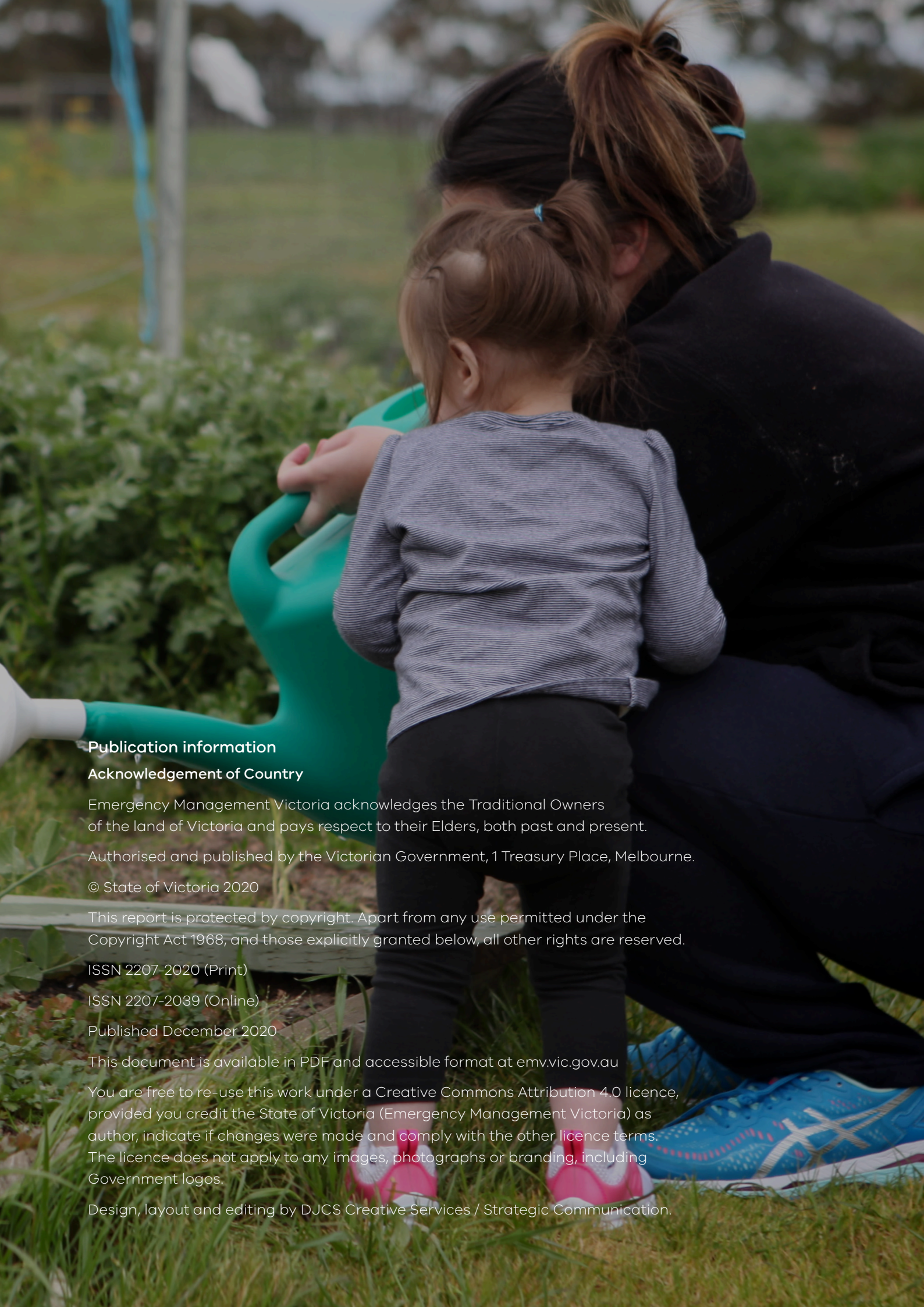


Family violence programs and services guide

Corrections Victoria



Publication information

Acknowledgement of Country

Emergency Management Victoria acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land of Victoria and pays respect to their Elders, both past and present.

Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.

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ISSN 2207-2020 (Print)

ISSN 2207-2039 (Online)

Published December 2020

This document is available in PDF and accessible format at emv.vic.gov.au

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Design, layout and editing by DJCS Creative Services / Strategic Communication.

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Introduction

The Victorian community is significantly impacted by family violence offences. In response, the Victorian Government initiated the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence (Royal Commission) to review and examine government, judicial and community responses to family violence. The Royal Commission delivered its findings in March 2016. Its 227 recommendations proposed a series of system improvements to family violence service gaps and obstacles in the delivery of effective programs, laws and policies (State of Victoria, 2016)¹.

Corrections Victoria (CV) has undertaken significant work in responding to family violence, recognising that prisoners and offenders are over-represented as perpetrators and victim survivors of family violence.

Corrections Victoria is committed to enhancing public safety and reducing recidivism through the:

- effective administration of prison sentences
- enforcement of Community Corrections Orders and
- delivery of offender-centric rehabilitation pathways and programs that respond to individuals' criminogenic risks and needs.

In a correctional context, the response to family violence necessitates a considered evidence-based approach that acknowledges the complexity of family violence in offender and prisoner populations. This approach will help ensure the community is safe and our corrections system is safe and secure.

