

# TRANSCRIPT

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY LEGAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

### **Inquiry into capturing data on family violence perpetrators in Victoria**

Melbourne—Monday 19 August 2024

#### **MEMBERS**

Ella George – Chair

Annabelle Cleeland – Deputy Chair

Chris Couzens

Chris Crewther

Cindy McLeish

Meng Heang Tak

Jackson Taylor

#### **WITNESSES**

Amber Griffiths, Executive Director, Family and Sexual Violence Programs,

Wayne Freeman, Director, Aboriginal Initiatives, and

Jane Hingston, Director, Perpetrator Programs and System Performance, Family Safety  
Victoria, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing.

**The CHAIR:** Good afternoon. My name is Ella George, and I am the Chair of the Legislative Assembly Legal and Social Issues Committee. We will now resume public hearings for the Committee's Inquiry into capturing data on family violence perpetrators in Victoria.

I begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we are meeting, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people of the Kulin nation, and I pay my respects to their elders past, present and future and extend that respect to First Nations people across Victoria.

I am joined today by my colleagues Jackson Taylor, the Member for Bayswater; Christine Couzens, the Member for Geelong; and online via Zoom Chris Crewther, the Member for Mornington.

The Committee recognises that evidence to this inquiry may be distressing, and we urge people to reach out for support. You can contact Lifeline on 13 11 14, 1800RESPECT or the Blue Knot helpline on 1300 657 380.

All evidence given today is being recorded by Hansard and broadcast live. While all evidence taken by the Committee is protected by parliamentary privilege, comments repeated outside this hearing may not be protected by this privilege.

Witnesses will be provided with a proof version of today's transcript to check, together with any questions taken on notice. Verified transcripts, responses to questions taken on notice and other documents provided during the hearing will be published on the Committee's website.

I am now pleased to welcome from Family Safety Victoria in the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing Jane Hingston, Director, Perpetrator Programs and System Performance; Amber Griffiths, Executive Director, Family and Sexual Violence Programs; and Wayne Freeman, Director, Aboriginal Initiatives. Thank you very much for joining us today. I invite you to make an opening statement of 5 to 10 minutes, and this will be followed by questions from members. Thank you.

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** Thank you for the opportunity to speak with the Committee today. I would also like to start by acknowledging the traditional owners of the lands we are meeting on today and pay my respects to all elders past and present and Aboriginal people joining us today.

I would also like to acknowledge victim-survivors of family violence, particularly those who have lost their lives to this violence, for whom we are doing this work and who we keep at the front of our minds as we do so.

I am Amber Griffiths. I am the Executive Director of Family and Sexual Violence Programs at Family Safety Victoria. I will just ask my colleagues to introduce themselves.

**Jane HINGSTON:** Thanks, Amber. I am Jane Hingston, Director of Perpetrator Programs and System Performance.

**Wayne FREEMAN:** I am Wayne Freeman. I am the Director of the Aboriginal Initiatives units, and I am a proud Gunnai man from Gippsland.

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** As you know, we are here today on behalf of Family Safety Victoria, or FSV, a division of the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. FSV was established in July 2017, and we have responsibility for the development, delivery and oversight of family violence programs, services and policy. FSV has had a key role in delivering and then meeting several royal commission recommendations, including recommendations aimed at keeping people who use violence in view and accountable for their use of family violence.

In line with principles of self-determination, Aboriginal-led family violence services are a vital component of the work that we do. The Dhelk Dja partnership agreement, which was released in October 2018 and is a 10-year agreement, is a world-leading agreement between Victorian Aboriginal communities, Aboriginal organisations and the Victorian Government. Its implementation is governed by the Dhelk Dja partnership forum. Eleven regional Dhelk Dja action groups set local priorities in line with the partnership agreement and its three-year action plans.

FSV is also responsible for operating the Orange Door, a free, accessible intake assessment and brief intervention service for people experiencing family violence, people using family violence and families who need support with the care and wellbeing of their children. The Orange Door receives referrals from Victoria Police as well as other professionals and services and self-referrals from individuals. The Orange Door plays a really crucial role in engaging with, assessing and responding to people using family violence to support them to access interventions that will help them to change their behaviour.

FSV also leads work on the Victorian family violence multi-agency risk assessment and management framework, or MARAM. MARAM is a legislated framework that sets out the responsibilities of different prescribed workforces in identifying, assessing and managing the risk of family violence. MARAM is embedded in the *Family Violence Protection Act*, and the Act prescribes organisations to ensure that their relevant policies, procedures, practice, guidance and tools align with MARAM. At the moment over 6000 organisations, including workforces across the education, health, justice, police and human services sectors, are required to align with MARAM.

MARAM helps professionals to better understand family violence dynamics and the impacts and to identify perpetrator behaviours and tactics and collaborate to accurately identify the perpetrator or predominant aggressor. The practice guidance reflects published research and evidence, program evaluations, practice standards, sector practice wisdom and coroners reports. Coroners reports are continuously reviewed to ensure that any evidence arising out of family violence related homicides is being reflected in the risk factors in the MARAM materials. FSV is currently in the process of developing MARAM practice guidance on identifying, assessing and managing family violence risk when working directly with children and young people, both as victim-survivors of family violence in their own right and young people who are using family violence, and this will include young people using family violence in the home and in intimate partner, dating or casual relationships.

MARAM also guides information sharing under the family violence information-sharing scheme, or the FVISS, so information relevant to the risk posed by a person using family violence can be shared between authorised services and organisations under the FVISS. This includes the pattern of behaviour, the needs, the circumstances and the characteristics of the person using violence to help identify seriousness or any change or escalation of the risk profile. In addition, the FVISS enables information about perpetrators to be shared directly with victim-survivors where the information can assist them to manage a risk to their safety.

We know that you have heard a lot already about the central information point, or the CIP, but the CIP was established in 2018 and compiles the information about perpetrators to help build an understanding of their patterns of behaviour and the risk that they pose. The information from Victoria Police, the Magistrates' Court, Corrections Victoria and child protection is compiled into a single report that supports frontline practitioners in assessing and managing risk for victim-survivors. This enables practitioners to accelerate responses to support the safety of victim-survivors, including children and young people. We will talk in more detail about the CIP in the questions, no doubt, but the CIP operating model comprises a technology platform and an operational workforce. While the CIP technology platform is integrated with the systems and databases of the partner agencies, manual intervention is still required to ensure the information sharing complies with legislation and policy. The current operational workforce of the CIP is 66.8 full-time equivalent staff across FSV and the partner agencies.

FSV is also responsible for developing and overseeing a range of services and programs for people using family violence as part of a system-wide response to people using violence. I will not talk about those in detail; we have outlined those in our submission, but all the programs funded by FSV are voluntary and delivered in the community and they sit alongside interventions delivered by police, courts and other criminal justice responses.

Separately, we also fund programs supporting young people who use violence in the home, but we do conceptualise these quite differently to what we would call our suite of perpetrator programs. They are a really therapeutic approach including tailored support for Aboriginal young people and their families, and they take into account the developmental age, stage and often a young person's own experience of family violence.

I would now like to just give you a very quick overview on how the profile and volume of people using violence is collected and used. I am aware I am using a lot of my time, so I will move quite quickly through

this. The person using family violence MARAM comprehensive risk assessment, which is a very lengthy title for the document, is built within an online platform called tools for risk assessment and management, commonly referred to as TRAM. TRAM is used by the Orange Door and other community-based agencies and collects data on demographics, evidence-based family violence risk factors, presentations of family violence and characteristics associated with serious risk. The risk assessment and management data in TRAM is collected for the purposes of better understanding presentations of family violence risk and systemic practice issues, and this data has recently been approved to be added to the Victorian social investment integrated data resource, or VSIIDR, the linked dataset that we know you heard about this morning. A feasibility study has been completed and work is currently underway to provide this data for inclusion in linked datasets. We also collect and use data relating to programs and services as part of policy, program management, funding and service delivery functions. This is largely administrative data, and there are some gaps within the data. It largely sits within the databases that services use, including IRIS and the specialist homelessness information platform.

We also collect other data from service providers, including summary data from No to Violence on call volumes to men's referral services and waitlist data for our programs. IRIS and SHIP are not exclusively used for family violence services, and they are not our platforms. They are legacy systems that we are a bit limited in the use of. But IRIS and SHIP data, as well as data through the client relationship management system from the Orange Door are also available through the VSIIDR linked dataset. The addition of TRAM data will provide a significantly more comprehensive picture to help us understand the characteristics of adults using family violence, through that linked dataset.

We are also working with the Crime Statistics Agency to include Orange Door data in the family violence data portal as of December this year. We are really working hard to increase access to data from the Orange Door client relationship management system. With the final Orange Door opening in late 2022, we now have over a full year of operational data, and we are working to provide greater access through the Orange Door sector report, which will be an interactive and flexible portal providing access to key data points from intake through to referral. We are currently working to provide access imminently to Orange Door sector partners and other key stakeholders and will then roll that out progressively over other tranches.

I am probably out of time for this statement, but I did just want to touch on work that we are doing with the Dhelk Dja partnership forum to increase access to meaningful data for Aboriginal committees to help them to make decisions about how they spend their time and direct their attention. Finally, in May 2024, as part of the strengthening women's safety package, the Premier announced a landmark perpetrator study to explore the latest evidence on behaviours and drivers of men who use violence. We are in the early stages of scoping that study to make sure that it complements work underway and addresses some of the gaps in our knowledge and informs future improvements to services. We have identified some opportunities for improvement, but I think we will leave it there for the opening statement. We can talk you further through those through questions.

**The CHAIR:** Great. Thank you, Amber. Let us make sure we do not forget those opportunities for improvement, because I think the Committee would love to hear them. We might get started with some specific questions. The first questions I have are just in regard to a perpetration strategy. Has the Victorian Government considered developing a Victorian perpetration strategy, and if so, which Victorian Government department would be best placed to lead and report on this?

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** Since the royal commission reported and since Family Safety Victoria's establishment we have been guided by *Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change*, which is the 10-year plan that was developed in response to the royal commission. That has always had a focus on perpetrators and behaviour change interventions. We are currently in the process of developing the third and final rolling action plan for that plan, and people who use violence will continue to be a focus of that. We have not traditionally had a separate strategy specifically for perpetrators. It is also fair to say that our response to people using violence is really evolving, but the large focus of some of those earlier rolling action plans has been on getting in place those really big system reforms—the Orange Door, the CIP, the information-sharing scheme, the MARAM—and really strengthening crisis support and ongoing support for recovery and healing for victim-survivors. We have made improvements to responses for people using violence over that time, but we really are still evolving that and really keen to continue to evolve that and have a significant focus on that going forward. I think it is probably difficult to answer the question about which department would be best placed to lead a specific perpetrator strategy, because it really is a joint responsibility over many different government departments. There are so many parts of government that have a role to play and need to work really

collaboratively to have the joined-up kind of system that supports the web of accountability that the royal commission talked about.

**The CHAIR:** The rolling action plans really focus on current and ongoing and near-future work. Is there any thought being given to some longer-term work or a longer term strategy that focuses on perpetration of family violence?

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** At the moment our focus has really been on that next three-year rolling action plan.

**The CHAIR:** Okay. How could a Victorian perpetrator study prioritise research on the profile and volume of people who use family violence?

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** As I said, we are in the early stages of scoping that question. One of the things that we are somewhat limited by is that—as you have heard from other people who have appeared in front of this Committee, I know—we only know what we know, and we only have data on the perpetrators who have had touchpoints with the system in some way. So we can try to scope the study to look at perhaps where there are opportunities for greater identification that we are missing, how we can build on work that we have already done across various workforces to really think about where those touchpoints are that we know people are coming into contact with and perhaps where there are greater opportunities for earlier identification that would lead to earlier intervention. Subject obviously to ethics considerations, there may be opportunities to do some structured interviews with people who use violence to try and understand a bit more about drivers for individuals.

**The CHAIR:** Perpetrators and people using violence is a priority of the family violence research agenda. Is there any research being undertaken directly underneath this priority at the moment?

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** Yes, there is. I am referring to my notes. We have three projects that were funded under the first phase of the initiative. One is on interventions for young men and boys using intimate partner violence in earlier relationships, which is currently in progress. It is being led by Western Sydney University. Monash University just recently delivered, in the last couple of weeks, a study on building the evidence base on perpetrator program attrition and participant engagement strategies, which really looked at points of attrition and spoke directly to participants in men's behaviour change programs to understand what the points of attrition were and what the motivating factors to stay engaged were. It was quite a small-scale study, but it has some really useful insights for us. And also quite recently there was a study by La Trobe University on early identification, recognition and referral of gay, bisexual, trans and queer men who perpetrate violence.

Under the second stage of the family violence research project there is a project by the University of Melbourne on determining outcomes and what works for multicultural communities. This was in a coordinated approach to family violence but is not specifically about people using violence, but it touches on a whole response.

**The CHAIR:** Are you able to give us a sense, across the different research priorities, how much is weighted towards the priority around people using violence?

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** The research program, as I understand it, had funding up until 2024, so that funding has now been provided to agencies to do the projects. Those ones that I have mentioned were the priority ones. There were six in the second round and 19 projects in the first round, and three were related to people using violence.

**The CHAIR:** Will FSV be putting a budget bid in for more funding to continue the research agenda?

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** That one is probably outside of my scope of expertise at the moment. We are very focused on the perpetrator study and really making the most of the opportunity that we have with that right now. That is a two-year study and of quite a significant scale, so that is really the focus for research at the moment, which does not mean we will not in the future seek funding for more research.

**The CHAIR:** Okay. Has the Victorian Government considered developing a Victorian perpetration survey, one that looks at understanding the greater picture of family violence as perpetrated where people are not necessarily coming into contact with, say, the justice system?

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** As in whole-of-population?

**The CHAIR:** Yes.

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** Family Safety Victoria has not to date. We are aware that quite a number of stakeholders have raised it with this Committee.

**The CHAIR:** They have. Yes.

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** We are certainly watching with interest the work that Michael Flood is doing in New South Wales to see what can be learned from that. In principle we would be supportive of such a survey. We could see that it could play a really strong role in building our knowledge about people who use violence and characteristics and factors that impact that. Obviously there would need to be some careful work around the self-censoring that we know that people do when they participate in an anonymised survey around behaviour that is not socially acceptable, but that is not insurmountable.

**The CHAIR:** And who do you think would be best placed to lead a statewide survey?

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** Great question. I would suggest it would probably be something that we would want to look to do independently and commission an expert in that space, particularly as it is a pretty specialised field—constructing a survey that will encourage people to provide honest answers about that type of perpetration.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you. I will hand over to Christine.

**Chris COUZENS:** Thank you. I will begin by acknowledging we are on Wurundjeri country today and pay my respects to elders, ancestors and Aboriginal people here today. Thank you for your time. We really appreciate you giving us this time today. I have got a series of questions, but just going back to you, Amber, you mentioned the coroner and homicides and that aspect of it. Is there any consideration around suicides as well in that report in relation to family violence?

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** The MARAM framework does look at suicide as a risk factor and indications of intention of suicide as a risk factor, so coronial reports that go to suicide will also be considered and taken into account.

**Chris COUZENS:** Okay. Should the Victorian Government transfer greater ownership and control of family violence data to Aboriginal community controlled organisations? And given the Closing the Gap agreement requires that, have you been doing any work on that? As we know, there is no model at the moment, and it would be great to see one. Have you been doing any work on that? That is directed at everybody, not just you.

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** I will let Wayne take that question, but we have been taking small steps, I would say.

**Wayne FREEMAN:** Thank you for that question. A lot of that work is being led by the Dhelk Dja Partnership Forum. We work quite closely with our Dhelk Dja Koori Caucus, which is made up of our statewide agencies and our 11 action groups. It is a commitment under the Dhelk Dja three-year action plan. We are currently in our second action plan under the 10-year agreement, and there are a number of activities that take steps towards data sovereignty and work that we are doing with that.

Through the partnership forum though, we have developed a Dhelk Dja data pack. We worked quite closely with the Dhelk Dja Koori Caucus to really understand what data was going to be meaningful and really valuable for Aboriginal communities, really recognise that they need to be part of that journey about the narrative and really understand where their priorities lie. We worked quite closely through the Dhelk Dja governance. We have got our sub working groups, which have members of Dhelk Dja Koori Caucus, but we also worked closely with our colleagues in Victoria Police and CSA as well as within the department to understand what data we specifically have. When it comes to perpetrator data, we are reliant on CSA data. In Dhelk Dja we do not collect data, but we are supporting Aboriginal communities to really understand what that means.

Under the Dhelk Dja agreement, as I mentioned, there are nine activities that we have got out of the 14 under priority five that really are looking at how we collect, understand and interpret data that is really meaningful to

Aboriginal communities so that they are better able to understand what the best responses are. But prevention as well is a key priority under Dhelk Dja.

That work has happened over the last couple of years, but we will say it is a journey for us. We have recently just recruited to a data position. We are currently working through a regional data pack—so ‘What does that look like at a local level?’—because we know that there are going to be various differences. Particularly when it comes to perpetrators, we do know that there are some differences for Aboriginal women and children that are experiencing violence. We know that the perpetrator is not necessarily Aboriginal, so it is about how we really challenge some of those misconceptions that family violence in Aboriginal communities is a challenge just for Aboriginal people to resolve. As I said, that is still a journey that we are working on, and really what we are keen to understand with communities is the analysis, so that it can really inform the policy but also the prioritisation of investment that we do in the department to be able to address some of those issues. I will say, though, that the perpetrator data that we have is quite limited, so we are still working through to understand what we can access. Hopefully, that has answered your question.

**Chris COUZENS:** Yes, thank you. That is a great update. Within Dhelk Dja, are they looking at things like misidentification with police in particular?

**Wayne FREEMAN:** Certainly, yes. That is one of the key challenges, I will say, particularly for Aboriginal women, as we do know there are lots of challenges when it comes to things like unconscious bias, but we also know that there is a distrust of Aboriginal communities. So we are working with our colleagues at Victoria Police around some of the data, but it is also as part of the broader work under MARAM to address misidentification. I will say there are still a lot of opportunities for us to be able to strengthen identification of Aboriginal women. As the Committee are aware, there are a lot of broader systemic issues for Aboriginal communities, but we are taking active steps to work in partnership with our organisations.

I will also flag for the Committee that through DJCS we have partially funded a project that Djirra is undertaking around the misidentification of Aboriginal women. It is in its fairly early stages, but the work undertaken by Djirra will be really critical in understanding misidentification of Aboriginal women and how we proactively address the misidentification of our women.

**Chris COUZENS:** Is there a timeframe on that work that Dhelk Dja is doing?

**Wayne FREEMAN:** The Djirra work is not by Dhelk Dja, but in terms of the Dhelk Dja work –

**Chris COUZENS:** No, but I mean overall.

**Wayne FREEMAN:** It is within the three-year action plan. We are currently in year two—so by the end of next year.

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** Could I just add to that if I may?

**Chris COUZENS:** Yes, sure.

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** The Djirra research report is due to be delivered next year. We do have within the MARAM framework a tool for identifying the predominant aggressor, to respond to misidentification, and a practice in place within the Orange Door of undertaking that assessment using patterns of service access to flag where that might be necessary and then making sure that is fed back to police, courts and other agencies so that they can update their understanding as well.

**Chris COUZENS:** Some Aboriginal communities challenge the process of the Orange Door. They have got a different way of working.

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** Yes.

**Chris COUZENS:** Has that been taken into account?

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** There are Aboriginal practice leads and Aboriginal co-partners for every Orange Door –

**Chris COUZENS:** Yes, I am aware of that.

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** so it is a process of continuous feedback and improvement.

