

## Family Violence Service Reform Strategy Priority Initiatives 2015–16

### Foreword

The World Health Organisation has described the issue of violence against women as being a global public health problem of epidemic proportions.

In Australia, one woman is killed every week by their current or former partners.

The impact of such violence is profound. It affects the whole community and will continue to destroy lives for generations to come unless we consistently and proactively enforce the message that family violence is unacceptable.

At Corrections Victoria, we have a unique opportunity to help reduce family violence incidents across the state.

Our *Family Violence Policy Framework* describes our vision for addressing the issue of family violence across the correctional system. It also sets out the underlying principles and objectives that will guide our approach to service delivery. We are also mindful of the work of the Royal Commission into Family Violence and will review this strategy in line with the recommendations.

In 2015-16, we will introduce a number of specific initiatives across the correctional system aimed at addressing the issue of family violence. These initiatives, which are detailed further in our *Family Violence Service Reform Strategy*, will form the first stage of our family violence reforms.

It is an ambitious strategy but in order to achieve our vision of helping to reduce the family violence related incidents that are affecting our community, we must take bold and decisive action immediately.

I commend this strategy to you and encourage you to take a stand against family violence.

**Jan Shuard PSM**  
Commissioner

### Quick facts

- Family violence is the leading cause of death and disability in Australian women under 45.
- Seventy five per cent of all assaults against women happen at home.
- An estimated 17 per cent of women in Australia have experienced violence by a partner.
- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander women are 31 times more likely to be hospitalised due to family violence, while women with a disability are more likely to experience family violence and for longer periods.

### Driving change: The Family Violence Service Reform Strategy

The prevalence of family violence is increasing in Victoria, with the number of family incidents reported to Victoria Police increasing by 83 per cent in the four years to 2013-14.

Corrections Victoria has a unique ability to create long term positive change across the correctional system through the way it works with, and supports, both perpetrators and victims of family violence.

The *Family Violence Policy Framework* explains Corrections Victoria's commitment to reducing family violence incidents, while the *Family Violence Service Reform Strategy* details the practical ways in which the issue of family violence will be addressed across the system during 2015-16.

# Vision

Perpetrators are held to account

Identify Perpetrators

Deliver Targeted Programs

Victims of family violence are supported

Support Victims

Stopping family violence is a shared responsibility

Culture Change

Work with other systems

In 2015-16, we want to...	So that we can...	We will achieve this by...
Improve the way we identify perpetrators of family violence	Develop a more accurate picture of the prevalence of family violence offending amongst prisoners and offenders	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using a consistent definition to identify which prisoners and offenders are perpetrators of family violence</li> <li>Flagging family violence perpetrators in the Corrections Victoria Intervention Management System</li> <li>Manually accessing intervention order information for all prisoners and offenders</li> <li>Implementing an electronic system that transfers family violence information from Victoria Police to Corrections Victoria</li> </ol>
Deliver targeted family violence programs and services to perpetrators	<p>Fast track access to family violence interventions</p> <p>Provide options to individuals who have not been eligible for treatment in the past</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementing a new family violence service delivery model and treatment pathway for prisoners and offenders</li> <li>Expanding cultural wrap around services to better support Aboriginal perpetrators of family violence who engage in mainstream treatment programs</li> <li>Implementing an Aboriginal specific family violence program</li> <li>Reviewing existing parenting programs in male prisons to include a family violence component</li> </ol>
Support prisoners and offenders who are victims of family violence	<p>Reduce their likelihood of experiencing further harm</p> <p>Better respond to the individual needs of victims</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing a new women's policy to guide future program and service delivery across the women's correctional system</li> <li>Piloting a family support program in prisons and CCS that aims to build family connectedness</li> <li>Raising awareness about the impact of family violence on prisoners by expanding family violence training to custodial staff</li> <li>Enhancing existing linkages with Victim Assistance Program providers to streamline the referral process for family violence victims in the community</li> <li>Increasing support for Aboriginal victims of family violence who are in prison</li> <li>Reviewing all CCS and prison based programs delivered to women with a view to including family violence components</li> <li>Developing culturally specific family violence awareness programs</li> </ol>
Create an environment for cultural change	Challenge family violence related behaviours and reiterate the message that they will not be tolerated	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surveying prisoners to gauge their attitudes towards family violence and using the results to inform the development of future campaigns and actions</li> <li>Encouraging peer involvement from prisoners to promote cultural change and take a stand against family violence</li> <li>Delivering family violence education and awareness campaigns to prisoners and offenders</li> <li>Delivering family violence training, information, education and awareness campaigns to Corrections Victoria staff</li> <li>Promoting regional family violence initiatives</li> </ol>
Work with other service systems	<p>Work towards providing a coordinated, collaborative and integrated response across the correctional system that is informed by the most accurate information available</p> <p>Share information effectively with other agencies to provide a more effective response to both victims and perpetrators of family violence</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving IT capacity and continuing to work towards having a fully integrated system that supports the effective transfer of family violence information</li> <li>Continuing to facilitate information exchange and building support structures for high-risk family violence victims through the Risk Assessment and Management Panels</li> <li>Building stronger linkages and information sharing capacity with the family violence divisions of the Magistrates' Courts</li> <li>Working with other agencies to implement the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Family Violence</li> </ol>

## Everyone benefits

The initiatives described in the *Family Violence Service Reform Strategy* have the capacity to benefit everyone.

While perpetrators of family violence will be held to account for their actions, they will also be given the opportunity to learn more about the impacts and consequences of family violence so they can change their behaviour. They will be supported to make positive behavioural changes and will consistently be exposed to role models who will challenge their attitudes and beliefs and reinforce the message that family violence is unacceptable.

Victims, or those at risk, of family violence will be encouraged to address the impacts of family violence and empowered to rebuild their lives through the provision of individualised support. They will also be offered assistance to link them with meaningful support structures in the community.

Corrections Victoria staff will have access to specific family violence training that will help them to better understand what constitutes family violence, how to proactively challenge inappropriate attitudes and behaviours and how to support victims in a way that will reduce any chance of further harm or trauma.

Delivering initiatives aimed at breaking the cycle of family violence offending will, in turn, improve community safety for all Victorians.

## Next steps

Corrections Victoria will continue to work with other agencies to address the issue of family violence and will review its current strategy after the Royal Commission into Family Violence hands down its recommendations in February 2016. The purpose of the review will be to ensure that Corrections Victoria's approach is consistent with the whole-of-government response and is aligned with best practice.

## For more information

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