Corrections Victoria is working towards creating an environment across the system that supports individuals to challenge attitudes and behaviours that rationalise or lead to family violence.

This document has been developed to identify and explain the service response offered to both perpetrators and victim survivors of family violence in CV.

Document purpose

This document provides an overview of Corrections Victoria's programs and service pathways that are available for offenders and prisoners affected by family violence, either as perpetrators or victim survivors.

¹ State of Victoria (2016): Royal Commission into Family Violence: Summary and Recommendations, Parliamentary Paper No.132 (2014-16)

Family violence policy context

Enhancing Safety: Family Violence Strategy for the Victorian Corrections system 2018-2021

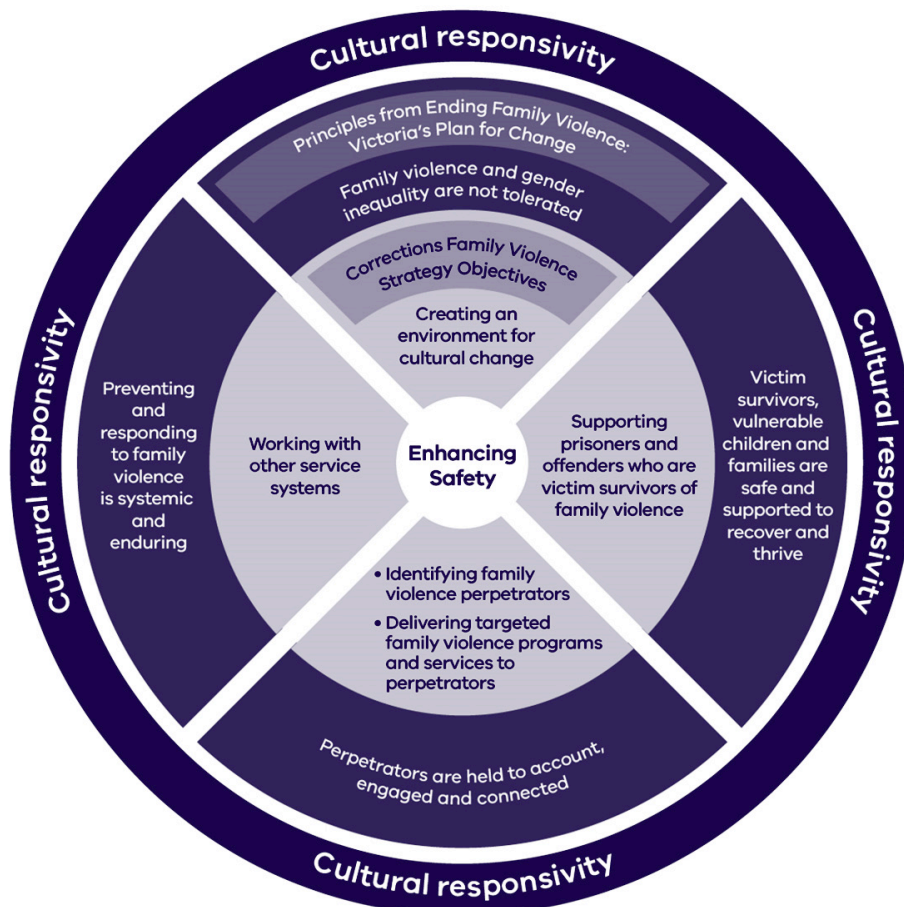
Corrections Victoria's family violence policy framework acknowledges the gendered nature of family violence and its root causes that stem from gender inequality, community attitudes and social norms that justify and rationalise family violence. The policy also recognises the need for service responses that can extend beyond the gendered lens.

Building on the objectives of the Family Violence Service Reform Strategy 2015-16, CV has identified four key principles for change as outlined in the Family Violence Action Plan for the Victorian Corrections System 2018². The principles are:

1. Family violence and gender inequality are not tolerated.
2. Victim survivors, vulnerable children and families are safe and supported to recover and thrive.
3. Perpetrators are held to account, engaged and connected.
4. Preventing and responding to family violence is systemic and enduring.

Cultural responsiveness sits across all four principles highlighting CV's commitment to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners and offenders, and those with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

Figure 1: The four family violence strategy principles, and objectives



Identification of family violence perpetrators

Definition of family violence

Family violence is defined in section 5 of the Victorian *Family Violence Protection Act 2008* (the Act). It involves coercive and abusive behaviours by a perpetrator that are designed to intimidate, humiliate, undermine and isolate, and result in fear and insecurity. Family violence can include physical, sexual, psychological and emotional violence and economic abuse and control.

The Act defines family broadly to include intimate partners, ex-partners, parents, children, siblings

or extended family. This definition encompasses the variety of relationships and structures that can make up family units and kinship networks, and the range of ways in which family violence can be experienced, including through family-like or carer relationships and other interpersonal relationships across all genders and sexualities.

Under the Act, family violence also includes behaviour that causes a child to experience, witness or be exposed to the effects of family violence.

