learning and accommodation centres, known as youth foyers. This will also make it easier for young people to connect to employment and other support services.



Personal Safety Initiative – Helping families feel safe at home

**Alice is a mother of 3 from regional Victoria.
Robert is the father of her children.**

Alice has experienced 20 years of family violence from Robert, including coercive control, physical abuse and stalking.

A full intervention order was in place but Robert breached it repeatedly.

After Robert physically assaulted her in front of their children, Alice sought help from The Orange Door.

The Orange Door practitioner reviewed the history, including Robert's extensive history of family violence. The practitioner worked with Victoria Police resulting in Robert being referred to the Family Violence Investigation Unit due to his level of risk.

The Orange Door practitioner referred Alice to the Personal Safety Initiative (PSI), which can help people with tailored security upgrades to make their homes and day to day lives safer.

A safety audit identified urgent measures to strengthen Alice's home security. The PSI coordinator recommended installing:

- CCTV
- sensor lights
- locks on the power box and letterbox
- a new back door
- security doors.

Alice was also referred to:

- a specialist family violence service for ongoing family violence support and case management
- Integrated Family Services for longer-term parenting support.

With Alice's consent, her family violence case manager:

- got her funding for the home security upgrades
- worked with her landlord and real estate agents to arrange and complete the work.

After the security upgrades were complete, Alice and her children felt safer, less anxious and more settled.

When Robert was released from prison, he returned only once – with Alice's permission – to collect his belongings.

Alice and her family violence case manager believe the CCTV helped deter further incidents.

(Names have been changed to protect privacy)



**Alice and her children
felt safer, less anxious,
and more settled.**

Our actions

Table 8: Area 2.1 – Engaging families to prevent violence before it starts

Number	Action	Lead agency
20	Deliver programs that support parents to challenge gendered expectations and model healthy relationships to their children.	DFFH
21	Provide guidance to schools to share with parents and carers with links to best practice advice about how they can support their kids to stay safe online. (Strengthening Women's Safety Package initiative)	DE

Table 9: Area 2.2 – Keeping families safe and housed

Number	Action	Lead agency
22	Develop and deliver the Safe at Home pilot in Geelong and increased personal safety services as well as program improvements to enable victim survivors to stay safely in their homes if they choose to, while keeping the perpetrator in view. (Strengthening Women's Safety Package initiative)	DFFH
23	Finish the development of 1,000 homes for family violence victim survivors through the Big Housing Build.	DFFH
24	Advocate to and partner with the Australian Government to deliver more crisis and transitional housing for family violence victim survivors and their children.	DFFH
25	Develop practice guidance to support more effective implementation by housing staff of existing policies protecting victim survivors from rental and maintenance debt arising from family violence.	DFFH
26	Create over 130 new beds for young people across metropolitan and regional Victoria so more young Victorians at risk of homelessness, including those experiencing family violence, have access to the supports they need.	DFFH
27	Strengthen refuge and crisis accommodation options for victim survivors at immediate risk of harm, including through completion of the refuge redevelopment program.	DFFH

Focus area 3:

Whole-of-community approach

Every Victorian has the power and responsibility to challenge the underlying values and behaviours that lead to family and sexual violence.

Strengthening our community-wide approach to preventing family and sexual violence

In 2017, we launched Free from Violence, Victoria's strategy to prevent violence before it starts. It aims to address the root causes and drivers of family and gendered violence, including attitudes, cultures and systems that:

- downplay violence against women
- limit women's independence
- impose rigid gender expectations on people, particularly for men to be aggressive, dominant and in control.

This plan continues our work under Free from Violence. It recognises that everyone can learn and change. We need to involve every part of the community, reaching people in practical ways where they live, learn, work and play.

We will explore new partnerships and ways of working with the private and community sectors so we can work together to reduce and end violence, and foster a culture of respect and safety across Victoria.





There is still much to learn about effective practice for primary prevention work that successfully challenges both violence against women and violence against LGBTIQ communities.

— *Rainbow Health Australia*

For the first time, we are piloting a new, large-scale and place-based approach to preventing and addressing violence – Respect Ballarat: A community model to prevent gendered violence. This model aims to immerse a place with messages and actions to counter violence and its causes, including harmful attitudes, behaviours and inequalities.

Respect Victoria is leading the trial of the ‘Respect Ballarat’ model. The actions, co-designed with the Ballarat community, include:

- conversations
- education and skill building
- community events
- practical changes and resources.

The model makes preventing violence everyone’s responsibility – from people and families to businesses and community organisations.

We will continue to engage people at key life and developmental stages, including as children, young people, and in older age.

We will become more sophisticated in how we reach diverse groups, including:

- people from LGBTIQ+ communities
- people with disability
- people from different cultural and religious backgrounds.

We will do this through initiatives that are:

- better tailored to each group
- informed by lived experience
- community-led
- meaningful and relevant to the target audience.

We will continue to target the places where Victorians live, work, learn and play – including online spaces.



It is critical that prevention programs consider cultural, social, and technological shifts that impact family and sexual violence.

— *Municipal Association of Victoria*



Community awareness and understanding of family violence has grown. We now have the opportunity to educate people on forms of family violence that are common but less understood, such as coercive control.

Coercive control can be hard to identify or 'name', as it often involves isolating victim survivors from their family and friends. Coercive control is linked to risk of serious injury or death.

We want to increase awareness of the signs of coercive control so people can recognise it in their own relationships and help others affected by it.



Coercive control... has so many insidious branches or tentacles. They slowly but surely grab hold, increasing their coverage and grip with time until you essentially don't know which part is you anymore. That is only part of the problem, worse can come when the perpetrator senses they are losing control, that is truly the most dangerous time, usually when the victim has decided to leave.

— Victim Survivors' Advisory Council



Supporting multicultural and faith communities to prevent family violence

For prevention to be effective, it needs to be relevant to the people it is designed to reach.

The Supporting Multicultural and Faith Communities to Prevent Family Violence Grants program supports multicultural and faith organisations to run prevention activities that are tailored to their communities and lived experiences.

