



Magistrates' Court of Victoria

Family Violence Taskforce

Recommendations to the Royal Commission into Family Violence

The Magistrates' Court Family Violence Taskforce was established in November 2014 with the sole purpose of forming a high-level leadership group to discuss issues relating to Family Violence in Victoria, and to undertake a scan of government and community resources that presently support the victims and perpetrators of Family Violence and formulate views to enhance or improve those resources.

The members of the Taskforce are committed to the elimination of family violence in Victoria. Whilst each organisation will contribute to the work of the Royal Commission in its individual capacity, the Taskforce has been working to reach a consensus on relevant issues where possible. This work is ongoing. It is proposed that there will be further engagement with the Royal Commission as this work progresses. However, given the time limits on submissions to the Royal Commission, the Taskforce determined to inform the Commission as to the agreement which has been achieved by Taskforce members to date.

We, the undersigned organisations, share the collective view that a better response to family violence is one where:

1. Legal and non-legal responses are integrated, monitored, and accountable to those impacted by family violence.
2. Shared understandings and practices include prioritising victim safety (including risk assessment and management), perpetrator accountability and family violence prevention.
3. A governance framework is established to coordinate a State-wide integrated family violence response, including permanent cross-ministerial governance and accountability, sustained partnership between Government, legal and community sectors, and shared understandings and practices across the family violence system.
4. Funding is available to adequately and securely resource each component of the system, including courts, police, family violence services and legal assistance services.
5. Judicial officers, court staff, legal representatives, police and non-legal family violence support workers are provided with ongoing training and professional development to foster expertise and specialisation in family violence and sexual assault, including knowledge and experience of family law. This includes training on identifying family violence risk factors and responding appropriately.
6. The court process is:
 - accessible to victims who need a justice intervention in response to safety concerns and identified risk factors;
 - a supportive environment that reduces risk to victims and perpetrators and their families through the effective management of court matters;
 - conducive to limiting victim and perpetrator interaction; and
 - Underpinned by the availability of services to promote victim safety and perpetrator accountability including the ability to order participation in behaviour change programs where appropriate.
7. The Family Violence Court Division is expanded State-wide so that victims and perpetrators in family violence matters are always treated within a specialist framework,

and they have access to legal and all necessary non-legal support services, regardless of geographic location.

8. Effective, safe and appropriate mechanisms are established for information to be shared between agencies and relevant jurisdictions, particularly in relation to risk, to ensure timely interventions are made and to reduce system trauma for victims.
9. Services provided in response to family violence are integrated and organisations co-located where appropriate, informed by best practice evidence.
10. Organisations within the family violence system are coordinated in their response to risk.
11. Behaviour change programs for people who use violence are available to promote long term safety for victims of family violence and that these programs are informed by research and adopt minimum standards.
12. The Victorian Systemic Review of Family Violence Deaths is statutorily established on best practice principles, adequately and securely funded, and fully integrated into the family violence governance framework, including risk assessment.

Signed:

Date: 4 June 2015



Magistrates' Court of Victoria



VICTORIAN BAR



LAW INSTITUTE VICTORIA



Victoria Legal Aid



Peak body for domestic violence services for women & children



No To Violence
Male Family Violence Prevention Association

Family Law Bar Association



County Court VICTORIA



VICTORIA POLICE

Womenwithdisabilitiesvictoria
empowering women

women's legal service victoria



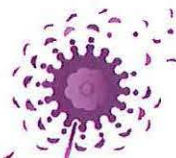
Federation of Community Legal Centres VICTORIA



Criminal Bar Association



Court Network



DVRCV
Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria