



Taking Responsibility

A framework for developing best practice in programs
for men who use violence toward family members





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**Partnerships Against
Domestic Violence**

Coordinated by the Commonwealth Office of the Status of Women

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Minister's foreword

It is with pleasure that I present the report "Taking Responsibility: A Framework For Developing Best Practice In Programs For Men Who Use Violence Toward Family Members".

This Government has a strong commitment to the prevention and reduction of violence against women and children. To this end, a whole-of-government Women's Safety Strategy (WSS) is being developed with the aim of improving women's safety, well-being and capacity to fully participate in Victorian life by reducing the level and fear of violence against women.

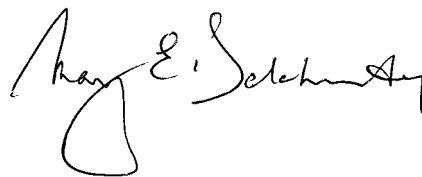
This best practice framework is a significant component of a range of strategies developed across Government, aimed at strengthening prevention responses and responding appropriately to people who use violence.

This report provides Government with a shared policy approach to underpin its response to the provision of programs for men who use violence toward family members. It outlines the way forward for Victoria to develop best practice in these programs, both within existing services and in future service development. It identifies the necessary elements and steps in the sequential development of a flexible and coordinated response to the provision of programs for men, which forms part of Victoria's efforts to reduce and prevent family violence.

Significant consultation across Government and the family violence service sector has resulted in informed discussion and lively debate around the many issues and priorities in the provision of programs for men.

I particularly wish to thank members of the Reference Group and all those involved in the forums conducted across Victoria. You have made a substantial contribution to the development of this best practice framework.

I believe this report is a significant step in developing a coordinated and holistic response to the provision of programs for men who use violence toward family members and as such, it is an important contribution to this Government's commitment to improving the safety of women and children in Victoria.



The Hon. Mary Delahunty, MP
Minister for Women's Affairs

April 2002

Executive Summary

In early 2000, the Office of Women's Policy (OWP) received funding through Partnerships Against Domestic Violence (Partnerships), a Commonwealth Government initiative, to develop "Taking Responsibility: A Framework For Developing Best Practice In Programs For Men Who Use Violence Toward Family Members".

This framework will form part of the Victorian Women's Safety Strategy (WSS), which aims to improve women's safety, well-being and capacity to fully participate in life by reducing the level and fear of violence against women. The safety of women and children is paramount throughout the consideration of the framework.

It is widely recognised that family violence is a significant social problem, which has considerable immediate and pervasive impacts on the Australian community. In 1996 the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Australian Women's Safety Survey,¹ found that 23 per cent of women who had been married or in a defacto relationship had experienced violence by a partner. The survey also found that 61 per cent of women who experienced violence by a current partner reported they had children in their care, and 38 per cent said their children had witnessed the violence.²

Extensive consultations held by OWP in late 2000 across Government and the community services sector, confirmed that programs for men who use violence toward family members are an important part of the continuum of prevention and intervention strategies to reduce family violence.

However, concerns remain that programs may be used as a diversion from criminal sanctions, that funds for women's services may be diverted to fund "men's programs", and in particular, there are continuing doubts regarding the effectiveness of programs for men who use violence toward family members in stopping men's violence.

Although there are a number of recent studies that suggest men can change their violent behaviours, there are also studies which are inconclusive, or suggest that little changes through a man's participation in a program. In general, there is a lack of methodologically sound evaluations of programs for men who use violence toward family members in Australia and overseas.

At present in Victoria there are 25 services conducting programs or groups for men who use violence toward family members.³ Eighteen of these are located in Melbourne. There is general agreement the programs and groups are underdeveloped and lack coordination, monitoring and systematic evaluation.

This framework identifies the following priority areas for developing best practice in programs for men who use violence toward family members:

- Safety of women and children
- Accountability of programs
- Coordination
- Assessment
- Evaluation
- Standards
- Availability of programs for men who self-refer, men who are directed to attend programs and for men within the criminal justice system
- Responding to men of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Indigenous men and men with diverse needs.

1 Australian Women's Safety Survey (1996), Australian Bureau of Statistics, 4128.0
2 ibid
3 NTV Forum, Volume 2, No 3, Summer Edition 2001.

The framework identifies the need to address these issues through the sequential development of statewide and local infrastructure, policy frameworks for assessment, evaluation and training, monitoring procedures and the enhancement of programs to meet identified service delivery components.

In summary, the framework proposes the following sequence of developments:

- At a statewide level, the establishment of an interdepartmental project management group to guide the implementation of the framework.
- At local levels, the establishment of community-based reference groups to ensure community accountability and coordination.
- At local levels, the development of partnerships and linkages between services providing programs and services which are an entry point for men, women and families who present with, or disclose, male violence within the family.
- The development of:
 - statewide and specific agency evaluation frameworks
 - a statewide assessment framework
 - a process for monitoring standards
 - a range of professional development programs.
- Enhancement of programs to meet specified service delivery components.

The framework identifies the best practice service delivery components of programs for men who use violence toward family members as:

- *Comprehensive entry assessment* and engagement to determine the motivation and intention of the participant and consequently, his suitability for a group program.
- *Intensive response program (IRP)* for directed clients assessed as unmotivated, resistant, or otherwise unsuitable for a men's behaviour change group.
- *Men's behaviour change group (MBCG)* to address partner safety, men taking responsibility for their violence, male privilege, power and control, and other issues essential to addressing men's violence.
- *Ongoing change group (OCG)* to provide a maintenance role for men who have completed the group program and/or an immediate response to men who are seeking help to stop their violent behaviour and awaiting entry to the group program.

- *Individual counselling* for those men assessed as unsuitable for a group program, or for men who may require individual counselling to address a particular issue, in addition to participating in the group program.
- *Contact with partners*, where willing and appropriate, to respond to the safety needs of former and/or current partners, children and other family members.
- *Follow-up with participants*, partners and children, where appropriate, after completion of the group program and with men who leave during the course of the group program.
- *Responding to men with diverse needs* in recognition of the range of men who may access programs, including men who have an intellectual disability or mental illness, drug and alcohol dependency issues and men who live in regional, rural or remote localities.
- *Responding to Indigenous men* in a manner which is relevant and sensitive to their Indigenous community and experiences.
- *Responding to men from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds* in a manner which is relevant and sensitive to men and their families from a range of backgrounds.
- *Research and development* to ensure new understandings and learnings inform the ongoing response to male family violence.
- *Evaluation of outcomes* for men, women and children and therefore, the effectiveness of the program.
- *Management of participants and their families* through assessment, planning, linking, protocols, referral and monitoring.
- *Personal and professional development* to improve workers' knowledge, experience and expertise, through both initial education and regular, ongoing training and supervision, to respond to the many issues raised in dealing with male family violence.
- *Participation in the broad family violence service system* through networking, development of referral protocols, inter-agency training and involvement in community development strategies.

This framework confirms the role of programs for men who use violence toward family members as an important part of the continuum of prevention and intervention strategies to reduce male family violence.

The framework outlines the way forward for Victoria in the provision of these programs, which will, in a strategic and coordinated way, reduce and prevent family violence, thus enhancing the lives of all Victorian men, women and children.

Terminology

An understanding of terminology is critical to the establishment of agreed understandings in relation to responding to men who use violence toward family members.