**Chris COUZENS:** Okay. How will treaty negotiations impact the ownership or use of family violence related data, do you think?

**Wayne FREEMAN:** I think it is very early to pre-empt what that will do, but we are certainly taking steps towards what we can do meaningfully now with Aboriginal communities so that our communities have access to data so they can better respond but also prevent family violence when it comes to Aboriginal communities.

**Chris COUZENS:** How has it improved reporting of First Nations status since the TOD CRM was updated to prompt users to update the standard Indigenous questions before closing a case? Has it led to a better understanding of the volume and profile of people using family violence? I know that is a big question.

**Wayne FREEMAN:** As I understand it, it has improved. I do not have specific numbers, but it is part of a broader holistic approach that we have. As Amber has mentioned, we have got the Aboriginal-led response teams. We have also got the action plan for cultural safety in the Orange Door, which is a really fundamental part of how the Orange Door works with Aboriginal communities to better identify Aboriginal clients and ensure that it is more culturally safe. There is some local governance as well. Our Dhelk Dja action groups work quite closely with the Orange Door around strengthening cultural safety so that we do improve identification of Aboriginal clients in the Orange Door, predominantly so they can get access to the services that are more culturally responsive to their unique needs.

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** In relation to the standard Indigenous question being mandatory for case closure in the Orange Door CRM as well as that now being mandatory for case closure, that has led to a significant reduction in the proportion of unknowns, because it has also prompted conversations about why the question is important. It has kind of supported practice change as well as just physically having to tick the box to close the case.

**Chris COUZENS:** Okay. Will I keep going?

**The CHAIR:** You are welcome to.

**Chris COUZENS:** Under strategic priority five in the Dhelk Dja agreement, how is the Victorian Government progressing with things like establishing a dedicated data position in FSV to support the Dhelk Dja partnership forum in accessing and interpreting family violence data with regional profiles? You sort of mentioned that earlier. Did you want to talk a bit more about that one?

**Wayne FREEMAN:** Yes. It was an original activity under the first Dhelk Dja agreement, so 2019 to 2022. The position was originally intended to be based in CSA. There were a number of challenges to the recruitment and the retention of that position. We recently converted one of our positions so that we could have the dedicated position within Family Safety Victoria, so it is in the early stages. But what we are doing is working with our Dhelk Dja action groups to really understand at a local level what data will be meaningful to support some of their relationships, because as you are aware, communities will have different challenges and opportunities. We are still in the very early stages of that work. We have started to understand what data they are interested in understanding and then being able to come back to them with what we have or what we are able to access. A critical component of that is really the analysis, ensuring that it is strengths focused and working with our communities to understand what it is that they actually want to understand—is this meaningful and will this inform their prioritisations where they want to strengthen relationships or where they would like to support some of their advocacy as well? It is in its very early stages. At this stage, as I said, it is due to be completed by the end of next year.

**Chris COUZENS:** Okay. The progress on procuring Aboriginal researchers and organisations to undertake research into Aboriginal family violence including for people who use violence?

**Wayne FREEMAN:** We previously ran a research round, as the Committee would be aware, back in 2022. One of the challenges that we found was around the researchers. We have been looking at how we strengthen and collaborate with some of the partnerships with research bodies and Aboriginal organisations. It is a



commitment that I believe will be delivered in year three, so at this stage we are still in the very early stages. But we are looking at how we really strengthen some of those partnerships, and in the past we have partnered with tertiary institutions. But at this stage it is due to be completed by the end of next year.

**Chris COUZENS:** The progress on encouraging investment in First Peoples led research into gambling harm and the intersections with family violence?

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** That is one we have not progressed yet.

**Chris COUZENS:** Okay. To champion Aboriginal-led research from design to delivery through the family violence research program, phases one and two?

**Wayne FREEMAN:** Again, have not progressed.

**Chris COUZENS:** To develop data-sharing protocols along with a shared understanding of Aboriginal data sovereignty? We sort of touched on that.

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** Yes, it is really linked to the data pack, and the work is in design at the moment.

**Chris COUZENS:** To build the capacity of action groups and ACCOs to translate and interpret data from an Aboriginal worldview and to drive research rather than participate?

**Wayne FREEMAN:** The data packs are one of the key mechanisms around that, yes.

**Chris COUZENS:** And to identify the gaps and data linkages in current data collection processes and systems to build an evidence base and hold service providers to account.

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** The work we are doing on the data pack is helping to identify those gaps and particularly to look at where we perhaps do not collect data that would be most useful to ACCOs, because it goes back to the Aboriginal world view that it may not have occurred to us to collect it previously. Then this process of working through the data we can provide and what is missing from that will then inform the next steps of that work.

**Chris COUZENS:** I will let someone have the turn now.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you. I will hand over to Chris Crewther. Thank you, Chris.

**Chris CREWTER:** Thank you, Chair. Thank you very much to each of you for your evidence today and the time you have taken both contributing to the submission and in the hearing today. My first question relates to Orange Door. We had evidence that you might have heard from SASVic that the Orange Door is not sufficiently taking into account sexual violence, that SASVic cannot train Orange Door workers in relation to sexual violence and that there appears to be a general lack of acknowledgement of sexual violence within Orange Door. Do you have any comments on that evidence given by SASVic, which has been reflected in a few comments by others, particularly around the sexual violence space?

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** I probably should have noted at the beginning of the hearing that the Orange Door is outside of our particular part of Family Safety Victoria. There is another executive director who oversees operations, so it is probably best if we take detailed questions on the Orange Door on notice so we can make sure that we get you the best response.

**Chris CREWTER:** Given your links with the Orange Door, though, do you have comments that you could generally make on I guess the need to take into account sexual violence a lot more within the family violence space?

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** I think that sexual violence does present within family violence, and it is often a sign of quite severe and escalated family violence. I think across the board we generally hear from many of our service providers that practitioners often feel less confident in addressing sexual violence within a family violence context, not only within the Orange Door but more broadly as well. It is feedback we have heard around men's behaviour change facilitators as well. The MARAM framework, which is used within the Orange Door, certainly includes sexual violence that occurs within a family violence context, and the Orange Door's

service offering is the brief intake assessment and referral service. So the MARAM framework is what is being used to guide that process. Anything more specific on how sexual violence is responded to within the Orange Door I would need to take on notice.

**Chris CREWETHER:** The other question I had related to Orange Door as well, so you perhaps may have a similar answer in terms of it being outside of your scope, although this one may elaborate a bit more. FSV contracted Jo Farmer Consulting to undertake the second evaluation of the Orange Door network, focusing on client experiences. When is the evaluation due and when will it be publicly released?

