

ATTACHMENT "AS-3"

This is the attachment marked "**AS-3**" referred to in the witness statement of Dr Angela Spinney dated 20 July 2015.



Reducing the Need for Women and Children to Make Repeated Use of Refuge and Other Crisis Accommodation

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Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

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- Alan Harper, final year law student at the University of Adelaide, who also assisted with the literature review.

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Executive summary

This report sets out the findings of a research project investigating *Early Intervention Strategies to Reduce the Need for Women and Children to Make Repeated Use of Refuge and Other Crisis Accommodation*. The project is intended to bring forward knowledge of the reasons for the decisions made by women who have been subject to domestic and family violence regarding whether to leave the family home for a refuge in order to escape the abuse, whether to return to the perpetrator and whether to leave again. It also explores the efficacy of primary prevention and early intervention schemes, including perpetrator behaviour change programs, in reducing women's and children's multiple experiences of refuge and other emergency accommodation. Finally, the project explores what best practice and service standards would be needed if Staying Home Leaving Violence (SHLV) models were to be implemented more widely in Australia.

The research has been funded by the Commonwealth Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) under the National Homelessness Research Partnership.

The research questions are:

- Why is it that women and children often leave home and return several times before an abusive situation of domestic and family violence ends?
- What Australian evidence is there about the number of incidents of violence and abuse experienced by a woman, and the number of separate occasions a woman may access homelessness accommodation services, prior to resolution of her domestic violence situation?
- How and to what extent have innovative early intervention schemes introduced in Australia since the mid-1990s been successful in enabling women and children to reduce their multiple experiences of violence and multiple use of refuge and other emergency accommodation?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of different responses in terms of service provision and from the point of view of the woman and her children?
- What best practice risk assessment processes and service standards and arrangements are needed if Safe at Home/SHLV models are to be implemented more widely?
- Do these findings have other implications for Australian policy and practice?

Research approach

The focus of the research was deliberately selective, and the research approach and methods were designed to achieve answers to these questions.

Stage one consisted of a desk-based literature review. The international and national academic and policy review of the literature is included in this report where relevant. In stage two a comparative methodology using two case studies, England and Australia, allowed investigation of 'joined up' approaches where housing, judicial and support services work together to enable the women and children to remain within their homes. The English case study involved visiting three Sanctuary homelessness prevention schemes and a male perpetrator behaviour change program. In the Australian case study, the three embedded units of analysis were New South Wales, Tasmania and Victoria. Homelessness prevention schemes were visited in each of these states and 45 semi-structured interviews were conducted. These sought to determine the scope and effectiveness of projects, with a focus on their objectives and how they work. The author was keen to hear the views of key policy makers and providers, including any implementation difficulties they had encountered. Documentary evidence was collected, including policy documents and promotional materials.

Following thematic analysis of the interview findings, a series of workshops was facilitated in each capital city of the states which made up the Australian case study: Hobart, Melbourne and Sydney, and also in Adelaide and Brisbane, with 47 policy makers, practitioners and researchers attending presentations on the interim findings. Facilitated discussions deepened understanding of the policy implications for successful implementation of early intervention strategies to reduce the need for women and children to make repeated use of refuge and other crisis accommodation. These additional findings were analysed and incorporated into this report.

The report has been compiled based on the learning from:

- The critical review of the literature;
- The primary research in the case study locales;
- The information obtained from the workshops.

A thematic analysis has been utilised, and the data are reported by analytical theme in order to create a useful document for policy makers. The report provides good practice examples and includes issues raised by the research participants concerning applicability and relevance in the Australian context, together with guidance on how they could be implemented.

Companion study

A companion study, *Homelessness Prevention for Women and Children Who Have Experienced Domestic and Family Violence: Innovations in Policy and Practice* (Project no. 50602), was funded by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI). The two projects were designed to dovetail together, and this report for FaHCSIA builds on the AHURI research. The research questions for the AHURI project were:

- How and to what extent have innovative homelessness prevention measures introduced in Australia and England since the mid-1990s been successful in enabling women and children to remain in their homes and localities?
- What are the implications of these findings for policy on housing and homelessness in Australia and for improvements to practice?

The AHURI study investigated and assessed the value and implementation challenges of innovative staying at home homelessness prevention measures. The fieldwork for the two studies was carried out at the same time. In most instances, the semi-structured interviews also covered both projects. All the workshops covered both projects together.

The findings from the critical review of the literature published as a Positioning Paper for the AHURI project were that women cannot easily exercise their right to remain in their homes unless the following two factors are recognised:

- There is an understanding in the community and from professionals and policy makers about what constitutes domestic and family violence and how it can impact on women and children;
- The links between domestic and family violence and women's homelessness are accepted (Spinney and Blandy 2011, p. 41).

The overall findings of the AHURI study were:

- That integrated homelessness prevention schemes have an important role to play in preventing homelessness for women and children who have experienced domestic and family violence, and that this is true for women living in very different situations in very different areas;
- That Australia should move to the provision of homelessness prevention schemes that are at least as extensive as the current provision of refuge and crisis accommodation.

These findings contribute to the growing normalisation of expanded housing choices for women and children after their separation from the perpetrator (Spinney 2012b).

The Positioning Paper from the AHURI study is available on the AHURI website at http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download/50602_pp and it is anticipated that the Final Report will also be available during the last quarter of 2012. Because the AHURI and FaHCSIA studies are closely related and the fieldwork was conducted together, there is some direct repeating of information in this report to FaHCSIA (especially in Chapters 5 and 6), and in the AHURI reports. This is particularly so regarding overlapping contextual matters and the risk assessment and management service standards required if Safe at Home/SHLV models are to be implemented more widely in Australia. However, because the projects do seek to answer different research questions, there is also information that is only in one or other of the reports. Although each report can be read alone, it is recommended that the reports from both studies are read and considered in order to gain a complete picture of the research findings of the two companion projects.

