



# STRENGTHENING THE FOUNDATIONS

FIRST ROLLING ACTION PLAN  
2019 - 2022



### **ABORIGINAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The Victorian Government proudly acknowledges Victorian Aboriginal people as the first peoples and Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and water on which we rely. We acknowledge and respect that Aboriginal communities are steeped in traditions and customs built on an incredibly disciplined social and cultural order. This social and cultural order has sustained up to 50,000 years of existence. We acknowledge the ongoing leadership role of the Aboriginal community in addressing, and preventing family violence and join with our First Peoples to eliminate family violence from all communities.

### **SUPPORT SERVICES**

If you have experienced family violence or sexual assault and require immediate or ongoing assistance, contact **1800 RESPECT (1800 737732)** to talk to a counsellor from the National Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence hotline. 1800 RESPECT can also provide support to workers.

For confidential support and information, contact Safe Steps' 24/7 family violence response line on **1800 015 188**. If you are concerned for your safety or that of someone else, please contact the police in your State or territory or call **000** for emergency assistance.



# FOREWORD



Victoria's vision is to end family violence and keep women and children safe.

To achieve this, Government wants to grow and support a workforce that is recognised as world leading.

We acknowledge all victim survivors of family violence. We remember those who have been killed as a result of family violence. We also keep forefront in our minds all those who are still experiencing family violence today, and for whom we undertake this work.

We want Victoria to be the first choice for those currently working in family violence or primary prevention or for those seeking a career in the sector.

We want to ensure their health and wellbeing and professional development are key priorities.

While our family violence reform work is unprecedented it is being built on the shoulders of giants. We salute those that have come before us, those who tirelessly strive to end family violence.

We are fortunate in Victoria to have a highly skilled, dedicated and resilient family violence and primary prevention workforce who have worked tirelessly for decades to help keep women and children in our communities safe.

Their experience, leadership, wisdom and expertise helped set out the long-term vision for the future of the workforces that intersect with family violence outlined in *Building from Strength: 10-Year Industry Plan for Family Violence Prevention and Response*.

Thousands of people working across community services, justice, health and education and training - our police officers, doctors, teachers and lawyers - also have contact with people experiencing or at risk of family violence. We want to make sure they all feel equipped and confident to play their role in preventing, identifying and responding to family violence.

A lot of work is already underway to strengthen capability across sectors. This Rolling Action Plan, as the first of three, brings this work together and builds on it, prioritising the initiatives that will strengthen the foundations needed to realise the long-term vision.

We should never lose sight that this is incredibly complex reform and much of what is being delivered has never been done before.

This work has come at a time of huge social change.

People are looking for work that is purposeful and meaningful.

They want to give back to their communities and we need to capitalise on this appetite for values-driven work.

We recognise there are many valuable transferable skills that people can bring to the family violence and primary prevention sectors. New ways of delivering services, such as The Orange Door, therapeutic responses for victim survivors and perpetrator interventions, also provide an opportunity for people wanting to work in a flexible, dynamic and collaborative environment.

I thank the members of the Industry Taskforce, as well as leaders across community services, health, justice and education, who are collaborating with us to implement the Industry Plan and this first Rolling Action Plan.

I also want to thank those with lived experience of family violence whose voices have informed this action plan - as always, they are at the heart of our work.

Together, we can work to ensure that our workforces are supported to respond to family violence and to prevent it from occurring in the first place, today and into the future.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Gabrielle Williams'.

**The Hon Gabrielle Williams MP**  
**Minister for Prevention of Family Violence**



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# INTRODUCTION

*Strengthening the Foundations: First Rolling Action Plan 2019-22 (Strengthening the Foundations)* is the first of three Rolling Action Plans that work towards achieving the long-term vision for the workforces that intersect with family violence, as outlined in *Building from Strength: 10-Year Industry Plan for Family Violence Prevention and Response (Building from Strength)*.

This vision is of a system that is flexible, dynamic, and person-centred, working together to respond to the complexity and harms of family violence, and to prevent it from occurring in the first place. It is also accountable and works collaboratively towards shared outcomes, its continuous development built on robust data and evaluation and harnessing technology.

The three Rolling Action Plans will steer organisations across the spectrum of specialist, non-family violence specialist, mainstream and universal service sectors, peak bodies and government in the implementation of *Building from Strength*. The initiatives that form this first Rolling Action Plan will lay the foundations for building supported, valued, skilled and diverse workforces and a responsive system that encompasses a range of sectors whose workforces intersect with family violence.

Specialist family violence response and prevention practitioners are facing increasing demand and urgent need across the system. The Royal Commission into Family Violence (the Royal Commission) acknowledged the commitment, knowledge and expertise of the specialist sectors. The role of workers across other sectors was also recognised, including community services, health, justice, human services and education and training.

Significant reform has already started to change the way the family violence system operates and how specialist family violence response and the prevention sectors work to identify, respond to and prevent family violence. Other system-level reform is also taking place across Victoria, impacting other workforces that intersect with family violence. For example, under the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM), workers across a broad range of organisations, professions and sectors have a shared responsibility and legal obligation to identify, assess and manage family violence risk, even where it may not be core business. These workforces must be supported to deliver on and work within this reform agenda.

The community services sector is also undergoing significant reform. *The 10-Year Community Services Industry Plan* articulates and responds to the opportunities and challenges faced by the industry, and its *Rolling Implementation Plan 2019-2020* identifies priority actions. *Strengthening the Foundations* and future Rolling Action Plans will address a number of the priorities in the *10-Year Community Services Industry Plan* for the specialist family violence response and prevention sectors, and actions will be coordinated between the two plans to ensure they complement rather than duplicate one another.

*Strengthening the Foundations* embraces the strength and diversity of Aboriginal communities and services in workforce and service system reform, and importantly, the foundation of Aboriginal self-determination. In doing so, it aligns with the vision and strategic directions set by both *Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way – Strong Culture, Strong People, Strong Families (Dhelk Dja)* and the forthcoming *Aboriginal Family Violence Industry Strategy*.

*Strengthening the Foundations* will build on the vision of a family violence system that is more inclusive, responsive and accessible for all Victorians, as outlined in *Everybody Matters: Inclusion and Equity Statement (Everybody Matters)*.

*Strengthening the Foundations* and future Rolling Action Plans will also align with other key state and national reform agendas. The Victorian Government is committed to partnering with the sector, across government and with the community to support this coordination.

This Rolling Action Plan has been developed in partnership with the industry. Key stakeholders and experts who guided the development and implementation of *Building from Strength* will also support the implementation of initiatives across all Rolling Action Plans, including the Industry Taskforce.

Underpinned by an evidence base from *Building from Strength* and the *2017 Census of Workforces that Intersect with Family Violence* ('the 2017 Census'), *Strengthening the Foundations* is an important step in implementing the Victorian Government's family violence agenda.





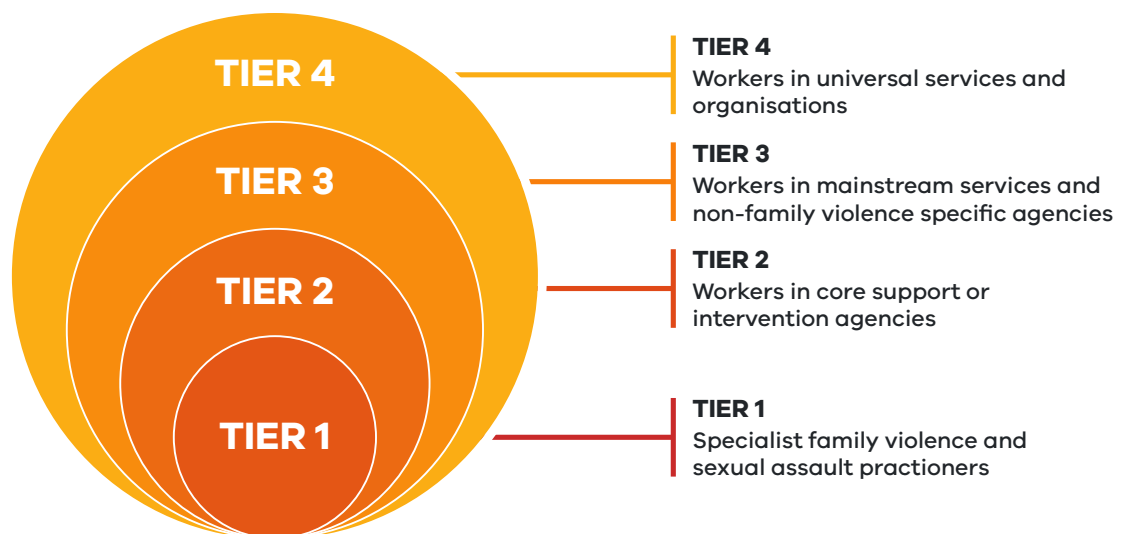
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# SCOPE OF STRENGTHENING THE FOUNDATIONS

In line with *Building from Strength, Strengthening the Foundations* has a broad scope across the specialist family violence and primary prevention, community services, health, justice, and education and training sectors.

This Plan uses the four-tier workforce classification adopted in *Building from Strength*<sup>1</sup> (Figure 1, below). The four tiers distinguish between different roles in family violence **response** across these sectors, for

both victim survivors of family violence and perpetrators. The Royal Commission noted that these tiers provide ‘a good starting point for thinking about the competencies each part of the system needs to possess’. The tiers, while not exhaustive, are a useful demonstration of how different workforces on a spectrum from specialist to universal services, have a distinct and particular role to play in **responding** to family violence.



**FIGURE 1:** Workforce tiers for family violence response

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<sup>1</sup> As originally developed by the Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria.

The **primary prevention** sector spans various workforces and is made up of specialist primary prevention practitioners

and individuals who contribute to primary prevention as part of their broader role. These are described in Figure 2 below.

