Inquiry into Budget Estimates 2017–18

Melbourne — 30 May 2017

Members

Mr Danny Pearson — Chair
Mr David Morris — Deputy Chair
Mr Steve Dimopoulos
Ms Fiona Patten
Ms Sue Pennicuik

Ms Harriet Shing
Mr Tim Smith
Ms Louise Staley
Ms Vicki Ward

Witnesses

Ms Fiona Richardson, Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence,
Ms Tania Farha, Chief Executive Officer, and
Ms Sarah Gruner, Assistant Director, Office of Prevention & Women’s Equality, Department of Premier and Cabinet.
The CHAIR — I declare open the public hearings for the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee inquiry into the 2017–18 budget estimates. All mobile telephones should now be turned to silent.

I would like to welcome the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence, the Honourable Fiona Richardson, MP; Ms Tania Farha, Chief Executive Officer; and Ms Sarah Gruner, Assistant Director, Office of Prevention and Women’s Equality.

All evidence is taken by the committee under the provisions of the Parliamentary Committees Act, attracts parliamentary privilege and is protected from judicial review. Comments made outside the hearing, including on social media, are not afforded such privilege.

Witnesses will not be sworn but are requested to answer all questions succinctly, accurately and truthfully. Witnesses found to be giving false or misleading evidence may be in contempt of Parliament and subject to penalty.

All evidence given today is being recorded by Hansard, and you will be provided with proof versions of the transcript for verification as soon as available. Verified transcripts, presentations and handouts will be placed on the committee’s website as soon as possible.

All written communication to witnesses must be provided via officers of the PAEC secretariat. Members of the public gallery cannot participate in the committee’s proceedings in any way and cannot photograph, audio record or videorecord any part of these proceedings.

I invite the witness to make a very brief opening statement of no more than 10 minutes, and this will be followed by questions from the committee. Minister.

Ms RICHARDSON — Thank you. The government has committed to a whole-of-family-violence package. This aims to hold perpetrators to account, and we are implementing of course each and every one of the royal commission recommendations. In addition to the last budget of $572 million we have allocated an unprecedented $1.9 billion over the forward estimates. This includes $50.8 million for prevention to help stop this harm from occurring. Also this investment is important because we know that we cannot police or spend our way out of the harm that is family violence. Moreover, it is a harm that will require effort from everybody over a long period of time. Overwhelmingly we know that the cost of family violence is borne by women and children, but there are other significant costs that are borne by each and every one of us every day.

There are of course many economic reports that have been done by people such as PricewaterhouseCoopers, and indeed the royal commission itself tried to evaluate the full costs of family violence and estimated in recent months the estimated cost for Victoria for the year 2015–16 alone was $5.3 billion.

If you have a look at what we have done in the last year, our key initiatives and our key achievements include investing in family violence by targeting initiatives so that we can reach Victorians where they live, work and play, and supporting local alliances through community primary prevention partnerships. The evidence is in that the community has the greatest impact with respect to the rates of violence if we actually work together in this way. Targeted prevention initiatives for older people are also included in this group, understanding that there are different levels of vulnerabilities, specifically focusing on Aboriginal communities and culturally and linguistically diverse and rural and regional communities. Of course our respectful relationships investment was committed to build on what we wanted to achieve in our whole-of-school approach for training and early childhood educators as recommended by the royal commission.

A second successful Victoria against Violence was actually held last year, and what we saw was a huge uptake in the number of initiatives that people wanted to participate in. This of course coincides with the International Day for the Elimination of Violence, and also is a campaign where we launched our gender equality strategy last year. Also in terms of universal behaviour change campaigns, we contributed 3.75 million to the national Stop it at the Start campaign and 4.5 for the Victorian respect for women campaign. It is important to acknowledge that there is a fair amount of work still to be done with respect to what we need to do to really
build on the work that we have seen so far. Also it is important to note that this has been worked alongside victims of family violence.

The Victorian government is currently working with market research firms Sweeney and BehaviourWorks of Monash University to ascertain the success and impact of these campaigns. This is also in keeping with what we have done with best practice models in terms of drink and drive campaigns and what we have been able to learn from those particular campaigns.

In terms of our key achievements, also in this financial year, we know that there is no quick fix to ending the harm of family violence. This will take time and effort. Also we know that to get this right we are going to need enduring work for a considerable period of time. That is why we have released a 10-year plan, our action plan. It is also closely linked with the Victorian Safe and Strong strategy.

The CHAIR — Minister, we might just pause the hearing here at this point in time. I think the committee just wants to have a quick chat downstairs. We will pause the hearing for 5 minutes, and then we will resume.

Thank you, Minister. We are aware of the fact that you are obviously ill today, that you are not feeling well. There have been some issues in terms of hearing your testimony to date. If you could just have the microphone as close to you as possible, we will continue with the hearing.

Ms RICHARDSON — Thank you. Apologies again. I am just one of those people that if I am a bit unwell, I lose my voice so that is gone completely.

Ms SHING — If you do feel that you are not able to continue at any point, Minister, please do let us know if it gets too difficult to talk. We have got a long hearing scheduled.

Ms RICHARDSON — Thank you, I appreciate it.

The next slide — the 17–18 budget is focused on delivering our primary prevention strategy. It has two key components. The first is setting the foundations to build this architecture that we need for prevention. The second is to continue on with proven and innovative primary prevention programs. In 17–18, building on our investment of 61 million last year, we have added another $50 million. We know that we have to have dedicated and sustained investment in prevention if we are to stop the harm of family violence. The important part of each of the strategies that we have released to date talks about the need to change deeply entrenched beliefs and cultures — this is lifted straight from the royal commission — and that this is something we need to do over a longer period of time. We have done this very successfully in the past where we have looked at VicHealth, WorkSafe and the TAC. These are in fact experts in behaviour change programs. We have already said as well that we will establish a prevention agency modelled on proven best practice, but it will be the first of its kind to focus on preventing the deaths of women.

