

# *A new approach to family violence*

## **A Common Risk Assessment Framework for Family Violence Services in Victoria**

### **Newsletter #2**

KPMG has been working with the Family Violence Coordination Unit of the Department for Victorian Communities to develop and pilot a Common Risk Assessment Framework for Family Violence Services in Victoria.

A Project Management Group made up of representatives from the Department for Victorian Communities, the Department of Human Services (DHS), Victoria Police, the Department of Justice and family violence peak bodies is overseeing the project.

The project commenced in August 2006 and the work to date has included:

- research investigating current approaches to family violence risk assessment in Australia and overseas and a review of literature regarding risk assessment tools in family violence;
- preliminary interviews with targeted stakeholders to gain an understanding of current approaches to risk assessment used by agencies in Victoria;
- development of a draft risk assessment framework and practice guide;
- two rounds of consultation in each of the eight Department of Human Services Regions including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-specific forums regarding the draft risk assessment framework and the accompanying practice guide, and
- revision of the framework and practice guide based on feedback from the consultation process.

More than 350 people attended the two rounds of consultation. Participants from a number of different agencies attended including:

- police;
- specialist family violence services;
- courts (both general courts and specialist family violence courts); and
- mainstream services such as Maternal and Child Health nurses and mental health practitioners.

The first round of consultation sought feedback on the first draft of the Common Risk Assessment Framework for Family Violence Services and also sought ideas about what might be required in an assessment tool. Feedback from the consultation informed a revision of the Framework and the development of a Practice Guide to assist in undertaking a risk assessment.

The second round of consultation provided an overview of the feedback from the first round of consultation and the subsequent changes made to the Framework. The Practice Guide was also presented and feedback was sought on its appropriateness for use by mainstream services, specialist family violence services, courts and police. The Framework and Practice Guide were further amended following this round of consultation.

The consultations provided a great opportunity for participants to network, while also having input into the Risk Assessment Framework and the Practice Guide.

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The framework and practice guide are now at a point where they can be piloted. The Interdepartmental Committee on Family Violence has selected the DHS regions of Hume and North and West to act as pilot sites. Within these regions, staff from police, courts and key family violence agencies will be involved in the pilot. Mainstream services will be included if they wish to participate.

Piloting will occur for a period of four weeks, from early December to early January. Prior to piloting, a full-day training session will be provided to representatives from each participating agency.

Following the piloting period, the pilot will be evaluated through a survey and through focus groups held in both of the pilot regions. The Framework and Practice Guide will then be amended based on the outcome of the pilot and recommendations for implementation will be developed.

Another newsletter will be posted on this site after pilot testing to let you know the outcomes.

Should you have any queries, please contact the KPMG team involved in this project:

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