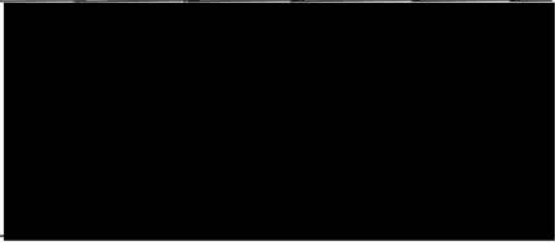


**IN THE MATTER OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION
INTO FAMILY VIOLENCE**

ATTACHMENT AR-13 TO STATEMENT OF ARTHUR ROGERS

Date of document: 20 July 2015
Filed on behalf of: the Applicant
Prepared by:
Victorian Government Solicitor's Office
Level 33
80 Collins Street
Melbourne VIC 3000



This is the attachment marked '**AR-13**' produced and shown to **ARTHUR ROGERS** at the time of signing his Statement on 20 July 2015.

Before me: ...



An Australian legal practitioner
within the meaning of the
Legal Profession Uniform Law (Victoria)

Attachment AR-13

Program requirements for the delivery of Family Violence Flexible Support Packages – June 2015

1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to outline the mandatory program requirements to be implemented by service providers for family violence flexible support packages. These flexible support packages will be available to single women and women with children. Throughout this document, a reference to women and children includes both single women and women with children.

These requirements have been developed to ensure consistency in how flexible support packages are distributed across the state.

2. Background

Family violence flexible support packages are designed to provide a new individualised approach to respond to women and their children experiencing family violence. Individualised packages of up to \$7,000 will be available, with an average cost of \$3,000.

Flexible support packages will deliver a personalised and holistic response to women and children experiencing family violence to assist them to access support to move out of crisis, stabilise and improve their safety, well-being and independence.

Flexible support packages build on the success of other flexible funding responses, such as private rental brokerage.

3. Target group and eligibility for family violence flexible support packages

Packages can only be distributed to women and children who already have a case management plan. One flexible support package will be available per case managed support period for women and children per presentation. This does not preclude women and children from receiving a subsequent package for future presentations, provided a new case management plan is in place.

Flexible support packages will be targeted to women and children who:

- are escaping and/or have recently experienced family violence; and/or
- are planning to leave an abusive situation or have the perpetrator removed from the family home with appropriate legal sanctions in place.

In addition to the risk assessment, a thorough case management/ safety or support plan needs to identify the way in which a flexible support package would support the woman and children:

- to establish sustainable arrangements that support their long-term health and wellbeing
- in preventing intervention by child protection
- in leaving their current family arrangements in which family violence is occurring.

Priority will be given to –

- women and children at highest risk from family violence
- women and children whose safety and security needs and independent living goals can reasonably be met through a flexible support package
- women experiencing significant financial hardship.

Service providers will be required to establish practices to appropriately identify eligibility to assist women and their children in need.

The intention of flexible support packages is to assist women to stabilise and improve their safety in a crisis or post-crisis situation. Flexible support packages will not be accessible to women who wish to continue their domestic living arrangements with the perpetrator of the

Attachment 4

abuse. If a woman returns to a domestic living arrangement with the perpetrator of the abuse, access to flexible support package funding will cease.

4. Flexible support package outcomes

Flexible funding packages should aim to deliver the following outcomes for women and children in a manner that is flexible enough to meet the varying needs and priorities of families:

- safety and freedom from violence
- access to safe, stable housing
- financial stability
- family health and wellbeing
- economic, social and community participation and
- independence.

Use of flexible support packages must represent the most cost-effective, timely and appropriate response to meet the outcomes identified in a person's support plan.

5. Flexible support package principles

Flexible support packages must be administered in accordance with the following principles:

- the safety and wellbeing of women and children is paramount
- women and children are empowered to lead and make informed choices about the package of supports they need to meet their goals, improve their wellbeing and safety, and live independently
- tailored to an individual
- directed by the women and children receiving the package, consistent with these guidelines
- understanding the social and gendered context of family violence and the impact of violence on women and on children's development
- understanding of culturally appropriate service responses for women and children from a range of backgrounds. This includes Aboriginal women and children, women and children with disabilities and women and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- commitment by service providers to build and maintain effective partnerships, collaborate, communicate and share resources with other agencies in order to maximise opportunities for women and children to achieve their goals
- support system wide responses focussing on perpetrator accountability
- underpinned by a strong quality improvement framework including a willingness to participate in research, evaluation and reviews to inform quality improvement and innovation.