Family violence is defined as:

*Violent, threatening, coercive or controlling behaviour that occurs in current or past family, domestic or intimate relationships... This encompasses not only physical injury but direct or indirect threats, sexual assault, emotional and psychological torment, economic control, property damage, social isolation and behaviour which causes a person to live in fear.*⁴

The term “family violence” is preferred to “domestic violence” because it incorporates violence which may occur between family members, such as violence between siblings or across generations, in addition to violence between partners. Use of family violence also reflects Indigenous communities’ preference for the term, because it more accurately reflects extended kinship ties and how the impact of violence affects all members of a family.

While child abuse and family violence are generally considered separately, it is important to acknowledge the inter-relationship between family violence and child abuse. These forms of violence often co-exist, with violence being directed towards both women and children. However, it is also a form of psychological child abuse if a child hears or witnesses violence directed towards their mother or a sibling, even if he or she is not the primary victim.

Research shows family violence is usually perpetrated by men against women and children. However, family violence can be perpetrated by any member of a family against any other member. It can occur in any kind of relationship including same sex relationships and against people who are elderly or disabled.

The term ‘*women who have experienced violence*’ is used in preference to the terms ‘victims’ or ‘survivors’. This report adopts the approach that referring to women who have experienced violence as ‘victims’ may perpetuate negative stereotypes of women, locking them into their situation and reinforcing powerlessness. On the other hand some women may not identify with the term ‘survivor’. The victim/survivor terminology can also suggest a type of person, rather than a type of experience and fails to acknowledge crucial aspects of a woman’s identity outside her experience of violence.

The term ‘*men who use violence toward family members*’ is used in preference to ‘perpetrators’ (as used in much of the Australian literature), or ‘batterers’ (as used in much of the material from the USA). This term describes the actions of the man, rather than labelling the person and is used because it identifies those who are experiencing the violence.

‘*Coordinated response*’ and ‘integrated response’ are often interchanged in describing the delivery of services and there is some confusion as to the meaning of both terms. This paper uses the term ‘coordinated response’ to describe a system where there are:

*“formally agreed relationships and compatible missions. Formal communication channels are developed, although authority is still maintained by the individual organisations and there is no separate structure ...”*⁵

⁴ This definition of family violence was developed as part of the Measuring Family Violence Project in Victoria, being conducted by the Victorian Community Council Against Violence 2000 - 2001. The definition was adapted from Walsh D. “Domestic Violence in Pregnancy” (2000) Vol 1 Domestic Violence and Incest Resource Centre Newsletter.

⁵ Mattesich, P & Monsey, B. *Collaboration: What Makes it Work*. St Paul, M A, Amherst. H Wilder Foundation, 1992, cited by Gardiner, J., in Justice and Change: Creating Integrated and Coordinated Criminal Justice Responses to Family and Domestic Violence in Australia at the Domestic Violence Prevention Council Conference, Canberra, September 1999.

A shared understanding of principles and the development of joint protocols may also be evident in a coordinated response, particularly in local settings. It is the intention of this document to promote the development of a coordinated response as a first step in improving the delivery of programs for men who use violence toward family members.

The term *directed participant*, rather than 'mandated participant', is used when a participant is ordered, usually by a Magistrate, to attend a men's behaviour change program. This may occur:

- as a condition of an intervention order (IO), a good behaviour bond, a community-based order (as part of sentencing)
- as part of a parole order
- as part of a case plan developed by a regional child protection unit, or as ordered by the Children's Court.

Other participants who may self-refer where criminal charges have been laid, or court proceedings are pending, are not considered directed.

Programs for men who use violence toward family members aim to prevent and reduce men's violence toward family members. They generally have group programs as their central element and may include entry assessment, individual counselling, ongoing change programs for men, partner or family contact, follow-up and evaluation, and are part of the broader family violence service system.

Part 1- Context

1. Aim

The aim of this report is to provide the Victorian Government with a framework for developing best practice in programs for men who use violence toward family members.

2. Introduction

2.1 Establishment of the Project

In early 2000, the Office of Women's Policy (OWP) received funding through Partnerships Against Domestic Violence (Partnerships), a Commonwealth Government initiative, to develop "Taking Responsibility: A Framework for Developing Best Practice In Programs For Men Who Use Violence Toward Family Members" project. Allocation of project management responsibility to the OWP was made by an interdepartmental committee of senior Victorian Government staff who wished to ensure the safety of women and children was considered as paramount in the development of the project.

The framework is an initiative of the Women's Safety Strategy which is also being developed by the OWP.

2.2 Development of the Project

The development of the framework was informed by a range of community consultations, discussions held across Government with key departmental staff and research findings.

A reference group comprising representatives from relevant State Government departments and a range of community organisations including men's, women's and children's services, provided advice and expertise to the development of the framework.

A whole-of-government discussion paper: Behaviour Change Programs for Men who Use Violence Toward Family Members was released to approximately 400 organisations around Victoria which sought to:

- present a proposed position with regard to behaviour change programs for men who use violence toward family members
- provide a starting point for the consideration of a range of issues to be addressed as part of the framework.

A number of consultations were also conducted with:

- family violence service providers and other stakeholders in each of the nine DHS regions
- Indigenous men throughout Victoria, with a statewide forum held in Melbourne
- representatives from culturally and linguistically diverse organisations and communities, service providers of behaviour change programs
- staff from the Department of Justice including Victoria Police, Office of the Correctional Services Commissioner and the Public Correctional Enterprise; Department of Human Services and the Department of Education, Employment and Training.

In addition, extensive research of contemporary Australian and international literature was conducted regarding appropriate interventions to address male family violence, including programs for men who use violence against family members.

In identifying men who use violence toward family members as the focus for intervention in this report, the OWP acknowledges the existence of other forms of violence including child abuse, adolescent violence (against parents, siblings, and other family members) and violence against older people. It also acknowledges that women use violence in either heterosexual or lesbian relationships and that men also experience violence in their intimate relationships. The focus of this project on men is in recognition that the majority of people who use violence against family members are male.

3. Background

3.1 What Are Programs For Men Who Use Violence Toward Family Members?

Programs for men who use violence toward family members first began to appear in the United States and England in the mid-seventies and in Australia in the mid-eighties. In Victoria, programs were initially developed in generalist family and counselling services, in response to the number of women who reported experiencing violence in their relationship. Recent international and Australian research provides strong evidence that programs will be most effective when provided within a coordinated and holistic approach.

Effective programs aim to prevent and reduce men's violence toward family members. They generally have group programs as their central element and include entry assessment, individual counselling and ongoing change programs for men. They also involve partner or family contact, follow-up and evaluation and are part of the broader family violence service system.

They provide, or are linked to, concurrent support programs for women partners and children, programs for specific target groups including young men and are involved in community awareness activities. The provision of a "program" infers a comprehensive response to male family violence, which is part of a coordinated approach and not to be confused with the provision of a "group", which does not include all the elements listed above.

Research conducted for Partnerships suggests that programs for men may have a number of theoretical underpinnings. Effective programs are those which have integrated theoretical explanations, which hold men responsible for their use of violence and encourage men to take responsibility to stop their violent and abusive behaviours. Programs based on theoretical explanations that pathologise men's violence, such as family dysfunctioning theory which sees all family members contributing to the violence, are the least effective in stopping men's violence.