The Centre for Holistic Health has worked with Victorian Chinese communities to put on puppet shows for over 90 children between the ages of 6 and 12 years.

The puppet shows explore themes of gender equality and respectful relationships.

After each puppet show, the children take part in group discussions to think about the show and its lessons. They also create their own story using puppets about respectful relationships.

Children who attended the puppet shows said that it helped them understand that:

- good relationships are about caring for one another, not having power over others
- family violence and aggressive behaviour is never acceptable.

When prevention is led by communities, it creates meaningful, lasting change.



Supporting children and young people to build respectful relationships

We must protect all children and young people from family and sexual violence, and help those who have experienced it be safe and recover.

To end violence, we must also give children and young people the skills and knowledge to build equal and respectful relationships. Childhood and adolescence are important stages where identity, values and patterns of behaviour are developed.

We will work with young people to help them:

- think critically about online content
- develop healthy identities
- build safe and respectful relationships.

In 2016, we introduced the Respectful Relationships initiative in Victorian schools. Victoria's Respectful Relationships program helps create lasting change by addressing the attitudes and behaviours that drive violence.

The program helps schools and early childhood educators:

- promote and model respect, positive attitudes and behaviours
- work with children and young people to build safe and respectful relationships, resilience and confidence.





Respectful Relationships education must engage with children and young people outside of formal education settings, be tailored to developmental needs, and be safe, inclusive and accessible to all.

— Centre for Innovative Justice, Melbourne City Mission, Youth Affairs Council Victoria and Berry Street Y-Change

Following an expression of interest during 2024-2025 to expand to further non-government schools, over 2,000 Victorian government, Catholic and independent schools are now signed on to the Respectful Relationships whole-school approach, including all government schools.

Schools also have new Respectful Relationships teaching resources to help students learn how to build and maintain respectful relationships, understand consent and safely navigate online spaces.

Evidence shows that racism is a significant driver of family and gendered violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.⁴ It reinforces family and gendered violence against women in culturally and linguistically diverse communities.⁵

We are helping schools address racism and build culturally safe and inclusive learning environments for all First Nations, culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse students, families and carers.





New ways to change attitudes in men and boys that can lead to violence

Violence is most often used by men against women and children.⁶ When men are victims of violence, it is usually due to the behaviour of other men.

Harmful gender norms contribute to violence against women. Gender norms are society's expectations and beliefs about how each gender should behave. Gender norms become embedded at a very young age. They can be reinforced at different life stages through culture and media.



All men have a role to play, not only in challenging their own attitudes and behaviours, but also to help shift the social structures and norms that maintain gender inequality and drive violence against women.

— *Our Watch*

Gender norms are also harmful to men and boys. Rigid ideas about what it means to be a man can pressure men and boys to look, act or behave in ways that damage their self-esteem, mental health, friendships, and intimate relationships.

Many men and boys want to help create gender equality and end violence against women. But some men and boys are reluctant or find it difficult to challenge disrespectful or hostile attitudes (both their own and others) towards women. This can be due to social pressures and fears of judgement, rejection, and exclusion.⁷



There's sometimes also fear that if you do step in, are the rest of the group going to back you on it or are you going to be the one person that is sticking up or telling the other person to stop and alienating yourself?

— *Participant, Willing, capable and confident: Supporting men to be active contributors to gender equality and the prevention of violence against women*

Research shows that men's peer relationships play a critical role in whether and how men and boys conform to or challenge masculine norms.⁸

In addition, boys and young men can be exposed to extremely sexist and violent content on the internet, including violent pornography.

There are opportunities to build men's willingness, capability and confidence to become allies for change. We will explore targeted strategies that both:

- engage with men and boys as individuals
- address social and cultural factors that create and enable harmful behaviours and attitudes.

What Kind of Man Do You Want to Be? – engaging men to prevent violence

Men need to be part of the conversation for prevention to work.

Respect Victoria's 'What Kind of Man Do You Want to Be?' campaign invites men to reflect on the social pressures associated with masculinity and their role in building safer and more respectful relationships, families and communities.

The campaign features 12 Victorian men sharing honest stories about navigating harmful gender norms and taking accountability for their actions.

The campaign was informed by:

- The Man Box study
- expert input
- sector consultation
- community testing.

Since June 2025, the campaign has reached over 3.1 million Victorians. It has resulted in more than 22.5 million video views and 22,000 website visits.

The campaign will continue in 2025–2026 with support from:

- Jesuit Social Services
- Western Bulldogs Community Foundation
- Parliamentary Secretary for Men's Behaviour Change.

Future campaigns will deepen men's understanding of:

- the link between rigid gender stereotypes and violence
- how to safely and meaningfully challenge these stereotypes.



Increasing prevention of elder abuse and improving our response to it

Elder abuse can take many forms, including:

- neglect
- emotional abuse
- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- financial abuse.

The perpetrators are often family members or caregivers, representing a shameful breach of trust.

Elder abuse has unique dynamics and drivers (like ageism) that differ from other forms of family violence. This is why targeted actions are needed to address this form of violence.

Elder abuse is still not well known or understood in Victoria. As Victoria's population ages, more people will become vulnerable to this form of harm. We must take steps to make sure that older Victorians' rights, safety and dignity are protected.



There is a pressing need to normalise the recognition of elder abuse as a distinct form of family violence. This can be achieved through concerted efforts in public education, government policy, and professional training.

— COTA Victoria and Seniors Rights Victoria

As part of this plan, we will expand prevention programs to include elder abuse. This will be supported by existing Elder Abuse Prevention Networks.

We will use existing elder abuse training and resources, such as the Elder Abuse Learning Hub, to build engagement and help improve practice. We will also create a practice development program so more specialist family violence practitioners can identify the signs of elder abuse and take action.