Legal definition

Section 5 of the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008* (Vic) defines family violence as:

1. For the purposes of the Family Violence Protection Act, family violence is:

- (a) behaviour by a person towards a family member of that person if that behaviour—
 - (ii) is physically or sexually abusive; or
 - (iii) is emotionally or psychologically abusive; or
 - (iv) is economically abusive; or
 - (v) is threatening; or
 - (vi) is coercive; or
 - (vii) in any other way controls or dominates the family member and causes that family member to feel fear for the safety and wellbeing of that family member or another person.
- (b) behaviour by a person that causes a child to hear or witness, or otherwise be exposed to the effects of, behaviour referred to in paragraph (a).

2. Family violence includes the following behaviours:

- (a) assaulting or causing personal injury to a family member or threatening to do so;
- (b) sexually assaulting a family member or engaging in another form of sexually coercive behaviour or threatening to engage in such behaviour;
- (c) intentionally damaging a family member's property, or threatening to do so;
- (d) unlawfully depriving a family member of the family member's liberty, or threatening to do so;
- (e) causing or threatening to cause the death of, or injury to, an animal, whether or not the animal belongs to the family member to whom the behaviour is directed so as to control, dominate or coerce the family member.

3. To remove doubt, it is declared that behaviour may constitute family violence even if the behaviour would not constitute a criminal offence.

Family violence flag

The family violence flag helps to identify offenders and prisoners as family violence perpetrators and is recorded on internal CV systems.

The family violence flag is used as a tool for case management. The flag should not be used to initiate referrals for assessment or treatment with Forensic Intervention Services.

Community Correctional Services (CCS) case practitioners must ensure a family violence flag is applied when an offender or prisoner:

- is found guilty of one or more offences in the current offending episode that is a family violence offence; or
- is found guilty of one or more offences in the current offending episode that was committed in the context of family violence; or
- has been found guilty of two or more offences that are either family violence specific or occurred in the context of family violence in the past three years; or
- reveals that they are the respondent of a current Family Violence Intervention Order (FVIO) or Family Violence Safety Notice (FVSN) during assessment or any time during their supervision by CV.

Corrections Victoria's programmatic response to family violence

Corrections Victoria's programmatic response to family violence caters for perpetrators and victim survivors. It aims to utilise the unique opportunity that CV has, to provide support for victim survivors and interventions to perpetrators. Perpetrators of family violence are provided a differentiated service response that targets their criminogenic needs. The CV family violence response extends to perpetrators of family violence who are:

- on remand
- sentenced to a term of imprisonment
- subject to a community-based disposition.

The differentiated service response to perpetrators of family violence is shaped by a number of key practice principles, which extend and translate CV's strategic frameworks into an

evidence-based, targeted and specialist service response.

The service response targeting family violence offenders aligns with the CV Offender Management Framework – in particular, to managing risk and targeting intervention needs. Using a Risk Need Responsivity model ensures the level of service is matched to an offender's level of risk. As a result, CV can offer an appropriate response, that includes services such as:

- offence-specific or offence-related treatment
- support for victim survivors
- personal development and psychoeducational programs.

Practice principles

The practice principles are as follows:

Early, ongoing and shared identification of family violence perpetrators

- Family violence perpetrators in the correctional system are identified early and will commence the programmatic pathway when entering the system in line with a front-end service delivery approach.
- Identification of family violence perpetrators is a 'live' process that can occur at any stage of an offender's or prisoner's correctional episode.
- Family violence perpetrator identification is shared across the system to enable a targeted and holistic service response.

FV interventions are integrated with offender management

- Intervention recommendations are based on evidence-based assessments.
- Family violence programmatic pathways are responsive to the risk and needs of prisoners and offenders in the system.
- Family violence interventions are responsive to the cultural needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as well as those from CALD cohorts.

The safety of women and children is a priority

- Family support and safety planning is critical for current and past partner of perpetrators of family violence.

Who is involved?

Forensic Intervention Services

Forensic Intervention Services is a specialist program area of CV that employs allied health clinicians to provide evidence-based, offence-specific intervention services, both in custody and in the community, to support offenders to affect positive behaviour change. Forensic Intervention Services is a critical component of the department's strategy to reduce reoffending and contribute to community safety.

Forensic Intervention Services service delivery model focusses on assessing and treating Victoria's highest risk violent and/or sexual offending prisoner and offender cohorts. Forensic Intervention Services operates in partnership with an external provider to deliver services across prisons and community. As such, varied eligibility criteria are applied across several differentiated

service pathways, namely; Violence Pathway, Sexual Pathway, Sexual and Violence Pathway, and Disability Supported Pathway.

Family violence perpetrators can progress through any of these pathways, with the most appropriate treatment being determined by a comprehensive risk assessment, including assessment of intimate partner violence. As such, family violence perpetrators may be found suitable for a specialised program targeting criminogenic risks underpinning family violence (the ChangeAbout program) or may be assessed as having broader criminogenic violence needs best met with a generalist violent program.