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** I will need to take that on notice and come back to you.

**Chris CREWETHER:** Do you know if that will engage with people using family violence as clients, or is that another one you would need to take on notice as well?

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** We will get you a response to that.

**Chris CREWETHER:** All right. I think I obviously picked too many questions on the Orange Door there. I will move to another question, just going to CIP, which has been discussed by a number of witnesses today and previously as well. There have been conversations by others around the need for CIP to be shared more generally in the practitioners of family violence space and there to be a lot more collaboration, because there is a lot of data there that is not being made available and not being shared at the moment that could really help service providers. Do you have any comments on that and I guess the willingness to move down a path of sharing CIP a lot more?

**Jane HINGSTON:** I can try and answer that question, Chris. Thank you. I think you have heard quite a bit about it in previous witnesses coming before you. The Central Information Point is managed by Family Safety Victoria but in partnership with Victoria Police, Corrections Victoria, the Magistrates' Court of Victoria and child protection. Those four agencies contribute data into the central information point. We have a technology platform that supports that data sharing but also an operational workforce. Amber mentioned at the start in the opening statement about how they identify and collate information to consolidate into a single report and provide it to our frontline practitioners. Currently practitioners who can make a request into the central information point are the Orange Doors across the statewide service provided, the risk assessment and management panels, men's referral service and Safe Steps. We have rolled the central information point out to those providers as the key agencies recommended by the royal commission to have access to the central information point. We have only just been on a process of rolling out, so as the Orange Doors open across the state they have been onboarded to have access to the central information point as well as RAMPs and then men's referral service and Safe Steps.

Some of the reasons why it would be difficult in the current operating model of the central information point to expand that service would relate to the demand. As I mentioned, we have an operational workforce who have to identify and collate that data, so that is a human intervention. They have to review all of the data from what we would call a source system—so it could be a Victoria Police system. They would review and identify what data goes into the central information point report. That is across all of those four agencies. If we are adding more volume into or more demand onto that service it is going to impact on timeliness and the ability for the central information point to provide a timely service in that space.

**Chris CREWETHER:** Do you think, though, if resources are put up-front in terms of the central information point, CIP, that will actually save resources for others in the whole supply chain—if I can put it like that?

**Jane HINGSTON:** Potentially. I think the other part is that with the central information point the information that is shared can be shared more broadly from the Orange Door to those agencies that receive that information through the family violence information-sharing scheme. That information is designed to flow through in referral documentation and other information-sharing processes that support the broader family violence sector to be able to obtain and use that information. The central information point is trying to get that information in at the intake and that critical assessment stage, and then it can flow through the service system through information sharing and referrals post that point.

**Chris CREWETHER:** Just to expand upon your answer then, do you see any particular or potential risks and/or benefits of expanding access to CIP reports?

**Jane HINGSTON:** I think you have probably heard the benefits from those who would be advocating for that to be expanded because of the rich volume of information it does provide. It collates family violence risk relevant information about a perpetrator or an alleged perpetrator for risk assessment and management. It collates from those agencies. It is a consolidated report, so it has got a lot of information on behaviours and history—the pattern of behaviour and history of a person using violence. That is really critical to support family violence risk assessment and management, so I can see why agencies are advocating for that information. Some of the challenges—or not challenges but some of the risks we need to be careful of in access to that information is that it is used in the right way in terms of the MARAM framework and doing family violence risk assessment and management. The CIP is not a standalone initiative. It needs to work in with the family violence information-sharing scheme and the MARAM framework to ensure that that information is used in a way that is supporting victim-survivors and those working with persons using violence in their risk assessment and management.

**Chris CREWETHER:** Thank you. One more on CIP, then I will pass back to you, Chair, to allow others to ask more questions. The package of reforms announced by the Victorian state government on 30 May 2024 stated that the Victorian Government is making CIP ‘easier and faster to use’. What does that involve, and can you expand upon that?

**Jane HINGSTON:** From the strengthening women’s safety package there is some funding to support some further enhancements to the central information point. Primarily they are enhancements to the technology platform, not the operational service. So it is not more FTE to do the operations, but it is to help us improve the underlying platform. We are scoping what those enhancements will look like, but it will be to improve the capability for operational reporting so we have got a better understanding of the requests that are coming in and the time it is taking for our operations team to work through and to produce that report. So it is about being able to have more timely capture of that operational data to support operational decision-making. There is also some scoping work we can do to see if there are any further improvements to automate data. We have the central information point connected in with our partner agency’s systems, and that provides partial automation of data, so structured data that can come across fairly seamlessly. There are further opportunities we could look at in what that might look like to prevent some of the administrative and manual processes of identifying and extracting data.

**Chris CREWETHER:** Thank you. That is very helpful. Chair.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you, Chris. Jackson.

**Jackson TAYLOR:** Thank you, Chair. Thank you very much for coming in today and for answering our questions. The 2023–24 state budget provided \$14.4 million over two years to develop a business case to replace IRIS and other critical department systems. Can you provide an update on the progression of the business case?

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** The work is led out of the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, so we are engaged in the work but not leading that work. The work is progressing. I know there have been consultations with service providers who use IRIS to better understand their service needs, how they are currently using IRIS, what some of the pain points are and what improvements they would like to see in a process in a new system.

**Jackson TAYLOR:** Will a new system replace IRIS and other critical department systems, and if so, which systems?

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** We probably will need to come back to you on that one as well, given that it is work that is in progress and led by another part of the department.

**Jackson TAYLOR:** I thought you were going to say that.

**Jane HINGSTON:** Although IRIS will be in scope.

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** Yes.

**Jackson TAYLOR:** Okay. Submissions—I am trying to work out if this will be relevant. You know what, I am just going to move to a different section, because I think that might cover off on what you have just said.

What are the current roadblocks to tracking a person using family violence across multiple services, for example, justice, health, family violence or universal services, and how can the Victorian Government overcome these barriers?

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** I will definitely invite Jane to add to this as well. I think some of the barriers probably come from legacy systems that do not necessarily talk to each other. I think the CIP is a good example of where you do still need a human intervention to be able to take the relevant bits of information and put them together. We are all working with a range of different systems with different kinds of capabilities, and I guess the age of the platform and the interoperability—I am clearly not the tech expert in the room. But I think that is one of the key barriers. I think the linked dataset run by the Centre for Victorian Data Linkage offers us some great opportunities to really start to track people across systems now that we have the Orange Door data included in that dataset. But there are still limitations to that in terms of tracking individuals through different service systems, and while there are a lot of data points in that dataset, it is not completely exhaustive either. Did you want to add anything?