Free from Violence, the prevention agency, coordinates and supports local prevention partnerships and alliances and advises on behaviour change campaigns and works with organisations operating in the field of family violence. Of course the prevention agency will also be supported by the government’s Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy. In terms of the $38 million that has been allocated to implement the prevention strategy’s programmatic work, it will focus on addressing the key drivers to prevent violence from happening in the first place. It includes the $17 million that will continue the community primary partnership program and will develop strategies to engage workplaces on gender inequality and prevention of violence activities across community.

Funds to trial new programs for prevention have also been made available, and I look forward to working with the ministerial task force to explore these ideas further. We are also going to fund the work of ANROWS and Our Watch. We will also continue to fund behaviour change programs and a further $6.4 million has been set aside for the agency for programmatic funding in this financial year.

The CHAIR — Thank you, Minister. I might start. I might give your voice a bit of a break, Minister, and direct my question to Ms Farha. The budget paper reference is budget paper 3, page 6. Over the course of the forward estimates there is a $12 million investment for the establishment of the prevention agency. Can you outline to the committee what that agency’s work will be doing?
Ms FARHA — There are a number of functions I think, outlined in the government’s 10-year plan, around what the functions of the agency will be, which is to coordinate activity on prevention as per the prevention strategy. It is to work and commission research around what works for prevention. It is to coordinate and work with local alliances to deliver prevention activity locally, because we know for prevention that when you work on whole of population or whole of community it is best to work at the local level. I think we have consulted with the ministerial task force, which is the task force the minister established to help co-design the strategy and the work, and there are a number of roles and functions that we have discussed and are yet to finalise with that task force.

The CHAIR — Can you maybe outline to the committee just the focus of the agency in relation to prevention — how it will have an ongoing focus in relation to prevention?

Ms FARHA — I guess the purpose of the agency is about primary prevention. So what we are talking about is stopping violence before it starts. It is addressing the drivers of violence. We know, for example, drivers such as gender inequality and other drivers that we have found through research that either in and of themselves or together with gender inequality lead to violence. It will be working on oversighting the programs that work to address the drivers of violence, so scaling out what works or building on, innovating or commissioning innovative approaches to see what works.

The CHAIR — I am assuming the agency will not be operating in a silo, that it will be working with other service providers in the field or other organisations.

Ms FARHA — I think it is probably fair to say that there are prevention experts that have been working in this field for some time, and you would hope that the agency will be building on what has already been established to work — and with those experts.

The CHAIR — Excellent. Thank you very much, Ms Farha.

Ms SHING — Thanks, Minister, for getting through the presentation and for persisting despite being clearly under the weather, and thank you, too, to the witnesses. We will be relying upon you today in the context of fleshing out further the implementation of recommendations from the royal commission and how we go to the prevention initiatives that were referred to in the opening presentation and also again, Ms Farha, in your response.

One of the things that does come up repeatedly is the call for family violence initiatives that, despite the very clear evidence that refers to this as a gender inequality issue, refer to the need for family violence initiatives to assist men. This is something which we touched on last year in the course of your evidence at last year’s PAEC, Minister, which has come up repeatedly in the context of the implementation of the prevention initiatives. Again it has resurfaced, as it is wont to do on occasion, in the popular media as a source of contention around funding initiatives and how they are actually implementing recommendations from the royal commission. What I would like, Ms Farha, perhaps if you could kick off with an answer in relation to this issue, is to talk to the point that was made clear in the presentation around specific groups within the cohort of victims and survivors of family violence, which includes people from rural and regional backgrounds, CALD community groups and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups, and to talk about the distinction between those particular groups and the LGBTI community as well and men — just for avoidance of any doubt — in this space.

Ms FARHA — I guess the first thing I would say about primary prevention is that it is whole-of-population intervention. The aim of primary prevention is social norm change more broadly. What we are actually trying to do is change social norms on family violence generally, which affects everybody — so it is not one cohort over another. But what we do know from the evidence is that in addition to universal whole-of-population approaches that work in different settings — so we work in workplaces, we work in schools et cetera and we work broadly in the communities — there are some community groups that are at greater risk of perpetration than others, so there are more intensive efforts that you can do with certain communities.

You have named some of them — some of the Aboriginal Victorians, LGBTI et cetera. What we try to do is work with those communities to develop new and innovative ways to respond to the prevention of violence. We know, for example, with Aboriginal Victorians they have been leading on this work for a long time. They have been using self-determination approaches through community strengthening et cetera to deal with prevention of violence in their communities. We have been liaising with LGBTI community members and through the
LGBTI taskforce, et cetera, to understand, perhaps, what works in that environment. We have commissioned some research together with the LGBTI taskforce to try and understand better how we can approach those forms of violence. I would say in relation to male victims, I hope that when we change social norms more broadly we will be impacting everybody — men, women and children.

Ms SHING — Well, that is definitely indicated in the preventative mechanisms through respectful relationships and that work, which is targeted at every child within that group of school students that can benefit from understanding proactively what positive relationships look like and how to actually call out negative relationships or identify that negative behaviour. How does that then lead into the broader benefit of prevention activities in accordance with the royal commission’s recommendations when in fact we do have a very disproportionately large group of women and children who are affected on the statistics, on the research and on the findings of the royal commission — and extrapolate that to a broader community benefit? Just a little question for you there. I did read the entire royal commission reports, by the way.

Ms FARHA — It is fair enough to say that the royal commission called out the gendered approach to violence, but this is the benefit of primary prevention in and of itself, because it is about the whole-of-population change, like we had with some of the broader public health initiatives that we have seen over time. This is where you are really, really working at that upper echelon to really change the social norms that impact individual attitudes and behaviours, and that is of all men and women, I would say. It is funny, because we talk about addressing gender inequality as an issue, but addressing rigid gender norms and stereotypes actually benefits men as well, because we are trying to really go to the heart of what it is that is at the heart of family violence, which is power, control et cetera.