Effective programs address partner safety, men's responsibility for their violence, patriarchy, unequal power balances, male privilege, power and control and other issues essential to addressing men's violence toward women and other family members. They may include anger management strategies in the content of their programs, but are not anger management programs.

Potential participants of programs for men who use violence toward family members include men who self-refer, men within the criminal justice system and men who are directed to attend through child protection proceedings or via intervention orders.

3.2 Why Is There a Need For Programs For Men Who Use Violence Toward Family Members?

Family violence is a huge social problem which has considerable immediate and far reaching impacts on the Australian community. For example, the *Australian Women's Safety Survey*,⁶ conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics found that 23 per cent of women who had been married or in de facto relationships had experienced violence by their partners. The survey also found that 61 per cent of women who experienced violence by a current partner reported they had children in their care and 38 per cent said their children had witnessed the violence.⁷ Additionally, while there were 15,258 female victims of reported family violence in Victoria in 1999-2000,⁸ vast under-reporting of family violence is widely acknowledged. A national report by Keys Young⁹ highlights the large number of women who never seek help for their experience of family violence.

The social and emotional effects of family violence are profound and extensive. Women who have been abused by their partners have been found to suffer from depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, isolation and lack of social support, low self-esteem, sexual problems, addictive behaviours, shame, anger and/or rage.¹⁰

Children who witness or experience family violence may also display a range of responses including aggression, tantrums, acting out, immaturity, truancy, delinquency, anxiety, depression, withdrawal, low self-esteem, anger, failure to thrive, sleeplessness, regressive behaviours, eating disorders, poor motor skills, psychosomatic symptoms, rejection by peers, poor academic performance, poor conflict resolution skills and language lag.¹¹

This report also acknowledges the criminal nature of many forms of family violence including assaults, threats to harm and property damage. These offences fall within the mandate of the criminal justice system and need to be addressed as criminal offences. The role of programs for men who use violence toward family members in cases where a criminal offence has occurred, must be an addition to, not a diversion from, other appropriate criminal justice responses.

Other forms of family violence such as constant criticism and put-downs, financial control, or isolating a woman from her family and friends, are not criminal offences, yet can be very harmful and have long-term effects for the whole family. In addition, many women do not wish to seek a criminal justice response to the violence they are experiencing - they just want the violence to stop. Furthermore, when a man is charged with a family violence offence, an order, fine or prison sentence does little to assist him to change his violent behaviour.

Many men throughout Victoria have accepted their use of violence and abuse is unacceptable and they actively seek assistance to change their behaviour. During the 1999-2000 financial year, the Men's Referral Service responded to 1,694 telephone calls from men seeking assistance and referral. An audit of programs for men who use violence toward family members conducted by the OWP for the 1999-2000 financial year, indicated that over 1000 (primarily self-referred) men attended programs or groups throughout Victoria during this time.

The provision of programs for men to change their violent behaviour is complementary to a strong and consistent criminal justice response and can serve as both a prevention and rehabilitation response to men.

The provision of programs for men is supported in the findings of research conducted as part of Partnerships Against Domestic Violence (Partnerships), that:

"there are obvious social and economic imperatives for focussing domestic violence initiatives in the area of early intervention and prevention. Although it is recognised that such initiatives have to be balanced alongside the need to continue providing support to those currently experiencing domestic violence, further funding for men's relationship programs are a core part of the prevention of domestic violence and the intervention process."¹²

6 *Australian Women's Safety Survey* (1996) Australian Bureau of Statistics, 4128.0

7 *ibid*

8 Victoria Police Family Incidents Report, 1999-2000

9 Keys Young, (1998) *Against The Odds: How Women Survive Domestic Violence*, prepared for The Office of The Status of Women, ACT

10 Giles-Sims, J. (1998) The aftermath of partner violence. In J.L. Jasinski and L.M.Williams (Eds). *Partner Violence: A comprehensive review of 20 years of research*. Thousand Oakes, CA: Sage

11 Wolak, J. & Finkelhor, D. (1998) In J.L. Jasinski and L.M.Williams (Eds). *Partner Violence: A comprehensive review of 20 years of research*. Thousand Oakes, CA: Sage

12 Partnerships Against Domestic Violence, *MetaEvaluation - Working with Men*, Bulletin 3, February, 2000.

3.3 Why Is There a Need For a Framework To Develop Best Practice in Programs For Men Who Use Violence Toward Family Members?

Historically in Victoria, program responses for men were restricted to the provision of a 10 or 12 week group for men. Over time, there has been increasing awareness of the need to respond to the safety of women and children in the provision of programs for men and for programs to be coordinated and linked with the broader service system response to family violence. There is a need to establish programs consistent with these recent findings and to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of these programs.

At present in Victoria programs and groups for men are underdeveloped and lack coordination, monitoring and systematic evaluation.

Recent research¹³ conducted for National Crime Prevention (NCP), also clearly identifies the need for programs for men to be integrated within the current Government and non-government services involved in family violence, to form part of the overall response to the amelioration of family violence. Consultations across Government and with the community in Victoria support this finding, along with the suggestion that the whole service system, including the criminal justice response and the current community-based programs for men, needs further development and strengthening.

The best practice framework outlined in Section 2 of this report, provides a way forward for further development of programs for men who use violence toward family members.

3.4 Responses In Other States and Territories

There is much activity across Australia in responding to male family violence. At present, States and Territories have varying levels of policy development, funding provisions, standards development, provision of programs for directed and self-referred clients and varying levels of integration between programs for men and other family violence service providers.

All jurisdictions are currently involved in either reviewing their policy, developing implementation plans, piloting programs or evaluating recent initiatives, with the aim of improving responses to prevent and reduce male family violence. Many of the new projects and initiatives have been funded through Partnerships Against Domestic Violence (Partnerships), a Commonwealth Government initiative which has committed \$50 million to the development of a wide range of projects to test new approaches, identify good practice and share knowledge in the area of family violence.

One of the major areas of interest for Partnerships is identifying effective responses and programs for men who use violence toward family members. Partnerships has funded a range of projects which include:

- an extensive community education campaign in Western Australia targeting men wanting help with their relationships/families (Freedom from Fear Campaign)
- the development of pilot programs in the Northern Territory and Western Australia for Indigenous men who are directed by the Courts to attend programs for men who use violence toward family members
- the development of programs in South Australia and Victoria for young men using peer educators.

More recently, Partnerships has funded Victoria and Tasmania to develop frameworks and plans for an improved response to the provision of programs for men.

(See Appendix 1 for a brief summary of programs for men in the other States and Territories.)

3.5 Current Victorian Government Responses

The development of the best practice framework for programs for men who use violence toward family members takes place at a time of much Government activity in the area of family violence policy development. The framework aims to inform and be informed by, the development of the following Government initiatives:

- The Office of Women's Policy is Chair of the Women's Safety Coordinating Committee, whose task it is to develop a whole-of-government Women's Safety Strategy.
- The Department of Human Services is developing:
 - a framework to include prevention, crisis/protection and recovery responses
 - a homelessness strategy which looks at accommodation options for women and children escaping family violence
 - an Indigenous Family Violence Strategy, in partnership with Aboriginal Affairs Victoria, to respond to the particular needs of Indigenous communities in responding to family violence.
- The Department of Justice is involved in a number of initiatives including the establishment of a family violence database, a review of a section of the *Crimes (Family Violence) Act 1987*, the development of strategies to prevent family violence and the development of local safety plans through the Victorian Community Council Against Violence, Legal Policy, Courts Services, Crime Prevention Victoria and the Victoria Police.