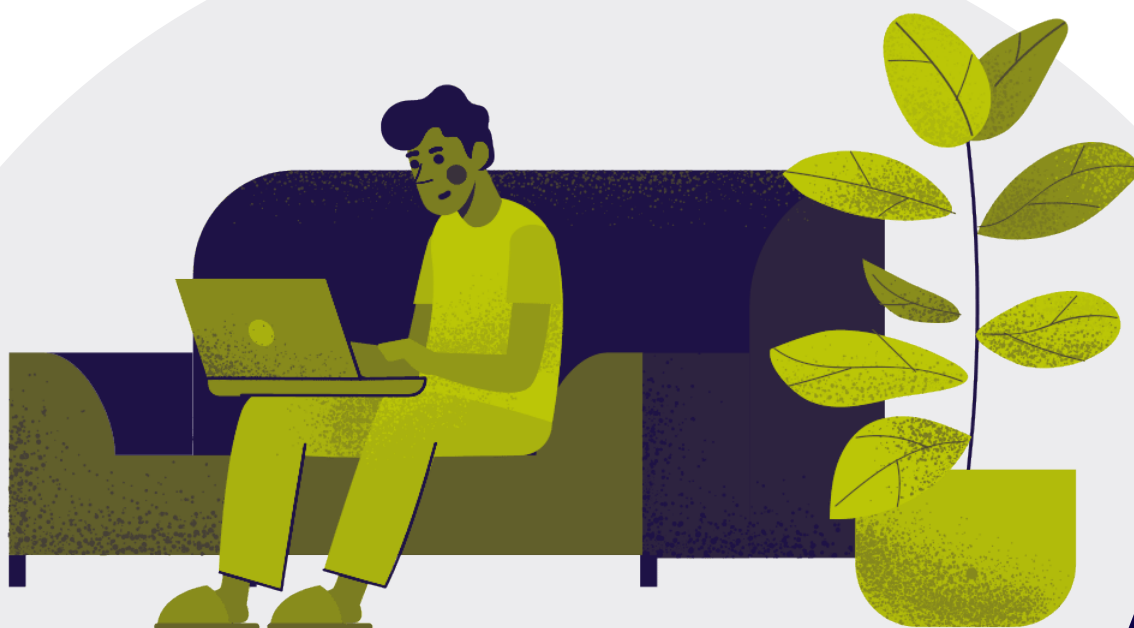
Rehabilitation and Reintegration Branch (RRB)

While Forensic Intervention Services is responsible for the coordination and delivery of offence-specific and offence-related therapeutic programs, other divisions in CV manage non-clinical and psychoeducational programs. These programs are intended to support the rehabilitation and reintegration needs of offenders and prisoners by assisting with personal development to aid transition into the community.

The Rehabilitation and Reintegration Branch has several units including the Transition and Reintegration Unit (TRU), Offender Rehabilitation Unit (ORU) and the Naalamba Ganbu and Nerrlingu Yilam (Yilam). TRU focuses on the transition and

reintegration of prisoners into the community and manages several pre- and post-release support programs. Yilam is responsible for leading the design, implementation and monitoring of CV policies, programs and services aimed at reducing the over-representation of Aboriginal people in the Victorian correctional system.

The ORU assists prisoners and offenders with the development and coordination of programs and services that are directed towards priority cohorts or areas of needs. The Unit oversees service development and the design of rehabilitation and reintegration programs (offense related, psycho-educational, personal development and well-being).



Program options

Perpetrator programs

Forensic Intervention Services programs

→ **ChangeAbout program**

The ChangeAbout program is an offence specific group program that targets a range of criminogenic factors for prisoners and offenders specifically associated with family violence. ChangeAbout assists prisoners and offenders to cease family violence and focuses on violence against intimate partners and children.

ChangeAbout uses evidence-based modules identified as critical to reducing the risk of family violence. The factors covered in these modules include attitudes and beliefs that support family violence, emotional abuse and regulation problems, substance abuse and relationship skills. The program aims to reduce recidivism by identifying deficits in these areas and minimising their impact and focuses on developing and strengthening the factors that support participants to desist from offending.

Perpetrators of family violence are recommended to participate in the ChangeAbout program pending suitability of referral to Forensic Intervention Services and clinical assessments.

The ChangeAbout program is accompanied by the Family Safety Contact Service (FSCS) to provide support for victims or family members of the perpetrator. This is described in more detail below.

→ **Violence Intervention Program**

The Violence Intervention Program is a moderate or high-risk offence specific group-based program that targets criminogenic needs and risk factors related to violent offending. This includes emotional regulation, thoughts and beliefs, offending behaviour, victim empathy and goal setting. The program examines why participants use violence and assists them in developing skills to manage violent behaviour and reduce their risk of re-offending.

The program is run either as a moderate-intensity or as a high-intensity program. The high-intensity program is longer than the moderate-intensity one.

Perpetrators of family violence are recommended to participate in the Moderate Intensity Violence Intervention Program (MVIP) or High Intensity Violence Intervention Program (HVIP) pending suitability of referral to Forensic Intervention Services, and clinical assessments.



The MVIP and HVIP are delivered in prisons by CV Forensic Intervention Services clinical staff.

Community-based HVIP programs are delivered by an external provider, in partnership with CCS and CV, and overseen by the Forensic Intervention Services External Providers team. The MVIP is not offered in the community.

→ **Adapted Violence Intervention Program**

The Adapted Violence Intervention Program (A-VIP) is a group-based program targeting a range of criminogenic needs and risk factors related to violent offending for prisoners and offenders who have cognitive impairments or cognitive disabilities. Risks include thoughts and beliefs relating to violence, offending behaviour, emotional regulation, substance abuse, and victim awareness.