Ms SHING — That disclosure narrative around discussion of family violence when and as it occurs and breaking down, particularly for those specific cohorts and groups that you talked about earlier, is a formidable task. We are coming up against some often very rigid and very entrenched — whether they are cultural, whether they are locational or geographic or whether they are based on existing structures that prevent ready disclosure and discussion. How is the work around prevention and implementing the latest reforms that are set out in the $23 million that you have referred to in your presentation, Minister, geared towards breaking down that rigidity that prevents discussion and that prevents getting sunlight onto these issues?

Ms FARHA — I guess the range of initiatives within that amount of money are varied. Some are targeted, so they work directly with different groups. For example, we have funded some work to directly address senior Victorians. The minister referred to respectful relationships. There is also some money in there around the universal campaigns. There were two. The Victorian government contributed to Stop it at the Start, which goes towards gender norms, but I think the Victorian campaign around addressing family violence is very much about bringing it into the open and making it an issue, if that is what you are getting to.

Ms SHING — Yes. There is a very long tail on all of this in the context of the benefits being realised over time and the benefits of these prevention initiatives being able to be calculated and understood over time. What work is the department doing to understand how we can continue to build on this momentum, not just in this forward estimates period but over the long term? This is an intergenerational process.

Ms FARHA — Yes, it is an important point. We know that prevention is not going to happen overnight of course, so we have to work continually to better understand what is working and then build on those, scale up what we know works and trial new things. What we have tried to do is have thorough evaluation and research processes attached to everything that we do.

Ms SHING — Data collection, evaluation, analysis.

Ms FARHA — Data collection and making sure that the evaluation goes back to the outcomes and what the impact is that we are trying to make.

Ms SHING — Then that can be more readily understood from an economic perspective in terms of future budget investments.

Ms FARHA — Yes, I think it is for the whole spectrum —

Ms SHING — As much as anything. For the purposes of the budget, though.
Ms FARHA — as it is to better understand it and to stop the input.

Mr MORRIS — Welcome, Minister. I am sorry you are not at your fighting fit best at the moment.

Ms RICHARDSON — Doing my best.

Mr MORRIS — Minister, in the general order the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence jointly and severally administers the Family Violence Protection Act 2008 with the Attorney-General. Can you tell us what aspects of that act you are responsible for?

Ms RICHARDSON — I work in concert with the Attorney-General with respect to specific measures that will go to protecting women and children. We have actually just introduced, as you would be aware, some changes in the Parliament which looked at what we can do to improve outcomes for women and children, and this is specifically in keeping with the royal commission recommendations and what we want to see arising out of the changes that were being made as recommended by the royal commission.

Mr MORRIS — So there are no aspects of that act for which you are solely responsible?

Ms RICHARDSON — Well, it is in concert with the Attorney-General. It is not done separately.

Mr MORRIS — What I was seeking to get to, though, as I am sure you are aware, is it is standard practice to identify what sections of what act — for example, the Minister for Finance and the Treasurer have shared responsibility for the Financial Management Act, and who is responsible for which sections is clearly defined. In this case we are not able to know what aspects of the act you are responsible for.

Ms RICHARDSON — Because in this case it is actually a shared responsibility.

Mr MORRIS — Okay. The Herald Sun on 3 May reported the Premier as saying:

She (Ms Richardson) is in charge of running our prevention agenda, which is funded very strongly as part of the $1.91 billion.

Yet on budget paper 3, page 6, under the family violence prevention initiatives, there are just two line items: the total investment of $50.8 million, or 2.6 per cent of the family violence budget. Do you agree with the Premier that prevention is well funded?

Ms RICHARDSON — What I would say with respect to that is that we have quite rightly prioritised the crisis support and the record-breaking funding that we need to deliver with respect to crisis response. It would also be true to say that in terms of the architecture that we need to put in place to ensure ongoing and sustained funding that that work is still to be done. So we have rightly prioritised what needed to be prioritised, and we have said that we will do more to develop prevention architecture to actually get it right. We have seen women’s organisations campaign for additional funding for so long and so significantly that it was very important to us to ensure that we actually funded those things properly and appropriately, and that is why you are seeing the kinds of significant investment in crisis response, but that is not to say that the work is completed. In fact it is far from it. If you have a look at what we are trying to do in terms of prevention, we know that we need to implement the royal commission recommendations, which are specifically talking about sustained and ongoing funding. To put that in place in the immediate term, we need to actually get it right. We need to work with our ministerial task force, which is currently looking at what we can do — —

Mr MORRIS — I guess, Minister, the point I am trying to get to is: the Premier is saying the prevention agenda ‘is funded very strongly’ — his words, ‘our prevention agenda, which is funded very strongly’ — yet it is 2.6 per cent of the total family violence budget. How can you possibly say that prevention is well funded if it is a miniscule percentage of the — —

Ms SHING — $1.9 billion.

Mr DIMOPOULOS — There was nothing under you.

The CHAIR — Order!

Mr MORRIS — How can you possibly say that 2.6 per cent of the family violence budget is ‘well funded’?
Ms RICHARDSON — What I would say is that if you are going to get the architecture right with respect to delivering the kinds of programs that we need to deliver, you have to make sure that you have the means by which that can take place. So there is not — —

Mr MORRIS — I accept that, but you have got, in terms of establishment of the family violence protection agency, 3 million each year for four years, so a total of 12. With regards to strategy, you have got 15.5 million in the first year, and then 9.1, 9.1, 5.1. So surely the architecture argument applies to the first year, but then the funds diminish.

Ms RICHARDSON — Perhaps to put you out of your misery to some extent, I can assure you that — as we did last year when we funded 61 million and then we have funded a further 50 million — there are a range of prevention programs that will be receiving ongoing funding. For example, respectful relationships, which received funding in last year’s budget, will keep receiving funding in this year’s budget, but that is not to say that there is not going to be additional funding ongoingly. I guess what I would say to you in terms of the architecture that we need to deliver is: watch this space.

Mr MORRIS — So it is: ‘Trust me, there’s more money’. Is that basically it?

Ms RICHARDSON — Well, I tell you — —

Mr DIMOPOULOS — It is a lot more than what you put in.

Ms SHING — They are your words, Mr Morris.

Ms RICHARDSON — As tempting as it would be to perhaps point out some of the gaps in your funding in the past, I will resist doing that.

Mr MORRIS — I am sure the Chair would rule you out of order, because that would be past budgets and we are not allowed to talk about anything that happened too far back.

Ms SHING — No, we can just talk about the $1.9 billion then, Minister.

The CHAIR — Stop talking about the Spanish Inquisition, Deputy Chair.

Ms SHING — Nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition, Chair.

Ms RICHARDSON — As I said, I will resist doing that, but it is true to say that there is so much more that we need to be doing with respect to prevention. There is no way that we can police or spend our way out of the challenge that is family violence. We have to embed cultural change. This is going to be difficult to do, and we are going to have to get a range of expertise around the table to make sure that we actually get this right. So I look forward to working in the prevention portfolio to make sure we keep the focus and attention, but to be fair we needed to get that investment — that $1.9 billion investment — in place so that we could actually address the crisis that is family violence.

Mr MORRIS — Yes, I think the argument is about the share, but I will move on. Budget paper 3, page 13, talks about prevention funding going to Our Watch and the research organisation for women’s safety. Of the 38.8 million under that initiative, how much is going to those agencies?

Ms RICHARDSON — With respect to Our Watch specifically, we have increased the funding for Our Watch, and we have done that in line with what we have done in previous years to make sure that the investment is ongoing. It is not actually in the line item with respect to this year’s budget because of the way that the program actually works, but for ANROWS as well there is also an increase. Well, I would anticipate there would be an increase in — —

Mr MORRIS — So is that part of the 38.8 or not?

Ms RICHARDSON — Yes.

Mr MORRIS — It is part of the 38.8.

Ms RICHARDSON — Yes.
Mr MORRIS — So how much is going to — —

Ms RICHARDSON — So CPI — —

Mr MORRIS — How much is going to Our Watch and how much is going to the research organisation?

Ms RICHARDSON — So ANROWS is funded in a different stream than Our Watch. In terms of Our Watch it is a two-year cycle for completeness. Our Watch has been funded in this year’s budget.

Mr MORRIS — Okay. So is ANROWS funded from base funding?

Ms RICHARDSON — Sorry, say again?

Mr MORRIS — Is ANROWS funded from the department funding, or is that — —

Ms RICHARDSON — No, it is just a dip. The amounts that they want, the amounts that they are looking for, it comes up in a different cycle. They are funded every two years, and — —

Mr MORRIS — So is Our Watch funded on an ongoing basis or simply for the next two years and then it is — —

Ms RICHARDSON — No. Similarly, as I understand, they have a two-year cycle. Sorry, Our Watch has a three-year cycle, I am told.

Ms SHING — Thank you very much. I would like to keep going in relation to the discussion that we were having before the last round of questions commenced and the modelling and the work that is going into understanding the impact that such a massive change in funding, in awareness, in engagement, in co-design with community and in outreach will have to implement the recommendations of the royal commission, and particularly in relation to the primary prevention partnerships, which are talked about in the course of the presentation and referred to in answers already — the $3.85 million — and the way in which those partnerships can assist with dismantling those silos around information, building up a better culture of disclosure and discussion and also working into that piece around prevention and positive role modelling insofar as the way in which we improve the behaviour and the cultural engagement of people around this issue for future generations.

So, Ms Farha, if you wanted to continue with that, or alternatively, Minister, if you had anything to add in that space — but we were on a bit of a roll before the last round of questions finished, so either/or, and Ms Gruner, feel free to leap in at any point as well. Perhaps if we start with the community primary prevention partnerships first and then work our way out to the way in which that will assist to realise the prevention initiatives over time and how that will be implemented at an operational level, if you can.

Ms RICHARDSON — Thank you for the question. These kinds of community primary prevention partnerships we know are critical to actually ensuring we achieve success. One of the things we know is that making assumptions about particular cohorts can actually lead you into all sorts of choppy water.

Ms SHING — Absolutely.

Ms RICHARDSON — So in the budget we just released an allocated amount of money for CPPs, and in that particular cohort there will be $150,000. Nine smaller single agencies will get grants of $50,000. What we know is that, from the primary prevention strategy that we have released, in order to actually make an impact we have to scale up in terms of what works — so do not make any assumptions and actually work towards ensuring that we put in place well-evaluated programs and build alliances with people on the ground. One of the things that government can be really, really good at is making sure that the resources go to the experts on the ground. Sometimes what they struggle with is making sure that it actually reaches the people who need to be supported. We are very proud that this particular budget cycle includes opportunities for work to be done for these exact kinds of partnerships.

It is very clear that getting this framework right will make a huge difference not just in the obvious cohorts but in some non-obvious cohorts as well. LGBTI is a case in point. Rural and regional communities are another case in point. Often we make assumptions about what will work or will not work in these particular communities, and we find that if we fund it in this particular way, it has the maximum impact and maximum effect in terms of outputs.
Ms SHING — It is a big game changer in the context of funding for stakeholder groups that have previously had to fight very hard for funding, for engagement and for recognition. How have these funding announcements and initiatives been received in the context of this brave new world around the total spend and the architecture that is needing to be developed that you have referred to earlier as well as this on-ground resourcing? Again, among anyone from Julie Kun at WIRE through to the way in which Fiona McCormack talks about this issue and the way in which Rosie Batty has commented on it, there seems to be a movement away from needing to fight for one’s own patch in relation to this particular subject area to being able to combine resources. That is a cultural change in and of itself. How are the stakeholder groups going in moving to that partnership-based approach as part of the CPPs but also more generally?

Ms RICHARDSON — To be frank, they love it because that is where the expertise actually lies.

Ms SHING — It must be a big relief for them in fact.

Ms RICHARDSON — But most particularly, what we have seen with respect to preventing any harm in the health space, for example, is that prevention ends up on a very short list of concerns in terms of what should be funded and what should not be funded. What we are trying to do in this budget is really bring the primary prevention focus into the spotlight, but it is at the same time making sure that we recognise who our experts are. So if you were to go to, for example, the health department and you were to talk about, just by way of example, what you need to do in primary prevention, you would see truckloads of documents that would explain that this is what we can do to bring down chronic illness, for example. Similarly, when you move to primary prevention, you will see armies — loads of work that has been done to what we know works — but it does not necessarily get funded. We are seeking to turn that approach completely on its head, and we are doing that specifically because the royal commission recommended that we put in place sustained and enduring funding. We are doing it because we recognise that unless we actually have that sustained and enduring funding, it will not survive, potentially, future governments. It will not necessarily survive future budget cycles.

Ms SHING — Or be as durable as it needs to be in the immediate cycle as well, given what we are now opening up as part of a big conversation socially.

Ms RICHARDSON — Exactly. And what we have seen through, dare I say, the Bloody Idiot campaigns is that they can be a little controversial. What you need to do is to not have, in a sense, people batting off the why-it-works arguments, but you need to have people actually stepping up and dealing with the long-term strategy, because these programs and advertising campaigns will make people feel uncomfortable. As a consequence of that, we do not want to have a situation where people are having to defend cultural change, because politically that is problematic and it is something that we do not want to get tied up in knots. We know what works. We know that VicHealth, TAC and WorkSafe have all been acclaimed around the world with respect to the way they deliver their programs. So we know what works, and that is exactly the kind of thing that we want to put in place.

Ms SHING — And it is that fine line between drawing awareness and having people sit in that uncomfortable space on the one hand versus turning off and disengaging entirely, and that is a delicate balance to strike. What I would like to return to in the next round of questions — given that we have had the 1-minute call — is the work globally — we have an Australian-first model here in Victoria — and to understand how that builds upon what we know as having been deliverable and positive globally and how that is being implemented at a local level to again get the sorts of long-term results and changes that we are looking for right across the community and within specific community groups as well. Thank you.

Mr MORRIS — I just want to follow up on the last question. I am happy, Minister, for you to answer or Ms Farha if that is easier. Just in terms of the payments to ANROWS and Our Watch, can we establish how much and when it is going to each agency?

Ms FARHA — Further to what the minister said — that the cycles are different — the Our Watch cycle is a three-year cycle. Next year, 17–18, will be the last of the previous three-year cycle, so then we will be starting in 18–19 the next three-year cycle.

Mr MORRIS — So is that funded annually, or is that one payment for three years?
Ms FARHA — Yes. It is funded annually, but in three-year agreements, if you want — three-year commitments, yes.

Mr MORRIS — Right. Is the provision in the forward estimates for 18–19 onwards?

Ms FARHA — Yes. That includes the Our Watch from 18–19 onwards, and then ANROWS is funded every year out of the forwards.

Mr MORRIS — Okay. Can you give us the quantum for each of those?

Ms FARHA — The amounts for Our Watch are 1.1 million plus indexation each year, and the ANROWS is approximately 450 000 a year. I am happy to provide you on notice the precise amounts as well, but suffice to say it is in that area.

Mr MORRIS — That would be great. Thank you very much. If that is easier, that would be good.

Ms STALEY — Minister, you and your portfolio have been moved from the Department of Premier and Cabinet to the Department of Health and Human Services, and Family Safety Victoria is a statutory authority under DHHS rather than DPC. Is it the fact that the DPC-based minister, Gavin Jennings, will still be responsible for Family Safety Victoria despite it not being under DPC and despite him having no previous responsibility within the Department of Health and Human Services?

Ms RICHARDSON — Yes. What we are doing with respect to the programmatic funding for DPC is we are moving that from DPC to DHHS. In the normal course of events, when you are doing programmatic funding what happens is that you move. The reform agenda finishes, and you move the programmatic funding to DHHS. That enables the programs to be delivered by, in this case, Gavin Jennings.

Ms STALEY — Minister, I understand you have confirmed that Gavin Jennings will be running that. I note in your presentation that you mentioned $12 million is establishing a family violence prevention agency. Will that sit within FSV, or will that be a separate agency?

Ms RICHARDSON — No. That will be a separate agency. With respect to prevention, as you would appreciate, there is very different expertise that comes from prevention. In particular, the prevention agency, in our view, needs to sit separate in order that you can ensure that long-term and dedicated funding, because the work that needs to be done is very different.

Ms STALEY — Also referencing your presentation, you noted that key initiatives in 2016–17 included $21.8 million for respectful relationships in schools. Over what period is the 21.8 million? If it was only in the previous year, what is the funding for this financial year? I am happy for the secretary to take that.

Ms RICHARDSON — With respect to that particular program, it is actually delivered by Minister Merlino, but I guess we can get some information to you.

Ms SHING — That was answered in the course of his evidence as well.

Ms RICHARDSON — I guess we can get some information to you if that helps.

Ms FARHA — Yes. Happy to take it on notice.

Ms STALEY — Thank you very much. I move to BP 3, pages 5, 8 and 7, about the safety and support hubs. Are you the minister responsible for establishing the safety and support hubs?

Ms RICHARDSON — No.

Ms STALEY — I move to budget paper 3, page 5. The main funding for the change in perpetrator behaviour program is only for two years. Why is that? What happens to these programs after that?

Ms RICHARDSON — Okay. So the perpetrator program that we are referring to is a crisis response program, so it would be better to direct those particular questions to Minister Jennings. He is responsible for the whole-of-government initiatives. He is in charge and responsible for implementing them.
Ms STALEY — Right. So if I go to the total $1.9 billion package, how many family violence service delivery performance measures are there in the budget papers?

Ms RICHARDSON — Sorry, can you say that again?

Ms STALEY — Of the total family violence response in the budget of a $1.9 billion package, how many family violence service delivery performance measures are there?