(See Appendix 2 for a brief summary of Victorian Government policy and program initiatives in the area of family violence).

4. Key Findings of the Project

4.1 Current State of Programs For Men Who Use Violence Toward Family Members in Victoria

In 2001, there were 25 services throughout Victoria conducting programs or groups for men who use violence toward family members.¹⁴ Eighteen of these are located in Melbourne. Programs are held in a range of settings, including community health services and non-government health and welfare agencies including Relationships Australia, Anglicare and others. Fifteen of these services receive partial funding through the DHS Family Violence Prevention and Support Program (FVPSP).

FVPSP also provides funding to NTV, the Male Family Violence Prevention Association Inc. This body is the result of an integration of two organisations - the Victorian Network for the Prevention of Male Family Violence (V-NET) and the Men's Referral Service (MRS), which both have a history of providing services and undertaking activities for the prevention of male family violence.

The V-NET Standards Manual completed in 1995 provides minimum standards and identifies a number of best practice goals for programs for men who use violence. At present, services funded through the FVPSP and NTV member agencies are required to adhere to these standards. Many of these services have identified difficulties in adhering to the standards with existing resources. There are no procedures in place to monitor adherence to the standards.

At present there are inconsistencies in the funding and distribution of programs for men who use violence toward family members across the State. There are no programs for men in the Victorian prison system and none specifically for Indigenous men, or men from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. There are very few programs for male adolescents and boys who use violence toward their girlfriends, mothers and siblings. Community Correctional Services is often unable to access programs for their clients.

In addition, the programs provided by services vary greatly, including differences in the length of the group program, the ability to provide individual counselling and follow-up and the provision of support for women partners and children. Other areas where there are inconsistencies across the programs, include the extent to which programs are able to:

- develop linkages with other agencies including women's support services
- develop referral protocols with relevant agencies
- establish relationships with child protection and correctional services (with varying numbers of men attending programs as referrals from these agencies)
- develop and conduct assessment and evaluation procedures.

4.2 Issues In the Provision Of Programs For Men Who Use Violence Toward Family Members

Extensive consultations held by OWP in late 2000 across Government and the community services sector, confirm programs for men are an important part of the continuum of prevention and intervention strategies to reduce family violence.

However, concerns remain that programs may be used as a diversion from criminal sanctions, that funds for women's services may be diverted to fund "men's programs", and in particular, there are continuing doubts regarding the effectiveness of programs for men in stopping men's violence.

Although there are a number of recent studies which indicate men can change their violent behaviours and that programs contribute to improved lives for women and children, there are also studies which are inconclusive, or suggest that there is little change through a man's participation in a program.

In general, there is a lack of methodologically sound evaluations of programs for men who use violence toward family members in Australia and overseas. The research into programs in Australia is particularly scarce and the evaluations which do exist cannot be compared. This contributes to the inconclusive evidence around the effectiveness of these programs in reducing men's violence toward family members.

One recent Australian report "*A Study in Hope*"¹⁵ published in 1999, offers a good example of a comprehensive, multi-sited evaluation of family violence services including men's behaviour change programs. This study also provided recommendations for the development of a better practice model for family violence services based on the findings from the evaluation.

It is essential that further development of programs for men is comprehensively evaluated to ensure that men are reducing their abusive behaviours and the lives of women and children are improved.

4.3 Priority Areas

The framework identifies the following eight priority areas for developing best practice in programs for men who use violence toward family members:

- Safety of women and children
- Accountability of programs
- Coordination
- Assessment
- Evaluation
- Standards
- Availability of programs for men who self-refer, men who are directed to attend programs and for men within the criminal justice system
- Responding to men of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Indigenous men and men with diverse needs.

4.4 The Way Forward

To ensure best practice in programs for men who use violence toward family members, infrastructure is required to support the developing system. This includes clear principles, guidelines and procedures developed at statewide and local levels and with stakeholders to ensure shared understandings, enhanced coordination and accountability.

It is proposed implementation of the framework be sequenced as follows:

- At a statewide level, the establishment of an interdepartmental project management group to guide the implementation of the framework.
- At local levels, the establishment of community-based reference groups to ensure community accountability and coordination.
- At local levels, the development of partnerships and linkages between services providing programs and services that are an entry point for men, women and families who present with, or disclose, male violence within the family.
- The development of:
 - statewide and specific agency evaluation frameworks
 - a statewide assessment framework
 - a process for monitoring standards
 - a range of professional development programs.
- Enhancement of programs to meet specified service delivery components.

Part 2-The Proposed Framework

1. Aim

The aim of the framework is to develop best practice in programs for men who use violence toward family members, including men who self-refer, those who are directed via child protection proceedings, as a condition of an intervention order (IO) and those within the criminal justice system.

The framework proposes a systematic approach and identifies appropriate pathways for men who are potential participants of programs for men. It:

- proposes the establishment of statewide and local structures to support a coordinated response
- explains the role of programs for men within the larger service system
- addresses the concern that programs for men may be used as a diversion from an appropriate criminal justice response, and
- proposes minimum service delivery components.

2. Guiding Principles

It is proposed the following guiding principles underpin the provision of programs for men who use violence toward family members in Victoria.

Programs for men who use violence toward family members will:

- **demonstrate a commitment to the safety of women and children**
- have the primary objective of assisting men to stop their violent and abusive behaviours
- hold men who use violence toward family members accountable for their use of violence
- be accountable and responsive to the experiences of women and children

- be provided within a coordinated response to family violence
- be available for men who voluntarily seek assistance, for those within the criminal justice system and for those directed to attend programs via child protection proceedings and intervention orders (IO)
- not be used as a diversion from a criminal justice response
- adhere to Government-approved standards of practice
- assess a man's suitability for participation and assess his behaviour throughout and after involvement in a group program
- be available and respond to men from diverse backgrounds, cultures and life experiences
- be developed by and in consultation with, members of culturally and linguistically diverse communities, to ensure the most appropriate and effective responses
- be developed by and in consultation with, Indigenous community members to determine the most appropriate and effective responses to address violence which also recognises the effects of colonisation and the subsequent dispossession of Indigenous people
- include evaluation of outcomes for men, women and children in any program evaluation undertaken.

3. The Framework

3.1 Statewide Coordination

At a statewide level, the establishment of an inter-Government Project Management Group (PMG) as a sub-group of the Women's Safety Coordinating Committee, would include a representative from the OWP and the relevant portfolio areas in the Department of Human Services and the Department of Justice. The role of the PMG would be to ensure consistent and coordinated Government implementation of the best practice framework.

It is further proposed that the PMG consider strategies to enhance Government and community coordination which may include:

- Developing a memorandum of understanding for relevant State Government departments, which would include agreement to the guiding principles.
- Overseeing the development and enhancement of programs for men. This would include overseeing the development and implementation of policy frameworks for statewide and specific agency evaluations, assessment procedures and a range of training programs.
- Providing advice to relevant funding bodies regarding the monitoring of programs' adherence to standards.
- Supporting community partnerships and initiatives through formally agreed interdepartmental protocols and procedures and the development of guidelines for developing community-based referral protocols.