Our actions

Table 10: Area 3.1 – Strengthening our community-wide approach to addressing family and sexual violence

Number	Action	Lead agency
28	Test and evaluate the new 4-year Respect Ballarat: A community model to prevent gendered violence. (Strengthening Women's Safety Package initiative)	Respect Victoria
29	Engage Victorians in community-level work to prevent violence against LGBTIQ+ people.	DFFH
30	Support culturally diverse and faith communities to prevent gendered violence through the Supporting Multicultural and Faith Communities to Prevent Family Violence program.	DFFH
31	Prevent violence against women with disability by equipping workers to address disability discrimination and gender inequality through the Gender and Disability Workforce Development program.	DFFH
32	Support local communities to prevent violence before it starts through: • the Free from Violence local government program • partnership with the Victorian Women's Health Services Network.	DFFH
33	Partner with the Victim Survivors' Advisory Council to increase community awareness and understanding about: • what coercive control is • what to do once it is identified.	DFFH
34	Use the updated <i>Indigenous family violence primary prevention framework</i> to prevent family violence experienced by Aboriginal people in a culturally safe and responsive way.	DFFH
35	Leverage major events to amplify community conversations about family and gender-based violence.	Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR)

Table 11: Area 3.2 – Supporting children and young people to build respectful relationships

Number	Action	Lead agency
36	Expand the Modelling Respect and Equality program in up to 240 Respectful Relationships schools to support schools to: • promote respect and equality • model healthy behaviour and attitudes. (Strengthening Women’s Safety Package initiative)	DE
37	Expand Respectful Relationships to more Catholic and independent schools. Continue to support all Victorian government and participating Catholic and independent schools to implement and embed Respectful Relationships, ensuring implementation is inclusive of all students. (Strengthening Women’s Safety Package initiative)	DE
38	Release new Respectful Relationships teaching and learning materials to further support schools to deliver respectful relationships and consent education. (Strengthening Women’s Safety Package initiative)	DE
39	Continue to deliver Respectful Relationships professional learning to early childhood educators in Victorian Government-funded kindergarten programs.	DE
40	Develop an anti-racism policy for schools and support schools to: • explicitly address racism • build culturally safe and inclusive learning environments for all First Nations, culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse students, families and carers.	DE
41	Scope approaches to challenge the harmful impacts of violent pornography and online misogyny, including by engaging young people through their influencers, including parents.	DFFH

Table 12: Area 3.3 – Finding new ways to engage men and boys to change attitudes that can lead to violence

Number	Action	Lead agency
42	Deliver a new campaign that challenges harmful gender roles and promotes healthy masculinities. (Strengthening Women's Safety Package initiative)	Respect Victoria
43	Intervene early with men and boys at risk of using family and sexual violence through: • innovative community-based programs • building the evidence base for consistent and coordinated best practice.	DFFH

Table 13: Area 3.4 – Increasing prevention of elder abuse and strengthening our response to it

Number	Action	Lead agency
44	Release a primary prevention of elder abuse framework and embed it in the work of the Elder Abuse Prevention Networks.	DFFH
45	Address the drivers of elder abuse in government-funded primary prevention programs, including through integration into program guidelines.	DFFH
46	Build engagement with the Elder Abuse Learning Hub and key services.	DFFH
47	Deliver a practice development program to specialist family violence case management organisations and The Orange Door, to better identify and respond to elder abuse.	DFFH

Focus area 4:

Whole-of-system approach

A whole-of-system approach looks at the overarching factors that can work together to prevent and respond to family and sexual violence.

This approach recognises how these factors are linked, including:

- laws
- policies and processes
- services
- organisations
- people
- technologies.

It highlights how interconnected and reinforcing actions at every level are vital for ending family and sexual violence.

For example:

- A teacher is trained to recognise the risks and signs of family violence.
- This means the school can intervene early and refer the family to The Orange Door.
- The Orange Door can connect the family to specialist services before violence happens or escalates.

Early intervention may prevent violence and lead to fewer statutory responses being needed.

We must make sure the system works consistently for the benefit of victim survivors and is not exploited by people who use violence.



The family violence sector does not operate in isolation. A strong sector is required to work with people using violence, as well as supporting systems and structures that can complement specialist family violence practice to achieve good outcomes for victim survivors.

— Safe and Equal





Ensuring the system is informed by lived experience

For many years, we have benefited from the expertise of lived experience advocates and committees, including VSAC.

Many services have also set up their own lived experience groups to inform their work.

This plan includes several initiatives designed to increase the influence of victim survivors in our work, including:

- championing the role of VSAC across all areas of government
- making sure the newly-established Senior Victorians Advisory Committee's work program includes a focus on elder abuse.



[Y]outh lived experience leadership is not just beneficial but essential in our shared fight to prevent and address family violence.

— *Victim Survivors' Advisory Council*

We will amplify and better connect different lived experience forums to build a more complete picture of the diverse range of people and their experiences.

Some people who have experienced violence choose to work in the public sector or the family and sexual violence sector because they want to help others. Staff members with lived experience bring unique expertise. We should use this to improve and drive changes to policy and service delivery. We will help services to support and value their employees through trauma-informed ways of working.

Improving system and service accountability to Aboriginal people

Cultural safety is a fundamental human right. In practice, it involves:

- making sure initiatives to prevent violence are culturally sensitive
- creating environments where Aboriginal people feel safe to find and get support.

To achieve this, we need strong and well-funded Aboriginal-led organisations, as well as broader services that are safe and welcoming for Aboriginal people. This can only happen through genuine partnership with Aboriginal communities, underpinned by respect for Aboriginal-led approaches.

We will formalise the existing practice of reserving a portion of new family violence funding for ACCOs. Aboriginal-led organisations have a long history of running successful programs to address violence. Providing direct funding is consistent with Aboriginal self-determination.

We are making it easier and more accessible for Aboriginal people to get the qualifications they need for family violence work. We are:

- revising the mandatory minimum qualifications policy for specialist family violence practitioners
- supporting qualification pathways to family violence work – for more on our partnership with Federation University, see priority on Keeping a dedicated focus on our specialist workforce.

We know that family violence and sexual assault services are not always culturally safe for Aboriginal people, which can:

- discourage Aboriginal people from getting help when they experience violence
- further traumatise them when they try to find support.

People working in non-Aboriginal led services need a strong understanding of the impacts of colonisation and intergenerational trauma.