Key learning from the two studies

One of the most significant overall findings of the two companion studies is that integrated schemes, such as SHLV and Safe at Home, can play an important role in preventing homelessness for women and children who have experienced domestic and family violence, and that this is true for women living in very different situations in very different areas of Australia, including those not previously thought to be suitable.

The findings of the research are that Australia should move to the provision of SHLV type schemes that are as extensive as the current provision of refuge and crisis accommodation, and that a common risk assessment tool (based on the Victorian model) should be used throughout Australia. Common risk assessment should lead to common standards of risk management based on the models detailed in this report.

Some specific findings from the two studies have implications for early intervention strategies to reduce the need for women and children to make repeated use of refuge and other crisis accommodation and for improvements to practice. They are consolidated below as items for consideration:

1. Creation of mirroring legislation relating to all aspects of homelessness prevention attributed to domestic and family violence throughout Australia. States and territories need to be much more uniform in their approach if women are to consistently receive good practice;
2. Provision of police powers throughout Australia to offer immediate protection to women by the removal of the perpetrator. The 12 month notice used in Tasmania is recommended;

3. Development of common methods of risk assessment and risk management, and national sharing of information between accredited agencies on domestic and family violence victims and perpetrators;
4. Development of a national training and instructions package for magistrates in order to provide a standardised response and consistency of service throughout Australia;
5. Offending perpetrators to be charged on every crime, not just the breach of injunction or order conditions, as national practice;
6. The use of 'monitoring bracelets' for high risk offenders to be considered, so that their location can be tracked;
7. The provision of specialist domestic and family courts to be legislated for throughout Australia. These would include court support workers for victims and perpetrators, as detailed in the AHURI reports;
8. Consistent police training on domestic and family violence;
9. Dual risk assessments to be conducted by police and support agencies;
10. Re-provision of legal aid for property matters in family law, as detailed in the AHURI reports;
11. Free telephone legal support services throughout Australia for women considering separating from the perpetrator;
12. Court fines to be cancelled if women choose to remain in their home following domestic and family violence, not just if they become homeless;
13. Provision of SHLV type schemes, using non-restrictive eligibility practices (such as not insisting on an injunction or police order and not using long-term affordability as eligibility criteria) throughout Australia. The schemes would include the existing services of practical and emotional support and also the provision of emergency alarm systems, peer support provision and personal development and financial confidence training, with social marketing as an integral part of each scheme. The Commonwealth government should take the lead in encouraging the normalisation of these schemes by providing advisors to 'teach' agencies how it can be done and by issuing national guidance on good practice;
14. Adequate funding for homelessness prevention schemes, so that women are not turned away or kept on a waiting list;
15. Provision of culturally appropriate schemes for Indigenous women. The implications of mainstream law, legal and judicial systems and the practices of mainstream

welfare agencies on Indigenous Australians need to be specifically considered in each jurisdiction;

16. Financial mortgage assistance for owner occupiers, similar to Commonwealth Rent Assistance, to be available throughout Australia for low income earners who choose to remain in their home with the perpetrator removed following a violent relationship;
17. Publication of information for women on how they can afford to leave their violent relationship;
18. The Commonwealth government to take the lead in informing mortgage lenders of their expectations on keeping owner occupying women leaving a violent relationship in their home through mortgage payment breaks, interest reductions, extending length of mortgage etc.

The findings reveal that long-term support for women and children who have experienced domestic and family violence is very important in keeping them from becoming homeless on more than occasion. Without such support, women may not even recognise that they are in an abusive relationship and therefore will not have the skills to stop the situation happening again with a new partner. It can take a long time for women to make these changes and to become less reliant on others to make them feel good about themselves and their ability to manage as independent adults. At present, service providers often do not have sufficient resources to provide longer-term support and this will need to be addressed if women's and children's need to use refuge and crisis accommodation is to be reduced. The research revealed that those most likely to re-use such accommodation are also likely to have substance abuse and/or mental health problems as well as experiencing domestic and family violence. These needs too must be addressed effectively, alongside the domestic and family violence issues, if women are to have their vulnerability reduced and resilience heightened.

There are a great variety of social, demographic, economic and emotional reasons, both structural and personal, for women's decisions to stay with or return to the perpetrator, discussed in the report. All have implications for the design of effective early intervention strategies to reduce the need for women and children to make repeated use of refuge and crisis accommodation. Importantly, refuge and crisis accommodation services are not designed to solve permanent housing needs and their effectiveness to deal successfully with clients during a single intervention depends very much on clients' ability to move on to other housing options such as private rental, public housing or owner occupation after they have received temporary accommodation and services while in crisis. As a consequence, many clients, including women and children who have experienced domestic or family violence,

return to a homeless situation after receiving temporary assistance. This is likely to be a major reason why women may return to emergency accommodation at a later date.

Structure of the report

The report consists of seven chapters as follows:

- Chapter 1 provides a brief introduction.
- Chapter 2 explains the research approach and methods used in the study, and details the companion AHURI research and how some findings are shared between the reports of both projects.
- Chapter 3 introduces definitions and concepts relevant to early intervention strategies aimed at reducing the need for women and children to make repeated use of refuge and crisis accommodation. These are domestic and family violence, homelessness and domestic and family violence, refuge and crisis accommodation, the impact of domestic and family violence on children, early intervention and homelessness prevention.
- Chapter 4 explores issues concerning multiple experiences of domestic and family violence and of homelessness, including why women return to perpetrators on occasion and why women and children sometimes access homelessness accommodation more than once.
- Chapter 5 considers English and Australian examples of strategies to prevent multiple experiences of homelessness and of staying in refuge and crisis accommodation.
- Chapter 6 looks at risk assessment processes and service standards.
- Chapter 7 draws together the research findings' implications for policy Australia-wide and comes to some final conclusions.