Ms RICHARDSON — Again, I think you will find that that is a responsibility of Minister Jennings, so perhaps again that is something we could take on notice. But it is not our area of responsibility.

Ms STALEY — In relation to the prevention of family violence, no matter what the program is, before something can be tackled we need measures as to where it is and where it is going, so my next question is specifically in relation to family violence prevention. Are there service delivery performance measures that actually target a reduction in family violence incidents, particularly in areas such as parts of my electorate, which has very high levels of family violence? Is there an output measure that I can look to?

Ms RICHARDSON — Now you are talking very much in my space around what we can do to measure performance over time, because one of the things that we have been struggling with is ensuring that we actually make a difference in preventing family violence. If you have a look at what governments have done in the past, they have been a bit haphazard with respect to how they measure performance over time, and we want to stop that from happening. The problem is that these are very key statistical measures; they are ones that I will be working with Gavin Jennings in concert to make sure that we are actually delivering a measure that will see performance measured over time. So the family violence index is something that will I think make a key and strategic difference to our suite of proposals to ensure that we can actually drive down the cost, but most importantly measure it over time.

Ms STALEY — The Family Violence Steering Committee is presumably a whole-of-government initiative — budget paper 3, page 5. Could you explain why you stepped down as co-chair of the committee?

Ms RICHARDSON — The most important thing was to establish the committee in the first place, and having done that work it made sense to give an opportunity to stakeholders and those engaged directly in the response to family violence.

Ms PATTEN — I want to seek some clarification — budget paper 3, pages 5 and 6 — about the family violence coordination agency. There is $15 million set out for that, and then the family violence prevention agency, where there is 3 million set out for that. I am just wondering if you could clarify the rationale behind having two separate agencies. We certainly heard about the responsibilities for the family violence prevention agency in earlier questions, so I am just wondering if you can clarify a bit more about what the responsibilities of the family violence coordination agency would be.

Ms RICHARDSON — Thank you for your question. What we want to see is something that will recognise the expertise that is actually there on the ground predominantly in women’s health associations to actually deliver the kinds of work that need to be delivered. This is incredibly specialised work — —

Ms PATTEN — This is the coordination agency that will be doing that identification?

Ms RICHARDSON — The prevention agency is what will be doing that.

Ms PATTEN — Yes, as you said to Ms Shing.

Ms RICHARDSON — So there is a coordination agency. There is also the prevention agency. The two are quite distinct and will have very different roles and responsibilities. It may sit neatly under a response agency, but the truth is that if you have a look at the sorts of work it needs to do, it is something that needs to be ongoing and enduring.

Ms PATTEN — I am not quite sure that I have quite got a clear picture of what the two separate agencies are doing, but that is all right. I just want to talk a little bit more in that case about family violence prevention for women with disabilities. Certainly you have put out some media releases about this — that there will be half a million dollars over two years towards supporting the needs of women and girls with disabilities who are
experiencing family violence. They are alarming figures — 70 per cent of women with disabilities have experienced some form of violence or sexual abuse. Then going on, one in every five Victorian women has a disability. So this is a fairly large and significant cohort, and I just thought $500 000 seemed a relatively modest amount for that cohort and whether there was a reason why it was so small. Could you clarify a bit more on that, and how many women you expect to be able to target with that amount of money.

Ms FARHA — I think the funding that went to that program around women with disabilities was more about mainstreaming the issues within disability services, so working with Women with Disabilities Victoria to mainstream the issues around the vulnerability of women in disability services. It was initial funding for that. But I think from the new money, you would have seen the minister’s breakdown of the money allocated. So for the work around research and evaluation and the work around innovative catalytic funding, there are opportunities to look at once we have some evidence based from the initial programming where we can direct and scale up more work for particular groups like those that are at greater risk of having violence perpetrated against them.

Ms PATTEN — So next year we might see that these organisations accessed or provided services to this many women and then our targets will work from there?

Ms FARHA — I think, as I said with prevention, it is not necessarily about individual service delivery. It is about educating groups, cohorts or services around the impact and having them ready to respond appropriately in those instances.

Ms PATTEN — Fair enough. With the access to services in prison — and this follows on a little bit from Ms Staley’s questions about funding for change in perpetrator funding but also about therapy in Victorian prisons for the women who have experienced violence — I understand that there is a considerable shortage of therapists in the prisons currently for perpetrators and for victims. I cannot seem to find anything in the budget around those issues around access to services in prisons.

Ms RICHARDSON — Again, this is something that falls outside our reach.

Ms PATTEN — With the understandable initiatives about putting Aboriginal Victorians in the centre of family violence reform, a couple of years ago my region, Banyule local government — which you would probably be well aware of, Minister — set up an Aboriginal gathering place and a meeting place to really focus on the needs of the Aboriginal community in that area. I note that you are trialling some similar programs, trialling a Koori women’s gathering place. I am just wondering whether you are aware of the Banyule initiative. I suppose I am wondering why we are trialling something that it would appear has already been established in our community.

Ms RICHARDSON — We can take that on notice. It does not fall into our area of responsibility. I have, by the way, heard of the good work that has been done.

Ms PATTEN — Yes, I thought you would. It is just around the corner from you. Can I just go back to getting an understanding of the family violence coordination agency? I understand the family violence prevention agency and the body of work that it is doing. I just want to get a clearer picture of the coordination agency.

Ms RICHARDSON — I guess the simplest way to describe it in the time allowed is that one is response and one is prevention. Does that help?

Ms PATTEN — Okay. Yes, that does. The coordination agency is about providing the housing, the emergency responses, the court support and those sorts of things.

Ms RICHARDSON — Yes, exactly.

Mr DIMOPOULOS — In an answer both in your presentation and in an answer to Ms Shing’s question, you talked about behaviour change and particularly the TV ads and the campaign. I see there is a commitment in the budget on page 6, budget paper 3. I just want to get a sense in relation to those ads. There is a whole bunch of drivers of behaviour change. As we have seen, I think you mentioned TAC and other campaigns run in the past. Do you have a sense in this case of what the benchmarks would be to assess whether that campaign has been successful? I think it is very powerful. I think it is important to run community education campaigns. I
think governments are going out of favour with them, but I think it is a very good addition to the package of measures that you have invested in the prevention of family violence and changing behaviour. Could you give us a sense of what you think would make or break these ads in terms of performance?