Actions under this plan will also help organisations actively address unconscious bias, racism and discrimination.

There is no end point in achieving cultural safety. Organisations must keep listening, learning and improving all the time.

Services will need to:

- identify and change practices that cause harm to Aboriginal people and their families
- accept and respond to feedback on how they can be safer for Aboriginal people.

Strengthening a system-wide focus on people who use violence

We need a service system that stops people from using violence as early as possible.

We will help services that may have contact with people at risk of using violence to:

- recognise high-risk attitudes and behaviours
- have the confidence to take immediate action to address them.

Embedding effective risk assessment and management is an important way to achieve this.

When violence happens, the justice system must respond quickly and effectively. We will improve:

- intervention orders, which are issued by courts to protect victim survivors
- the stalking offence to make it clearer, and easier to understand and apply.

We recognise that laws alone will not keep people safe from violence. We also need to create behaviour change in people who use violence. We are investing in targeted, trauma-informed programs for people who use violence to help them address the specific factors contributing to their behaviour.

We are committed to making sure victim survivors who attend court feel safe and supported. SFVCs have been designed with extra safety features to create a safer environment. We will continue to refine and improve the SFVC model.





Addressing misidentification

The person who is predominantly using violence in a family or intimate partner relationship is sometimes referred to as the ‘predominant aggressor’.

Misidentification occurs when someone is incorrectly labelled as a perpetrator or predominant aggressor.

This can happen when agencies:

- act on incorrect or incomplete information
- do not recognise their own assumptions, biases or prejudices
- fail to identify patterns of behaviour and risk.

For example:

- a perpetrator may undermine the victim or frame them as the aggressor
- a victim may use violence when acting in self-defence.

This means that systems set up to protect victim survivors can unintentionally cause further harm.



An essential part of protecting victim-survivors involves overcoming the practice of, and mitigating the impacts of, the misidentification of women who have experienced family violence as aggressors.

— *Djirra*

Aboriginal women are disproportionately misidentified as the predominant aggressor. This can have devastating impacts and worsen the violence and racism they are experiencing.

Through MARAM guidance and training, we are improving the skills agencies need to:

- prevent the misidentification of the person using family violence
- make sure steps are taken to correct records
- address the impact on victim survivors when misidentification occurs.

Regulating activities that contribute to family and sexual violence, including alcohol and gambling

Not all people who gamble or use alcohol are violent. However, alcohol and gambling can worsen the use of violence and its consequences.⁹

Evidence shows that greater access to alcohol increases the risks of family and sexual violence. This is concerning given the recent rapid growth in the online sale and delivery of alcohol.¹⁰ We will review alcohol laws and their impact on family violence victims. We will identify and share best practice and reforms across jurisdictions.

We will work to make sure venues that serve alcohol are safe for patrons and will train staff to identify and respond to behaviours that suggest harassment and family violence.

We will also introduce reforms to the regulation of electronic gambling machines. We will work with other jurisdictions to develop a national strategy to reduce online gambling harm.

We suggest a particular emphasis on environments, such as nightclubs, bars and sporting venues and clubs, that correlate with increased levels of domestic, family, and sexual violence.

— No To Violence





Building the skills and capability of relevant workforces

Since 2018, the MARAM Framework has been the common way to identify, assess and manage family violence risk across different sectors.

At the same time, we also changed laws to make it easier for different services and agencies to share information about risks of family violence (under the FVISS).

These changes have allowed services to:

- work with better information
- manage risk more effectively
- provide more joined-up support.

In some cases, services have had to make big changes to their culture and ways of working.

In this plan, we will embed these changes by continuing to develop this workforce's skills and knowledge, with MARAM guidance on:

- adults using family violence – to build capability and more effectively respond to people who use violence across the service system
- children and young people – child and young person MARAM practice guides (to be released in 2026) will help children and young people be recognised as victim survivors of family violence in their own right.

We will continue to help organisations align with MARAM and make family violence risk assessment and risk management part of everyday practice.

This next phase of work will focus on:

- clarifying, streamlining and consolidating our efforts
- improving how data is used to measure and track outcomes over time
- strengthening the impact of our work.

We will revise the *Responding to family violence capability framework* (Response Framework), so workers and organisations develop the skills needed to implement MARAM consistently.

The Response Framework will identify capabilities workers need to meet their responsibilities.

The Response Framework will also guide:

- Vocational Education and Training (VET) and university courses
- professional development activities
- workforce planning.

This will improve the way skills and training systems develop needed capabilities across all workforces related to family violence.

Keeping a dedicated focus on our specialist workforce

Our specialist workforce is vital to our efforts to end violence. These are people who:

- work across the community to prevent and respond to family and sexual violence
- make sure the system is responsive, coordinated and effective.

This workforce should be supported through:

- career pathways
- skills and capability building
- a focus on their health, safety and wellbeing.



Framing the future

Framing the future is the second rolling action plan under *Building from strength: 10-year industry plan for family violence prevention and response* (Industry Plan).

The Industry Plan and its action plans aim to create a strong specialist family violence and sexual assault sector.

Framing the future addresses workforce challenges and priorities across 4 focus areas:

- **Growing the workforce:** Attracting and recruiting skilled workers when and where they are needed.
- **Supporting strong organisations and workforce culture:** Making work in family violence and sexual assault services a career of choice. Workers are valued, culturally safe and supported in their roles and in finding new experiences throughout their careers.
- **Building capability:** Making sure workers across the service system understand how their roles support family violence and sexual assault prevention and response. Workers are given the skills and resources they need to perform these roles effectively.
- **Building a system that works together:** Making sure all workforces work together to prevent and respond to family violence and sexual assault.

Actions from *Framing the future* have been included in this plan.

We will monitor and review progress against our actions to end family and sexual violence in one place.

Since the start of the Royal Commission into Family Violence, the specialist family violence workforce has grown 5 times larger. In 2014, there were around 500 workers. In 2023, there were around 2,500.

We will keep working to make sure there are enough qualified workers to meet the demand for services and help employers address critical vacancies. We will make sure employers make workers' health, safety and wellbeing a priority.