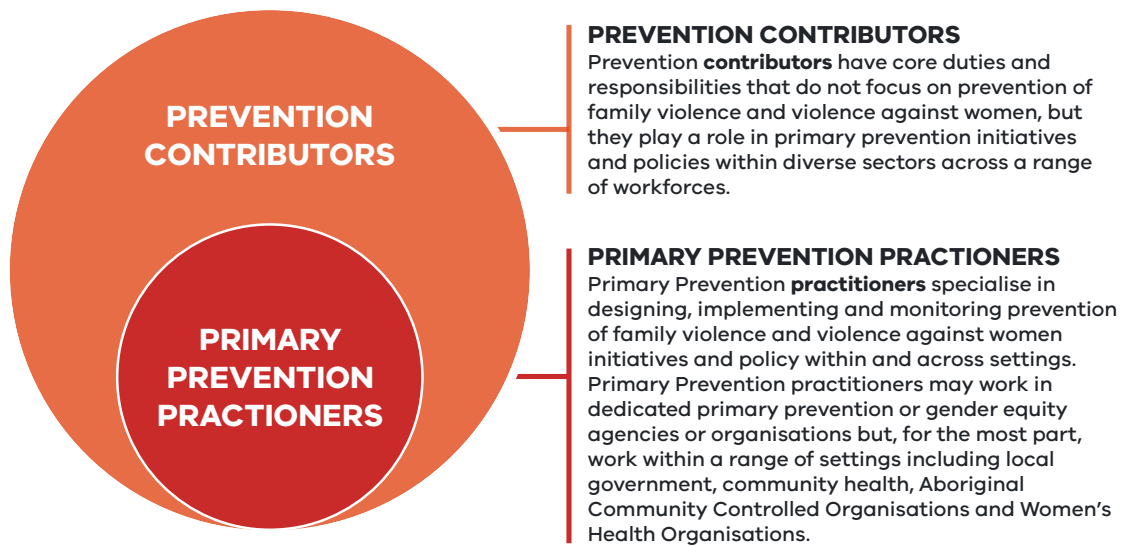
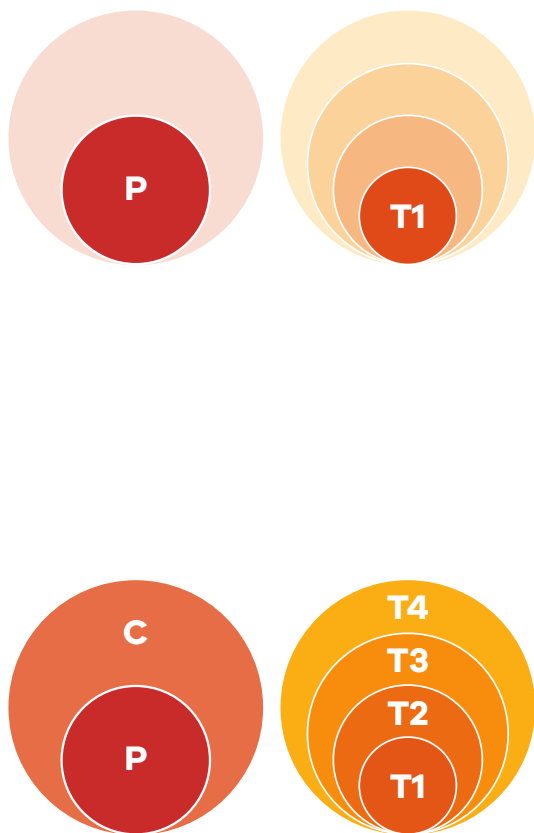


FIGURE 2: Primary prevention workforces

Parts of this Plan focus specifically on the **specialist family violence response and prevention practitioner** workforces and sectors. These workforces may be referred to collectively as 'specialist workforces' or 'specialist sectors' but this Plan recognises that they each have unique characteristics and workforce needs, and initiatives are targeted and tailored accordingly. Specialist practitioners may work in specialist organisations or may be embedded in tier 2-4 settings. Prevention initiatives in this Plan particularly focus on the prevention practitioner workforce. In the response space 'specialist workforces' encompasses the workforces that work with victim survivors and the workforces that work with perpetrators.

Other parts of this Plan have a broader focus. Tiers 2-4 workforces, and prevention contributors, are referred to collectively as '**non-specialist workforces**'. This terminology indicates that these workforces do not specialise in family violence response or prevention, however can be critical first responders (such as police), early identifiers (such as teachers) or provide services which are critical to ensuring safety and recovery (such as lawyers or child and family services workers). This Plan recognises that these workforces are specialist in their own contexts, and initiatives in this Plan are designed to build family violence capability for workers to prevent and respond to family violence within that context.

A comprehensive **glossary** can be found at the end of this Plan.



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# IMPLEMENTING *BUILDING FROM STRENGTH*

*Building from Strength* has a broad scope to build family violence response and prevention capability over 10 years across a range of workforces that intersect with family violence. It will sustainably shift how we respond to and prevent family violence and violence against women.

*Building from Strength* identified four priority actions, as seen in Figure 3. As the first Rolling Action Plan, *Strengthening the Foundations* will focus on the foundation required for long-term prevention and response capability and capacity across a strong and connected system. Seven key focus areas, as seen in Figure 3, have been developed to steer our efforts and guide our first steps in achieving the long-term vision of *Building from Strength*.

The actions in this Plan are grouped under the seven key focus areas, but many of them support more than one. In this way, the key focus areas are mutually-reinforcing, and together support systemic workforce and sector development.

A commitment to Aboriginal self-determination and intersectionality is embedded in all of the key focus areas. This Plan sits alongside *Dhelk Dja* and *Everybody Matters* which provide roadmaps for this critical work. In particular, this Plan is a companion piece to the forthcoming *Aboriginal Family Violence Industry Strategy*, to be developed by the Dhelk Dja Partnership Forum.

The key focus areas are underpinned by an evidence base from *Building from Strength*, the 2017 Census and the practice wisdom and experience of sector partners. *Strengthening the Foundations* has been developed using a gendered and intersectional lens. The Rolling Action Plans that succeed *Strengthening the Foundations* will incorporate emerging evidence, build on what works and map out the next steps to respond to the changing specialist family violence response and prevention systems.

The seven focus areas align with the Family Violence Outcomes Framework (FVOF) as introduced in *Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change*. In particular, they contribute to the systems domain outcomes: a system which is united and integrated; and a workforce which is properly recognised, understands risk and need, and is skilled to prevent family violence.

As *Building from Strength* is a 10-year industry plan, achieving its vision will require carefully prioritised, sequenced and sustained work. It is therefore important that this first Rolling Action Plan focuses on putting the foundations in place and addressing evidence gaps to inform the next steps to be taken in future Rolling Action Plans.



**FIGURE 3:** Building from Strength: Rolling Action Plan Framework

# 10-YEAR OUTCOMES

## *Building from Strength* priority: Building prevention and response capability across the system

<b>FOCUS AREA 1</b>	<b>BUILDING WORKFORCE CAPABILITY</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. A culture of continuous learning enables specialist family violence response and primary prevention workforces to build the skills and capabilities required for their work.</li><li>2. Specialist family violence response and primary prevention workforces have highly developed technical skills and capabilities to deal with the complexity and diversity of their work.</li><li>3. Specialist family violence response and primary prevention, community services, health, justice, human services and education workforces are prepared to identify, assess and manage family violence risk and understand their role in supporting family violence prevention, early identification and response. When prescribed, organisations follow the maturity model to align policies, procedures, practice guidance and tools to MARAM.</li></ol>
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<b>FOCUS AREA 2</b>	<b>ENHANCING TRAINING ARCHITECTURE</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Workforces are provided with a quality learning experience, with opportunities to grow, learn and develop throughout their career.</li><li>2. Future workforces are provided with relevant high-quality training content and courses that reflect the appropriate skills and knowledge required to build family violence response and primary prevention capabilities.</li><li>3. A network of skilled trainers and educators deliver specialist-informed and evidence-based family violence response and primary prevention training, working closely with the specialist sectors.</li><li>4. There are strong and sustainable connections between the education, training and professional development sectors and specialist family violence and response sectors.</li></ol>
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## *Building from Strength* priority: Strengthening the specialist workforces

<b>FOCUS AREA 3</b>	<b>RECRUITING AND RETAINING SPECIALIST WORKFORCES</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Specialist family violence response and primary prevention sectors can attract, recruit and retain skilled practitioners, when and where they are needed.</li><li>2. Specialist family violence response and primary prevention workforces reflect the diversity of the community, because organisations are accessible, culturally safe places to work.</li><li>3. The value of the specialist family violence response and primary prevention workforces is recognised, and remuneration reflects skills, training and experience.</li></ol>
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## FOCUS AREA 4

### STRENGTHENING LEADERSHIP IN THE SPECIALIST SECTORS

1. Sector leaders set direction and build, motivate and develop their workforces to work towards ending family violence.
2. Capable, purposeful and connected leadership underpins a system that works together to prevent and respond to family violence.

## *Building from Strength* priority: Workforce health, safety and wellbeing

## FOCUS AREA 5

### PRIORITISING HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING

1. A positive and supportive work environment is strengthened by best practice supervision, peer support, opportunities for reflective practice and health, safety and wellbeing tools to support practitioners in their work.
2. Health, safety and wellbeing in the specialist workforces is enhanced by improved job security and employment conditions across the sectors. Role design supports a high level of health, safety and wellbeing.

## *Building from Strength* priority: Building a system that works together

## FOCUS AREA 6

### BUILDING SECTOR AND ORGANISATIONAL CAPABILITY

1. Organisations and sectors are capable in planning, resourcing, delivering and committing to change and reform.
2. Organisations and sectors have robust governance, policies, processes and support systems to ensure the long-term success and sustainability of the actions committed to in Building from Strength.

## FOCUS AREA 7

### WORKING IN A CONNECTED AND COHESIVE SYSTEM

1. The system is connected, cohesive and dynamic and can respond to evolving economic and social trends.
2. A culture of collaboration, innovation and learning extends across organisations and sectors.
3. The system is accountable and works collaboratively towards shared outcomes. Continuous improvement is supported by robust data and evaluation.
4. Statewide and regional infrastructure exists to support system connection and cohesion, across government and non-government sectors.







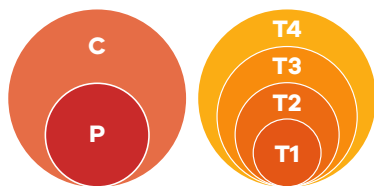
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# STRENGTHENING THE FOUNDATIONS FOCUS AREAS

The seven focus areas developed to support achieving the long-term vision of *Building from Strength* will be realised through a number of thematic key foundational priorities and associated actions.