Perpetrators of family violence are recommended to participate in the A-VIP pending suitability of referral to Forensic Intervention Services, and clinical assessments.

The A-VIP is delivered in two prisons, and in one Community Correctional Centre by CV Forensic Intervention Services clinical staff.

→ **See Change for Women Program**

The See Change for Women Program is a group-based offence-related program that targets a range of criminogenic factors associated with violent offending. The purpose of the program is to assist prisoners and offenders to desist from violent offending.

Perpetrators of family violence are recommended to participate in the MVIP or HVIP pending suitability of referral to Forensic Intervention Services, and clinical assessments.

The See Change for Women is delivered in prisons by CV Forensic Intervention Services clinical staff.

Non-Clinical Programs

Men's Behaviour Change Program

The Men's Behaviour Change Program (MBCP) is a group based psychoeducational program delivered over 20 weeks, with a minimum of 40 program hours. The MBCP must align with the minimum standards developed by No To Violence (NTV).

The MBCP supports offenders, who have used abusive and controlling behaviours on their partners, to change their behaviour and build healthy and respectful relationships. To participate in an MBCP, an offender must acknowledge and accept responsibility for their behaviour or demonstrate a willingness to consider accepting responsibility.

The MBCP is available to all perpetrators with a current offence involving intimate partner violence, regardless of their risk of reoffending. All participants must attend at least two assessment interviews to see if they are suitable to attend the group.

MBCPs are delivered to CV offenders by external providers. The Department of Justice and Community Safety and the Department of Health and Human Services

(DHHS) have A Memorandum of Understanding that ensures places are available for CV offenders to attend MBCP groups in the community.

MBCP's also include a FSCS as described below to ensure that current and ex-partners are supported and safe while the perpetrator engages in the program. It is a requirement of entry into the program that men provide the contact details if known.

1:1 Perpetrator case management

Individual perpetrator case management is available to perpetrators of family violence subject to community corrections orders. This support targets perpetrators in the community who are not eligible for other group-based programs due to offences against family members, or insufficient time remaining on their orders.

External services providers who deliver MBCPs also provide case management support. On average, 20 hours of support is provided and includes partner contact support work.

LINCS in Families

The LINCS in Families program provides offenders in the community an opportunity to engage in an intensive one-day intervention. The program aims to assist offenders to identify their key needs and priorities for behaviour change and improved relationships. Through a strengths-based approach, it recognises the key skills required to address these needs and priorities. The intervention is also an opportunity to link in with and initiate referrals to community agencies to support these needs and priorities.

The LINCS in Families program is for offenders in the community who have committed a family violence offence. This program can be used as an introductory intervention while offenders are waiting or ineligible for other more intensive programs.

Tuning into Respectful Relationships

The Tuning into Respectful Relationships (TiRR) program is a short psycho-educational program to introduce prisoners to the concept of healthy, respectful relationships and is delivered over two three-hour sessions. TiRR does not address family violence directly. The two key modules are:

- Introducing respectful relationships: an introduction to the aims, content and methods of the program
- Crossing the line: a deeper understanding of the role of respect in positive relationships.

Topics include an introduction to the issue of family violence, and:

- building awareness of the benefits of respectful attitudes and behaviours
- differing communication styles,
- understanding the connection between respect and acts of violence.

The TiRR program has also been developed for Vietnamese and Greater Horn of Africa prisoners. The Vietnamese program is delivered in Vietnamese.

The TiRR program is suitable for male and female prisoners. The short format of the TiRR makes it ideal for remandees, but the program is also suitable for sentenced prisoners and those nearing release dates.

Living Free from Violence

The Living Free from Violence (LFFV) program is delivered by Drummond Street Services and is designed for women, transgender and gender diverse people who have caused harm or used violence in their relationships. This program will be delivered at DPFC.

The LFFV is a 15-week group-based program, however participants are also engaged in individual support before and after the group program. Drummond Street Services offers individual support to participants in the management and protection units, and an adapted program specifically for women, transgender and gender diverse people with a cognitive impairment.

A pilot of this program was delivered at DPFC as part of perpetrator intervention trials and received positive evaluation.

Positive Shift (+Shift)

The +Shift program is delivered at Tarrenghower Prison by BaptCare. This evidence-based program is for women who have used force in the context of family violence and has also been positively evaluated.

The +Shift is an eight to twelve-week program and assists women to understand the impacts of family violence and give women viable alternatives to force in their intimate relationships.

Women's use of force is different to that of men's use of violence. +SHIFT sessions help participants to identify that their use of force may have occurred for a variety of reasons including but not limited to self-defence, a short-term gain of power and control or protecting children. While this does not excuse their behaviour, the +SHIFT curriculum supports participants to make sense of their lives, explore family safety and provide alternatives to using violence or force.

Family Safety Contact Service (FSCS)

In accordance with recognised best practice for the delivery of family violence perpetrator interventions, both ChangeAbout and MBCP are accompanied by concurrent family safety support services.

The FSCS is offered and provided by a third party (not program facilitators). When an identified person consents to engage in the service, they are contacted at regular intervals throughout the intervention to monitor their safety, wellbeing and facilitate referrals to ongoing community-based supports.