**Jane HINGSTON:** No, I think that is probably right. It is the number of databases there that might hold information, and they do not currently talk to each other and are often quite old, what we could call legacy databases. They are difficult to maintain and improve even to capture different data fields. And then connecting that all across the service system, you have probably heard all the different ways that data is captured or not captured. That is problematic. And I think that is only if the person using violence comes into contact with our services or the service system, not the unknown.

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** There is probably also some work to do on consistency of data definitions and consistency of data capture methodologies as well.

**Jackson TAYLOR:** DFFH's submission talks about a linked data repository. Can you expand on this?

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** This is the VSIIDR, the linked dataset that you heard about this morning. I do not know if you want us to expand further.

**Jackson TAYLOR:** If you feel like you have anything to add, by all means.

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** Probably just the inclusion of the Orange Door data—and we are now working to have the tools for risk assessment management data included as well—really makes it a much richer database for our purposes to really understand service access and risk factors associated with family violence.

**Jackson TAYLOR:** To better understand people using family violence, are there opportunities to better collect and link family violence data with data from councils, health services, banks and financial services, employment and gambling services, and mental health and AOD services, as examples?

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** I think the opportunity is in that linked dataset. I guess we are probably in a situation now where we need to test that a bit with the data that we have just recently worked to have included, then look for other opportunities.

**Jackson TAYLOR:** Just now on misidentification. I know it has been covered in part, but what progress has been made on implementing the Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor report recommendations on misidentification?

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** We are still working through those, so the work around the predominant aggressor assessment tool as part of the MARAM framework has taken us quite a long way. That is the first of its kind, that tool. It has also recently been embedded into the Specialist Homelessness Information Platform—or SHIP—so that will provide us with better access to a quantity of data coming out of that risk assessment tool. When it was developed in 2021–22, it was based on the best evidence available at that time, and that included small-scale qualitative studies and quantitative data. So the capture of that data in a more systematic way will help us to improve that tool over time.

As we mentioned before, the work that Djirra is undertaking at the moment will also really help to build our understanding. Probably what is difficult at the moment, and there are a range of departments who would be involved in this—we need a more accessible, easier way to correct the record when misidentification has

occurred, because obviously we are aware that misidentification can have really serious impacts, particularly for Aboriginal women. Making sure that that can be rectified, remedying the impacts as well as correcting the record, is still probably where the opportunities are for some real improvement.

**Jackson TAYLOR:** Thank you. What are the data system barriers that prevent the correction of records identified in DFFH's submission?

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** Some of those are protections within the data systems, so I do not want to speak too much for other data systems, but you can imagine, for example, police data systems have very high levels of protection around them to make sure that that data is not misused or changed without authorisation. So those sorts of things are the things that we were referring to in the submission that make it more difficult for something to easily be corrected. In CIP, for example, a CIP report does not label somebody as a perpetrator, but it does rely on the source data. So if we are aware that misidentification has occurred, then we can remove a CIP report so that is not available. But unless the source data in the partner agency's database is corrected, there is a risk that it will be picked up at that point.

**Jackson TAYLOR:** The Committee has learnt a systems response to misidentification is required. As Victoria Police data is only a point in time and service providers can add information to more accurately and dynamically assess risk and the primary aggressor, what does a systems response to misidentification look like to the Victorian Government?

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** I think we cannot speak for the Victorian Government, but I think for FSV this would need to be a real whole-of-government effort to really look at how we have those very clear pathways for taking that information that service providers have, and often much better data, because as you say, it is not point-in-time and it is based on really rigorous and comprehensive risk assessments. Having some formal mechanisms to make sure that data reaches where it needs to be but then also that agencies right across government have the opportunity and the systems in place to be able to do something with the data—I think it is definitely work that Family Safety Victoria is interested in progressing, but it certainly will require a whole-of-government approach.

**Jackson TAYLOR:** One last question from me, Chair. What is the Victorian Government doing to ensure consistent definitions of family violence and criminal behaviour between jurisdictions?

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** We are participating in national conversations, and we are sharing the learnings that we have had from the MARAM framework and from the central information point. Obviously jurisdictions have different definitions in their legislation. We certainly are sharing our experiences and participating in those conversations with our colleagues in other jurisdictions.

**Jackson TAYLOR:** Actually, one more question, Chair, sorry. Just a broad question regarding MARAM: we have had some submissions around obviously MARAM being a fantastic tool that is nation leading—in fact world leading. There has been discussion around opportunities for better understanding for frontline people in services across the sector. Are there opportunities for FSV to lead further training or a further breaking down and being able to really distil what MARAM is about to make it easier for people on the ground to understand and work across the framework, if that question make sense?

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** So when you say 'the sector', do you specifically mean the family violence sector or do you mean more broadly?

**Jackson TAYLOR:** Yes.

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** FSV's role in relation to MARAM is that we oversee the strategic implementation, the training, the development of training resources and the policy, and the implementation specifically in DFFH-funded workforces, which includes the family violence sector. Then other departments and agencies are responsible for ensuring their workforces align with the framework and adapt their policies and approaches. You heard this morning from Jenny Hosking at corrections that different agencies do that in different ways depending on their workforce and their needs, but they do. There is a legislative requirement for MARAM to have a five-year evidence review, and we are continually looking to improve the use of MARAM. It is a really foundational tool for us. The recent evidence review included some findings about opportunities to improve the way that it is used for culturally diverse communities, for example, or more tailored approaches for Aboriginal

people, so yes, there are definitely opportunities for FSV to continue to improve the framework and support the implementation. Our focus really at the moment—there are 6,000 workforces, as I heard, that are currently prescribed. We are really focusing on embedding in the workforces that are prescribed and focusing on how we can mature their implementation and have the MARAM working as well as it possibly can.

**Jackson TAYLOR:** Excellent. And I must say I am very impressed at the references to previous submissions during the hearings today throughout. Very good.

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** We have been watching.

**Jackson TAYLOR:** It is very good—fantastic. I would not doubt it. Thank you, Chair.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you. Are the central information point reports and the information that they contain considered together and analysed?

**Jane HINGSTON:** The reports are provided to the frontline practitioners, and they will do the risk assessment and management across that information for the report that they get. Are you referring to the data holdings more broadly?

**The CHAIR:** Yes.

**Jane HINGSTON:** Each individual report is analysed by the practitioner who receives it, and they will be looking through that at the pattern and history and the information that is contained in there to support the risk assessment and management for their client.

**The CHAIR:** And are those reports analysed as a broader group so we can start to look at maybe some patterns about the cohort of people using violence?

