

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Centre for Innovative Justice, RMIT

The CHAIR: Elena, if you want to come back to the Committee on anything specific where you think MARAM can more accurately collect data on dynamic risk, whether MARAM is fit for purpose for research and analysis purposes or any other recommendations that you have around the improvement of MARAM, that would be greatly appreciated.

I can confirm from our ongoing research program that ongoing dynamic risk assessments are still not being captured in MARAM risk assessments, particularly related to children and young people. This results in an underestimation and lack of recording of risk. What practitioners are telling us in our research (and what we have heard in previous research) is that, rather than any changes to the MARAM per se, the priority should first be a considerable MARAM capability uplift. What we've heard is that assumptions are being made that certain workforces have MARAM capability – those wider services, such as mental health, alcohol and other drug, homelessness and youth services, - whereas the reality is that they still don't feel confident at all. Practitioners tell us that this is in part a direct result of COVID, where training was offered during this time, but practitioners didn't have the capacity to engage at all, given that the entire system and way of working was in crisis. Once this has occurred it may be that the next step is a streamlining of the MARAM tools to identify which are the most important criteria to record in order to capture dynamic risk.

Annabelle CLEELAND: I have got to pass it along, but I just want to ask about different touchpoints for children, in particular around health services, police and schools. A local issue at one of my schools was parental consent to leave the grounds to see a specialist. Do you have any comments about that? So they have actually—it is amazing, quite groundbreaking—brought the service to the school to prevent the parental intervention if they are potentially a perpetrator or there is a culture of protection in the family. Schools to me sound like a phenomenal access point and support base for students, but there is also a barrier with parental oversight, so have you got any comment on that?

The other thing I just want to mention as well—sorry, before I pass this on—is you have mentioned so many research points that you have been part of in the last decade. If there is anything you can contribute to the Secretariat for us from that research, that would be excellent. If there are recommendations that are lingering, we would love you to take that on notice if possible.

Here I note that all of the reports referred to in our [submission](#) are actually provided through links in the submission, including the PIPA report. That said, recommendations from the PIPA report are particularly important because they go to the way in which the legal process is actually driving young people into contact with the legal process and subsequently driving them into criminalisation. This is because the Family Violence Protection Act does not currently require an assessment of whether a respondent to a Family Violence Intervention Order is capable of understanding or complying with any order and nor does it require an assessment of the safety of the environment in which a young person is placed if they are removed from the home. For this reason and other reasons I think that the Family Violence Protection Act should be reviewed with consideration of inadvertent consequences in mind.