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This project, *Early Intervention Strategies to Reduce the Need for Women and Children to Make Repeated Use of Refuges and Other Crisis Accommodation*, focuses on those whose homelessness can be attributed to domestic and family violence. It looks at the period prior to final separation when women and their children may leave the perpetrator only to return to live with him a number of times, while making use of refuge and other crisis accommodation several times during this process. These attempts at reconciliation often ultimately lead to permanent separation but it can take some time, and several attempts, for the woman to come to a realisation that an end to the violence will only happen if the relationship permanently ends. The repeat incidents of violence and abuse and ‘churning’ through homelessness services (especially crisis services) at this stage can be extremely disruptive and stressful for both children and their mothers.

The study has been funded under the National Homelessness Research Partnership with the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) and brings forward knowledge of the reasons for the decisions made by women who have been subject to domestic and family violence regarding whether to leave the family home for a refuge in order to escape the abuse, whether to return to the perpetrator and whether to leave again. It considers ways to intervene early to reduce repeated reliance on homelessness services and explores the efficacy of early intervention schemes, including perpetrator behaviour change programs, in reducing women’s and children’s multiple experiences of refuge and other emergency accommodation. Finally, the report explores the best practice and service standards needed if Safe at Home/SHLV homelessness prevention models are to be implemented more widely in Australia.

This project has been designed to fill gaps in knowledge by complementing the work undertaken by the same chief investigator for the companion AHURI project (50602), *Homelessness Prevention for Women and Children Who Have Experienced Domestic and Family Violence*, as discussed in Chapter 2. This chapter introduces the research questions and context of the study and describes the structure of the report.

1.2 Research questions

The funder of this research (FaHCSIA) and the chief investigator agreed on the following research questions in order to complement the companion research for AHURI:

- Why is it that women and children often leave home and return several times before an abusive situation of domestic and family violence ends?

- What Australian evidence is there about the number of incidents of violence and abuse experienced by a woman, and the number of separate occasions a woman may access homelessness accommodation services, prior to resolution of her domestic violence situation?
- How and to what extent have innovative early intervention schemes introduced in Australia since the mid-1990s been successful in enabling women and children to reduce their multiple experiences of violence and multiple use of refuge and other emergency accommodation?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of different responses in terms of service provision and from the point of view of the woman and her children?
- What best practice risk assessment processes and service standards and arrangements are needed if Safe at Home/SHLV models are to be implemented more widely?
- Do these findings have other implications for Australian policy and practice?

1.3 Context of the study

This research is set within the context that women and children who have experienced domestic and family violence have relatively few options:

- To remain in the family home with the perpetrator;
- To remain in the home with the perpetrator removed;
- To leave the home until the perpetrator is removed;
- To leave the home permanently (ODPM 2004).

All of these involve difficult and emotional decisions with the potential for less than perfect outcomes. In order to reduce multiple use of refuge and crisis accommodation, women must receive appropriate support that prevents them from having to return to the perpetrator and then leave again at a later date.

We know that both the number of support periods and numbers of days of support is increasing for refuge and crisis accommodation. In 2009-10 in South Australia, for instance, there were 23,200 Supported Accommodation and Assistance Program (SAAP) funded support periods, with an average length of 87 days (SA Department for Families and Communities 2011). Some clients and ex-clients of refuge services interviewed for this research confirmed that they had stayed in homelessness accommodation for many months.

Sometimes this was because they were in need of the support offered by the services, other times because they were waiting for the opportunity to access move-on accommodation.

The White Paper *The Road Home: A National Approach to Reducing Homelessness* (Commonwealth of Australia 2008) promoted the need to expand programs that allow women and children to remain in the home once the perpetrator has been removed. It identified expansion of SHLV type models and continuation of crisis accommodation as the main policy responses. It set an interim target to increase by 2013 the number of families that have experienced domestic and family violence who maintain or secure safe and sustainable housing by 20 per cent. The White Paper acknowledged that remaining in the family home with the perpetrator removed is not a viable option for all women and children and that there must also be a focus on transitioning them out of refuges into long-term safe and secure housing. However, it also notes that violence will continue to have a major association with homelessness unless rates of domestic violence fall significantly or new strategies are found to keep victims safer in their homes. This report seeks to tackle some of these issues and to highlight examples of projects that aim to circumvent or shorten the period in crisis accommodation and establish women and children back in their homes or in new independent housing back in their community as quickly as possible. The case studies examined the effectiveness of such measures.

1.4 Structure of the report

- Chapter 2 explains the research approach and methods used in the study, and details the companion AHURI research and how some findings are shared between the reports of both projects.
- Chapter 3 introduces definitions and concepts relevant to early intervention strategies to reduce the need for women and children to make repeated use of refuge and crisis accommodation. These are domestic and family violence, homelessness and domestic and family violence, refuge and crisis accommodation, the impact of domestic and family violence on children, early intervention and homelessness prevention.
- Chapter 4 explores issues concerning multiple experiences of domestic and family violence and of homelessness, including why women return to perpetrators on occasion and why women and children sometimes access homelessness accommodation more than once.
- Chapter 5 considers English and Australian examples of strategies to prevent multiple experiences of homelessness and of staying in refuge and crisis accommodation.
- Chapter 6 looks at risk assessment processes and service standards.

- Chapter 7 draws together the research findings' implications for policy Australia-wide and comes to some final conclusions.

2. Research approach and methods

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explains how the research approach and methods chosen were designed to fill the gap in existing knowledge about early intervention strategies to reduce the need for women and children to make repeated use of refuge and other crisis accommodation by answering the research questions presented in Chapter 1.

2.2 Methodology

The comparative methodology employed for the research involved two case studies: England and Australia. The latter included three embedded units of analysis, New South Wales, Tasmania and Victoria, which the literature revealed have made substantial steps towards intervention approaches enabling women and children who have experienced domestic and family violence to avoid multiple incidents of violence and multiple exposure to homelessness. The research methods used the advantages of comparative studies but were careful to avoid potential pitfalls, including insufficient background information, which can threaten the validity of the research findings (Bourne 1981; Jacobs et al. 2004).

The research project comprised five stages, as follows.