Attachment 4

6. Key service requirements and features

Service providers will undertake the following activities:

- determine suitability, eligibility and priority for flexible support packages
- develop a holistic person-centred plan that is led, as far as possible, by the recipient of the flexible support package and reflects their goals and expected outcomes and clearly articulates how the flexible support package will assist in achieving these outcomes
- regularly review progress toward achieving the outcomes of women and children who have received a flexible support package
- if appropriate refer the recipient to other relevant services and/or co-case management.

The service delivery features relate to the operational and process requirements for delivering flexible support packages. The following are mandatory requirements:

- A package is provided in conjunction with a case management plan outlining goals and support needs to be purchased with flexible support packages funding
- Regular and ongoing reviews of risk and safety planning
- Support will go beyond initial assessment and the practical response period as women may need different levels and types of support at different times.
- Flexible support packages must address the needs of children, including linking children to appropriate services.

7. What the package can buy

Flexible support packages can be used to purchase services and goods nominated by a woman in her support plan. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following:

- financial stability - basic material needs including food, clothing, care packs, bills (utilities, phone) and utility debts
- technological safety support - CCTV, mobile phone, personal/property alarm; security doors or lighting
- health and wellbeing - medical or pharmaceutical costs not covered by Medicare or Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, counselling or specialist services
- safe, stable housing - public or private housing debt, rent in advance, rent arrears, relocation costs, travel costs, furnishings and whitegoods in newly established housing
- economic, social and community participation - schooling, educational costs, workforce readiness (eg CAE / TAFE course)
- independence - clothing, care or placement of pets, outings, wellbeing courses.

Flexible support packages can be used where available supports (e.g. Local, State or Commonwealth Government services) cannot be provided in a timely manner. They can also be used to supplement supports identified in a support plan.

8. Exclusions and additional requirements

Flexible support packages cannot be used for the following purposes:

- illegal activity
- gambling
- an emergency housing response
- products or services not identified in the support plan
- other free or low-cost services readily available within the community
- to replace or duplicate supports that are available through other funding sources, including other Local, State and Commonwealth Government programs

9. Reporting and accountability

Service providers are accountable for using flexible support package funding provided by the department to deliver better outcomes for women and families.

Attachment 4*Definition of a package/case*

Each provider is expected to deliver the number of packages/cases specified in the Department of Health and Human Services Agreement.

A case is defined as a necessary period of support where a case management plan is in place and a package has been allocated.

In circumstances where a woman and her child/children re-presents after a support period has been closed and a new case management plan is put in place, this will be considered to be a new case.

In order to assess whether this has occurred, service providers are required to collect data on a range of outcome indicators (set out below) and analyse their performance against these indicators in order to identify areas in which further improvement may be required.

Performance Reporting and Evaluation

Service providers are required to contribute to a live performance reporting and evaluation process that will support continued learning and service improvement. Further information about the evaluation process will be provided.

Accountability

The service provider is responsible for ensuring that:

- the flexible support package contributes to agreed outcomes of the recipient
- the funds are spent in accordance with the support plan
- funds are acquitted on a quarterly basis
- data on outcomes is collected
- they participate in live data reporting and program evaluation.

Acquittal

Service providers are required to acquit flexible support package funding to the department on a quarterly basis, using the acquittal template provided. Acquittal must be completed after the finalisation of any invoices for the reporting period. Service providers must also report the amount spent on administration costs as part of the acquittal process. Please note administrative costs are not included in the program funding.

The acquittal includes a report outlining:

- total amount of funds received by the service provider
- total amount of funds expended for each individual (recipient de-identified)
- type and amount of assistance provided to each package recipient
- total amount spent on administration of the flexible support packages
- any balance of unspent funds.

Service providers are expected to fully allocate flexible support package funding over the relevant financial year. The treatment of any unspent funds will be negotiated with the department, depending on the amount and reasons. The department reserves the right to require service providers to repay the unspent funds to the department.

Service providers are also required to monitor and acquit expenditure against individual support plans, follow up irregularities and review support plans. A key purpose of such funding acquittal is to ascertain that funds provided have been fully expended or committed in accordance with the agreed funding plan. The department may undertake a forensic audit of the program management documentation to ensure funds are acquitted as agreed in individual support plans.