Under this plan, we will work with education providers to create attractive career pathways into the family and sexual violence workforces. Courses need to stay current with best practice and prepare students for the practical realities of the work.

We are partnering with Federation University on a new Graduate Certificate of Social and Community Services program. In 2026 and 2027, 68 fully-funded places will be available – especially for Aboriginal workers and people living outside metropolitan Melbourne. The new qualification will:

- give workers better access to training
- help attract and retain a diverse and highly skilled family violence workforce that reflects communities across Victoria.

The Community and Social Services Graduate Program is a structured professional graduate program for community services. This pilot program started in 2024 to give new graduates opportunities to start their careers in community services, including family violence and sexual assault services. This program recognises that supporting someone effectively in their first year can set them up for a long and successful career and make it easier to build and retain skilled workers.

To attract workers who want to make a difference in the family and sexual violence sectors, we need organisations to offer a range of roles that are:

- satisfying
- well supported
- offer meaningful career progression.

Organisations also need to invest in:

- onboarding
- supervision
- learning and development opportunities
- looking after their workers' health, safety and wellbeing.

We are trialling innovative ideas to boost the number of skilled workers. One example is the Workforce Vacancies Demonstration Program. This program involves 4 lead organisations trialling ideas, such as:

- cross-agency secondment
- shared induction
- learning and development
- mentoring.

It is also looking to better support staff from diverse backgrounds and encourage students to do work experience in specialist services.

Through these changes, we will have a vibrant, skilled and supported workforce that is ready to meet the challenge of ending family and sexual violence.



Once people are part of the specialist family violence workforce, we want them to have job security and be able to see a future for their career in our sector.

— Safe and Equal

Community and Social Services Graduate Program – backing sector starters

Working in family and sexual violence is complex and difficult. New workers face unfamiliar challenges in an unfamiliar environment.

New workers need structured support to thrive. However, community services can find it difficult to give this support.

The Community and Social Services Graduate Program aims to recruit, develop and keep graduates in these important roles.

The program expands on the success of the Family Violence and Sexual Assault Graduate Program and helps build a strong and thriving workforce for the future.

The program is a partnership between:

- the Victorian Government
- community service organisations
- peak bodies.

Graduates get 12 months of:

- professional learning
- supervision
- peer networking across the 27 community services in the program.

Employers get:

- recruitment support
- access to learning activities for new starters
- funding contribution
- a dedicated Graduate Resource Centre.

Graduates involved in the program have enjoyed the program and its benefits:

- *I like that I have easy access to learning materials and training.*
- *It was nice to be in the same room as people! To meet people face-to-face helps cement the group dynamic and provide motivation for ongoing involvement.*



Improving the coordination of services, policies and programs for better support

We will promote consistency and collaboration across a broader range of services.

For example, Respect Victoria will introduce quality principles to help put in place quality and evidence informed primary prevention programs in different settings and sectors. This will lead to greater consistency in how programs are designed and implemented, so they can have the greatest effect possible.

We will encourage better integration across mental health and victim services. We will improve access and intake to mental health services for victim survivors.

We will build an understanding of the connections between:

- family violence
- sexual offending
- suicide.

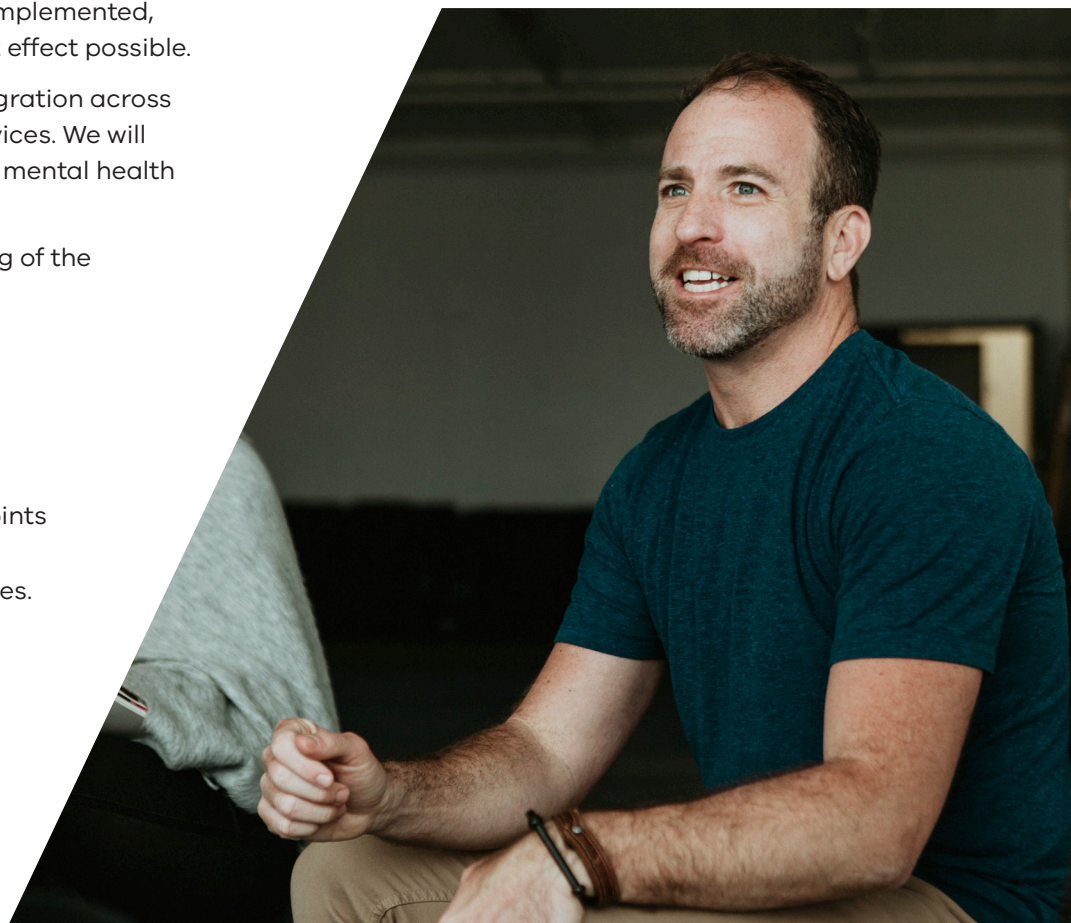
This will help:

- identify key intervention points
- improve referral pathways
- strengthen service responses.