Further detail on the priorities and their associated actions is available in the *Strengthening the Foundations: Detailed Action Plan 2019-2022*, available at [www.familyviolence.vic.gov.au](http://www.familyviolence.vic.gov.au).

## FOCUS AREA 1: BUILDING WORKFORCE CAPABILITY



Preventing and responding to family violence is everyone's business. Building workforce capability is vital in creating a system that works together in response to the complexities of family violence. Capability development initiatives will strengthen the deep expertise and practice wisdom held by the specialist sectors and the skills and knowledge of workforces that intersect with family violence.

Additionally, the Royal Commission identified the need to ensure all workforces are capable of fulfilling their particular role in preventing and responding to family violence, recommending a consistent approach to developing capability in mainstream and universal services<sup>2</sup>. While the need for capability building will continue, it is expected that the balance of actions to support this will shift in future Rolling Action Plans.

The actions in this focus area are underpinned by the *Responding to Family Violence Capability Framework* and the *Preventing Family Violence and Violence Against Women Capability Framework*, which were developed with the specialist sectors<sup>3</sup> and released with *Building from Strength*.

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<sup>2</sup> State of Victoria, Royal Commission into Family Violence: Report and recommendations, Vol V, Parl Paper No 132 (2014-16).

<sup>3</sup> Led by Domestic Violence Victoria, DVRCV, No To Violence, Our Watch and Women's Health Victoria.

The *10-Year Community Services Industry Plan* also places a focus on capability building, offering opportunities for aligned work to maximise outcomes.

This focus area will also build the capability required for the successful implementation of the new Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework, also known as the MARAM.

## Why it's important

- Workforce capability across specialist and non-specialist workforces is fundamental to successful reform, and critical in ensuring that the indicators of family violence are recognised early, to ensure that all victim survivors, including children and young people, are supported appropriately, that perpetrators are held to account, and that opportunities for primary prevention are maximised.
- A consistent and collaborative approach to risk assessment and risk management is required across all parts of the service system to ensure victims' safety and perpetrator accountability. This shared responsibility is explained in the MARAM and embedded in the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008*. This provides a clear authorising environment and legal obligation to support a broad range of workforces to undertake family violence risk assessment and risk management.
- The 2017 Census found that most respondents who stated they were 'not confident' in identifying and responding to family violence had not completed training. Those who had completed training overwhelmingly said they were 'somewhat confident' or 'confident' in identifying family violence<sup>4</sup>.

## Strengthening the Foundations outcomes

1. Existing specialist and non-specialist workers are accessing tailored education, training and professional development opportunities consistent with the prevention and response capability frameworks, so they have the skills to prevent family violence, support victim survivors and hold perpetrators to account.
2. Professionals from prescribed organisations in specialist and non-specialist sectors understand and act within the MARAM framework and their responsibilities in its implementation, resulting in improved identification and management of family violence risk, and increased safety for those with lived experience of family violence.
3. Organisations and new workers joining the specialist sectors have a range of clear pathways and supports to enter the sectors and meet minimum qualification requirements.

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<sup>4</sup> State of Victoria, *Census of Workforces that Intersect with Family Violence: Companion report to Building from Strength: 10-Year Industry Plan for Family Violence Prevention and Response* (2017).

# Key foundational priorities to support this focus area

This Plan aims to address immediate upskilling needs as well as set the foundations to embed sustainable capability building approaches. This focus area prioritises:

- Building capability across specialist and non-specialist workforces to support the implementation of MARAM. The aim of MARAM is to increase the safety and wellbeing of Victorians by ensuring all relevant services contribute effectively to the identification, assessment and management of family violence risk, according to their roles and responsibilities.
- Building capability in primary prevention, for practitioners and contributors. Embedding primary prevention in Victoria's communities is a key piece of prevention infrastructure to support long term shifts in the prevalence of family violence.
- Building capability of entrants to the sector to support the rapid growth in the specialist response and prevention sectors and support the implementation of mandatory minimum qualifications for specialist family violence response practitioners.

## Actions

- 1.1** Roll out MARAM tools and practice guidance for professionals who work with victim survivors.
- 1.2** Develop MARAM perpetrator tools and practice guidance for professionals who work with perpetrators of family violence.
- 1.3** Deliver MARAM training program to support organisations to understand their roles and responsibilities and act in accordance with their legal obligations.
- 1.4** Deliver MARAM Collaborative Practice Training to equip prescribed professionals to collaborate across services and workforces to embed MARAM and ensure the best outcomes for victim survivors
- 1.5** Develop learning and assessment resources on working with male perpetrators of family violence.
- 1.6** Further develop The Lookout as a clearinghouse and 'go to' source for up to date policy and practice changes and advice on prevention for specialist and non-specialist workforces.
- 1.7** Build the skills, knowledge and capability of existing and emerging workforces to work effectively with perpetrators.
- 1.8** Continue to build specialist capability in primary prevention, including through communities of practice, induction programs for new practitioners, and training for supervisors.
- 1.9** Deliver training for primary prevention contributors to build capability to prevent family violence and violence against women.
- 1.10** Deliver training for disability and social service workers to embed primary prevention into their work.
- 1.11** Deliver the Fast Track Professional Development Program to support the rapid development of practitioners into response and prevention roles.
- 1.12** Deliver the Family Violence Practice Social Work Graduate Program in two locations, providing social work graduates with training, professional development and supervision.
- 1.13** Build capability in specialist family violence workers to identify legal issues, provide legal information and make timely and appropriate referrals to lawyers and other services.
- 1.14** Implement minimum qualifications for the specialist family violence response sector from 2020 to strengthen the deep expertise, knowledge and practice wisdom held by the specialist family violence response workforce, and to equip sector entrants with the capability they need for this specialised, complex work.
- 1.15** Review and update Victoria's first capability frameworks for prevention and response to ensure they continue to accurately articulate the skills and knowledge needed to prevent family violence and violence against women.

# MARAM Framework

The MARAM Framework, which replaces the Common Risk Assessment Framework (CRAF), has been redeveloped to address the issues and gaps identified by the Royal Commission, the Coronial Inquest into the death of Luke Geoffrey Batty and the 2016 Monash Review of the framework. It aims to improve the identification, assessment and management of family violence risk.

Significant work is underway to implement MARAM and the Family Violence Information Sharing (FVIS) scheme. This includes training, change management support and a range of guidance materials being developed by Family Safety Victoria (FSV) and other government departments.

The following example illustrates the importance of building capability across specialist and non-specialist workforces to support the successful implementation of MARAM.

*A young pregnant woman arrived with her partner at the emergency department, presenting with bleeding and abdominal pain. The nurse noticed that the patient was withdrawn, appeared depressed and identified that missed antenatal care had not been followed up. The partner did not let the patient speak for herself during the consultation.*

*The nurse distracted the partner by asking him to assist with paperwork in a separate room while the nurse supported the patient to have a physical examination. The nurse asked screening questions in line with the MARAM Framework to identify family violence risks. The patient disclosed that her partner was verbally threatening and controlling of her movements and connection with her family, and had been physically violent in the past.*

*With the patient's consent, the nurse called the local Orange Door service where a specialist family violence worker completed a risk assessment which included an information request to Victoria Police (under the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme) about the patient's partner, seeking information on his history of violence and other risk-relevant information to inform the assessment.*

*The Orange Door worker was informed that the partner had a previous charge for physical assault against the patient, a prior history of violence and had breached an intervention order against a former partner. The information about the perpetrator's history of family violence was able to be shared with the victim survivor under the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme to support the safety planning for her and her child. She was later able to use this information to provide relevant information to the court regarding the child's safety when seeing his father.*

## Minimum qualifications for the specialist family violence response sector

The Royal Commission called for a staged introduction of mandatory qualifications (Bachelor of Social Work or equivalent degree) for specialist family violence response practitioners.

A minimum qualification for entry to the specialist family violence response sector is complex. This recommendation must be implemented in a way that prepares new practitioners for the complexity of specialist family violence work, whilst also minimising any unintended consequences such as exacerbating workforce supply challenges.

It is also important that implementation of a mandatory minimum qualification recognises and honours the commitment, skills and knowledge of existing practitioners, the need to retain the existing workforce to facilitate capability building from within the sector, the cultural and lived experience many individuals bring to their work, the unique cultural knowledge of Aboriginal practitioners and the barriers to education and training faced by individuals from diverse backgrounds.

Based on extensive consultation, *Building from Strength* announced that:

- The minimum standard will apply to all **future** practitioners employed to provide services directly to victims or perpetrators of family violence in a specialist family violence capacity, within a service funded by the Victorian Government. This includes practitioners in specialist family violence services and family violence practitioners embedded in broader services.
- The existing specialist family violence workforce will be exempt, in recognition of the significant skills, knowledge and experience already in the sector.

An implementation model has been developed to outline the skills and knowledge that new practitioners need, while recognising the strength in diversity and the need for flexible pathways into the sector.

In line with Aboriginal self-determination, the design of pathways and support for Aboriginal practitioners will be led by the Dhehk Dja Partnership Forum, through the implementation of *Dhehk Dja: Safe Our Way Strategic* Priority Three: Self-determining Aboriginal family violence support and services.

