

Parliamentary Inquiry into Capturing Data on Family Violence Perpetrators in Victoria

Question 1 – The Chair: The full set of data linked by CVDL across the family violence sector

Summary of family violence related datasets linked by CVDL

Dataset	Source	Description
LEAP database	Victoria Police	Family violence incidents reported to Victoria Police
Adult corrections data	DJCS	Information on prisoners and community correction services
Integrated Reports and Information System (IRIS)	DFFH	IRIS – Family Violence Support Services Data Collection (includes service provider data relating to Male Behaviour Change programs and perpetrator case management) IRIS – Sexual Assault Support Services Data Collection
Homelessness Data Collection (HDC)	DFFH	Perpetrator case management for people who use family violence. Also homelessness services accessed by persons using family violence.
The Orange Door	DFFH – Family Safety Victoria	Assessment and brief intervention service for children and young people and adults who are experiencing or using family violence
Child Protection	DFFH	Child Protection reports and cases
Victorian Alcohol and Drug Collection (VADC)	DH	The VADC mandates collection of data identifying individuals experiencing family violence and using family violence.
Victorian Emergency Minimum Dataset (VEMD)	DH	Includes data relating to human intent including family violence observations
Tools for Risk and Assessment Management (TRAM)	DFFH – Family Safety Victoria	Data collected by the Orange Door network and TRAM agencies to identify, assess and manage family violence risk. Includes information about persons using family violence and the relationship between victim survivors and perpetrators.

Question 2 – The chair: How have the four data linkage requests mentioned in the introduction contributed towards different policy settings or improved policy?

Project	Agency	Outcome
Evaluation of Men’s Behaviour Change Programs	Department of Justice and Community Safety and University of Melbourne	An evaluation of programs which Vic Gov funds to create long -term behaviour change in male family violence perpetrators in Victoria. The project includes quantitative analysis using linked data as well as participant and family interviews. Linked VSIIDR data will be used to analyse participant characteristics and outcomes. This is a recent project which has not yet produced outputs.
Family Violence Outcomes Framework analytics	Family Safety Victoria	<p>VSIIDR Project commenced in 2022 by Family Safety Victoria to explore the use of linked data for Family Violence Outcomes reporting. The exploratory project has led to improved understanding of family violence outcomes using linked data, as well as the quality of existing data for such reporting. It provides a list of suggested outcome indicators and measures for implementation. Indicators relate to perpetrators use Victoria Police Data collected through the justice system.</p> <p>Since the Orange Door (TOD) data was not available for linkage when the project commenced, FSV is planning a follow-up project to test the implementation of measures proposed by the project, taking TOD data into account. Measures tested may be included in regular reporting. This may lead to better monitoring of perpetrator outcomes for policy making purpose.</p>
Child Victims: Providing protection from re-victimisation and future offending	Swinburne University	Research project aimed at improving understanding of the impact of child abuse, neglect and exposure to domestic violence on young people’s future experiences of re-victimisation and offending. This project commenced in June 2022 and CVDL provided the linked data in May 2023. No outputs are yet available for this project.
The Nature and Frequency of Health	Swinburne University	Research into the health service burden of victims and perpetrators of family violence

Contacts in Victims and Perpetrators of Family Violence		which commenced in late 2018 with data provided in February 2022. This project includes linkage of multiple Victorian datasets (including Victoria Police data) with MBS and PBS data (undertaken by the AIHW). It has involved substantial delays due to the complex data flows and governance.
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Question 3 – Annabelle Cleeland: What is the shortest timeframe you have been able to provide research data? For these 4 project requests, what is the shortest timeframe? And maybe an average while you are looking at it – average timeframe.

Data was provisioned for the two Victorian Government VSIIIDR projects within 3 months of the VSIIIDR Governing Council approving the projects.

With the first research project relating to Child Victims, CVDL provisioned the linked data about 11 months after registration of the project, and with the second research project related to Health Contacts, approximately 3.5 years after registration of the project.

The timeframe for the Health Contacts project is unusually long and included lengthy time periods waiting for approval by Victorian and Commonwealth data custodian. While we calculated the average timeframe for these four projects as around 15 months, this average is distorted by the highly unusually long time frame for the Health Contacts project.

Question 4. Chris Couzens: You talked about Victoria being the leading jurisdiction in this area. Is there anywhere else you are aware of around the world that is even better in the family violence and perpetrators area that could be considered?

When the Centre for Victorian Data Linkage was established in 2009, the focus for CVDL’s linkage was almost exclusively on health dataset. This changed in 2016 with the first version of the Integrated Data Resource, which added human services data along with births and deaths data. CVDL now routinely links a broad range of data across health, human services, education, justice and police. This includes the datasets listed under Question 1.

In comparing CVDL with other data linkage agencies in Australia and overseas, we looked at the number and type of family violence-related datasets linked, and whether they are linked on a regular/enduring basis, or only for project specific requests.

Many other linkage agencies in Australia and internationally continue to focus primarily on health datasets, and the linked data therefore does not include the necessary datasets for research into family violence perpetrators. Some states, including NSW and WA, have produced linked data assets including broader datasets including justice, child protection and police data, but do not contain data relating specifically to provision of family violence services comparable to IRIS, The Orange Door and TRAM.

New Zealand has a very comprehensive linked data asset, the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) which is developed and maintained by Statistics New Zealand. This includes a very broad range of data across health, education, justice, social services and benefits, population, income and employment and housing. Inclusion of this broad range of data is facilitated by all key datasets being held in a single jurisdiction, compared with Australia’s federated model.

However, the IDI includes limited information regarding family violence programs, and information on the Statistics New Zealand website indicates that the small number of projects on perpetrators using the IDI have primarily focused on offending.

Scandinavian countries have personal identity numbers which facilitate linkage between datasets. However, the only perpetrator research we were able to locate was undertaken using a questionnaire rather than linked data.

Review of family violence linkage projects undertaken in the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States identified a small number of research projects related to perpetrators. However, the data linkage undertaken appeared to be specific to that project, rather than involving the routine linkage of multiple relevant datasets.

In summary, we have been unable to find any interstate or overseas linkage agencies with a broader range of family violence data than that linked routinely by CVDL. We have also been unable to find many overseas research studies which relating to perpetrators which use linked data. It is possible that some interstate and overseas governments have undertaken linked data analysis relating to researchers which has not been published and is therefore not visible to us.