Ms RICHARDSON — Thank you for your question. We actually put in place the universal media campaign in the 2016–17 budget. In this budget we have also invested a further $1.5 million in an additional amount of money to address what we need to do to change those cultural norms. In terms of the actual campaign, you would have seen perhaps — and they are somewhat confronting — that family violence has no good days, and there is nothing good about dads who abuse women. Clearly this is not meant to be easy viewing. They do of course challenge these commonly held perceptions that have for far too long been excused.

One of the things we know is that people also often will diminish or excuse perpetrator behaviour that we know is very, very harmful to women. This is one of the challenges, because in fact when you talk to women and men about what you are trying to do in this space, you at times get very different feedback in terms of what they believe needs to happen in this space. It is not to say that men dismiss it — far from it — but they have a very different response to what is going on around them in a cultural sense. So these initiatives are going to be, no doubt, very important in the long term. But let us not kid ourselves; this is not a change that is going to happen overnight. The best research that I have seen talks about changing attitudes within a seven-year period. That is the best that I have ever seen.

Mr DIMOPOULOS — What period?

Ms RICHARDSON — Seven years. Mostly people will talk about changing attitudes like the one that we are trying to change within a 25-year period. Fingers crossed we can get it done in seven years, but it is more likely to be somewhere between seven years and 25 years.

Mr DIMOPOULOS — Thank you. Just a comment, if I may, and then I will hand over to Ms Shing. You may have heard this before, but the ad of the family having a picnic and the kid and his father are kicking the ball and he accidentally hits the mum on the head I think is a very powerful one because, if you go too far out on these things, people dissociate themselves and go, ‘That’s not me. I don’t beat my wife or my girlfriend’, or whatever. But if it is something like that, I think many of us know people who do that or who have done something similar, because it is a bit closer to home — or maybe ourselves.

It was a very powerful ad when I saw it because it is actually much easier to identify with for a broader audience, as we saw with the gentleman — I cannot remember his name — who addressed us in the chamber that day. We devoted half a day. I think he said something to the effect that many of us contribute to a conversation in the context where some choose to perpetrate family violence. I think some on the other side objected to that characterisation, but I think that ad is exactly that kind of context. I just wanted to make that statement.

Ms SHING — I might pick up there and just contrast what Mr Dimopoulos has said in relation to the response from that advertisement from people in Gippsland, the area that I am one of a number of MPs to represent, which has been that it is in fact intensely uncomfortable and difficult to watch because it is so familiar. It is that power imbalance and that sense of the all-pervasive nature of being diminished and being comparatively powerless, particularly where there are children involved, that has resonated very strongly with people. Congratulations on achieving a message which is uncomfortable but so important to communicate. I think the work that is being done in this space has been incredibly powerful.

To move back to the question that I was asking before the last break, the global research in relation to these areas and the programs that have worked are something which has, as you have referred to, Minister, taken on the goal of changing attitudes and changing behaviours over time. Not just realising the recommendations from the commission as far as prevention is concerned, but behaviour change, what is it that has been adopted as part of global lessons in other programs and other jurisdictions that we can actually build upon here in Victoria? We know that as we have moved toward this Australian-first architecture that the skeleton is forming and we are getting things into place to be able to deliver on that, but what else has been done globally that we can add to and learn from and implement here?

Ms FARHA — I think that the interesting thing with prevention around the world, primary prevention, is that a lot of research has happened, you probably know, through the World Health Organization. There is a big
project funded by the UK government called What Works? to prevent violence against women et cetera, and there are a range of consistencies that emerge through the meta-evaluation of certain programs, and you will see that school settings is very positively received. Community mobilisations, working both with men and women at the grassroots — —

Ms SHING — And that co-design principle in terms of delivery.

Ms FARHA — That co-design principle where you start working, talking with people, getting greater understandings, building on your understanding of human rights, gender equality et cetera which lead to change. And there has been amazing success in places like Uganda with actual rates of perpetration as a result of those. I think they are all things that we can build on, but I think what is probably fair to say is that this is going to be probably one of the world’s first coordinated multilevel, multisetting approaches to prevention, which is what you need to really change behaviour.

Ms SHING — All occurring simultaneously.

Ms FARHA — Simultaneously so you are constantly delivering the same message through different media. You might have a universal campaign. You might do something targeted at schools, in workplaces, sports clubs. You might do something more generally in people’s lives, wherever they live, work and play — you know that saying. It is true, this is what you really have to do. I think the coordination of these and making sure that those social norm changes are happening at every level is key to changing behaviour ultimately.

Ms SHING — If we are talking about these themes needing a gestation time of between seven and 25 years to take effect and to be durable in an intergenerational sense, how do these mechanisms that are being set up now as part of infrastructure, as part of prevention, as part of the work that, Minister, you referred to in your presentation, set the structure up to be able to withstand a change in government or a change in the political landscape? That is something which I know is a very significant concern that weighs on the hearts and the minds of people in the sector, people who are sensing light at the end of a very long and often very difficult tunnel. Just your views in that regard, please.

Ms RICHARDSON — The focus that came from having a royal commission into family violence was to ensure that we actually put in place enduring and sustainable funding. What we have seen too often is a chop and change. Primary prevention strategies might get funded one year and then, the next, nothing. We cannot afford to do that. This cultural change is actually incredibly difficult work, and there is some expertise on the ground — most particularly the women’s health organisations, among others — —

The CHAIR — Order! Ms Staley until 4.25 p.m.

Ms SHING — We will come back to that.

Ms STALEY — Minister, I refer to budget paper 3, pages 5 to 6, table 1.4, which lists 36 output initiatives in relation to family violence. I would like your advice as to: are you responsible for ‘building the capacity to deliver family violence services for culturally diverse communities’, and if not, who is?