1) *Literature review*

Stage one consisted of a review of the relevant literature regarding:

- Domestic and family violence;
- Homelessness and domestic and family violence;
- Refuge and crisis accommodation;
- The impact of domestic and family violence on children;
- Early intervention;
- Homelessness prevention.

International and national academic, grey and policy literature were reviewed, with particular attention to that from the case study locales. This information is incorporated into this report.

2) *Case studies*

The research received ethics clearance from Swinburne University of Technology where the author, who undertook all the fieldwork, is based. The English case study included visiting Sanctuary Schemes at Breckland (Norfolk), Hull and Sheffield and the Strength to Change male perpetrator behaviour change program in Hull. Semi-structured interviews were held

with practitioners, advocates and policy makers involved with the schemes and with three academics. Also interviewed were John Bentham, a senior officer at the national Homelessness Strategy Unit at the Department for Communities and Local Government who was instrumental in the establishment of Sanctuary Schemes at a national level and Davina James-Hanman, director of AVA (Against Violence and Abuse), a UK second tier good practice advice and training agency.

The three embedded units of analysis in the Australian case study were New South Wales, Tasmania and Victoria. It was originally envisaged that only NSW and Victoria would be included, but the early stages of the research revealed that Tasmania, as the Australian originator of a jurisdiction-wide integrated justice-led *Safe at Home* approach to domestic and family violence, offered valuable learning opportunities, and it was therefore incorporated into the data collection and analysis process. Each state was visited for the research.

In NSW three very different SHLV schemes were visited at Bega, Mt Druitt and Newcastle. Some interviewees gave a national perspective and others spoke from their extensive experience with state based projects. These consisted of representatives of the three SHLV schemes, officers of the NSW Women's Refuge Movement, academics at the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearing House, officers at the Housing Assistance Unit of Housing NSW and officers at Staying Home Leaving Violence at the Department of Family and Community Services, NSW.

In Tasmania semi-structured interviews took place with directors of two women's refuges, a court support officer, a police domestic violence liaison sergeant, the chair of the Safe at Home Inter-Department Committee (IDC), manager and staff of the Family Violence Counselling and Support Services, DHHS, and domestic violence workers at Centacare Tasmania.

Interviews in Victoria were with the chief executive of the Women's Legal Service Victoria (WLSV), a policy officer at Domestic Violence Victoria (DV Vic), a court support officer, the chief executive of the Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service Victoria (WDVCS), a senior manager at the Public Interest Law Clearing House (PILCH), the project officers for Tools for Change and Bsafe, the Loddon Campaspe regional integration coordinator, and the chief executive and two senior members of staff at the Eastern Domestic Violence Service (EDVOS).

Most interviewees are acknowledged in Appendix 1, but some preferred to remain anonymous. The interviews sought to determine the scope and effectiveness of each visited project, with a focus on their objectives and how they work, and to learn from their

experiences. The author was keen to hear the views of key policy makers and providers, including any implementation difficulties they had encountered. Documentary evidence was collected, including policy documents and promotional materials. Some interviews were with academics who contributed their knowledge and findings.

Where possible, clients of Australian services were also interviewed in order to gain their perspective of why women and children often leave home and return several times before an abusive situation of domestic and family violence ends, and to what extent early intervention schemes have been successful in enabling them to reduce their multiple experiences of violence and multiple use of refuge and other emergency accommodation.

3) *Workshops*

Following thematic analysis of the interview findings, a series of workshops was facilitated in each capital city of the three states which made up the Australian case study: Hobart, Melbourne and Sydney, and also in Adelaide and Brisbane, with 47 policy makers, practitioners and researchers attending presentations on the interim findings. Facilitated discussions deepened understanding of the policy implications for successful implementation of early intervention practices in each of these five states. The information elicited concerning the efficacy and portability of early intervention schemes for women and children who have experience domestic and family violence to a spread of Australian locations was then used to add to and amend the previously analysed data.

4) *Report*

This report has been produced using information obtained from the analysis of the literature review, the case studies and the workshops. The data are reported by analytical theme (rather than juxtapositioning the case studies), in order to create a more useful document for policy makers. The report provides good practice examples and includes issues raised by the research participants concerning applicability and relevance in the Australian context, together with guidance on how they could be implemented.

5) *Synthesis, reporting and dissemination*

The final findings will be disseminated through academic papers and presentations to the National Homelessness Conference, Australasian Housing Researchers Conference, Australian Social Policy Conference and TASA Conference.

2.3 Companion study

A companion study, *Homelessness Prevention for Women and Children Who Have Experienced Domestic and Family Violence: Innovations in Policy and Practice* (50602), was funded by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI). The two projects

were designed to dovetail together, and this work for FaHCSIA; *Early Intervention Strategies to Reduce the Need for Women and Children to Make Repeated Use of Refuge and Other Crisis Accommodation*, builds on the AHURI research. The research questions for the AHURI project were:

- How and to what extent have innovative homelessness prevention measures introduced in Australia and England since the mid-1990s been successful in enabling women and children to remain in their homes and localities?
- What are the implications of these findings for policy on housing and homelessness in Australia and for improvements to practice?

The AHURI study explored the value and implementation challenges of innovative staying at home homelessness prevention measures. The aim was to investigate and assess some of these innovations in policy and practice. The fieldwork for the two studies was carried out at the same time. In most instances, the semi-structured interviews also covered both projects. All the workshops covered both projects together.

The findings from the critical review of the literature for the AHURI project were that women cannot easily exercise their right to remain in their homes unless the following two factors are recognised:

- There is an understanding in the community and from professionals and policy makers about what constitutes domestic and family violence and how it can impact on women and children;
- The links between domestic and family violence and women's homelessness are accepted (Spinney and Blandy 2011, p. 41).

The overall findings of the AHURI study were:

- That integrated homelessness prevention schemes have an important role to play in preventing homelessness for women and children who have experienced domestic and family violence, and that this is true for women living in very different situations in very different areas;
- That Australia should move to the provision of homelessness prevention schemes that are as extensive as the current provision of refuge and crisis accommodation

Those findings contribute to the growing normalisation of expanded housing choices for women and children after their separation from the perpetrator (Spinney 2012b).