The FSCS for ChangeAbout is made available on a voluntary basis to any person nominated by the perpetrator as an identified person and meets the relevant criteria. This is not limited to intimate partners and ex-partners, but to any family member or person affected by the offender's violence. The partner contact element of the MBCP is available only to current or ex intimate partners of the offender.

Victim survivor programs

Safety and resilience – family violence support

Good Shepherd is delivering a service in DPFC and Tarrengower Prison that provides information about family violence for women in custody, particularly for those with short sentences, on remand or nearing the end of their sentence.

This program has two key components:

- A family violence information session that outlines what family violence is, the types of violence that can occur and strategies for coping.
- Individual women are seen to provide safety planning support for their upcoming release. Women are provided with support details and community agencies that can assist them.

This program is delivered frequently, and women can self-refer.

Specialist trauma counselling (STC)

Specialist trauma counselling is delivered by the Centre against Sexual Assault (CASA) at both the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre and Tarrengower Prison.

The STC is available to all female prisoners who have experienced trauma from sexual abuse, violence or family violence. This service provides individual counselling for women to develop coping skills and focus on protective factors.

Counselling is delivered on an as-needs basis as determined by the counsellor in consultation with the prisoner.

📌 Understanding Trauma group

CASA has developed an eight-week group-based program called Understanding Trauma. This program is available for women on remand or while they wait for individual counselling appointments. The groups focus on understanding what trauma is, the effect it can have, and basic coping and emotional management strategies.

Parenting programs

Given the connection between family violence and children, it is crucial to support prisoners who are parents to improve personal relationships and rehabilitation prospects upon release.

Positive Parenting Program

A parenting program for men and women called the Positive Parenting Program (Triple P) has been implemented across several prisons.

Triple P is a 12-hour parenting program, where prisoners participate in exercises to learn about the causes of child behaviour problems. Participants learn how to use strategies to promote child development, manage misbehaviour and plan for high risk situations. Facilitators are also trained to deliver 90-minute seminars that provide a brief introduction to Triple P strategies, such as 'Positive Parenting', 'Raising confident, competent children', and 'Raising resilient children'.



Triple P assists prisoners to reignite family connectedness with the overall aim of aiding smoother transition and reintegration into the community and family.

Parenting Inside Out

The Parenting Inside Out program operates out of Marngoneet and Ravenhall prisons and has both a 90-hour and 12-hour program version. This program has been developed for incarcerated parents. The longer program version includes weekly supported play groups whereby fathers have visits with their children with arranged activities and story book dads, which involves recording a father who is in custody reading a children's story which is then sent on to their children.

Mothers and Children Framework

CV's Mothers and Children Service Delivery Framework operates across the women's prison system and has four streams:

1. pregnancy health and wellbeing
2. living with mum
3. parenting support
4. family connectedness.

This framework provides parenting and maternal health support for prisoners who are mothers or are pregnant and may have experienced family violence in their past.

This service includes parenting skills programs at both women's prisons that provide practical support and advice for mothers of children of all ages.

Community programs

There are extensive community programs available for perpetrators and victim survivors of family violence who have reached the end of service for CV delivered or contracted programs.

Many agencies deliver MBCP and eligible persons can self-refer if there are limited or exhausted contracted options with CV.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) impacts

Research has indicated that disasters result in an increase in the severity and frequency of family violence and can trigger a change in the nature and tactics of existing family violence or the onset of family violence. Evidence from around the globe reveals a spike in family violence during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.³ Given this evidence, CV has ensured that programs and services are still available for perpetrators and victim-survivors of family violence including any family safety contact support.

Throughout the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, service providers offering family violence treatment and support have adapted to restrictions in the prisons and community by offering flexible and modified interventions. In most cases, services have been modified for individual support conducted by phone or video calls. Some programs have been delivered virtually with smaller group sizes.

3 Domestic Violence Victoria webpage; <https://dvvic.org.au/covid-19-and-family-violence/>

Culturally and linguistically diverse services

Corrections Victoria acknowledges that a significant proportion of the offender and prisoner population are from CALD backgrounds. As such, CV has sought to focus on varied cultural cohorts to provide advice on and services related to family violence in languages other than English.

Aboriginal programs

Men's Healing and Behaviour Change Programs - Dardi Munwurro

Dardi Munwurro offers a group-based Healing and Behaviour Change Program for Aboriginal men who use or have been convicted of family violence.

Dardi Munwurro's Healing and Behaviour Change Programs encourage and respectfully challenge men to take responsibility and be accountable for their actions. Our program supports men to take ownership and reconnect by working through three elements - the past, the present and the future in a culturally safe environment.

The program is different to traditional MBCPs and comprises of:

- a formal intake and assessment process, including assessing for group readiness
- a three or five day healing camp led by Facilitators, Elders and Traditional Owners
- fortnightly group sessions
- ongoing informal connection with Dardi Munwurro

The men who participate in this program work towards:

- strong spirit and strong culture
- taking responsibility and being accountable
- healthy relationships.

Ngarra Jarranounith Place (NJP) program – Dardi Munwurro

The NJP program helps address Aboriginal male offending. It is an intensive residential diversion program for perpetrators of family violence and is a recommendation from the Royal Commission into Family Violence.