Without sufficiently resourced, coordinated and evidence-based primary prevention activity, we cannot hope to achieve the level of cultural and behavioural change required to break the cycle of family violence...

— *Respect Victoria*



Improving how we measure our impact

We need to make sure that the changes we are making to end family and sexual violence are working. Every dollar we invest in addressing violence should make a difference.

We will keep building our understanding of what works to prevent violence and refine our strategies accordingly.

By consistently collecting data across the family violence and sexual assault systems, we can identify trends and track outcomes over time.

This includes developing a better understanding of:

- what happens as people progress through the system
- how effective broader programs and services are.

Data can help us make sure services are sustainable in the long term. We can use data to understand how much funding is needed to meet current and future demand.

We will link data we collect to the *Family Violence Outcomes Framework* so we can:

- track our collective impact
- be transparent
- make sure we meet our commitments
- contribute rigorous data to national efforts to measure progress to end violence.



The family violence sector has traditionally been valued by reference to the number of people who use a service, rather than the complexity of needs and the outcomes achieved. The focus on 'throughput' undermines the multifaceted, intersecting and diverse needs of people seeking help for family violence.

— Safe Steps Family Violence Response Centre

Our actions

Table 14: Area 4.1 – Ensuring the system is informed by lived experience

Number	Action	Lead agency
48	Ensure the design and implementation of family and sexual violence programs, policies and services is informed by engagement with a diverse range of people with lived experience of family and sexual violence, including the Victim Survivors' Advisory Council and other lived experience groups across Victoria.	DFFH
49	Embed the role of the Victim Survivors' Advisory Council and support the Council to engage with all portfolios responsible for family and sexual violence reform.	DFFH
50	Ensure that the newly-formed Senior Victorians Advisory Committee's work program includes a focus on elder abuse.	DFFH
51	Develop guidance on recruiting and supporting staff with lived experience in the family violence and sexual assault sectors.	DFFH
52	Elevate the voices of children and young people with lived experience through mechanisms such as the Ministerial Youth Advisory Group.	DFFH

Table 15: Area 4.2 – Continuing to strengthen family violence system and service accountability to Aboriginal people and communities

Number	Action	Lead agency
53	Strengthen accountability for non-Aboriginal family violence services to deliver culturally safe services to Aboriginal people by: • ensuring all workers understand what cultural safety is and how they contribute to it • recognising Aboriginal ways of working through policies, practices and training that promote and continually improve cultural safety • encouraging feedback from Aboriginal service users and having strong systems to act on that feedback • promoting the voluntary adoption of the <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety framework</i> by government-funded organisations that are not already bound to comply with it.	DFFH
54	Allocate at least 10% of new funding to ACCOs to support services for Aboriginal people.	DFFH
55	Work with Djirra to explore opportunities to enhance and expand their service delivery across regional Victoria, ensuring Aboriginal women who are experiencing or have experienced family violence can access culturally safe legal and support services closer to home.	DJCS

Table 16: Area 4.3 – Continuing to strengthen our focus on people who use violence

Number	Action	Lead agency
56	Improve personal safety intervention orders to improve responses to stalking and interpersonal violence. (Strengthening Women's Safety Package initiative)	DJCS
57	Improve Central Information Point technology to make it easier and faster for frontline workers to access information about family violence perpetrators. (Strengthening Women's Safety Package initiative)	DFFH
58	Continue to improve specialist family violence courts (SFVCs) by: • embedding consistent practice • finishing building upgrades at tranche 2 SFVCs to make them safer and more comfortable.	CSV
59	Change the law to strengthen family violence intervention orders (FVIOs) by: • introducing a presumed minimum duration for an order • making it easier to serve the order on a person • making it clear a FVIO continues to protect a person after they turn 18. (Strengthening Women's Safety Package initiative)	DJCS
60	Explore the development of a sustainable model for administration of family violence intervention order breaches in Koori Court.	CSV
61	Strengthen the ability of agencies to take actions to: • prevent misidentification of the person using family violence (predominant aggressor)¹¹ and correct records • address impacts of misidentification on victim survivors at the earliest opportunity to reduce systems abuse, drawing on emerging research, including research being undertaken by Djirra and the Centre for Innovative Justice.	DFFH and DJCS
62	Change the stalking offence, as informed by the Victorian Law Reform Commission's Stalking report. (Strengthening Women's Safety Package initiative)	DJCS
63	Seek advice from the Judicial College of Victoria and the Sentencing Advisory Council about guidance for magistrates on sentencing for FVIO breaches. (Strengthening Women's Safety Package initiative)	DJCS

Table 17: Area 4.4 – Examining the regulation of activities that contribute to family and sexual violence in the community, including alcohol and gambling

Number	Action	Lead agency
64	Introduce reforms to electronic gambling machines that reduce gambling harm.	DJCS
65	Work with the Australian Government and other state and territory governments to develop a national strategy to reduce harm from online gambling.	DJCS
66	Review on-demand delivery of alcohol to determine whether and how these services increase the risk or severity of violence.	DJCS
67	Expand the use of gender-based violence plans for licensed venues that serve alcohol.	DJCS
68	Include mandatory training to Victoria's Responsible Service of Alcohol to support staff to identify and respond to sexual assault and harassment in venues. (Strengthening Women's Safety Package initiative)	DJCS



Table 18: Area 4.5 – Continuing to grow the skills and capability of relevant workforces