3.2 Local Area Based Coordination

3.2.1 Reference Group

To ensure community accountability and coordination, it is proposed that programs for men who use violence toward family members have a local community-based Reference Group with representation from the following:

- Auspicing agencies providing programs for men who use violence toward family members
- Family Violence Networker
- Women's Domestic Violence Service
- Victoria Police
- DHS Protective Services
- Local court
- Correctional services
- People of culturally and linguistically diverse background
- People of Indigenous backgrounds
- Other agencies as determined by local need.

The Reference Group would be guided by terms of reference including aims and objectives and agreement to the guiding principles. The role of the Reference Group would be to provide advice to the development and delivery of programs for men in the local area. This may include advising on safety issues, gaps in service provision, identifying needs and issues of accessibility and equity, providing advice on information needs and dissemination, community development strategies and other issues as identified in the local area.

Management responsibilities for the programs for men who use violence toward family members would be the responsibility of the auspicing agencies.

3.2.2 Partnerships

At a local level, it is proposed partnerships and linkages be developed between services providing programs for men who use violence toward family members and with services which are an entry point for men, women and families who present with, or disclose, male violence within the family, ie, Victoria Police, courts, community correctional services, child protection units and women's domestic violence services.

A “partnership” would provide a working relationship for the partner services, supported by a memorandum of understanding outlining roles, responsibilities and referral protocols.

3.2.3 Linkages

Services providing programs for men would develop linkages with services such as:

- Maternal and Child Health Services
- Community health services
- Centres Against Sexual Assault
- Local Indigenous communities
- Local culturally and linguistically diverse communities
- Mental health services
- Family services
- Women’s services
- Women’s health services
- Drug and alcohol services
- Generalist counselling services
- SAAP and other accommodation services
- Children’s access services
- General Practitioners
- Schools
- Hospitals
- Clergy

Programs for men would have responsibility to provide these service providers with information about their programs and to develop procedures for the referral of men and where available and appropriate, young men and children, to an appropriate program.

4. Pathways

It is important that programs for men who use violence toward family members are available for men who voluntarily self-refer, for those within the criminal justice system and for those directed to attend programs via child protection proceedings and intervention orders.

Although there has been some debate regarding the advantages of providing programs for men who are directed to attend, versus programs for men who self refer, current evaluations do not promote one type of program over another. Similarly, the question of whether group programs should respond to men who self-refer separately from men who are directed, has not been addressed in any systematic way.

Consequently, this framework recognises that men who attend programs do so via a number of different pathways and that subject to the outcomes of an entry assessment, programs should be available equally to men whether within the criminal justice system or not. Outlined below are the proposed pathways for men to appropriately access programs. (See diagram on page 22 for illustration of pathways)

4.1 Men Who Voluntarily Seek Assistance

Men who voluntarily seek assistance to stop their violence or who are referred by other agencies, eg Men’s Referral Service or a generalist counselling service, would be invited to attend an entry assessment. After assessment, they would be invited to attend either a Male Behaviour Change Group (MBCG), offered individual counselling and/or referred to other service options.

4.2 Men Who Are Within the Criminal Justice System

Men subject to parole orders, or on community-based or intensive correction orders, may be directed to attend an assessment for a program for men. In the latter cases, this is in addition to other requirements of the order. Men who have been sentenced to a term of imprisonment cannot be directed to attend programs, however these men may, of their own volition, seek appropriate service responses. Programs for men within prisons could be provided as an outreach service of the local programs.

Programs conducted for men within the prison system may need to be adapted to meet the particular needs of the client group. For example, programs may be more intensive, of shorter duration and could address specific issues for men in prison and safety issues for men and their families upon their release.

An entry assessment would be a prerequisite for all men wishing to attend programs via the criminal justice system. Depending on assessment, the man may then attend a MBCG, or an Intensive Response Program (IRP), with the possibility attending a MBCG at its completion, individual counselling and /or be referred to other service options.

A comprehensive report on the man's attendance and participation in the program(s) would be made available by the programs for inclusion in the Individual Management Plan files for prisoners and the Community Correctional Services (CCS) file for other offenders.

4.3 Men Who Are Directed to Attend Programs Via Child Protection Proceedings

Men may be directed to be assessed for their suitability to attend a program as part of a case plan developed by a regional child protection unit, or as ordered by the Children's Court. Depending on the assessment, a man may then attend a MBCG, individual counselling, or be referred to other service options. A comprehensive report on the man's attendance and participation in the program(s) would be made available by the program to DHS.

4.4 Men Who Are Directed to Attend Programs Via Intervention Orders

The Department of Justice (DoJ) is intending to conduct a review into the possible implementation of Section 5 (1)(g) of the *Crimes (Family Violence) Act 1987*. This section provides for the court to make attendance at prescribed counselling a condition of an intervention order. To date, this provision has not been used because no programs have been prescribed under the legislation. Following the review, a model will be developed for possible implementation as a pilot program to commence in the Magistrates' Court, for the direction of appropriate intervention order recipients to programs for men who use violence toward family members.

5. Service Delivery Components

The framework identifies the best practice service delivery components of programs for men who use violence toward family members as:

5.1 Entry Assessment and Engagement

The provision of a comprehensive entry assessment conducted over a number of sessions would provide an opportunity to conduct both qualitative and quantitative assessments of the potential participant and where appropriate and willing, his partner or ex-partner. This information can then be used to determine the motivation and intention of the participant and consequently, his suitability for a MBCG. Direction to other suitable programs or treatment may also be indicated through this assessment. The assessment procedure would be designed in a manner which recognises the diverse backgrounds and need of clients.

The importance of assessment is highlighted in literature both in Australia and overseas.

"While all abusive men should be seen as potential candidates for treatment (sic), programs must retain control over the clients actually accepted for treatment (sic). This point is particularly relevant for court directed programs. Providing treatment (sic) to a man who is assessed to be untreatable (sic) may create false hopes for the woman and actually function to increase the risk for her ... Clearly-defined assessment procedures for determining suitability for group participation are essential."¹⁶

The NTV Standards suggest that an intake assessment should assess the participant's history of abuse, possession of weapons, understanding and willingness to change, motivation and commitment to attend, ability to keep his partner and family safe, willingness for facilitators to contact his partner or other family members, his legal position and his agreement to the limited confidentiality of the program. Limited confidentiality refers to when a man discloses, as part of the intervention process, that someone's safety is at risk. This information is not regarded as confidential and the service provider would act upon the information.

It is also anticipated that a comprehensive entry assessment would assist in engaging the individual man in the change process. It provides an opportunity for the potential participant to get to know and trust the facilitator, have his story heard and to start the change process by being invited to take responsibility for his behaviour.

A cautionary note: although it is acknowledged that sexual abuse may occur as part of the family violence inflicted upon women and children, for the purpose of responding to men who sexually abuse, participating in programs for men who use violence toward family members may not be appropriate or sufficient. The assessment process will determine the suitability for a man who uses sexual abuse, and any additional responses which may be required. In general, additional intervention from a professional with particular expertise in responding to people who sexually abuse is recommended.

5.2 Intensive Response Program

It is proposed that an Intensive Response Program (IRP) be developed and implemented initially for directed clients who are assessed as unmotivated, resistant, or otherwise unsuitable for a MBCG. The program would be developed as part of the assessment framework and trialed by a number of programs for men who use violence toward family members.