The Positioning Paper from the AHURI study is available on the AHURI website at <http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download/50602_pp> and it is anticipated that the

Final Report will also be available from the last quarter of 2012. Because the AHURI and FaHCSIA studies are closely related and the fieldwork was conducted together, there is some direct repeating of information in this report to FaHCSIA (especially in Chapters 5 and 6) and in the AHURI reports. This is particularly so regarding overlapping contextual matters and the risk assessment and management service standards required if SHLV and Safe at Home models are to be implemented more widely in Australia. However, because the projects do seek to answer different research questions there is also information that is only in one or other of the studies. Although the reports can be read alone it is recommended that the reports from both studies are read and considered in order to gain a complete picture of the research findings of the two companion projects.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has explained the research questions, approach and methods used for this international comparative project. Chapter 3 goes on to explore the relevant key definitions and concepts:

- Domestic and family violence;
- Homelessness and domestic and family violence;
- Refuge and crisis accommodation;
- The impact of domestic and family violence on children;
- Early intervention;
- Homelessness prevention.

3. Key definitions and concepts

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses some of the literature on the definitions and concepts on which the research is based; domestic and family violence, homelessness and domestic and family violence, refuge and crisis accommodation, the impact of domestic and family violence on children, early intervention and homelessness prevention.

3.2 Domestic and family violence

Domestic and family violence is made up of many controlling and intimidating coercive behaviours, often much wider than physical violence alone. These can include emotional, sexual, financial and spiritual abuse and enforced social isolation which are used by perpetrators to exert power and control in order to dominate another person, often within the context of an intimate relationship or ex-relationship. For Indigenous Australians, it can also include loss of cultural and religious connections to land, and can be wider than spousal abuse to include extended families and communities (Spinney and Blandy 2011; Spinney 2012b). The term 'domestic and family violence' is used in this report in order to encompass a term that all Australian communities can relate to and identify with. In 1993, Australia was one of the sponsors of the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women:

Recognizing that violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women, and that violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men ...

This definition brings to the fore that domestic and family violence is an international phenomenon which occurs in all countries, amongst all races and cultures, and that it is one of the ways in which men exert power over women. In 1982 the Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs in Duluth, Minnesota devised a power and control wheel, <<http://www.theduluthmodel.org/pdf/PowerandControl.pdf>>, to illustrate some of the ways in which it is used to control and subordinate family members, usually women and their children (see Figure 1). In Chapter 4 these power and control factors are used to discuss the reasons why women return to perpetrators, and why women and children can have multiple experiences of refuge and crisis accommodation.



Figure 1: Power and Control Wheel

Source: Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs, Duluth (1984)

In 2011 amendments were made to the Commonwealth Family Law Act 1975 which included a new definition of family violence. Section 4AB defines family violence as:

- (1) For the purposes of this Act, family violence means violent, threatening or other behaviour by a person that coerces or controls a member of the person's family (the family member), or causes the family member to be fearful.
- (2) Examples of behaviour that may constitute family violence include (but are not limited to):
 - (a) an assault; or
 - (b) a sexual assault or other sexually abusive behaviour; or
 - (c) stalking; or
 - (d) repeated derogatory taunts; or
 - (e) intentionally damaging or destroying property; or

- (f) intentionally causing death or injury to an animal; or
- (g) unreasonably denying the family member the financial autonomy that he or she would otherwise have had; or
- (h) unreasonably withholding financial support needed to meet the reasonable living expenses of the family member, or his or her child, at a time when the family member is entirely or predominantly dependent on the person for financial support; or
- (i) preventing the family member from making or keeping connections with his or her family, friends or culture; or
- (j) unlawfully depriving the family member, or any member of the family member's family, of his or her liberty.

3.2.1 Domestic and family violence within an Indigenous Australian context

It is known that, for Indigenous Australians, domestic and family violence and homelessness can be different from that of white mainstream interpretations. This includes their incidence and severity as Indigenous Australian women may be up to 35 times more likely than non-Indigenous women to experience such violence (Council of Australian Governments 2010). In NSW in 2006, 20 per cent of Indigenous Australian women reported physical violence in the previous year, compared with 7 per cent of the general female population (Department of Aboriginal Affairs 2008).

The causes of family violence in Indigenous communities are now increasingly accepted as stemming from the history and impact of white settlement. These include dispossession of land, breakdown of community kinship systems, marginalisation, entrenched poverty, racism, alcohol, and the effects of institutionalism and removal policies (Office of Women's Policy 2001; Victorian Government 2004). Cripps (2010) has also identified that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are less likely to use phrases such as domestic and family violence, but more likely to use words that minimise the behaviour as an everyday or innocuous happening. This is done in order to protect the family from intrusion, and in order not to make the situation worse or to adversely affect their community. In an Indigenous community context, family violence is wider than spousal violence and can encompass a mix of harmful, violent and aggressive behaviours that can occur within families, extended families, kinship networks and communities (Victorian Government 2004).

3.3 Homelessness and domestic and family violence

Domestic and family violence is a major reason why women and children need to leave their homes in Australia. When they do so, they almost inevitably become poorer, and both their short-term and long-term housing conditions deteriorate as they struggle to access private

rental accommodation or public housing where in both cases demand is far greater than available supply. Domestic and family violence is one of the main reasons why women and children in Australia lose their homes. However, for the last decade, both nationally and internationally, there has been a growing discourse that this is both unjust to those concerned and costly to the public purse in terms of welfare and homelessness provision. This has led to a growing expectation that attempts should be made to break this link between being a victim of the crime of domestic and family violence and becoming homeless, and to innovations to prevent such homelessness by devising ways in which women and children can safely remain in the family home (Spinney and Blandy 2011; Spinney 2102b).