Number	Action	Lead agency
69	Strengthen capability of The Orange Door workforces to assess and respond to child wellbeing, including through the development and implementation of an integrated assessment tool.	DFFH
70	Embed capability within the child protection and family services workforces to identify and address family violence risk for children and young people, and their families.	DFFH
71	Improve consistency in family violence risk assessment and increase information sharing between services by: • embedding MARAM • ensuring people are clear about their responsibilities to identify and act on risk.	Whole-of-Victorian Government (WoVG)
72	Promote and embed MARAM practice when working with adults using family violence across specialist and universal services to build capability and effectiveness in responding to people who use violence across the system.	WoVG
73	Build professionals' ability to identify, assess and manage family violence risk when working with children and young people using MARAM, with a particular emphasis on: • applying a child's rights approach to practice, which recognises children and young people as victim survivors in their own right • directly supporting children and young people to participate in their risk assessment and management processes • recognising and remedying cases where a young person has been misidentified or mislabelled by the service system as a respondent in family violence matters and provide a trauma informed and therapeutic response.	WoVG
74	Advocate to the Australian Government on how Australian Government services, including disability services and private mental health services, can align their risk assessment and management policies and practices with MARAM, ensuring people with disabilities and those accessing mental health services receive family violence responses earlier and are connected with Victoria's family violence service system.	DFFH
75	Develop a map of services and practice advice for Child Protection and The Orange Door for children and young people who have lost a parent or carer to family violence homicide, as part of the Children Bereaved by Family Violence Homicide project.	DFFH

Table 18: Area 4.5 – Continuing to grow the skills and capability of relevant workforces
continued

Number	Action	Lead agency
76	Explore options to support onboarding and work readiness for workers across service types, in consultation with sector stakeholders.	DFFH
77	Analyse current mechanisms for monitoring training quality and effectiveness and identify where new measures may be required to understand how professionals are embedding family violence capabilities in their work.	DFFH
78	Redevelop and implement the <i>Mandatory minimum qualifications policy</i> (MMQ policy) for specialist family violence practitioners, and work with the family violence sector and education providers to create more accessible and appropriate qualification pathways to family violence work, building off recommendations from the MMQ policy 2024 evaluation.	DFFH
79	Release and implement the revised <i>Responding to family violence capability framework</i> , working with peak bodies, government, education providers and industry representatives to: • explore options to embed family violence capabilities in pre-service qualifications for priority workforces • develop an online interactive platform for the capability frameworks.	DFFH
80	Develop a new capability framework for sexual assault services.	DFFH
81	Strengthen the coordination of workforce training and development activities across the prevention sector.	DFFH
82	Implement <i>Best practice education model</i> to guide registered training organisations on the knowledge, skills and experience required for their family violence trainers to deliver quality training.	DFFH
83	Work with the family violence and sexual assault sectors to identify the future workforce capabilities and capacity required to meet current and emerging trends.	DFFH
84	Retain workforces through the development and implementation of initiatives, such as best practice: • supervision • health, safety and wellbeing • leadership development.	DFFH
85	Scope initiatives that support organisations to embed culturally safe, inclusive and equitable workplace policies and practices.	DFFH

Table 19: Area 4.6 – Maintaining a dedicated focus on our specialist workforce

Number	Action	Lead agency
86	Support employers to recruit workers to address critical vacancies across family violence and sexual assault services.	DFFH
87	Explore opportunities to raise secondary school students' awareness of the education, training and employment pathways that can lead to a career in community services.	DFFH
88	Map the education, training and employment pathways for people to work in perpetrator services and identify and test options to attract new, appropriately-qualified workers.	DFFH
89	Implement the Family Violence Attraction and Recruitment activities including: • strategy work to link to Jobs That Matter campaign • review the Family Violence Jobs Portal • determine next steps.	DFFH
90	Develop guidance on recruiting and supporting staff with lived experience in the family violence and sexual assault sectors.	DFFH

Table 20: Area 4.7 – Improving coordination of services, policies and programs to provide better support

Number	Action	Lead agency
91	Establish a wellbeing promotion alliance to enable collaboration across services and promote wellbeing to support Victorians to thrive.	Department of Health (DH)
92	Work with government, philanthropic and community partners to develop a long-term wellbeing investment agenda to guide resourcing for wellbeing promotion and primary prevention.	DH
93	Establish an interdepartmental network for mental health and wellbeing promotion to better coordinate government's prevention activities in portfolios delivering improvements in wellbeing and preventing mental ill health.	DH
94	Implement <i>Safe from harm: Victoria Police strategy for family violence, sexual offences and child abuse 2024–2029</i> .	Victoria Police (VicPol)
95	Build an understanding of connections between family violence, sexual offending and suicide to identify key intervention points to support coordinated prevention and response efforts, including opportunities to strengthen referral pathways and service responses.	DH, DFFH and VicPol
96	Strengthen access and intake to mental health services for victim survivors of family and sexual violence to support therapeutic responses for victim survivors.	DH and DFFH
97	Strengthen collaboration between multicultural community organisations and specialist family and sexual violence services so that victim survivors or people using violence from multicultural communities can access culturally responsive, safe and tailored supports where and when they need them.	DFFH
98	Enhance connections between disability and family violence services and build the capability of the family and sexual violence system to provide inclusive, multifaceted support to people with disability through extension of the Family Violence Disability Practice Lead initiative.	DFFH
99	Pilot a cross-community services sector graduate program modelled on the Family Violence and Sexual Assault Graduate Program.	DFFH
100	Identify ways to increase workforce mobility between the family violence and sexual assault sectors, other non-government community services and government-delivered services.	DFFH
101	Introduce quality principles that encourage greater consistency and best practice approaches in primary prevention and program design.	Respect Victoria
102	Strengthen collaboration between universal services, The Orange Door, children and family services (including child protection) to increase families' engagement and connect them to supports more quickly.	DFFH

Table 21: Area 4.8 – Strengthening how we measure our impact

Number	Action	Lead agency
103	Strengthen measurement of outcomes within the family violence system, with a focus on: • improving measurement and monitoring of short- and medium term outcomes • trialling approaches to measure client outcomes • exploring the use of Victorian Government’s linked data repository to develop new ways of measuring and reporting outcomes in the <i>Family violence outcomes framework</i> • progressing a statewide monitoring, evaluation and learning system that will improve monitoring and evaluation of initiatives designed to prevent violence before it starts.	DFFH and Respect Victoria
104	Strengthen the integration and application of the <i>Family violence outcomes framework</i> across governance, decision making and monitoring processes.	DFFH
105	Strengthen governance and accountability arrangements for The Orange Door network based on opportunities for improvement identified in the 2024 review, including: • establishing a statewide partnership group • clarifying roles and responsibilities between strategic and operational level governance groups • enhancing the impact of Aboriginal governance • improving risk management approaches • supporting team and practice leaders in The Orange Door to develop their leadership skills.	DFFH
106	Develop a new regular collection of key workforce data, supported by periodic qualitative workforce surveys.	DFFH



Violence is an individual choice but a collective community responsibility. We all have a role to play in confronting, healing and preventing abuse from happening in the first place.

