

# 2015-16 Public Accounts and Estimates Committee Hearing

Fiona Richardson MP

Minister for Women

Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence

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# Overview – Prevention of Family Violence Portfolio

*Leading a whole-of-government strategy in the prevention of the most serious law and order issue that we face, to shape our responses as a government and as a community, and ensure perpetrators are held to account.*

## Family Violence - Facts and Figures

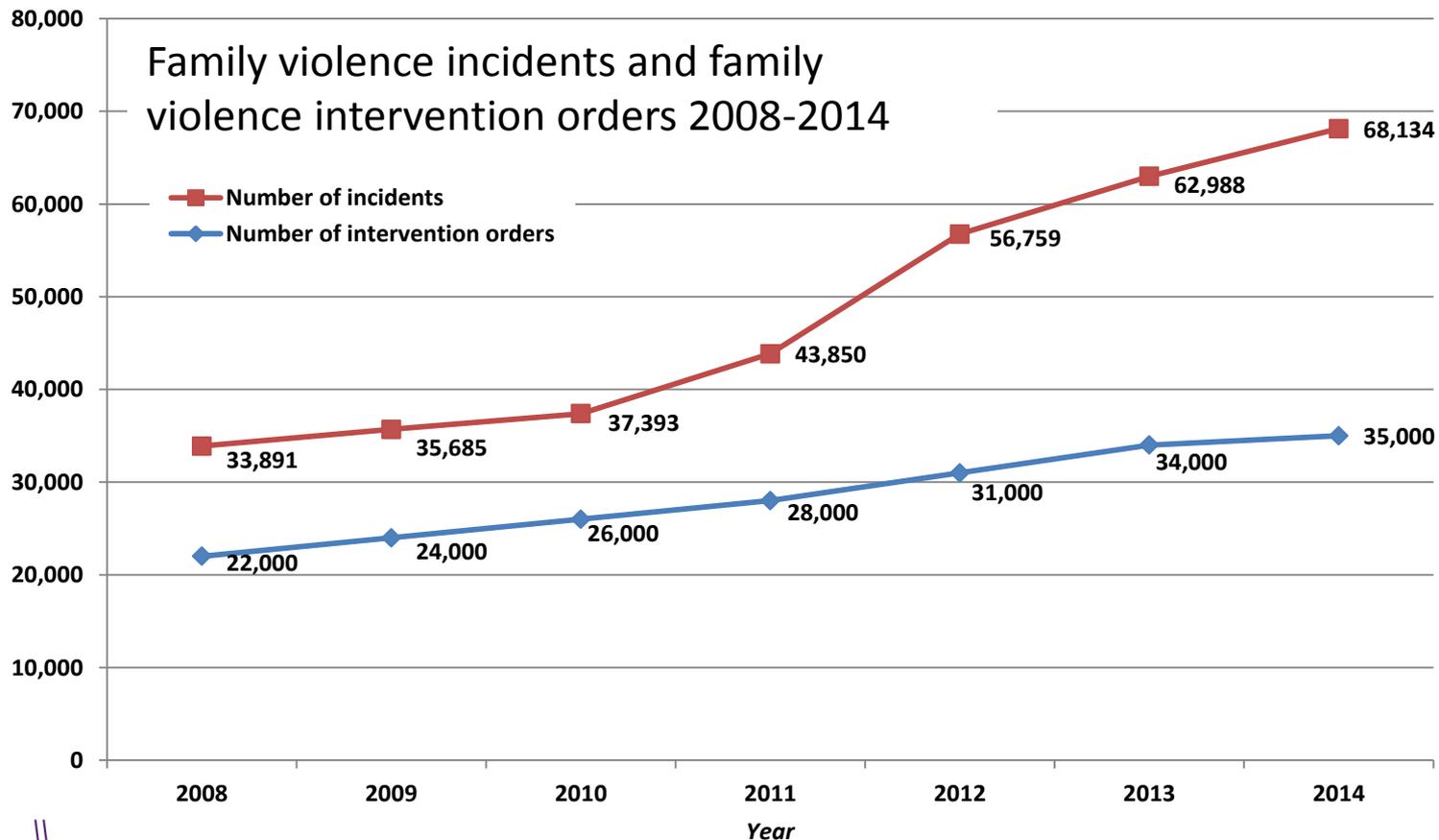
- Family violence is the leading contributor to death, injury and disability in Victorian women aged 15 to 44 years, and is the greatest community safety issue confronting Victorians.
- Last year, on average, one woman per week lost her life in Australia. This year, tragically, we are tracking at two deaths per week.
- 1 in 3 women experience physical violence and 1 in 5 women experience sexual assault from the age of 15.
- More than 68,000 incidents of family violence were reported to Victoria Police in 2014 – an increase of more than 70 per cent from 2010.

## Family Violence - The system is broken

***“The whole system is broken. It doesn’t protect the vulnerable, it doesn’t punish the guilty and more of the same policies will only mean more of the same tragedies.”***

The Royal Commission will shine a light on the gaps in the system and the opportunities for reform.

# Prevalence of Family Violence



# Gender equality and the prevention of family violence

- Although family violence can happen to anyone, it is overwhelmingly women and children who are impacted by this harm and men who commit it.
- Women are more than three times more likely than men to have experienced violence by a partner.
- Gender inequality is a primary determinant of family violence.



# Royal Commission into Family Violence

- The Royal Commission into Family Violence has commenced and has been tasked with examining the entire system from the ground up.
- \$36 million is funded to the Royal Commission and \$4 million provided as an initial investment to boost support services.
- Its Terms of Reference tasks the Royal Commission to make recommendations that consider the needs and experiences of a broad range of groups within our community.
- The causes of family violence are well known- what is needed is a root and branch investigation of family violence in Victoria.

*'I cannot promise that every woman and child will be safe. I cannot promise that every family will be free of violence. But I am prepared to try' – Daniel Andrews, 2014*



# The 2015/16 Budget

## Family Violence

- Under the Andrews Labor Government, total new expenditure directed to family violence in the 2015-2016 budget is **\$81.3 million**.
- Funding delivers in full on Labor's election commitments and focuses on the need to address the increased demand.

# The 2015/16 Budget – Labor’s Election Commitments

Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence	✓	Implemented
Australia’s first Royal Commission into Family Violence	✓	Underway
\$2.5m for crisis accommodation	✓	Funded
\$2.5m for counselling services	✓	Funded
\$1.4m for boost to Domestic Violence Victoria	✓	Funded
\$100k for victims to access pet foster care	✓	Funded
\$500k to reduce the waitlist for court-ordered men’s behaviour change programs	✓	Funded
\$1.2m for more Family Violence duty lawyers from Community Legal Centres	✓	Funded
\$900k to trial duress alarms and CCTV for at-risk women	✓	Funded
Undertake a safety audit of the Magistrates’ Court	✓	Funded
\$1.6m boost to the Community legal assistance fund	✓	Funded
Re-establish the Death Reviews in the Coroners Court	✓	Funded
\$500k for additional support at Ballarat Centre Against Sexual Assault	✓	Funded

# The 2015/16 Budget – Additional to election commitments

## Family Violence Fund

The \$16 million Family Violence Fund has been created to be ready to respond to urgent and high priority needs.

- \$2 mil urgent boost in 2014/15 for crisis support and counselling services.
- \$2 mil boost in 2015/16 for L17 Family Violence Access Workers in locations across Victoria
- \$6 mil of unallocated funding to be utilised for urgent funding for unforeseen and high priority needs while the Royal Commission is underway
- \$6 mil set aside for other family violence activities that was deferred from the current year to the 2015/16 year.

# The 2015/16 Budget

## Additional to election commitments

In addition to Labor's election commitments and family violence fund

- **\$2.1 mil for legal assistance for victims of family violence**
- **\$2 mil for responses to family violence for culturally and linguistically diverse people**
- **\$1.9 mil for responses to family violence for Aboriginal people**
- **\$3.9 mil for additional workers to address the impact of family violence on the child protection system**
- **\$3 mil for men's family violence services, including behaviour change programs**
- **\$2 million for prevention of violence against women and children programs**

## Partners in Prevention

### Additional to election commitments

The 2015-16 Budget includes **\$2 million** to extend **four evidence-based prevention programs** targeting key settings and populations:

- Preventing Violence Against Women and Children in our Community (Local Government Clusters) Project
- Workplace Equality and Respect Program
- Disability Sector Violence Prevention Resources and Training
- Partners in Prevention Program

## Other Budget Initiatives contributing to the family violence response

Other initiatives funded in the 2015-16 Budget contributing to the Government's response to family violence include:

- Homelessness Innovation Action Projects (\$40.3 million), which will provide innovative early intervention approaches for people experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness
- Child FIRST and Family Services (\$48.1 million), which will strengthen the system's capacity to assist vulnerable families

## Other initiatives announced prior to the 2015/16 Budget

New Budget funding builds on Government's existing investment to address family violence, including funding for other specialist initiatives commencing this year:

- Court Integrated Services Program expansion (\$7.1 mil over three years)
- Specialist family violence courts program expansion (\$12 mil over four years)
- Information sharing and risk monitoring pilot (\$2.5 mil over two years)



## 2014/15 Funding

**\$2 mil funding from the Family Violence Fund is available immediately.**

**Consultation with service providers and the DHHS has already commenced.**

- **\$1 mil for crisis support and transport** for women and children
  - The state-wide crisis service Safe Steps has been funded \$600,000
  - \$400,000 will be provided to family violence services for their crisis accommodation and rental brokerage programs
- **\$1 mil for counselling services** for women and children
  - Funding is being allocated to existing community service organisations
  - Services are being prioritised to support counselling and specialised service responses for children and young people

# Family Violence Index

- The Victorian Labor Government has commissioned Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) to develop the first Family Violence Index.
- While we know the causes of family violence, we don't know just how extensive this crisis is.
- The index will draw on a variety of indicators and statistics from across crime, justice, healthcare, education and community attitudes to create a single indicator of family violence.
- The Family Violence Index will quantify the magnitude of the problem.



# The 2015/16 Budget- Summary

- **This budget delivers on Labor’s election policy in full as well as delivering a boost to services to respond to increased demand.**
- **Demand for family violence services has far outstripped funding increases over the past five years.**
- **We know that the interest in the Royal Commission and greater public awareness of family violence has increased that demand even further.**
- **We are gearing up for the Royal Commission’s recommendations – we have committed to implementing them all.**
- **Next year’s budget will respond to the Royal Commission’s recommendations.**