Women and children who experience domestic and family violence frequently lose a sense of having a 'home' even before the relationship comes to an end and while the family all still remain in their accommodation. This is because women's sense of safety and belonging is destroyed if they feel unsafe and are unable to conduct life normally at home. They may be unable to invite friends and family around, carry out hobbies or work, go to bed at the time they want, cook the food they like or have money to buy things for the home. Children will feel frightened and constrained, may not receive the attention they need, be able to get their toys out or have friends around to play or sleepover. This is important because homeless families in Australia are mostly made up of this group of women and children and they are one of the most overlooked and marginalised groups in society (Hulse and Spinney 2010). The impact of domestic and family violence on children is further discussed later in this chapter.

As Tually et al. (2008) confirm, a significant number of women who become homeless in order to leave situations of domestic and family violence are Indigenous Australians. The experience of homelessness for Indigenous Australians can also be different from mainstream definitions because it can include loss of cultural and religious connections to land, in addition to the stress factors that affect all homeless people (Berry et al. 2001). Domestic and family violence is the single biggest risk factor for homelessness in Australia, with women escaping such violence representing 30 per cent of all SAAP clients in South Australia, for instance (SA Department for Families and Communities 2011).

3.4 Refuge and crisis accommodation

Since the 1970s, domestic and family violence refuges have been the mainstream service provision in both Australia and England for women and children who have left these abusive situations. They play a pivotal role in keeping women and children safe and in helping them with the skills to restart their lives. Current refuge accommodation can range from high-

security models through to clustered and even dispersed units. A central feature of the refuge model is that it has always involved the relocation of women away from the situation of violence and therefore away from their homes, support systems and communities. Crisis accommodation is often a domestic violence refuge, but increasingly it is also motel rooms, caravan parks or boarding houses, which can be isolating and frightening (Hulse and Spinney 2010). Gradually over the last decade there has been a growing recognition that it is unjust and sometimes unnecessary for women and children to have to lose their homes in order to escape violence, and that it is the perpetrator who should be forced to leave and the women and children enabled to safely remain in their home.

The growing policy interest in the right of women and children to remain has led both nationally and internationally to the development of early intervention service responses designed to prevent their homelessness (Spinney 2012b). It is important to break the cycle of multi-generational use of refuge and crisis accommodation because, as discussed in the following section, experiencing domestic and family violence and homelessness are extremely negative experiences for children; 40 to 70 per cent of children entering women's refuges with their mothers as a result of domestic and family violence were themselves victims of abuse and neglect (Flatau et al. 2009). Indeed one of the refuge clients interviewed for this research confirmed that she had stayed at the very same refuge 15 years before, as a child accompanying her mother.

3.5 Impact of domestic and family violence and homelessness on children

For the purposes of the Family Law Legislation Amendment (Family Law and Other Measures) Act 2011, a child is exposed to domestic and family violence if the child sees or hears family violence, or otherwise experiences the effects of family violence. Examples of situations that may constitute a child being exposed to family violence include, but are not limited to:

- Overhearing threats of death or personal injury by a member of the child's family towards another member of the child's family, or
- Seeing or hearing an assault of a member of the child's family by another member of the child's family, or
- Comforting or providing assistance to a member of the child's family who has been assaulted by another member of the child's family; or
- Cleaning up a site after a member of the child's family has intentionally damaged property of another member of the child's family; or
- Being present when police or ambulance officers attend an incident involving the assault of a member of the child's family by another member of the child's family.

Research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in the UK recommends increased recognition of the childhood experiences that later lead to multiple experiences of homelessness, as problematic childhood experiences such as domestic and family violence and homelessness are very prevalent among adults with complex needs. McDonagh (2011) found that increased support needs to be given to families experiencing homelessness in order to help break the pattern of intergenerational homelessness. The effect of living in a situation of domestic and family violence can be devastating for both mothers and their children. Women may be killed, raped or seriously physically injured. They may become seriously mentally ill and, at the very least, will lose confidence and self-esteem if they are constantly belittled or controlled. Their children will be living with an aggressive perpetrator and a subdued mother, and this can impact on their emotional and cognitive development, with long-term consequences for their life chances and expectations (Spinney and Blandy 2011; Spinney 2012b). One in four children who have experienced domestic violence display serious social and behavioural problems (Weeks and Oberin 2004). Ways in which a child can be changed by experiencing such violence include:

- Children are denied a good father and positive male role model;
- Abuse can harm the mother/child bond;
- Children can develop negative core beliefs about themselves;
- Children can be isolated from helpful sources of support;
- Unhealthy family roles can evolve in homes;
- Abuse destroys a child's view of the world as a safe and predictable place;
- A child's style of coping and survival may become problematic;
- Children may adopt some of the rationalisations for abuse;
- Children can believe that domestic or family violence is inevitable or normal (Cunningham and Baker 2004);

Furthermore, the homelessness that is still so often associated with leaving situations of domestic and family violence can be a severe source of stress for children. They are more likely to exhibit significant psychological distress and health problems, including poor nutrition from lack of cooking facilities in motels, boarding houses and caravan parks etc., and the poverty that this type of high cost accommodation causes (Dockery et al. 2010, p. 18). Lower rates of immunisation have also been recorded as a result of the high rates of mobility leading to disruption in medical services (Hulse and Spinney 2010). These circumstances can lead to children being more likely to experience illness. Homeless

children commonly have to leave friends, familiar neighbourhoods, schools and extended family and, as a result, can become 'withdrawn, unsettled, angry even suicidal and suffer sleeping difficulties and bedwetting' (Kirkman et al. 2009, p. 11). The disruption in education caused by the trauma of becoming homeless makes succeeding at school more difficult, particularly perhaps if homeless families have to stay in a motel or boarding house with limited room to do homework in a quiet setting. The upset at moving school (sometimes several times as families move from the family home, to crisis accommodation, to transitional accommodation, to a permanent home) also accentuates the problem and can lead to children refusing to go to school, as their routines and friendships are disturbed. For children, then, domestic and family violence and homelessness can cause a 'double whammy' of disadvantage. As a result, families facing multiple problems such as domestic and family violence and homelessness do not just have an impact upon themselves, but also involve a high cost to society through support services, lost productivity and policing anti-social behaviour (Social Exclusion Task Force 2007).