The aim of this program is to provide further engagement opportunities with a participant to assist in his capacity to respond to the change process. The IRP may consist of individual work, group work, or both. It would draw on skills such as motivational interviewing, relapse prevention and other techniques developed, for example, in the drug and alcohol area.

At the conclusion of the IRP, the participant would be assessed to determine his motivation and intention to change, as well as his suitability for a group program. A recommendation for attendance at a MBCG, individual counselling, or other service options would then be made. Where willing and appropriate, partners would be involved in this process.

5.3 Men's Behaviour Change Group

Men's Behaviour Change Groups (MBCG) are the central element of most programs for men who use violence toward family members. This is due to a number of reasons including the effect of the group in encouraging the change process, providing a social system which allows for role modelling, challenging and encouragement from peers and providing a forum for exploring and sharing thoughts, beliefs and feelings.

It is recommended all Men's Behaviour Change Groups have the capacity to provide a comprehensive program over an extended period of time. This view is supported by a number of programs within Australia and overseas. For example, the Guiding Principles for Services in British Columbia state 'there does appear to be some clinical consensus that four months should be a minimum course of treatment with provision for follow-up',¹⁷ and the Duluth and Hamilton models of service delivery upon which a number of Australian programs have been modelled, both offer 26 week programs.

Anecdotal evidence from workers in Victoria also suggest the change process is life-long and that participants should be encouraged to continue working on the change process at the completion of the formal group program.

5.4 Ongoing Change Group

It is strongly recommended programs for men provide an additional Ongoing Change Group (OCG) which includes:

- a maintenance role for men who have completed the MBCG, and
- an immediate response to men seeking help to stop their violent behaviour.

Behaviour change is a long-term process and men need both support and ongoing challenge to facilitate the change process. Ongoing change groups have been useful in assisting men to maintain changes and to further develop their sense of the long-term nature of the change process.

A further benefit of an OCG is that it provides immediate access to men wishing to begin the change process. At times there may be a delay between a man seeking help and joining a group program. An OCG can be used to keep men motivated and interested while waiting to join a MBCG. It is vital men are provided with immediate support at the time of crisis when they have strong motivation, as this is often a small window of opportunity to begin the change process.

5.5 Individual Counselling

Individual counselling, as well as a group program, would be provided as an option for men who wish to change their violent and abusive behaviours for the following reasons:

- Some men who are assessed as unsuitable for participation in group programs, but who are nevertheless willing to work on their violent behaviours, may benefit from individual counselling
- Some men may require individual counselling to address a particular issue in addition to participating in the group program.

This view is supported both within Australia and overseas with agreement that while group programs are preferable to individual counselling, individual counselling may be a useful adjunct to group work, or an alternative if a group program is not available.^{18 19}

5.6 Contact with Partners

It is the responsibility of programs for men to respond to the safety needs of the former and/or current woman partner, children and other family members. However, it is the woman's choice whether she wishes to have involvement in the program and her decision must be respected.

In some cases women do not realise their own safety issues because they have focussed their efforts on their partner. These women may need assistance to focus on their own safety needs. Where the partner and family members wish to be involved in the program, safety needs can be addressed through regular and consistent contact. Where partners do not wish to be involved in the program, the programs for men still have a responsibility to address any safety needs as they arise. This may include providing information to the female partner and referral to other services as appropriate.

Gaining permission from the male participant to contact family members is a prerequisite to accepting the man into the programs. Workers need to be responsive to the possibility of partners preferring a female worker to conduct the ongoing contact. Partner contact has a five-fold purpose:

- to ascertain the safety of partners and children
- to ascertain other support and information needs of partners and children
- to give accurate information to partners about the group program and the man's participation
- to provide the facilitators with information about the man's progress and any issues they need to address with him
- to contribute to holding a man accountable for his ongoing behaviour.²⁰

At a minimum, contact with willing partners would include an initial interview as part of the man's entry assessment, phone contact at regular intervals during the man's participation in the program, and an exit interview immediately after completion and at further appropriate times after the group program. Consideration may also be given to providing information nights for partners, face-to-face individual counselling and an ongoing partner and/or children's support group.

5.7 Follow-Up

Follow-up of the participant, partner and children (where willing and appropriate), should include the capacity to follow-up men who leave during the course of the group program and also the follow-up of participants and partners at regular intervals after completion of the group program. Follow-up would check on any safety needs of the partner and family and the ongoing change process for the male participant.

5.8 Responding to Men With Diverse Needs

It is recognised that programs for men who use violence toward family members need to respond to the specific needs of a range of men. These include men who have an intellectual disability or mental illness, men with drug and alcohol dependency issues, men in prisons and men who live in regional, rural or remote localities. At present, there are few program options available to men with diverse needs.

Some of these issues could be addressed by agencies developing flexible responses to meet identified needs. For example, it may be more appropriate for men in remote areas to attend a number of half-day group programs, rather than a two-hour program each week; or the location of the program may need to change each week to cater for the distances some men may have to travel to attend.

Representation by drug and alcohol services and mental health services on the local Reference Group will provide the opportunity for complementary agencies to share information, identify particular areas of need and develop appropriate responses.

5.9 Responding to Indigenous Men

As family violence is recognised by Indigenous people as a significant community issue, it is essential that Indigenous communities are involved in addressing men's violence toward family members.

It is anticipated that an Indigenous Family Violence Strategy for Victoria (IFVS) will be developed through an Indigenous community-led approach. Government will support this work by ensuring a whole-of-government approach is in place to respond to issues identified by Indigenous communities.

Programs for men who use violence toward family members can be complementary to the IFVS by being accessible, relevant and sensitive to Indigenous communities and their experiences. This could be achieved by representatives from local Indigenous communities participating on the local Reference Group to ensure programs respond to the needs of their communities. This would include the identification and prioritisation of issues through to the development, implementation and delivery of programs.

Across-agency training could also be developed by and for, Indigenous and non-Indigenous program workers to:

- ensure awareness of specific issues and the broader contextual background in working with Indigenous men, women and children, and
- ensure awareness by Indigenous workers of the specific issues and the broader context of working with men who are violent toward family members.

5.10 Responding to Men From Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds

Programs for men need to develop linkages with organisations representing people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, by providing information and developing procedures for the referral of men, and where available and appropriate, other family members to an appropriate program.

Representation from organisations for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (eg. Migrant Resource Centres or ethno-specific services) on the local reference group, will provide the opportunity for particular issues and/or groups to be identified and responded to in each local area.

It is also proposed training programs be developed for workers from culturally and linguistically diverse organisations about working with violent men and for workers from programs for men, so they can better respond to men from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. This training could include:

- general and specific inter-cultural training regarding gender, family and marriage
- language issues including interpreting, translation and provision of information
- acknowledgment of the diversity of cultures within language groups, and
- identification of diverse cultural patterns of counselling to meet the needs of particular culturally and linguistically diverse groups.

This approach recognises that responses to men from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds need to be developed by the different communities, in partnership with experienced behaviour change group facilitators and women's workers. Options need to be provided for men to attend behaviour change programs in culturally specific services, or in mainstream services which are culturally sensitive inclusive and flexible, to incorporate the culturally specific needs of service users.

5.11 Evaluation

Evaluation is an essential aspect in providing programs for men who use violence toward family members. The main aim is to evaluate outcomes for women, children and men and therefore the effectiveness of the program. Evaluation would draw on information provided by the participant and his partner, gained through the assessment process, partner contact and follow-up. Evaluation may also include a range of other aspects of program delivery including program accountability, coordination, adherence to the guiding principles and standards, and the effectiveness of different interventions for people of diverse backgrounds and needs.