## Model for implementation of Recommendation 209

Candidate is employed in the specialist family violence sector at <b>commencement of transition period</b>	Eligible for employment as a specialist family violence worker.	Exemption is for existing employees at <b>commencement of transition</b> ; it includes employees on approved leave (including parental leave, long service leave, annual leave, sick leave and leave without pay).  'Continuity of service' provides for breaks from the industry of up to four years, consistent with the Portable Long Service Leave Scheme.
Candidate holds a <b>Bachelor of Social Work or Master of Social Work</b> (qualifying degree)	Eligible for employment as a specialist family violence worker	A five-year transition period commencing in <b>2020</b> will align with the roll out of recommendation 208 (which called for family violence to be embedded as core curriculum in all undergraduate social work degrees); social work graduates at the end of the transition will have studied family violence as core curriculum, based on the <i>Responding to Family Violence Capability Framework</i> .
Candidate holds <b>another degree qualification – deemed equivalent</b> on basis of agreed principles	Eligible for employment as a specialist family violence worker	A framework of principles will be developed in 2019 to determine whether a course is considered <b>equivalent</b> or <b>related</b> . This will be determined by considering the competencies acquired in a social work degree.
Candidate has <b>significant professional experience in a related field</b>	Requires a specialist qualification in family violence	In addition to the principles referred to above, this pathway may require the development of a bespoke qualification aligned to the <i>Responding to Family Violence Capability Framework</i> . If delivered in the VET sector, entry, delivery and assessment could be flexible to increase accessibility. This will build on the development of accredited units of competency underway.
<b>OR</b> Candidate holds <b>another qualification (VET or Higher Ed)</b> – deemed related on basis of agreed principles		The level of the qualification and required experience will be defined in the framework of principles referenced above.
Candidate brings <b>significant cultural knowledge and experience, or lived experience</b> (for example, of disability, migrant or refugee experience, of family violence) <b>and experiences barriers</b> to accessing the pathways above	Eligible for employment as a specialist family violence worker if <b>working towards</b> one of the above pathways with appropriate support, and has supervision with qualified and experienced practitioner	Support for candidates in this category could include workplace delivery and assessment of qualifications, support to apply for VET or tertiary courses, and mentoring to assist with study in addition to clinical supervision.  <b>In line with Aboriginal self-determination, the design of pathways and support for Aboriginal workers will be led by Aboriginal stakeholders through the development and implementation of the Aboriginal 10 Year Family Violence Agreement.</b>

In recognition of the significant supply challenges for the sector, candidates could be employed while working towards one of the available qualification pathways during the transition period.

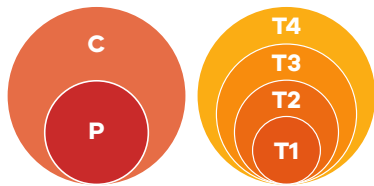
Recommendation 209 aims to ensure a high level of knowledge and skills in practitioners **entering** the specialist family violence system. It is only one part of supporting specialist capability and does not replace transition to practice support, quality supervision, ongoing professional development and sound recruitment practices, including to determine readiness and suitability for career progression.

Implementation of the recommendation will be supported by a comprehensive communication strategy for potential workers and employers, and implementation toolkit for employers. Work will be undertaken in 2019-20 to explore organisational readiness for implementation, and to consider what support might be required for potential workers from diverse backgrounds.

Implementation will be carefully monitored throughout the transition period, with a mid-transition review of the impact of the recommendation. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation will inform future directions, including consideration of qualification pathways for prevention practitioners, and potential consideration of an accreditation scheme.



# FOCUS AREA 2: ENHANCING TRAINING ARCHITECTURE



A skilled and capable workforce must be supported by high-quality industry-informed and flexible learning. This must respond to the urgent need to expand our training reach to ensure that all workforces are effectively equipped to respond to and prevent family violence. Innovative teaching models will be developed to meet this demand, along with a pipeline of skilled practitioners who are able to deliver high-quality training ensuring specialist expertise remains deeply embedded in training development and delivery.

## Why it's important

- For workforces to effectively respond to and prevent family violence and deliver reform, they must have access to high-quality, culturally safe and specialist-informed learning, which is aligned to the capability frameworks.
- The training sector (Registered Training Organisations [RTOs], including TAFEs) requires a sustainable supply of training and assessment professionals with the necessary qualifications and relevant family violence experience. Estimates suggest there are only around 70 trainers across the state equipped to deliver accredited family violence training.
- Specialist knowledge, expertise and lived experience are central in the design and delivery of training. Strong partnerships between the specialist sector and the training and education sectors will support the development and delivery of high-quality learning experiences for existing and future workforces, support any future shifts in capability requirements and expand the capacity for training delivery across Victoria.

## *Strengthening the Foundations* outcomes

1. Current and future workforces across all sectors are accessing contemporary, highly accessible and enriching learning experiences across the state, including through TAFE and specialist sector partnerships.
2. There are increased links between the education and training sector and specialist family violence prevention and response sectors, so that training content is relevant, specialist-informed, up-to-date and aligned to the capability frameworks, with the specialist sectors and the training sector partnering in the development and delivery of training as required.
3. Robust and clearly articulated learning and development pathways with direct links to career growth and progression are developed and understood across the specialist family violence prevention and response sectors, to ensure workers are entering the sector with the right capability and are able to maintain their skills over time.

## Key foundational priorities to support this focus area

This Plan focusses on three fundamental pieces of architecture for a sustainable training approach:

- Increasing accredited training options to help ensure that consistency and quality is maintained while the scale of delivery increases.
- Ensuring training is available to workforces that intersect with family violence across the state. To be successful, there is a need to increase the pool of trainers with family violence prevention and response expertise.
- Increasing access to training by reducing the barriers that prevent workers from accessing education and training, including cost.

# Actions

- 2.1** Develop accredited units of competency in family violence response and prevention to meet the skill and capability requirements for the future specialist workforces and the broader workforces that intersect with family violence to support alignment to MARAM.

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- 2.2** Develop accredited units of competency in gender equity and prevention of violence against women to meet the industry needs of a current and emerging primary prevention workforce.

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- 2.3** Enhance the accredited course in working with perpetrators for Men's Behaviour Change facilitators to increase access to the qualification while maintaining integrity and quality.

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- 2.4** Develop a whole-of-institution TAFE approach to primary prevention of violence against women, complemented by a model to enhance TAFE capability for early identification and intervention in family violence.

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- 2.5** Develop innovative education and professional development options aligned to the *Responding to Family Violence Capability Framework*, commencing with foundational family violence e-learning to complement face-to-face training.

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- 2.6** Increase the number of experienced trainers with family violence response and prevention content and training delivery expertise by partnering with peak bodies to support practitioners to complete a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.

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- 2.7** Develop and deliver a train-the-trainer program in partnership with the specialist sector, to grow the pool of family violence trainers to deliver unaccredited training.

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- 2.8** Provide supplementary professional development on the reformed family violence system (including MARAM and information sharing) for newly qualifying and existing holders of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.

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- 2.9** Undertake research to develop 'best practice' teaching and assessment approaches in VET family violence training to inform effective design and delivery strategies for TAFEs, Learn Locals and other Registered Training Organisations.

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- 2.10** Undertake action research to monitor and progressively enhance outcomes across the suite of vocational family violence training projects, to provide early advice on what is working and where improvements can be made in relation to trainer capability, learning resources, access to appropriate training for students from diverse backgrounds, and workforce development outcomes.

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- 2.11** Establish prevention officers in TAFE settings to build capability across the training sector.

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- 2.12** Introduce eligibility exemptions: to increase student participation, exemptions from upskilling and commencement eligibility requirements apply to the accredited course in Identifying and Responding to Family Violence Risk delivered by Skills First-funded training providers.

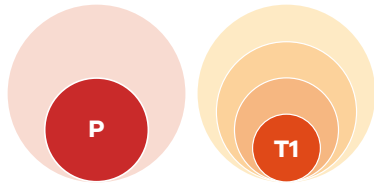
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- 2.13** Embed family violence response and prevention in relevant pre-service courses and professional development for a range of professions that intersect with family violence, so that graduates are 'work-ready'.

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# FOCUS AREA 3: RECRUITING AND RETAINING SPECIALIST WORKFORCES



The people who work in the specialist response and primary prevention sectors are our most valuable assets in building a future where all Victorians can live free from violence. Strengthening the capacity of the system to meet the current and future demands for specialist family violence and prevention practitioners is a duty we owe not only to these workers, but to the victim survivors they support.

Since the Royal Commission, the specialist response and primary prevention sectors have grown rapidly – and this is likely to continue. Labour market forecasting indicates that over the five years from 2017, the health and social assistance industry, in which the specialist sectors are primarily embedded, will be the fastest growing industry in the state<sup>5</sup>. This Plan addresses current supply challenges as well as the need to build a sustainable pipeline for the future with clear pathways into the sector for students and workers from other sectors. Growth needs to be sustainable and geared towards achieving a stable, confident, supported, experienced and engaged workforce.

Bringing new people into the specialist sectors is only one part of the picture. This Plan will also address the factors that keep someone in a workforce. For the specialist family violence and primary prevention sectors, there are significant challenges in relation to remuneration - including inconsistency between the salaries of specialist family violence practitioners and comparable roles in other community services - and in employment arrangements.<sup>6</sup> Insecure and fixed-term funding is linked to project-based roles, which can have an impact on attraction and retention, and workers in the sector have identified a lack of opportunity for career progression.

These issues are complex and will take time to work through. Progress to date has been hampered by a lack of data. The 2017 Census went some way to addressing the gap, but there is a need for targeted work in the first year of this Plan to build a robust evidence base. This will then inform work in the second and third year of this Plan, and in future Rolling Action Plans.

Three years on from the Royal Commission, there is a need to understand what work in the specialist sectors looks like, with new service models, new ways of working and an increased commitment to cultural safety and responding to intersectionality and diversity. Research in the first year of this Plan will examine roles in the specialist sectors and consider current and future system requirements while also contributing to the evidence base about remuneration, conditions and pathways.

## Why it's important

- Workforce supply is a significant issue for the specialist sectors. To meet future workforce requirements, a pipeline of dedicated, skilled and diverse practitioners is required. It is likely that referrals to the family violence response sector will increase (resulting from broader workforces being better supported to respond to family violence) resulting in an increase in demand for this workforce. At the same time, a greater supply of prevention practitioners will be required to reduce family violence in the long-term and alleviate pressure on crisis responses.
- Specialist workforces must reflect the diversity of the Victorian community. There is an urgent need to grow the Aboriginal workforce and an increasing need to attract more men into specialist roles. There are challenges in attracting and retaining practitioners from diverse, rural and regional communities to the workforce.

<sup>5</sup> Australian Department of Jobs and Small Business, Employment projections for the five years to May 2022, Labour Market Information Portal, <http://lmip.gov.au/>

<sup>6</sup> State of Victoria, Royal Commission into Family Violence: Report and recommendations, Vol V, Parl Paper No 132 (2014–16)

- Organisations require greater support to offer valuable student placements, to build a strong workforce pipeline. The 2017 Census showed that almost one in four family violence response and prevention practitioners were studying, completing a student placement or volunteering at their organisation prior to commencing employment.<sup>7</sup>
- 3. Organisations and government have a sophisticated understanding of inclusion strategies that support the attraction, recruitment, retention and engagement of a diverse, intersectional workforce, which better reflects the rich diversity of the Victorian community and meets the needs of all Victorians.

## Strengthening the Foundations outcomes

1. Detailed workforce data, analytics and best practice research are available to support more strategic decisions and approaches relating to workforce planning, attraction and recruitment, career pathways, working conditions and employment arrangements (including remuneration) to improve attraction and retention.
2. Organisations and sectors have improved capacity for student placements and graduate transition programs, to support a pipeline for workers who are supported to provide high quality services.

## Key foundational priorities to support this focus area:

To ensure work on recruiting and retaining specialist workforces is built on a deep understanding of specialist family violence prevention and response work in a reformed family violence system, this Plan focusses on initiatives that:

- Improve workforce data to create the foundation on which the design and delivery of actions to recruit and retain specialist workforces can be based.
- Identify future workforce requirements, providing the basis for work on attraction, recruitment, capability building and retention in the specialist prevention and response sectors.
- Focus on immediate and short-term attraction and recruitment.

<sup>7</sup> State of Victoria, Census of Workforces that Intersect with Family Violence: Companion report to Building from Strength: 10-Year Industry Plan for Family Violence Prevention and Response (2017).



# Actions

- 3.1** Deliver the Workforce Estimates project to improve understanding of the size and location of the specialist response and prevention workforces, and inform strategic planning, training and development initiatives.

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- 3.2** Undertake the 2019 Census of Workforces that Intersect with Family Violence.

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- 3.3** Undertake research on role design in the specialist sectors and develop options for current and future system requirements. This research will consider related pieces of work including the review of case management, perpetrator interventions and the Orange Door service model, as well as workforce diversity and employment opportunities to embed lived experience of victim survivors.

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- 3.4** Undertake research into the size, skills and qualifications, location and background of the specialist primary prevention workforce. This research will support the design of actions to address the particular and unique workforce supply, capability and other workforce issues experienced by the prevention workforce.

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- 3.5** Undertake a study into remuneration and conditions across the specialist family violence sector and (where appropriate) related community services to form an evidence base for industry's future work.

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- 3.6** Continue to deliver the Enhanced Pathways to Family Violence Work project, which facilitates student placements in community services sector organisations, including specialist family violence services, and investigate opportunities to extend its reach into the prevention sector.

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- 3.7** Undertake a targeted recruitment campaign for specialist family violence response and prevention workforces.

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- 3.8** Reduce workforce entry barriers to increase workforce diversity, working towards achieving a workforce that reflects the community.

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- 3.9** Develop a workforce forecasting model for the specialist sectors.

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- 3.10** Develop and implement initiatives to address workforce supply challenges in regional areas.

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- 3.11** Work across the community services sector over the life of this Plan to develop qualifications and training that support mobility across specialist community services areas.

## Supporting the specialist family violence response workforce

Around 2,000 workers make up Victoria's specialist family violence response workforce. This includes those working with victim survivors and those delivering perpetrator interventions, and those in specialist family violence roles embedded in broader systems.

The Government's ambitious family violence reform agenda has been welcomed by these workers, who know better than anyone how desperately the system needed to change. However, there is no doubt that increased awareness of family violence and new ways of working across the system have increased the pressure on this committed and professional sector. For example:

- Reported breaches of family violence intervention orders have more than doubled in the five years from 2013 to 2018
- Technology is being used in new ways to threaten, control and cause fear

- New investment has doubled the number of places available in community-based perpetrator programs to 4,000 per year, and boosted case management and therapeutic responses for victim survivors, with over 9,000 family violence case management services provided each year

Over the life of this Plan, it is anticipated that the specialist family violence response workforce will need to double. It's crucial then, that the specialist workforce is supported to grow, and that a strong pipeline is in place to meet future demand for highly skilled specialist workers. To be competitive in this industry, the specialist family violence sector will need to be able to offer its workers recognition, security and opportunities to grow and develop. This Plan, and the ones to follow, will address the factors that support the sector to sustain and grow its workforce, and to attract skilled and committed workers into the future.

## Preventing family violence is a long-term vision

Around 316 primary prevention practitioners<sup>8</sup> work across Victoria to prevent violence from happening in the first place.

Primary prevention works by identifying the deep underlying causes of violence – the social norms, structures and practices that influence individual attitudes and behaviours – and acting across the whole population to change these, not just the behaviours of perpetrators.

An effective primary prevention approach is essential to support and complement early intervention and response efforts activities by reducing pressure on these other parts of the system. Over the life of this Plan, the primary prevention workforce will need to grow significantly.

Primary prevention practice is an emerging field in Victoria. The needs of this workforce and the long-term impact it might have on the workforce requirements of the response sector requires detailed consideration in workforce supply modelling. This modelling will be undertaken as part of this Plan.

<sup>8</sup> Validation process undertaken by Family Safety Victoria. Data drawn from State of Victoria, Census of Workforces that Intersect with Family Violence: Companion report to Building from Strength: 10-Year Industry Plan for Family Violence Prevention and Response (2017).

Forecasting how and where the specialist family violence response and prevention workforces need to grow requires an understanding of multiple factors. A deeper sense of the specialist family violence workforce at a general and local level is needed so that workforce planning is more nuanced. This work will culminate in better insight into the size and locations of these workforces and the environments they service.

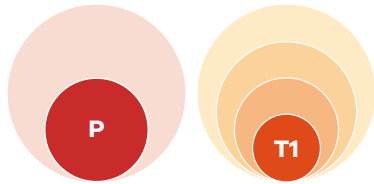
We know that long lasting workforce reform investment takes time. A strong foundation needs to be able to withstand future pressures placed upon it. Growth needs to be sustainable and geared towards achieving a stable, confident, supported, experienced and engaged workforce.

*“This is an opportunity – it’s the moment. We’ll look back and say, ‘this was the turning point.’”*

- Stakeholder, Attraction and Recruitment campaign research phase, 2019



# FOCUS AREA 4: STRENGTHENING LEADERSHIP IN THE SPECIALIST SECTORS



The family violence reform agenda is ambitious, complex, and unprecedented. Strong sector leadership will maximise this opportunity for enduring change. The priorities in this focus area build leadership capability, equipping leaders in the specialist response and primary prevention sectors with the tools they need to manage, respond to and implement change, and support each other in the evolving family violence landscape.

## Why it's important

- Strong executive and board-level leadership across organisations and the specialist sectors is needed to build a responsive and inclusive system as well as deliver the priority actions identified in this Plan, and future Rolling Action Plans.
- The increasing demands of government reform and rapid change for the specialist sectors requires specific and new competencies and leadership traits, including the ability to respond to changing environments.
- Strengthening governance and leadership in organisations is also a priority focus of the *10-Year Community Services Industry Plan*. There are opportunities to work with the Human Services and Health Partnership Implementation Committee to support specialist sector engagement in the actions in its first Rolling Implementation Plan (2019-2020), including a community services industry leadership and mentoring program for current and emerging leaders and the development and promotion of affordable, accessible community services industry governance training for boards.

## Strengthening the Foundations outcomes

1. Specialist sector leaders can access tailored professional development opportunities that support them in setting direction, using an outcomes orientation in service planning, developing strategies to work towards continuous improvement and motivating and developing their workforces.
2. Specialist sector leaders are equipped to undertake robust workforce planning within their organisations and sectors.
3. Leaders are knowledgeable and equipped to manage change and promote leading collaborative practice to effectively respond to and deliver family violence prevention and response reform, so that opportunities for improved practice are maximised.

## Key foundational priorities to support this focus area

This Plan takes a two-fold approach to this area:

- Developing leadership capability for current sector leaders through initiatives that acknowledge and build on existing leadership capability.
- Developing evidence to support leadership development that is tailored for the specialist prevention and response sectors.

# Actions

- 4.1** Deliver leadership intensives that bring together public sector thought leaders, academia and the specialist sectors and broader social service sector to explore managing change in a complex environment.

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- 4.2** Establish a Leadership Intensive Alumni network to enable participants to continue to build on their learnings in relation to contemporary practice.

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- 4.3** Undertake an action research project on contemporary feminist leadership practice in the family violence and primary prevention sectors.

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- 4.4** Identify and deliver targeted initiatives relating to building capability in contemporary feminist leadership practice.

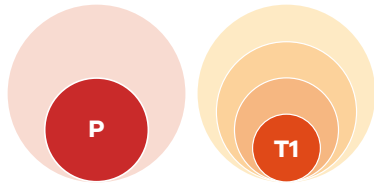
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- 4.5** Build capability for specialist sector leaders to engage in cultural leadership.

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# FOCUS AREA 5: PRIORITISING HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING



Specialist family violence response and prevention practitioners' work is stressful, emotional and fatiguing and can often result in vicarious trauma and burnout<sup>9</sup>. Supporting specialist response and primary prevention workforces to support victim survivors, hold perpetrators to account and engage in long-term primary prevention to bring about generational change means that we must focus on their health, safety and wellbeing.

In the response space, the Family Violence Health, Safety and Wellbeing Framework currently in development will guide the initiatives below. In the primary prevention space, there is a need to work collaboratively with the primary prevention sector to design initiatives that address the unique health, safety and wellbeing impacts of primary prevention practice.

## Why it's important

- The specialist workforces are exposed to unique and distinct psychological health, safety and wellbeing risks and the impact on practitioners in terms of their emotions, behaviours and reactions needs to be recognised and normalised. Vicarious trauma and employee burnout are widespread issues.
- The gendered nature of the specialist workforces and the prevalence of violence against women and family violence means that many practitioners in these sectors will have their own lived experience of violence. This experience can exacerbate the impact of the work on health, safety and wellbeing.
- The prevention workforce experiences significant amounts of backlash in their work, which can lead to poor health, safety and wellbeing outcomes.

- There are additional health, safety and wellbeing impacts experienced by Aboriginal workers, workers from culturally diverse communities and workers with lived experience of family violence, and tailored approaches that consider these additional impacts are required.

## Strengthening the Foundations outcomes

1. Specialist organisations are supported to establish healthy, safe and supportive work environments for all of their staff, from all backgrounds, with contemporary research on best practice supervision and peer support, and the Family Violence Health, Safety and Wellbeing Framework.
2. Specialist prevention organisations are supported to develop and align practices that seek to improve the health, safety and wellbeing of practitioners.
3. Workers across all sectors can access the health, safety and wellbeing guidance, information, strategies and tools available to support them in their work with family violence prevention and response.

## Key foundational priority to support this focus area

This focus area prioritises initiatives that enhance the health, safety and wellbeing of specialist prevention and response workforces. Research on the specific family violence-related needs of non-specialist workforces in the third year of this Plan will inform work in future Rolling Action Plans.

<sup>9</sup> State of Victoria, Royal Commission into Family Violence: Report and recommendations, Vol VI, Parl Paper No 132 (2014-16), p179.

# Actions

- 5.1 Complete and roll out the Family Violence Health, Safety and Wellbeing Framework, a guide for specialist family violence organisations to proactively manage practitioner health and wellbeing and inform practices that are specific to the needs of specialist workforces.
- 5.2 Design and deliver professional development for organisational leaders in the specialist sectors around supporting health, safety and wellbeing, aligned with the Family Violence Health, Safety and Wellbeing Framework. This will align to the *Responding to Family Violence Capability Framework*.
- 5.3 Undertake research in best practice supervision to determine agreed definitions of clinical supervision, current practices within the sector (including funding arrangements), suitable models of supervision for the specialist sector, outline best practice standards of clinical supervision including minimum requirements for workforces and provide advice on successful implementation.
- 5.4 Roll out online health, safety and wellbeing resources hosted on the redeveloped The Lookout site to help organisations to manage their workforce's health, safety and wellbeing and reduce the impact of vicarious trauma and potential burnout.
- 5.5 Identify and implement initiatives to enhance the health, safety and wellbeing of the primary prevention workforce.
- 5.6 Trial peer support initiatives for specialist prevention and response practitioners.
- 5.7 Undertake research into supporting the health, safety and wellbeing of specialist and broader workforces that intersect with family violence.

*“An employer should equip you, help you to think about... understanding trauma. They should help you think about what you bring to the work, how it might impact on you and who you are as a worker, what the boundaries are. It is not enough to be kind and nice...”*

- Family violence worker, Attraction and Recruitment campaign research phase, 2019

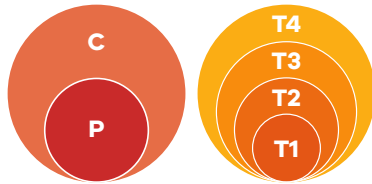
*“While the stories we are exposed to are complex and challenging, I find the welfare organisation I work in supports me as a professional experiencing vicariously the traumas our families live, and emotionally holds me as a professional to continue to do this work.”*

- Family violence worker, 2017 Census of Workforces that Intersect with Family Violence





# FOCUS AREA 6: BUILDING SECTOR AND ORGANISATIONAL CAPABILITY



*Building from Strength's* vision includes a system that is flexible and dynamic and can respond to evolving community, economic and social trends. To deliver reform, organisations and sectors must be capable in planning, resourcing, delivering and responding to change. Robust governance, policies, processes and support systems will provide a foundation for the long-term success and sustainability of reform.

The priorities in this key focus area aim to build sector and organisational capability to support the management of change and delivery of reform, across specialist and non-specialist sectors and organisations. As with focus area 1: *Building workforce capability*, there is a strong focus in this Plan on supporting the implementation of the MARAM Framework across sectors.

## Why it's important

- Family violence reform requires organisations and sectors to be family violence literate, gender aware and able to support their workforces to undertake a range of prevention and response roles, while operating in an agile, efficient and responsive way.
- All sectors must be committed to the change required to achieve the vision from *Building from Strength*. While specialist knowledge and expertise are at the core, the specialist sectors are not alone in preventing and responding to family violence.
- For the MARAM Framework to be effective across the service system, workforces must be competent and capable in all aspects of its application.

## Strengthening the Foundations outcomes

1. Organisations, sectors and government understand their role in managing change and reform and are better supported in their ability to plan, resource, deliver and respond to it, so that the whole system can support better outcomes for victim survivors, greater accountability for perpetrators and effective primary prevention.
2. Progress has been made by organisations and sectors towards more robust governance and support systems to ensure family violence prevention and response capability and workforce sustainability.
3. Strong and sustainable relationships exist with key stakeholders within the settings for prevention identified by *Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children* and *Changing the Picture: preventing violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women* so that sustained and meaningful prevention activity can support culture change.

## Key foundational priorities to support this focus area

The focus of this Plan is to support specialist and non-specialist sectors to adapt and respond to family violence reform. This includes:

- Building capability in specialist sectors and organisations to support new ways of working, including increased awareness of the need to deliver services that are culturally safe and respond to diversity and intersectionality.
- Building capability in non-specialist sectors and organisations to ensure they can work to prevent and respond to family violence.

# Actions

- 6.1 Enhance sector capability to work in outcomes-focused ways. This may include through development activities and development of architecture related to collecting, interpreting and using outcomes data and evidence in decision making and service delivery.
- 6.2 Undertake a survey of specialist response and prevention sector leaders to understand the sustainability needs and pressure points of the specialist sectors.
- 6.3 Provide change management support for the rollout of MARAM to government departments, peak or representative bodies and key funded organisations to lead, develop and deliver tailored support initiatives. Framework organisations and professionals will be supported to align their policies, procedures, practice guidance and tools and use the MARAM assessment tools and practice guides.
- 6.4 Deepen family violence capability in the youth alcohol and other drugs (AOD) sector, to support the complex needs of young people accessing youth AOD services, by building family violence capability through staff training, support and supervision, and support for organisational change.
- 6.5 Embed the capability frameworks across sectors through grants to support workforces that intersect with family violence to undertake demonstration projects for translating and embedding the family violence capability frameworks for prevention and response into sector and community-specific contexts.
- 6.6 Develop and implement initiatives to build capability in workforce planning for executives and boards across the specialist sectors.

## Changing culture to change practice

17 specialist and non-specialist organisations were funded in 2018-19 to support the implementation of Information Sharing in their sectors. These organisations have produced sector specific resources, case studies and policies that support this change on the ground. An important example of this is the work the Aboriginal Sector Grants Working Group have begun – a dialogue on how to build the capacity of their staff to have new conversations around consent so that MARAM and information sharing can be implemented in a culturally safe way.

Sector Grants in 2019-20 will support a specific focus changing practice to maximise outcomes for people with lived experience through the use of MARAM.

## Embedding capability across sectors

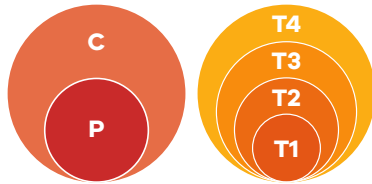
Over 2018-19, YSAS has been investigating how the Responding to Family Violence Capability Framework can be embedded into youth alcohol and other drug (AOD) practice.

Their findings identify the highly complex nature of family violence experienced by young people, as victim survivors both at home, in their relationships, and as users of violence. The complexity is compounded by the intersection of adolescent development with other factors such as lack of adolescent-specific family violence services, diverse presentations of trauma, the vulnerability experienced by adolescents, risk of homelessness and lack of empirical evidence relating to the intersection of youth family violence and substance use.

Reflections from the YSAS workforce identifies adolescence as a critical intervention point. This project has identified that the issues resulting from the intersection of adolescence, family violence and youth AOD are severe, and requires a unique service response.

The next phase of this work is to build specialist capability across the youth AOD workforce aligned to MARAM and the capability framework, as well for the sector to consider how best to support the workforce undertaking this work.

# FOCUS AREA 7: WORKING IN A CONNECTED AND COHESIVE SYSTEM



*Building from Strength's* broad scope across all workforces that intersect with family violence supports system connectedness. Victoria needs a system where specialist sectors work together with the community services, health, justice, human services and education and training sectors, to respond to the complexity and harms of family violence and prevent it from occurring in the first place.

This focus area prioritises initiatives that support increased partnerships, connection and collaboration across the sectors and a consistent approach to risk assessment and risk management across all parts of the system.

## Why it's important

- To build a connected system, specialist workforces must be supported by organisations and sectors that understand the importance of working in a connected and collaborative way. This will encourage a cultural shift and greater understanding between the specialist and non-specialist sectors.
- Workers in non-specialist sectors must understand their role and how it contributes to a collective effort, including in contributing to risk assessment, risk management and information sharing. They must be supported to build and maintain the skills and knowledge they need, consistent with their role.
- Successful primary prevention requires coordinated, mutually-reinforcing action across multiple settings, engaging sectors, institutions, organisations, communities and individuals.

## Strengthening the Foundations outcomes

1. The roles and responsibilities of the specialist family violence and primary prevention sectors in the reformed family violence system are clearly articulated and understood.
2. Prescribed workforces have a greater understanding of family violence, MARAM and the importance of information sharing to support risk assessment and management, and to keep perpetrators in view and hold them accountable.
3. Clear, formal connections and partnerships at the local level support service connection and cohesion, so that service users don't fall through the cracks.
4. Workers in non-specialist sector understand their role in contributing to the prevention of family violence in the community in collaboration with prevention specialists, ensuring that prevention activity is mutually-reinforcing across settings in line with best practice.

## Key foundational priority to support this focus area

The following initiatives aim to support the development and formalisation of partnerships across sectors, to build consistency in cross-sectoral approaches. This Plan aims to build on good local practice and learnings from existing partnerships and collaborations.

# Actions

- 7.1 Respond to the *Family Violence Regional Integration Project: Strengthening the case for the future of regional integration* that analyses the future role of Family Violence Regional Integration Committees, their Principal Strategic Advisors and the work of regional integration.
- 7.2 Develop and deliver professional development to build capability in cross-sectoral practice, building partnerships and understanding of intersecting service systems.
- 7.3 Review workforce-related impacts, opportunities and risks associated with the potential integration of family violence and sexual assault services (recommendation 32 of the Royal Commission).
- 7.4 Continue to advance and invest in specialist family violence response for victim survivors and perpetrators.