Dardi Munwurro delivers a range of family violence, healing and behaviour change programs and services, which aim to break the cycle of inter-generational trauma in Aboriginal families and communities, by empowering and inspiring individuals to heal the past, acknowledge the present and create a positive vision for the future.

There are three residential properties that support up to 27 men per year, including offenders referred from CCS. Men residing at the properties are provided with intensive family violence case management, engagement in treatment programs. Their families are provided with family safety contact support.

Sister's Day Out and Dilly Bag programs – Djirra

These programs are delivered by Djirra and are part of a suite of programs under five priority areas: cultural strengthening, family violence, healing, parenting and women's programs.

The Sisters Day Out program (referred to as "Sisters Day In" in the prison setting) has a strong focus on relaxation, wellbeing, and on building resilience to family violence.

The Dilly Bag is an intensive women's cultural strengthening program to assist Aboriginal women with the recovery of trauma they may have experienced in their lives.

These programs aim to:

- strengthen Aboriginal women's ability to resolve and reduce their vulnerability to family violence
- highlights important roles Aboriginal women play in their community as leaders and nurturers
- strengthen support networks in the community
- enhance emotional, physical and spiritual wellbeing through the power of culture and community.

A Djirra specialist family violence lawyer is available to discuss any legal needs that a woman may have and a trauma informed therapeutic counsellor is also available. The program is delivered at both the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre (DPFC) and Tarrengower prison.

There are also several service agencies present on the day so that women can access information relating to a range of non-legal services that can support them both in prison and post-release.

Family violence information booklets and brochures

A series of brochures and booklets called 'Keeping Your Family Safe' have been developed, printed and distributed to CCS and prison locations state-wide.

These products are also available in soft copy in the following languages:

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| • Plain English | • Dinka |
| • Arabic | • Hindi |
| • Chinese | • Turkish |
| • Dari | • Vietnamese |

The booklet and brochures have been developed as an educational tool for men engaged in the justice system to provide information about:

- what constitutes family violence
- different types of abuse
- the impact abuse can have on family members,
- the law in Australia
- services to call to access help.

These resources can be made available by contacting the Offender Rehabilitation Unit via RRBOffenderRehabilitationUnit@justice.vic.gov.au

Cultural guidelines

A series of cultural guidelines have been developed to strengthen the responsiveness of CV staff, in particular clinicians, when working with offenders from different cultural backgrounds.

The cultural guidelines have two parts:

Part A – Cultural Overview of CALD communities including Sudanese, South Sudanese, Somali, Lebanese, Iraqi, Maori, Indian and Vietnamese. This part also provides a program facilitation toolkit for general cultural responsiveness.

Part B – Culturally Responsive Practices for offending behaviour programs. This part provides facilitation advice for various clinical programs for different cultural cohorts and how various modules should be adapted to improve cultural sensitivity and program effectiveness.

These guidelines can be requested by contacting the Offender Rehabilitation Unit via RRBOffenderRehabilitationUnit@justice.vic.gov.au

Assessment

Clinical assessment

The Risk Principle of the Risk Need Responsivity (RNR) Model recommends offenders who present a higher risk of violence receive more intensive intervention than those who present a lower level of risk. As such, it is critical that decisions about clinical service provision on the Service Pathway is informed by an evidence-based assessment of risk.

The Service Pathway assessment process is informed by the administration and interpretation of a suite of empirically validated violence risk assessment tools.

Assessment for men's behaviour change programs

Assessments undertaken by external providers for the MBCP are completed using the Common Risk Assessment Framework (CRAF) and are currently in the process of transition to the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Management Framework (MARAM). These assessments use the process of structured professional judgement to assess the level of risk.

Referral Process

Forensic Intervention Services

The Intake Unit will generate automatic referrals for Forensic Intervention Service eligible prisoners and offenders on the Violence Pathway. Where referrals are for offenders on community-based orders, the Intake Unit will request that CCS case practitioners send the required documentation such as sentencing comments, criminal history report, police summaries et cetera to update the CVIMS file.

The Intake Unit will filter all reports to ensure eligibility criteria is met and will then allocate the offender or prisoner to the relevant regional queue in CVIMS for service commencement.

External programs

All referrals for external programs such as the MBCP are completed by case practitioners and sent into the Intake Unit via email, accompanied by supporting documentation such as Sentencing Comments, Criminal History report, police summaries, etc.

The Intake Unit will then ensure eligibility of the referral and allocate to an external provider to complete an assessment to determine suitability for a program.