When women and children have to leave the family home because of experiences of domestic and family violence, their housing conditions deteriorate significantly in terms of affordability, length of stay, physical condition of the housing, the neighbourhood, safety and the availability of maintenance (Champion et al. 2009, p. 3). Sometimes their new housing conditions, e.g. sleeping in cars, puts mothers at risk of having their children removed by child welfare agencies, and this is one of the reasons why this type of homelessness is so invisible. Whether or not families seek help from service providers, they often face multiple moves between motels, boarding houses and caravan parks (Hulse and Spinney 2010).

The research evidence base currently indicates that:

- More than half of all women with children seeking assistance through SAAP give domestic and family violence as their primary reason for doing so;
- The majority of those accommodated in domestic or family violence refuges and other crisis and transitional accommodation are children;
- Almost one in ten homeless Australians are aged under 12, with three-quarters of these being aged under 10;
- Homelessness affects children in quite profound ways, e.g. they are more likely to experience emotional and behavioural problems such as distress, depression, anger and aggression;
- Experiencing homelessness as a child makes adult homelessness more likely (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2007).

The White Paper on Homelessness (Commonwealth of Australia 2008) acknowledged the negative impacts of homelessness on children, stating that they face disrupted schooling and 'other important opportunities to build resilience' and are more likely to experience emotional and behavioural problems such as 'distress, depression, anger and aggression' that may lead them into a cycle of 'intergenerational disadvantage'. It is because of these factors that early intervention projects designed to ameliorate the damage done to young children and to educate parents and the community about the effects of domestic and family violence on children (Safe from the Start, Peek-a-Boo Club and BuBs on Board) are discussed in Chapter 5.

An advocacy organisation interviewee noted that one of the drivers behind policies designed to remove the perpetrator and enable the women and children to remain in their home are that otherwise we teach children that violence is how you get your own way, and that if you are a victim, running away or putting up with it is the only solution. The information which children receive about domestic and family violence from outside their homes is extremely influential and forms the context in which they make sense of their own experiences. As demonstrated in the 2011 Family Law amendments stance (detailed above) that a child is exposed to domestic and family violence if they see, hear or otherwise experience its effects, there is increasing recognition within Australia that exposing children to such violence is a form of child abuse,. There are correlations between domestic and family violence and child rearing, with 17 per cent of women who experience violence reporting that it started while they were pregnant, and the overwhelming majority of women with children in their care reporting that the violence has been witnessed by their children (Richards 2011).

3.6 Early intervention

In the context of this report, early intervention strategies to reduce the need for women and children to make repeated use of refuge and other crisis accommodation can involve several approaches:

- Preventing domestic or family violence from occurring at all;
- Preserving the relationship by stopping the violence;
- Improving effective choices and support for women so that they remain in a violent relationship for less time;
- Lessening the need to return to the perpetrator for economic, emotional and other reasons.

This report discusses all these types of approaches. Early intervention strategies involve building equal and respectful relationships between individuals within families and in

communities. They include such things as programs for young children, respectful relationship programs in schools for teenagers, and social marketing campaigns to discourage violence occurring. This study, however, mostly considers strategies designed to reduce the need to make repeated use of refuge and crisis accommodation for those who have already experienced domestic and family violence. They include homelessness prevention schemes discussed in the following section, and financial and housing initiatives to assist women and children to find new places to live. Social marketing strategies designed to influence women's tolerance to violent relationships and men's willingness to seek assistance to change their controlling behaviour are discussed in Chapter 5.

3.7 Homelessness prevention

For the purposes of this report, homelessness prevention for women and children who have experienced domestic and family violence can involve one or more strategies including:

- Rapid rehousing of women and children who have had to leave the family home;
- Preventing women and children at risk of homelessness from becoming homeless;
- Women and children leaving their home in a safe and planned way rather than leaving a time of crisis during a violent episode.

All three types of approach are considered in this report. Measures can include tenancy sustainment initiatives such as outreach and crisis intervention services and, for the client group of this research, SHLV and Safe at Home type schemes. SHLV and Sanctuary projects are designed to combine judicial, housing and welfare measures in a coordinated manner in order to enable women and children to remain in their homes safely, and for the perpetrator to be removed and deterred from returning. Legal and judicial measures can involve such things as improving police attitudes and responses to breaches of court orders, law reform and family violence courts. Housing and welfare policies can involve provision of outreach support, financial assistance, incentives for perpetrators to leave and assistance with provision of safety equipment within the home (such as stronger doors, bars on windows and direct telecommunications with the police). Safe at Home schemes such as those in Tasmania and Victoria involve integrated approaches by government and non-government agencies. Judicial and legal issues can have a major impact on whether women and children are prevented from becoming homeless. Residential tenancy and domestic and family violence legislation, the attitude and procedures of the police, courts and magistrates, and the availability of legal support can determine whether women are able to remain in their homes. These matters are covered in detail in *Home and Safe? Policy and Practice Innovations to Prevent Women and Children Who Have Experienced Domestic and Family Violence from Becoming Homeless* (Spinney 2012b).

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has explored definitions and concepts relevant to early intervention and prevention strategies to reduce the need for women and children to make repeated use of refuge and crisis accommodation. The following chapter examines why women and children sometimes endure multiple experiences of domestic and family violence and subsequent homelessness.

4. Issues concerning multiple experiences of violence and of homelessness

4.1 Introduction

The information in this chapter comes from the literature review, interviews and workshops. Questions regarding why women remain with or return to the perpetrator of domestic and family violence and why women and children sometimes access homelessness accommodation on multiple occasions are explored in order to establish the efficacy of the early intervention and prevention schemes discussed in Chapter 5.