*“I think one of the really strong pieces that I’m walking away from today with is the idea of really ensuring we’re linking the work that happens right across Victoria.”*

- Participant, Building from Strength: Transforming Systems and Improving Outcomes in Family Violence Together Forum, March 2018







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# BUILDING THE EVIDENCE BASE

The seven focus areas, the key workforce priorities and associated initiatives and the implementation pathway are grounded in evidence. They are informed by the commitments in *Building from Strength*, the 2017 Census, and the knowledge and experience of those who work in or access the family violence system. *Strengthening the Foundations* and future Rolling Action Plans will continue to be informed by evidence of what works, workforce development and the changing environment of the family violence response, prevention and broader systems.

Led by FSV's Centre for Workforce Excellence, *Strengthening the Foundations* will develop a research strategy to build a robust evidence base to support workforce development, service reform and strong and skilled specialist workforces that are able to meet future demands.

Partnerships with universities, research bodies and sectors will be formed to consolidate and build on existing research. Knowledge gaps will be identified and research projects to support and inform the implementation of initiatives will be prioritised. Where necessary, new research will be commissioned to focus on both current and emerging workforce and industry needs.

The 2019 Census of Workforces that Intersect with Family Violence will be a key part of this work.

The first Rolling Implementation Plan (2019-20) of the *10-Year Community Services Industry Plan* includes actions to embed evidence-informed approaches. The Centre for Workforce Excellence will work with the

Human Services and Health Partnership Implementation Committee which oversees the implementation of the *10-Year Community Services Industry Plan*, to ensure *Strengthening the Foundations* aligns with and complements these community services-wide initiatives.

The research strategy in *Strengthening the Foundations* will ensure that complementary research and evidence undertaken by Respect Victoria, Our Watch, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) and through the monitoring and evaluation of the Orange Door, MARAM and other programs is utilised and not duplicated.

Our progress and success will be monitored by the Implementation Sub-group of the Industry Taskforce. Tracking and reporting will allow us to continue to review and update our planned initiatives and implementation plan, and adjust accordingly. This information will then inform future Rolling Action Plans. In addition, an immediate priority will be to work with the Implementation Sub-group to develop an evaluation framework for this Rolling Action Plan.

The two Rolling Action Plans that follow this Plan will be agile and adaptive, building on what works, incorporating emerging evidence and responding to the changing family violence response, prevention and broader system reforms. They too will be regularly reviewed and adjusted based on how sectors and the system respond to the challenges and opportunities we face.





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# PARTNERING IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF STRENGTHENING THE FOUNDATIONS

Realising the vision and actions in *Building from Strength* requires a long-term collaborative effort over the life of the Rolling Actions Plans. Along with the key stakeholders below, the Implementation Sub-group and others with specialist expertise, knowledge and lived experience will continue to guide the initiatives in *Strengthening the Foundations* and future Rolling Action Plans.

As an initial step, *Strengthening the Foundations* will be showcased around Victoria to support the development of local implementation approaches.

## The roles of key stakeholders in implementation

Successful implementation of the initiatives outlined in *Strengthening the Foundations*, requires a collaborative, proactive and considered approach across the system.

Key stakeholders and stakeholder groups that have important roles in the implementation include:

- Organisational, sector and industry leadership (executive and board)
- Specialist family violence and primary prevention sectors

- Specialist peak bodies
- Specialist RTOs
- Family Violence Regional Integration Committees and their Principal Strategic Advisors
- The Dhelk Dja Partnership Forum
- Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations
- FSV – particularly the Centre for Workforce Excellence
- Government departments and agencies
- Respect Victoria
- The tertiary education and training sector

Successful implementation of *Strengthening the Foundations* and future Rolling Action Plans relies on a clear, agreed articulation of the role of each stakeholder. The work to define roles is underway and will remain an immediate focus for the first year of this Plan. As a first step, the Centre for Workforce Excellence, and FSV, will work with specialist peak bodies and RTOs to clearly define their role in specialist sector workforce and sector development.

Collectively defining the roles of all of these stakeholders will be a key priority action.



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# GLOSSARY

This Glossary is provided to provide consistency in understanding throughout this Plan, and to support effective implementation.

- Capability Frameworks** Capability Frameworks are designed to set out the critical skills, knowledge, abilities, behaviours and/or attributes that are required for successful performance in a profession or role. This Plan pays particular regard to the *Responding to Family Violence Capability Framework and the Preventing Family Violence and Violence Against Women Capability Framework*, which articulate the knowledge and skills required for the range of workforces that intersect with family violence.
- Community Services Industry Plan** The 10-Year *Community Services Industry Plan* presents a unified vision for the Victorian community services industry and the actions required to achieve this vision. Developed by the industry, it aims to provide a shared platform for government and community services that both articulates and responds to the opportunities and challenges facing the industry. It sets out the actions and commitments that will be required for successful implementation of its vision and the capabilities, competencies and infrastructure required to deliver an integrated, whole-of-society approach.
- Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way – Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families*** *Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way – Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families* is the Aboriginal-led 10 Year Victorian Aboriginal Family Violence Agreement. It commits the signatories – Aboriginal communities, Aboriginal services and government – to work together and be accountable for ensuring that Aboriginal people, families and communities are stronger, safer, thriving and living free from family violence. *Dhelk Dja* articulates the long-term partnership and directions required at a state-wide, regional and local level to ensure that Aboriginal people, families and communities are violence free, and built upon the foundation of Aboriginal self-determination.
- Early intervention** Identification and support for individuals and families experiencing family violence with the aim of stopping early signs of violence escalating, preventing a recurrence of violence or reducing longer-term harm.
- Elder Abuse** **Elder abuse** is a form of family violence under the Act. It is often referred to as “any act occurring within a relationship where there is an implication of trust, which results in harm to an older person. Abuse may be physical, sexual, financial, psychological, social and/or neglect.”

**Everybody Matters; Inclusion and Equity Statement**

*Everybody Matters: Inclusion and Equity Statement (Everybody Matters)* sets out the Victorian Government's long-term vision for the creation of a family violence system that is more inclusive, responsive and accessible to all Victorians. The statement aims to build a shared understanding across government, the family violence service system, its workforces and the community about taking an intersectional approach to better support those who experience or who use family violence. *Everybody Matters* identifies key frameworks that support an intersectional approach and is intended to be a guiding document for anyone with responsibility for policy development or service planning, design and delivery.

**Family**

The word **family** has many different meanings. In this Plan, the word is intended to be all-encompassing and acknowledges the variety of relationships and structures that can make up a family unit and kinship networks and the range of ways family violence can be experienced, including through family-like or carer relationships, and across all genders and sexualities.

**Family violence**

In this Plan, **family violence** has the meaning set out in the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic)*. This includes a range of behaviours by a person towards a family member of that person that is physically, sexually, emotionally, psychologically, or economically abusive, or behaviour that is threatening or coercive. Family violence also includes any other way that a person controls or dominates that family member and causes that family member to feel fear for the safety or wellbeing of that family member or another person.

Family violence includes behaviour by a person that causes a child to hear or witness, or otherwise be exposed to the effects of, the behaviour outlined above.

In line with *Building from Strength*, this Plan recognises that family violence is a deeply gendered issue. While family violence takes many forms and affects many in our community, structural inequalities and unequal power relations between men and women mean that women are more likely to experience family violence.

This Plan also recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's experience of family violence is compounded by experiences of racism and marginalisation. While the violence also has gendered patterns, there are other factors at play, deeply rooted in the impacts of colonisation and violent dispossession, particularly the loss of land and culture and the high levels of intergenerational trauma experienced by Aboriginal women, men, children, families and communities.

This Plan acknowledges the definition of family violence for Aboriginal people set out in *Dhelk Dja: Safe Our way – Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families*. This includes the violence of non-Aboriginal people against Aboriginal partners, children, young people and extended family on spiritual and cultural rights, which manifests as exclusion or isolation from Aboriginal Culture and/or community.

**Family violence response**

Family violence response includes services for both victim survivors and perpetrators of family violence. Family violence response aims to support victim survivor safety and recovery and perpetrator accountability.

**Family violence system**

For the purposes of this Plan, family violence system refers to the broad system of organisations and services across the community services, health, justice and education and training sectors that can play a role in prevention, early intervention and response to people experiencing or perpetrating family violence.

**Free from Violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women**

*Free from Violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women* was released in 2017 to guide our efforts to stop family violence and violence against women before it starts. *Free from Violence* builds on the work of the family violence and primary prevention sectors and has benefited from the leadership of victims of family violence and violence against women, VicHealth, women's health services, Aboriginal communities and services, local government, primary prevention advocates and organisations, and academics. Achieving a Victoria free from violence will require multiple strategies to address the complex social conditions that drive violence in the first place, delivered in everyday settings and across the spectrum of people's lives, with a momentum that counteracts the size and scale of the problem.

**Industry Taskforce**

The Industry Taskforce was established in 2016 to guide the development and implementation of *Building from Strength*. Chaired by the Minister for Prevention of Family Violence, the Industry Taskforce comprises expert stakeholders from across family violence and sexual assault services, primary prevention organisations, community services, justice, health and education sectors, including representatives from peak bodies, professional organisations, unions and education and training providers. The Industry Taskforce is supported by an Implementation Sub-group and a Qualifications Sub-group.

**Intersectionality**

The term **intersectionality** describes how systems and structures interact on multiple levels to oppress, create barriers and overlapping forms of discrimination, stigma and power imbalances based on characteristics such as Aboriginality, gender, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, colour, nationality, refugee or asylum seeker background, migration or visa status, language, religion, ability, age, mental health, socioeconomic status, housing status, geographic location, medical record or criminal record. This compounds the risk of experiencing family violence and creates additional barriers for a person to access the help they need.

**Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM) Framework**

The **MARAM Framework** can be used by all services that come into contact with individuals and families experiencing family violence. The MARAM Framework aims to establish a system-wide shared understanding of family violence. It will guide professionals across the continuum of service responses, across the range of presentations and spectrum of risk. It will provide information and resources that professionals need to keep victim survivors safe, and to keep perpetrators in view and hold them accountable for their actions. It covers all aspects of service delivery from early identification, screening, risk assessment and management, to safety planning, collaborative practice, stabilisation and recovery. The MARAM Framework provides policy guidance to organisations that have responsibilities in assessing and managing family violence risk, including those that have been prescribed under regulation as Framework organisations.

Prescribed organisations are those that are prescribed by regulation to be a Framework organisation for the purposes of Part 11 of the Family Violence Protection Act and required to align their policies, procedures, practice guidance and tools to it. References in this document to framework organisations include section 191 agencies.