Ms RICHARDSON — Can you say that again?

Ms STALEY — Are you the minister responsible for ‘building the capacity to deliver family violence services for culturally diverse communities’, which is the first one in this table, and if you are not, who is?

Ms RICHARDSON — If it was responding to family violence, that is Minister Scott. If it is working to prevent family violence in unique cohorts, then that is something that would fall under my responsibility. Having said that, there are of course crossovers and learnings with respect to this work, but I would emphasise the need to actually draw on the expertise of the primary prevention sector to ensure that what we put in place actually does make a difference.

Ms STALEY — So in that particular case there is total funding over the forward estimates of $9.2 million. What proportion of that would you be responsible for?

Ms RICHARDSON — What is the budget reference?
The CHAIR — Budget paper 3, page 5 — the first line item.

Ms RICHARDSON — That would be Minister Scott.

Ms STALEY — Sorry. I thought the answer I got to the first question was that the aspects of it that were to do with delivering programs were Minister Scott but the aspects of it that were to do with prevention were with you. So I have misunderstood. You are saying that the whole lot goes with Minister Scott?

Ms RICHARDSON — It talks about building the capacity to deliver family violence services for culturally and linguistically diverse groups. I can see how you could read that as being part of my program responsibility, but I see it as a way to build capacity, which is responding to family violence, and that is why it is pulled out as a line item in that particular way. Does that help?

Ms STALEY — Yes, it does. Thank you very much, Minister. So if I move to the next line item in the same table, which is the ‘courts case management system’, do you have any responsibility for that?

Ms RICHARDSON — No.

Ms STALEY — The ‘Court Integrated Services Program (CISP) and CISP Remand Outreach Pilot’, do you have any responsibility for that?

Ms RICHARDSON — No.

Ms STALEY — ‘Delivering on the Royal Commission into Family Violence recommendations on funding reform’, do you have any responsibility for that?

Ms SHING — It is the presentation about prevention, which is over the page on page 6.

The CHAIR — You are not the Chair, Ms Shing.

Ms STALEY — The minister in her presentation mentioned the full amount of the investment by the government. I am asking what her responsibilities are in relation to this table and the presentation she gave, which mentioned the full investment. I am up to the ‘enhanced role for universal service providers’; do you have any responsibility for that?

Ms RICHARDSON — Would it save time if I went to the actual responsibilities that are detailed in the budget, and that would mean that you can turn the page and you will get to ‘establishing a family violence prevention agency’ and ‘prevention of family violence strategy’, which is on page 6 of the budget papers.

Ms STALEY — So you have confirmed that of the 36 output initiatives in relation to family violence you have responsibility for two. Thank you, Minister. In relation to the $38.8 million, which is the prevention of family violence strategy on page 6 —

Ms RICHARDSON — Can I just stop you there? I think that one of the things that might be misunderstood with respect to primary prevention is just how important it is to get it right, and it is a specialist bit of work. It is not something that you can do in a shorthand way. It is something that we need to spend some time on and is something that we need to get right.

Ms STALEY — Thank you, Minister. In relation to the prevention of family violence strategy, which is the 38.8 million, in your presentation you noted that 6.4 million is for programming connected to the prevention agency, and then you also mentioned that there is 12 million to establish the family violence prevention agency. So could you please just go into a bit more detail around what the programming connected to the prevention agency is, at 6.4, separate to the 12 if you like — is my question. What is the difference? What are they for?

Ms RICHARDSON — Yes, sure. With respect to the $38 million that you are referring to, there are of course $6.4 million that are connected to delivering the prevention agency, so the programs that will actually deliver the agency. Our vision with respect to delivering this agency will be that it will put in place ongoing programs, ongoing measures, to improve outcomes for women and girls. So this is an initial investment that is being made with respect to this funding, and it is something that we hope to see more of once we get that.
architecture in place. We do not want to, in a sense, cut things short; we want to keep things going as we try to put in place some prevention architecture.

**Ms STALEY** — Sorry, I am struggling slightly with hearing you, but I am also — —

**Ms RICHARDSON** — Sorry.

**Ms STALEY** — So there is 12 million to set it up, and then it runs some programs. Is that really what you are saying?

**Ms RICHARDSON** — Yes, because while the work and the architecture is being completed we do not want to stop funding because there are a lot of programs that have been evaluated and evaluated very well. This will ensure that we can actually keep those programs going while we deliver the architecture that we need to deliver to see long-term change.

**Ms STALEY** — Thank you. Perhaps if I could go back to that table that I was talking about before, table 1.4 ‘Output initiatives’, is it possible to have on notice who is responsible for each of those line items? Thank you very much, Secretary — that is great.

My question is about something that you and I have talked about before, which is in relation to court security in small courthouses. This was not a direct recommendation of the royal commission — it was separate. There were some court things that were in it. My question is: can you go beyond the royal commission now? Is that where we are now? Things like helping those people — is that possible?

**Ms RICHARDSON** — We are in the business of helping people, no doubt about that, but with respect to the Attorney-General’s responsibilities, it would be more appropriate for him to respond to.

**Ms STALEY** — Thank you. That is fair enough. So Minister, why are you here — I know you are very ill, as well — appearing at PAEC to answer 1½ hours of questions about family violence budget initiatives when you are not responsible for almost all of them? Why has the government sent you?

**Ms SHING** — She is the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence; we have just talked about prevention of family violence for nearly an hour and a half.

**Ms RICHARDSON** — One of the things that — —

**The CHAIR** — I would like to thank the witnesses for their attendance — the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence, the Honourable Fiona Richardson, MP; Ms Farha; Ms Gruner. The committee will follow up on any questions taken in notice in writing. I believe there were four questions in the hearing this afternoon. I think Ms Pennicuik will also submit some, given that she is ill today. The response, answering the questions in full, should be provided in writing within 10 working days of the committee’s request.

**Witnesses withdrew.**