All programs for men would participate in the statewide evaluation of programs, as well as conducting their own agency-specific evaluation. Consistent data would be collated across all programs for men in Victoria to inform the program evaluation. Conducting regular and consistent evaluations of programs at an agency level are also part of a continuous quality improvement process.

5.12 Management of Participants and Their Families

Family violence is very complex. Many of the participants of programs for men have a range of issues to address. They and possibly their families, may be clients of a number of services. A program facilitator's role is to ensure clients and their families receive appropriate and coordinated services. This would include assessment, planning, linking, referral and monitoring. Clear protocols and referral procedures would determine case management responsibilities, which in some cases may be the facilitator of programs for men who use violence toward family members

Systems need to be coordinated and workers need to be competent and adequately resourced to track clients through the system. Coordination in the sharing of information (where appropriate) and planning of interventions through case management, would assist in responding to men in a holistic way and assist in addressing the needs of the whole family.

5.13 Research and Development

Conducting research to inform practice and the future development of programs for men is essential. New understandings and changes in practice methodology in the area of male family violence are constantly emerging. Program facilitators need to be able to conduct research, implement new strategies, document new learnings and disseminate information as part of their work with men. Having the ability to conduct research and then incorporate learnings from other programs in Australia and overseas, will ensure the ongoing development of programs.

5.14 Personal and Professional Development

Working with men who are violent toward family members can be extremely difficult and complex. Workers require knowledge, experience and expertise, through both initial education and training and then regular ongoing training, to respond to the many issues raised in dealing with male family violence. Reflection on practice and the opportunity to address practice issues, needs to be provided through regular supervision.

National competency standards have recently been developed within Australia for people who come into professional contact with those affected by domestic and family violence. The standards are designed to ensure workers would have the skills and knowledge required to work effectively in this area.

Further to this, NTV and Swinburne University of Technology are in the process of jointly developing a package of training programs in the area of male family violence (Graduate Certificates in Male Family Violence Telephone Counselling, Men's Behaviour Change Group Facilitation and Men's Behaviour Change Program Management).

Facilitators of programs for men who use violence toward family members are expected to have the training and skills outlined in the national competencies and to have successfully undertaken relevant professional development. Workers including peer educators are also expected to participate in regular training and personal development opportunities provided within their own agency.

5.15 The Family Violence Service System

Significant findings of recent research²¹ indicate that programs for men need to be integrated with other services involved in family violence, to form part of the overall response to reduce and prevent family violence. Programs for men are most effective when implemented in the context of enhanced resourcing of support services for women and children and strengthened criminal justice and civil responses.

It is important to recognise that men who attend programs often have continuing contact with partners, ex-partners and children, who may have a range of needs themselves. Even when there is no further contact with the man, family members may still have a range of support needs.

Programs for men need to be developed within a context of a range of services which provide support to women and children, to ensure the needs of all family members are met. These services may include: women's emergency accommodation services, women's outreach services, women's support programs, programs for pre-schoolers, primary age programs, adolescents' programs (12-17), young men's programs (18-25), and couple/ family programs.

Programs have a responsibility to acknowledge the effect of male family violence on the whole family and need to network, educate, be educated and be involved in community development strategies.

6. Conclusion

This framework confirms the role of programs for men who use violence toward family members as an important part of the continuum of prevention and intervention strategies to reduce family violence. This view is consistent with the findings of international research and with the policy and program directions taken by other Australian jurisdictions.

At present there are continuing issues regarding the availability, suitability and effectiveness of programs. There is a lack of coordination, monitoring, accountability and evaluation of programs and there is the overarching issue of ensuring that programs for men have the safety of women and children as their paramount concern.

The framework for developing best practice programs for men who use violence toward family members provides Victoria with a way forward. It provides a strategic and coordinated approach to the issues and enhances the current response in reducing and preventing family violence, thus enhancing the lives of all Victorian men, women and children.

Appendix 1

Programs For Men Who Use Violence Toward Family Members in Other Jurisdictions

New South Wales

Historically, the New South Wales State Government has not provided any substantial funding for programs for men who use violence toward family members, although Corrective Services has funded Relationships Australia to conduct programs for its clients. A small number of non-Government funded programs have also been conducted by Relationships Australia, Centacare, Unifam and St Vincent de Paul. This latter program has been operating for eight years.

In February 1999, the NSW Minister for Women announced Government funding for the establishment of a 12-month pilot men's behaviour change program. The program will be an integrated community response, where participation in the program will be ordered post-conviction for a domestic violence offence. The program and structures are still being developed in NSW by the Violence Against Women Specialist Unit, NSW Attorney General's Department. The pilot program was expected to commence in July 2001.

NSW has also initiated *Rekindling the Spirit*, a voluntary Indigenous men's anti-violence project funded by the Department of Corrective Services, Northern Rivers Area Health Service and the Department of Education and Training.

Queensland

The Queensland Government currently funds 12 programs for men who use violence toward family members. These programs are funded through Queensland's Department of Families, Youth and Community Care and are required to meet the *Minimum Standards of Practice for Men's Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programs*. The Department also funds a men's telephone counselling service, the Men's Info Line. Queensland also has a number of non-Government funded programs. The development of programs for men who use violence toward family members in Queensland is proceeding with caution.

Western Australia

The Western Australian Government provides program funding for both voluntary and directed clients. The Department of Family and Children's Services funds two specific Men's Behaviour Change Counselling Services which take referrals specifically from the Men's Domestic Violence Helpline. The Department also funds several other domestic violence counselling services throughout the state with some of these services offering counselling and/or groups to men who use violence, as well as their partners and children in a 'whole-of-family' model.

The Western Australian Ministry of Justice currently funds six regional agencies to provide men's behaviour change services. Both voluntary and directed clients can access these programs. Due to demand, the Ministry has temporarily purchased the provision of a behaviour change program (for directed men only) in the central metropolitan area. In the area of Joondalup where a Family Violence Court is being piloted, Relationships Australia provides programs for directed men. A program is also run in Greenough Prison, Geraldton. Services are contracted to ensure adherence to the Best Practice Model.

The DV Prevention Unit, Women's Policy Office has published a *"Best Practice Model for the Provision of Programs for Perpetrators of Domestic Violence in Western Australia"*. A contract to develop programs specifically designed for Indigenous participants has been advertised.

South Australia

South Australia was one of the first States to conduct programs for men who use violence toward family members, with programs beginning in the early eighties. In 1997, the Domestic Violence Unit published both competency standards and a best practice model for conducting men's groups. A service audit of South Australia's programs for men who use violence toward family members was undertaken last year and an implementation plan and associated programs costing is currently occurring.

There are approximately 20 programs for men who use violence toward family members for voluntary and directed men conducted in South Australia each year. Fourteen programs are funded as part of the *South Australian Violence Intervention Project (VIP)*. Voluntary programs are funded by various community organisations and there are changes in the number of programs available each year due to funding limitations.

Two pilot programs are operating as part of VIP. A directed (post-sentencing) program is being conducted in one region and another has a program which operates during the sentencing process, but is not used as a diversion option. These pilot programs have recently been reviewed and funding will continue to June 2005.