**Perpetrator**

In this Plan, a **perpetrator** is someone who chooses to use family violence.

## Primary prevention

**Primary prevention** aims to prevent violence from ever happening in the first place. It works by identifying the deep underlying causes of violence – the social norms, structures and practices that influence individual attitudes and behaviours – and acting across the whole population to change these. Primary prevention is distinct from early intervention and crisis response activities (also known as secondary and tertiary response) that aim to stop violence from escalating or recurring. Effective primary prevention supports and complements early intervention and crisis response efforts by reducing pressure on these parts of the system.

## Safe and Strong: Victoria's Gender Equality Strategy

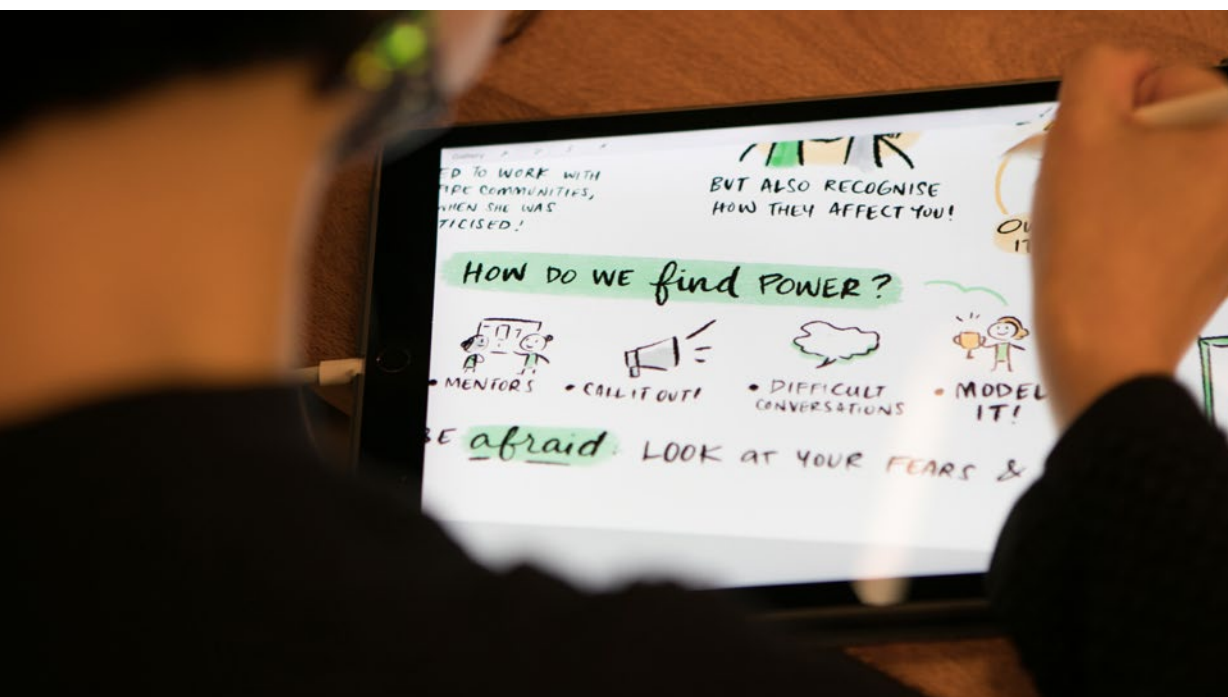
*Safe and Strong: Victoria's Gender Equality Strategy (Safe and Strong)* sets out a framework for building the attitudinal and behavioural change required to reduce violence against women and delivering gender equality. *Safe and Strong* draws on global evidence of what works in gender equality, and sets out the founding reforms and a new standard for action by the Victorian Government. *Safe and Strong* includes the Victorian Gender Equality Outcomes Framework.

## Violence against women

**Violence against women** as defined by the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (1993) means any act of gender-based violence that causes or could cause physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of harm or coercion, in public or in private life. It is broader than what is covered by the term 'family violence' and includes, for example, sexual assault and harassment perpetrated by someone other than an intimate partner or family member.

## Workforce planning

Workforce planning is a tool that assists organisations and managers to plan for the future, anticipate change, manage their workforces and meet their business goals. It provides a framework for making workforce decisions that align with the strategic goals of the organisation. The workforce plan identifies how future staffing and skill needs will be met (i.e. via recruiting, development, internal deployment, recruitment, succession planning). A workforce plan will help an organisation meet its objectives by ensuring that the staffing profile of the organisation has the right capabilities to meet current and future demands.



# TRAINING TERMS

## Accredited training course

An **accredited training course** is a nationally recognised course that:

- meets national quality assurance requirements
- meets an established industry, enterprise, educational, legislative or community need
- provides appropriate competency outcomes and a basis for assessment.

A course can be accredited as a short course (with a Statement of Attainment 'Course in' outcome) or a qualification recognised within the Australian Qualifications Framework (including Certificates I-IV, Diploma and Advanced Diploma, Graduate Certificate).

## Authorisation to deliver accredited training

Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) or organisations working in partnership with an RTO are authorised to deliver training packages qualifications and units of competency, if the RTO has the training package product/s on their scope of registration.

An RTO's training and assessment may only be delivered by trainers and assessors who have:

- the vocational competencies at least to the level being delivered and assessed
- current industry skills directly relevant to the training and assessment being provided
- current knowledge and skills in vocational training and learning that informs their training and assessment.
- In addition, training and assessment may only be delivered by persons who:
  - holds the mandated training and education credential, or
  - holds one of the relevant training skills sets, are supervised by a credentialed trainer and assessor and does not determine assessment outcomes.

## Capability

This Plan uses the term **capability** to refer to a person's ability to perform their role or profession. While the term 'competencies' often refers to the required knowledge and skills necessary to perform a job, the term capability is preferred because it refers more broadly to a person's ability to develop or improve.

This Plan also refers to **organisational capability** which is defined as an organisation's potential to perform by successfully applying its skills and resources to accomplish its goals and satisfy its stakeholders' expectations. The skills and resources that make up an organisation's capability may include staffing, infrastructure, technology, financial resources, strategic leadership, process management, and networks and linkages with other organisations and stakeholders.

## Competency-based assessment

A **competency-based assessment** confirms that an individual can perform tasks to the standard expected in the workplace. Evidence of competency is gathered and then assessed by a credentialed assessor. Evidence might include direct evidence observed by the assessor (including observations of workplace performance, oral questioning or a demonstration), indirect evidence (evidence that can be reviewed or examined by the assessor such as written assignments or tests), and supplementary evidence (evidence presented to the assessor to support a candidate's claim of competence such as reports from supervisors, testimonials from employers, etc).

RTOs are required to make judgments on the validity, currency and authenticity of the evidence, and are encouraged to minimise the burden of evidence gathering where possible – for example, using work-based evidence before setting an assessment task.

## Non-accredited training course

A **non-accredited training course** is any structured training program that is not formally accredited by a VET Regulator or endorsed by the Australian Industry and Skills Committee, and does not lead to the achievement of a Statement of Attainment or formal qualification aligned to the Australian Qualifications Framework.

## Registered Training Organisation

**Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)** are organisations registered by a state or territory recognition authority according to national standards to be eligible to issue qualifications and statements of attainment under the Australian Qualifications Framework. RTOs operating in Victoria include TAFEs and dual sector universities, adult and community education providers (including Learn Locals), and for-profit and not-for-profit organisations.

## Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

**Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)** is a process whereby an organisation authorised to issue qualifications (e.g. a Registered Training Organisation or university) assesses an individual's relevant prior learning as part of the individual's application for credit towards a qualification. That is, the organisation assesses the extent to which the learning outcomes that an individual has already achieved are equivalent to the learning outcomes of some or all of the destination qualification.

Prior learning may be:

- **Informal learning.** This is gained through work, social, family, hobby or leisure activities. Unlike formal or non-formal learning, informal learning is not organised or externally structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support.
- **Formal learning.** This takes place through a structured program of learning leading to a full or partial achievement of an officially accredited qualification.
- **Non-formal learning.** This takes place through a structured program of learning but does not lead to an officially accredited qualification (e.g. a non-accredited course).

RPL credit may be used for entry to a course or to reduce the amount of learning required to achieve a qualification.

## Training architecture

In this Plan, training architecture refers to the foundational elements required for systematic, consistent, high quality training. Training architecture may include standards, accredited content and providers required to deliver the mechanisms required to build long-term capability uplift. In general, elements of training architecture will be subject to regular review processes to ensure currency.



## **Training and Assessment Strategy**

As a training package or accredited course sets out the competencies but does not prescribe how the training should be delivered or the time taken to deliver it, a **training and assessment strategy** is developed by the training provider to translate the training package and the associated competency requirements into a meaningful learning experience for learners.

## **Training package**

Developed by Service Skills Organisations to meet the training needs of an industry or group of industries, **training packages** are a key part of the national training system. Training packages do not suggest how a learner should be trained. Instead, they specify the skills and knowledge required to perform effectively in the workplace. Each training package is made up of three components:

- Units of competency
- Qualifications framework
- Assessment guidelines.

The Community Services Training Package has 15 units of competency related to family violence which can be packaged into a range of courses spanning community services, health, justice and public safety.

## **Training products**

**Training products** include all associated material used to deliver training, including:

- national industry training packages (such as Australian Qualifications Framework qualifications, units of competency, and Skill Sets)
- Training Package Companion Volumes
- VET accredited courses
- Training and assessment resources.

## **VET regulators**

There are two regulators relevant to VET in Victoria.

### **Victorian Registration and Accreditation Authority (VRQA)**

The VRQA is responsible for registering and regulating organisations in Victoria that wish to offer VET qualifications and courses to domestic students in Victoria only, or in Victoria and Western Australia only.

### **Australian Standards and Quality Authority (ASQA)**

ASQA is the regulatory body for jurisdictions other than Victoria and Western Australia, except where RTOs in Victoria and Western Australia:

- offer courses to overseas students; and/or
- offer courses to students (including through offering courses online) in jurisdictions other than Western Australia



## **Strengthening the Foundations: First Rolling Action Plan 2019-21**

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In this document, 'Aboriginal' refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. 'Indigenous' or 'Koori/Koorie' is retained when part of the title of a report, program or quotation.



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