*— Victim Survivors' Advisory Council,
Strong Foundations*



Endnotes

1. Commonwealth of Australia, 2022, *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032*.
2. Our Watch, 2021, *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia (2nd ed.)*, Melbourne, Australia.
3. Our Watch, 2021, *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia (2nd ed.)*, Melbourne, Australia.
4. Our Watch, 2018, *Changing the picture: A national resource to support the prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children*, Melbourne, Australia.
5. Our Watch, 2021, *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia (2nd ed.)*, Melbourne, Australia.
6. Crime Statistics Agency, *In fact: Characteristics of men's violence against women and girls in police-recorded crime*, Number 13, September 2024.
7. Respect Victoria, 2023, *Willing, capable and confident: Supporting men to be active contributors to gender equality and the prevention of violence against women*, Respect Victoria, Melbourne, Australia; Our Watch, 2019, *Men in focus: unpacking masculinities and engaging men in the prevention of violence against women*, Our Watch, Melbourne, Australia.
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10. M Livingston, 'The ecology of domestic violence: the role of alcohol outlet density', *Geospatial Health*, 2010, 5(1):139-149; M Livingston, 'A longitudinal analysis of alcohol outlet density and domestic violence', *Addiction*, 2011, 106(5): 919-925; Y Mojica-Perez, S Callinan and M Livingston, 'Alcohol home delivery services: An investigation of use and risk', Centre for Alcohol Policy Research and Foundation for Alcohol Research & Education (FARE), 2019; Centre for Innovative Justice, Compulsion, convergence or crime? Criminal justice system contact as a form of gambling harm, RMIT University, 2017.
11. The predominant aggressor is the person who has used a pattern of coercive, controlling and violent behaviour over time. They are the person causing the greatest family violence harm to a partner or family member. Failure to identify the predominant aggressor may result in the misidentification of the victim survivor as the perpetrator.

Appendix: Image descriptions

Figure 1: Important achievements from our reforms

Infographic highlighting some important reform achievements.

Since 2019–2020, **14 specialist family violence courts** (SFVCs) gazetted by the Victorian Government.

- final in Wyndham 2025.

Since 2021–22, **over 180,000** people have participated in **primary prevention programs**.

Since 2018–2019, **19 Aboriginal community-controlled organisations** (ACCOs) were funded to offer **family violence and sexual assault services**, including:

- Aboriginal-designed sexual assault services
- healing programs
- responses for people using violence.

Since 2018, **The Orange Door** has responded to **over 590,000** people

- 40% were children and young people.

Since 2017–2018, **over 45,000** people engaged with **DFFH-funded interventions** for people who use violence.

Since 2017–2018, **over 25,000** children and young people took part in **family violence therapeutic interventions**.

Since 2017, **over 2,000** Victorian schools took part in the **Respectful Relationships program**.

Figure 2: The plan's guiding principles

A ring with 4 quadrants representing each focus area.

Lived experience

People with lived experience of violence have unique expertise to bring to our ongoing efforts to end family and sexual violence. They know the difficulties that come with escaping violence:

- having a safe place to live
- getting intervention orders
- making sure there is enough money for the essentials.

They understand the road to lasting safety and healing can be long.

Intersectionality

We know that every person's experience of violence is different. It can be affected by a range of factors including:

- age
- gender
- sexuality
- ability
- faith
- language group
- often a combination of these factors.

Sometimes, a person's circumstances can make them particularly marginalised and vulnerable to violence, such as people who have been in prison, or who are on temporary visas.

Aboriginal self-determination

We are committed to Aboriginal self-determination and to supporting Truth and Treaty. Self determination recognises the leadership of Aboriginal people in ending family violence in their communities.

It promotes community involvement and ownership. It acknowledges Aboriginal people have the best understanding of their community's need and priorities.

Accountability

Holding adults who use violence accountable is critical to stopping violence. This principle also reflects the accountability that each person holds in addressing family and sexual violence.

Family and friends, communities, community services, government and the private sector all have a role to play in ending family and sexual violence.

Figure 3: Our focus areas

This image describes the plan's 4 focus areas.

Person

Each person's experience or use of violence is unique and needs a tailored approach. This includes considering things such as:

- age
- sexuality and gender identity
- ability
- cultural background
- where they live.

It may also include past and intergenerational experiences of trauma and colonisation.

A whole-of-person approach ensures that the needs, circumstances and experiences of each person are understood and addressed.

Family

When we talk about families, we mean all types of families, chosen families and kinship networks.

A whole of family approach goes beyond focusing on individual needs.

It emphasises the different needs and connections between family members.

By taking this approach, we benefit from the leadership of Aboriginal services, which go beyond individual needs to working with people in their broader family and cultural context.

Community

Violence does not occur in a vacuum. It is influenced by values and attitudes held by everyday people.

Every Victorian has the power and responsibility to challenge underlying values and behaviours that lead to family and sexual violence. We need to activate every part of the community in our efforts to prevent violence. To do this, we need to connect with people in practical ways and reach them where they live, learn, work and play.

System

Government has an important role in ensuring every part of the system works to help end family and sexual violence. When we talk about a 'system' we mean the people, laws, policies, services, technologies and processes that work together to prevent and respond to family and sexual violence.

It recognises how everything is linked – if one part of the system isn't working well, it can affect how things work across the state.