Tasmania

The Tasmanian Government does not fund any programs for men who use violence toward family members. However, Centacare, a non-Government organisation, has been conducting programs for eight years. Three voluntary programs based on the Duluth model are conducted each year.

The Department of Justice and Industrial Relations, Community Corrections Division, has received *Partnerships* funding to conduct a feasibility study on programs for men who use violence toward family members, including developing and costing an appropriate model program for Tasmania which will then be submitted to the Tasmanian Government. The study has commenced.

Northern Territory

Under the Northern Territory Government Domestic Violence Strategy, two Partnerships funded offender programs have been piloted: the prison based *Court Referred Offender Program (CROP)* and the prison and community-based *Indigenous Family Violence Offender Program (IFVOP)*. The CROP was developed after extensive local research and consultation with Indigenous Territorians to ensure implementation was appropriate and responsive to emerging issues. The IFVOP was developed from the key learnings and recommendations of the CROP and consultations with, and advice from, Indigenous Territorians.

The CROP has two pathways of referral - courts and prison. The IFVOP has four pathways of referral: courts, prisons, self-referrals, and Indigenous communities or other agencies. Both programs for delivery to offenders are designed as a set of modules totalling 54 hours, catering for one-on-one intervention or single gender group work. Where necessary, the programs allow for the use of interpreters and translators. The IFVOP also offers structured support to (ex)partner/s and child witnesses of offenders as a critical program component.

Outcome evaluation for both programs involves a series of structured interviews with offenders and (ex)partner/s, where willing, against standardised monitoring and measurement tools, as well as access to information from relatives, community and council members, and health and safe house staff. The interviews are conducted before and during programs, then at six and 12-month intervals following completion of the program. Findings of the outcome evaluation of both programs will be incorporated into a publication for release in 2002.

The programs were developed to meet the cultural diversity and geography of the Northern Territory, and to integrate the best features of a number of approaches, including recognised *Partnerships* best practice.

Australian Capital Territory

As part of the Partnerships funded *Interagency Family Violence Intervention Program of the ACT*, a pilot men's behaviour change program for court directed offenders was established in September 1998. Corrective Services has contracted program provision to Relationships Australia and the program is of 24 week's duration, based on the Duluth model. The ACT Government recently committed to three year recurrent funding for the program to continue.

Relationships Australia also runs groups for non-mandated participants, however some offenders are also referred to these programs.

Appendix 2

Victorian Government Initiatives

Department of Premier and Cabinet Women's Safety Strategy

The Victorian Government is developing a whole-of-government Women's Safety Strategy to reduce the level and fear of violence against women in Victoria. "Violence against women" includes family violence, sexual assault, public safety issues, sexual harassment and violence in the workplace. Family violence and sexual assault will be a key focus in the first year of operation.

The overall aim of the strategy is to improve women's safety, well-being and capacity to fully participate in Victorian life by reducing the level and fear of violence against women.

To achieve this aim the Government will:

- improve coordination and strengthen local networks
- change community perceptions and strengthen prevention initiatives
- reduce barriers to women disclosing violence and seeking assistance
- improve responses to women who have experienced violence
- respond appropriately to people who use violence, and
- ensure responses are relevant to people from diverse cultures, backgrounds and life experiences.

Ten Government Ministers oversee the Strategy through an annual meeting of Ministers on Women's Safety. A *Women's Safety Coordinating Committee (WSCC)* has been formed across Government, comprising senior executives and officer-level staff appointed by relevant Ministers. The role of the WSCC is to coordinate the whole-of-government response to violence against women. It is chaired and resourced by the Office of Women's Policy, Department of Premier and Cabinet.

Department of Justice Portfolio Initiatives

Crime Prevention Victoria

As part of the Government's commitment to reducing the personal and economic harm which results from crime and violence in our community, the recently established Crime Prevention Victoria agency within the Department of Justice will collaborate with local government, other State Government departments and the community, to develop and implement programs which will include specific initiatives at the local level to tackle violence against women.

Crimes (Family Violence) Act 1987

The Department of Justice (DoJ) is intending to conduct a review into the possible implementation of Section 5 (1)(g) of the *Crimes (Family Violence) Act 1987*. This section provides for the court to make attendance at prescribed counselling a condition of an intervention order. To date, this provision has not been used because no programs have been prescribed under the legislation. Following the review a model will be developed to enable a pilot program to commence in the Magistrates' Court, for the direction of appropriate intervention order recipients to programs for men who use violence toward family members.

Victorian Community Council Against Violence

The Victorian Community Council Against Violence (VCCAV) has commenced a project entitled Measuring Family Violence in Victoria Database which, with the development of a single database, will establish a 'one-stop-shop' for family violence data. This will integrate current published and unpublished family violence data currently collected by a broad range of Government and community agencies. The database will provide the basis for innovative analysis of family violence estimates, patterns and trends, enabling improved policy, program and enforcement responses to family violence. It is proposed the database will provide a model for undertaking similar initiatives in other jurisdictions.

Victoria Police

Victoria Police has recently introduced the Local Priority Policing model of service delivery to involve local communities as active participants in shaping police service priorities. Local safety plans have been developed following identification of local community needs and expectations. The nature of community safety problems will vary across Victoria and the local safety plans will include responses to family violence and sexual assault, where such problems are identified. Victoria Police undertakes initiatives to assist in ensuring family violence and sexual assault are treated seriously and dealt with consistently.

In support of female victims of crimes "against the person", Victoria Police is trialing safety forums and security audits in four localities to assess their effectiveness in assisting women to regain their sense of personal safety.

Department of Human Services Initiatives

Family Violence Framework

The Department of Human Services (DHS) Community Care Division, will be developing a family violence framework to incorporate the components of crisis/protection, prevention and recovery. This framework will provide a comprehensive policy framework and continuum for the delivery of services to those affected by family violence.

At this stage the framework proposes an area service model to underpin the future directions in service delivery in response to family violence. An area service model will provide the opportunity to consider reorganisation of current service delivery operations and resources into areas to provide broad, linked and coordinated responses to those affected by family violence.

Departments of Human Services and Natural Resources and Environment

Indigenous Family Violence Strategy

Addressing family violence has been recognised as a priority by Indigenous communities and this Government. An Indigenous Family Violence Strategy is being developed through a partnership between Indigenous communities and the Victorian Government. An Indigenous Family Violence Taskforce has been formed to lead the development of the Strategy. There will be a strong focus on supporting and resourcing Indigenous community involvement at the local level. Government will support and facilitate the development of the Strategy using a whole-of-government approach with all relevant Ministers and Departments responding to this issue. The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and the Minister for Community Services are the lead Ministers responsible for the development of the *Indigenous Family Violence Strategy*.

Acronyms

DHS	Department of Human Services
DOJ	Department of Justice
FVPSP	Family Violence and Prevention and Support Program
IO	Intervention Order
IRP	Intensive Response Program
MBCG	Male Behaviour Change Group(s)
MBCP	Men's Behaviour Change Program(s)
MRS	Men's Referral Service
NCP	National Crime Prevention
NTV	No To Violence
OCG	Ongoing Change Group
OWP	Office of Women's Policy
PMG	Project Management Group
SAAP	Supported Accommodation Assistance Program
VCCAV	Victorian Community Council Against Violence
V-NET	Victorian Network for the Prevention of Male Violence
WSSC	Women's Safety Coordinating Committee

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