Table 1: Referral process for perpetrator programs

Program	Eligibility	Locations	Referral Process
Forensic Intervention Services Violence Program Suite	<p>Eligible for Forensic Intervention Services as per <i>Section 8</i></p> <p>Identified needs related to risk for intimate partner violence</p>	Prison and CCS State-wide	<p>Referrals are automatically generated for offenders who meet Forensic Intervention Service eligibility criteria.</p> <p>Once Intake Unit has processed relevant referrals, case managers will be contacted to provide required documentation (in community).</p> <p>Offender will be placed on regional queue for screening service commencement.</p> <p>Suitability to program determined from Forensic Intervention Services eligibility criteria and clinical assessment outcomes.</p>
Men's Behaviour Change Program	<p>Male</p> <p>Current intimate partner violence offence</p> <p>Order length of at least eight months</p> <p>Programs condition on order</p>	CCS State-wide	<p>Manual referral sent to Forensic Intervention Services Intake Unit by CCS case practitioner.</p> <p>Referral forwarded to external Program Provider via Regional Contract Coordinator.</p>
Men's Healing and Behaviour Change Program	<p>Male, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, any type of family violence, order length of at least eight months</p>	CCS State-wide	<p>Manual referral sent to Forensic Intervention Services Intake Unit by CCS case practitioner.</p> <p>Referral forwarded to external Program Provider via Regional Contract Coordinator.</p>

1:1 Perpetrator Case Management	Male or female Any type of family violence Order length of at least 5 months duration	CCS State-wide	Manual referral sent to Forensic Intervention Services Intake Unit by CCS case practitioner. Referral forwarded to external Program Provider via Regional Contract Coordinator.
LINCS in Families	Male or female Current family violence offence Any risk level as per LS RNR Programs condition on order	CCS Metropolitan regions	Manual referral sent to Forensic Intervention Services Intake Unit by CCS case practitioner.
Tuning into Respectful Relationships	Male or female Remand prisoners	Dame Phyllis Frost Centre (DPFC) Metropolitan Remand Centre Various prison locations (from 2021)	Prisoners able to self-refer or referral by prison case manager.
Living Free from Violence	Women, transgender or gender diverse people who have used force.	Dame Phyllis Frost Centre (DPFC)	Prisoners able to self-refer or referral by prison case manager.
+Shift	Women who have used violence in relationships	Tarregower Prison	Prisoners able to self-refer or referral by prison case manager.

Table 2: Referral process for victim survivor programs

Program	Eligibility	Locations	Referral Process
Safety & Resilience Family Violence Support	Female	DPFC and Tarregower Prison	Prisoners able to self-refer or referral by prison case manager.
Specialist Trauma Counselling, including Understanding Trauma groups	Females who have experienced trauma	DPFC and Tarregower Prison	Prisoners able to self-refer or referral by prison case manager.

Appendix 1

Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Management Framework (MARAM)

The MARAM framework builds on the existing Common Risk Assessment Framework (CRAF) principles. The aim of the MARAM framework is to increase safety and wellbeing by ensuring all relevant services are contributing effectively to the identification, assessment and management of family violence risk.

The MARAM framework provides policy guidance to organisations that have responsibilities in assessing and managing family violence risk.

Under MARAM:

- all parts of the service system will have a shared understanding of risk assessment and management
- professionals will have the skills and a framework to guide appropriate risk management action
- there is a clear understanding of the responsibilities of other parts of the system to coordinate and implement safety and accountability⁴.

Through the second half of 2019 and early 2020, CV departments undertook training to align existing practices to the MARAM Framework. Training included risk assessment tools for both perpetrators and victim survivors, as well as understanding practice guidelines to manage risk.

Until new MARAM practices are developed and integrated into the service response, the CRAF is used by practitioners to understand and identify risk factors associated with family violence. For instance, the CRAF is used by external program providers who undertake assessments to determine suitability for the Men's Behaviour Change Programs.

All external providers working with CV to deliver family violence programs must also be aligned to the MARAM.

⁴ MARAM – Family Violence Reform; www.vic.gov.au/familyviolence/family-safety-victoria/information-sharing-and-risk-management/maram.html

Information sharing

The Royal Commission identified the crucial role that effective and appropriate sharing of information between organisations in the family violence service system plays in keeping victim survivors safe and holding perpetrators to account. CV is part of significant family violence reforms which impact on how information can be shared.

Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS)

Part 5A of the Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (the Act) was developed in response to the Royal Commission recommendations, establishing the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS), which authorises prescribed information sharing entities (ISEs) to share information with one another for family violence risk assessment and risk management purposes⁵. This includes the ability to share information regarding perpetrators without their consent.

However, consent from victim survivors and third parties is required before information is shared, unless there is serious risk present, or the information is related to a child victim survivor.

Any requests for information to CV under the FVISS must be submitted via email to cv.fviss@justice.vic.gov.au

Information Sharing Entity (ISE)

Information sharing entities are prescribed persons who can request information under the FVISS and who can respond to requests for information from another ISE. All ISE can request and share information to manage the assessed risk of family violence to victim survivors. To request information, an ISE must have a reasonable belief that a perpetrator is committing family violence.

Corrections Victoria is identified as an ISE under the Act and are therefore permitted to share and request information from another ISE.

For example, a victim support agency may make a request to CV for the pending release date and treatment program participation for a prisoner who has been convicted of family violence offences and is subject to a term of imprisonment.

Central Information Point (CIP)

The CIP has been identified as a mechanism for the facilitation of information sharing, by bringing together previously separate information from Victoria Police, Courts, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and CV. The CIP will allow prompt access for practitioners in the Support and Safety Hubs to obtain the critical information they need to strengthen their risk assessment and risk management function.

Child Information Sharing Scheme

Part 6A of the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 established the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS), which allows information sharing among ISE to promote the wellbeing and safety of a child, or a group of children.

It is noted that CV is not a formal part of the CISS, with exception to CCS staff who participate in Risk Assessment Management Panels.



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