**Jane HINGSTON:** No, we have not really been doing that. There are a couple of reasons. We have used some of that data to help the evaluation, so there is an evaluation of the central information point to help understand what some of those outcomes might look like for the central information point, and it is about timely information sharing and the way that practitioners use that to support the safety and wellbeing of victim-survivors and to work with persons using violence. The data in the central information point, as we referred to earlier, is just sourced from what we call those source systems, so there is no additional manipulation or analysis of that data. It is just extracted from those source databases and collated together. So if there is any analysis done it is probably best done at the source system end, and that data is available in the linked datasets and other family violence dashboards and things like that, so the CIP, no, we are not doing any deep analysis over.

**The CHAIR:** Would there be a value in doing that deeper analysis?

**Jane HINGSTON:** There could be, yes. We would have to be clear on what purpose we would be doing that for. Is it to improve the operations of the central information point and how that is operating to support frontline practitioners to do their job? Is it in relation to more systemic thematic reviews? So I think we would need to be really clear on what purpose—we would be looking at that—and if the central information point is the best focus for achieving the purpose of what the analysis might be.

**The CHAIR:** What happens when information collated in the central information point contradicts each other? For example, information on who the predominant aggressor is if there is a case of misidentification.

**Jane HINGSTON:** It is partly why we have such a big workforce in the operations team. So the mechanics of the central information point is that each, as we would call it, data custodian agency extracts and reviews the information only for their agency. So we would have four individuals working on a single report and they extract from their agency, and then we have a Family Safety Victoria coordinator, who would look at every single report to ensure that there is consistency or try to identify any of those potential inconsistencies across that data. They will only be able to identify that at a high level, because they are not doing the practice. They are not the practitioners who would have that next level of detail for family violence risk assessment and management. But a core part of that job is to look for any of those inconsistencies at that level.

**The CHAIR:** Going back to databases. We have heard a lot throughout this inquiry from different witnesses about the multitude of databases out there. Submissions and witnesses have suggested a need to implement a dedicated or standardised CRM or database for people using family violence and/or victim-survivors; implement a dedicated or standardised database for perpetrator intervention programs; implement a dedicated data-sharing platform for service providers and statutory bodies to share information on people using family violence—so really that is looking at the agencies that do not have access to the CIP; streamline the number of databases that service providers must report to—we heard from Meli, who are a Geelong-based service, and from memory, they have five databases that they are entering information into; use unique identifiers for people using family violence across the justice and service systems to more effectively monitor the use of family violence; make it easier to extract information on people using family violence from these databases or support the service providers to do this; and use application-programming interfaces to help existing databases communicate with each other. There is a lot we are finding throughout this inquiry that really sits within this theme of databases, and some challenges and some barriers. Has the Victorian Government considered any improvements to sector-wide databases, or how we can overcome some of these challenges?

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** I mean, the idea of a single database sounds great, and probably we have not had the resourcing to ever consider it seriously. What we have seen, though, is the benefit of the TodCRM, the Orange Door CRM, in that it was built for the Orange Door service model—built to meet the needs of practitioners and to be able to draw the data that we can from it—and now we can see what a rich source of data it has become. Whereas any of the other systems that are legacy systems—not built for our service delivery model—just do not have the same ability. Did you want to add to that?

**Jane HINGSTON:** Yes. I think there was a lot in what you were saying. I think partly the legacy systems that we are working with or providers are working with are a bit of a barrier. We can connect some of those systems in different ways, but it is difficult to add different data fields—those systems stand alone—and I think what we are hearing is it is probably not even the right thing to do. The business case for a replacement of some of those legacy systems will go a long way to, I think, addressing some of the challenges that providers would find in how they capture data, what data they provide to the department—sort of administrative data—but also better capture outcomes and see the flow of data across family groups and different service provisions. When Amber was talking about the Orange Door, that CRM is designed so a practitioner working with children or a victim-survivor or a person using violence has access to the information that they need in that context, which if you had separate systems based on just victim-survivors or persons using violence, would continue that challenge. So I would say we appreciate the challenge out there with the data systems, and the department is going some way to trying to look at how we might be able to rectify some of that.

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** You would probably also appreciate the implementation challenges in that many of our service providers are operating more than one type of service, so even if we had a single service for family violence, for example, they would potentially be working with the same family over several different service types.

**The CHAIR:** Given that that work is ongoing, would you be able to provide the Committee with an update in writing, say, in three months time so that the Committee can consider that as we write our report?

**Jane HINGSTON:** Yes.

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** Yes.

**The CHAIR:** Great. Thank you. Submissions have also highlighted the need to establish a minimum dataset or standardised data collection and sharing protocols. How can service provider data collection practices be made more consistent across the state—for example, through prompts to complete data fields or any other suggestions?

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** Do you want to take that one?

**Jane HINGSTON:** Yes. There is work that we can do and will do with providers in terms of working with the systems that we currently have if we cannot replace them or enhance them in any more meaningful way. We can definitely work with providers in trying to understand some of the challenges in using the systems and the processes that we currently have, and some of that would be just reporting on some data fields that are in the systems that might not be used well. That could be because it just feels very administrative to enter into another

system. They may or may not understand exactly across the number of providers what is required for each of those data fields, which we find is why people are not entering that data or we get inconsistencies. So there is work that we can do in supporting service providers with the existing systems, and that is some work that we know about and can work through. I think there is a bit of a balance we need to manage when—you have probably heard from providers that they are using spreadsheets and multiple systems—contributing to the administrative burden if there is no feedback loop in how that data is used or there is not a really clear reason why that is being collected and what the purpose is. I think if we can provide that and work with the sector, we can go some way in improving some of the data quality and practices, even with our legacy systems.

**The CHAIR:** In Victoria we have the family violence data collection framework. Is there an opportunity to mandate the use of that across the family violence sector to promote consistent data collection?

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** I think it is probably the balance that Jane was talking about, about being really conscious of the administrative burden on our funded agencies and the demands on their time as well, so kind of balancing again—going back to Jane’s earlier response—if we were to mandate something like that, what we will then do with the data and how we make that useful and meaningful for the sector as well, having some feedback loops or some consolidated reports back. So I think we would need to carefully consider that against our contractual arrangements and our funding for service providers.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you. On young people, has the Victorian Government considered developing a strategy for young people using family violence that could help with our understanding of this cohort?

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** As with adults using family violence, it has not really been our practice to have specific standalone strategies, but children and young people have always been a focus of the 10-year plan and the rolling action plans. A critical piece of the picture, which we are happy to provide to the Committee at a time when it is available, is that we are currently evaluating our adolescent violence in the home programs. They are available across the state. It is a therapeutic-based approach working with young people and their families. There are spaces for about a thousand young people per year, and around 170 of those young people and their families are Aboriginal, accessing tailored services delivered by ACCOs. Those service providers hold really important data about those young people, particularly their own experiences of family violence and where there may have been opportunities to intervene earlier.

**The CHAIR:** That would be great to see that. Thank you. Why isn’t there a separate strategy for young people? What is the rationale behind that?

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** One of the key things the royal commission talked about was the need for integration and having integrated responses across different services, across different government departments and across different parts of the community, so in line with that we have always taken an integrated approach to a strategy that has really looked to provide a holistic response from primary prevention all the way through to response and then to look at more tailored responses for children and young people, for different groups in our community, to address particular risk factors but all within the overarching umbrella of a more integrated approach to try to avoid any kinds of silos. For children and young people, for example, we want our adolescent violence in the home programs to sit within a system that also looks at counselling and recovery services for young people under the age of 12 and 12 and up who are not using violence in the home—the intake services for family services of the Orange Door, the support for victim-survivors, knowing that many of them are victim-survivors, rather than having it sit separately and risk having it become disintegrated with the rest of the response.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you. Chris, do you have some additional questions you would like to ask? Thank you.

**Chris CREWETHER:** Yes. Thank you, Chair. Firstly, thanks for your additional answers then as well. Reflecting on some of the submissions and some of the witnesses who have been part of the public hearings so far, coercive control, as you know, is one form of family violence, and it is reflected in, for example—you talk about it in your submission with appendix 1—the evidence behind the men’s behaviour change program minimum standards on page 106, which then references the Victorian principles for perpetrator interventions, particularly items three and six of that. I want to quote something that I have received from someone who is a victim of family violence, and I would just be interested in your perspectives on this and the link with coercive control. This person says:



I'm finding that DFFH do not seem to have the mechanisms in place to support coercive control, particularly child protection services. I seem to keep repeating myself constantly and it's incredibly disheartening. DFFH continue to reassure me that the 'Maram' assessment is a supportive measure designed for coercive control, but it simply places the onus on myself to put protections in place, such as safety planning, but it does not deal with the perpetrator directly. It places in the victim in a continued state of fight, flight, freeze or fawn ...

Noting some of the other submissions as well that have identified or alleged that there are barriers with the ability of MARAM to support dynamic risk assessment and management practices, that MARAM tools are unwieldy and time-consuming to use and so forth, what is your view on I guess the perspective of victims like this, and what can be done to address these barriers, particularly with respect to the MARAM framework and assessments as they relate to coercive control?

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** That is quite a large question, and there is probably quite a lengthy response. I think we can absolutely provide some additional information on this to you. I would say, firstly, I am very sorry to hear that the person who has been in contact with you has had that experience. It is an ongoing process of embedding the MARAM framework and making sure it is reflected in practice and that the intent of the MARAM framework is reflected in practice. We know that is not happening perfectly everywhere all of the time, and we continue to work on how we can train and support workforces to implement the framework in a way that reflects its intent. In terms of the rest of your questions around the MARAM evidence base and the best response to coercive control, perhaps we can provide you with some more information on that on notice.

**Chris CREWOTHER:** That is fine. Thank you. Just a follow-up question as well: can you also provide an update on the establishment of a Victorian common evaluation framework for perpetrator interventions?

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** Yes. This was one of the recommendations of the expert advisory committee on perpetrator interventions that was formed post the royal commission and made recommendations around the services that should be provided. It is one we have not progressed yet; it is one that we are continuing to work through. Part of the reason for that is that a number of the perpetrator interventions that were put in place post EACPI delivering its report are still quite new. Several of them have been evaluated but not against a common evaluation framework.

Many of those programs have only been operating for a couple of years. We have really been kind of letting them run well enough to generate, I guess, a sufficient amount of data to make the evaluation really meaningful. But we have separately evaluated some of the programs, and the work now on the perpetrator study that we will do shortly I think will help to guide the development of a common evaluation framework in helping to identify the things we should be evaluating and what it is that we should be testing and measuring in terms of outcomes.

**Chris CREWOTHER:** And how will DFFH strengthen and standardise the evaluation of men's behaviour change programs? For example, by ensuring service providers are asking the same questions when measuring outcomes?

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** Well, I think that is a great question, because measuring outcomes is something we really need to focus on to improve how we are measuring outcomes and how we are asking service providers to measure outcomes. You would be aware that there is a family violence outcomes framework and there is a perpetrator domain within that. And there is work ongoing at the moment to really look at: what are the outcomes, what are the right indicators and measures of progress and how are we collecting them or could we be collecting them in a standardised way so that we could usefully compare across the board? But it is absolutely work in progress still, and that is also one of the focuses for the upcoming rolling action plan.

We released a policy document to guide the consultations called *Strong Foundations* earlier this year, and one of the five domains in that was understanding and measuring our impact. Consultations, as I said, have been underway around the priorities for the next rolling action plan, and we expect that to be one of the key focuses.

**Chris CREWOTHER:** Thank you. And can you provide the Committee with FSV's guidance document for what are the key evaluation questions to examine the implementation of perpetrator interventions? Is that something FSV or DFFH would be willing to provide to the Committee?

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** Yes.

**Chris CREWITHER:** Thank you. I have one more question on a different topic, and then I will pass back to you, Chair, if that is okay.

**The CHAIR:** Go for it.

**Chris CREWITHER:** This I guess relates more to outcomes, monitoring and evaluation. Are there opportunities to increase the publication of deidentified data to reduce barriers for researchers to access and analyse data collected on people using family violence?

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** Yes. As of this year we will be including our Orange Door CRM data in the family violence data portal, so that will be deidentified data that will be far more available for people.

**Jane HINGSTON:** We have Orange Door data in the VSIIDR linked dataset and the TRAM data that will shortly be also going into that dataset, so that will provide indicators on risk and risk identifiers even beyond what we have with the Orange Door data. I think that will increase the value of that linked dataset to support some of the research and understanding what outcomes could look like for our programs.

**Chris CREWITHER:** Thank you. Thank you very much, Chair. And thank you to all three of you once again.

**The CHAIR:** Thanks, Chris. Before we conclude, the Committee did have a number of questions regarding the Orange Door, and we were hoping that you could answer those today. I appreciate that that is not the area that you look after. Could we provide you with those questions on notice and then could you please go back to your department and come back to us with some answers?

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** Yes, definitely.

**The CHAIR:** That would be great. Thank you.

**Amber GRIFFITHS:** We could give it a go today, but I think we will get you better answers if we take them with us.

**The CHAIR:** No problem at all. Thank you. Thank you, all, for appearing before the Committee today and for your contribution to the inquiry. We are really grateful for your time but also the time that you have taken to put the submission together, so thank you very much.

I also thank all the other witnesses who have given evidence to the Committee today, as well the Hansard team, the Committee Secretariat and security.

I declare this hearing adjourned.

**Committee adjourned.**