4.2 Why do women stay with or return to the perpetrator?

Many, perhaps half, of the women who leave an abusive relationship return to the perpetrator (Griffing et al. 2002). Interviewees were keen to stress that leaving a violent partner can be 'a process rather than an event', and that multiple attempts at leaving should not be regarded as only negative, as sometimes women need to go through this process in order to really know that the relationship cannot be 'mended' and must be ended. One Tasmanian interviewee stated that it frequently took five to seven times for her clients to permanently leave, partly because it took that long for them to understand that they could live independently of the perpetrator. Until that point it can seem easier to return than to permanently stay away, and several 'trial runs' are needed. An English interviewee pointed out that the question of whether to stay or leave any relationship is a difficult and complex one, irrespective of the presence of abuse, and it is unlikely to be a sudden decision. The resolve to stick with a course of action may waver, depending on external factors including the behaviour of the abuser and the responses she encounters from others. There are a variety of social, demographic, economic and emotional reasons, both structural and personal, for women's decisions to stay or return. These include:

- Fear of greater violence from the perpetrator to themselves and their children if they do not agree to return. There is statistical evidence that women and children are at greater risk of physical harm and murder post-separation (Griffing et al. 2002) and therefore, for women who do not consider that judicial processes will adequately protect them, this can be considered a sensible decision.
- Poverty resulting from erosion of financial resources and of opportunities to increase income through education and employment, long-term financial insecurity, reduced financial confidence, knowledge and skills due to limited experience (Landvogt 2011).

It is for this reason that self-confidence and financial mentoring schemes such as Tools for Change are discussed in Chapter 5.

- Difficulty in sustaining the break due to the wrong type of (or not enough) support being available. The initial response women receive during disclosure, whether they are believed, kept safe and helped to find somewhere to live can be a real predictor of whether they return to the perpetrator or not.
- Concerns about making herself and her children homeless due to not being able to return to the family home with the perpetrator removed or to access alternative suitable accommodation: 'Sometimes women who are faced with a decision to either leave the family home and enter the homelessness system, or remain with the perpetrator, have difficulty in ascertaining which of these will do less damage to their children' (Spinney and Blandy 2011, p. 18).
- The gains that women may achieve from leaving (such as self-respect and self-confidence, more control over their life and the chance of a new start) are intangible, whereas the losses are tangible and normally include home, possessions, status as a wife, a father for the children, a partner who she may still have feelings for, friends and family, pets, finances, garden, GP, dentist etc. The losses can seem so huge and the changes so overwhelming that, when the perpetrator begs for forgiveness and asks for another chance, it can be tempting to believe him.
- As discussed in Chapter 3, the losses for children can also be enormous as they lose their home, school, father figure, bedroom, friends, sports activities etc. and it can be hard for them to see advantages in their mother staying away. The losses for women and children are immediate, but any gains can take time to achieve after separation, including safety.
- Legal processes can involve repeated court appearances, visits to the solicitor and dealings with the police. The courts may order that the children still have a relationship with the father after the woman has ended the relationship with him. Women may consider that the process is too difficult, and that their children are safer if they do not put them in a situation where they have to spend time with their father without her being there.
- The humiliation and embarrassment of having to repeatedly tell their story in order to try to access assistance and support from agencies.
- Interviewees considered that approximately 30 per cent of women return to the perpetrator, with a higher percentage in rural areas. The reasons they gave include

schools, agency supports, finances, wanting children to be with their father, loneliness, Centrelink crisis payments, possessions, escalated risks, isolation, to protect the children, pets, shame, hope, love and nowhere else to go after their time in a refuge has come to an end.

- Inability to find somewhere else to live.
- Inability to access peer support from women who have been through similar experiences or intensive support from staff because of not being accommodated in a communal living refuge. Many domestic and family violence services are crisis focused but the journey to recovery can take many months if not years. Most focus only on the immediate crisis and it is notable that the time when services are withdrawn is the point at which women are especially vulnerable to returning to the violent partner.
- Inability to access refuge or crisis accommodation and having to stay with friends or relatives and keep moving around (Novac 2006) or having to stay in motels, boarding houses or caravan parks which are inappropriate for their needs (Hulse and Spinney 2010) so they feel they have no option but to return.
- Lack of self-awareness on the part of the victims as to what they want in life and what their values are. Victims often had male figures in their childhoods who were abusive and therefore these type of relationships have become normalised for them and they are not sufficiently aware that what they are enduring is wrong and that there are alternative ways of living.
- Young women aged 18-24 have fewer resources in terms of resilience, friends who can offer support and finances, for instance, to enable them to stay away.
- It is easy for women to underestimate how difficult staying away is going to be, and how vulnerable they are to returning to the perpetrator.
- Lack of money for practical things such as moving house. Women often leave with few of their belongings, and with very little money to buy replacement goods this can make it difficult to stay away from the perpetrator.

In terms of considering both repeat incidents of domestic and family violence and of homelessness attributed to the violence, interviewees stressed that it is not the woman's behaviour which is the problem, but the perpetrator's. It is therefore important that women should not be blamed or criticised for their actions. It is also important that interventions enabling them to leave the relationship do not result in the abuser being left unaccountable for his actions and free to form a new relationship with his values and beliefs about women

unchallenged and unchanged. It is for this reason that the perpetrator behaviour change program Strength to Change is discussed in the following chapter.

4.3 Why do women and children access homelessness accommodation more than once?

Refuge and crisis accommodation services are not designed to solve permanent housing needs and their effectiveness depends very much on clients' ability to move on to other housing options such as private rental, public housing or owner occupation after they have received temporary accommodation and services while in crisis. As a consequence, many clients, including women and children who have experienced domestic or family violence, return to a homeless situation after receiving temporary assistance. Women and children are in the top bracket of 'unmet demand' from homelessness services, as many more people try to access crisis and refuge accommodation than there is room for. This is likely to be a reason why women return to the perpetrator (Spinney 2012b).

Many of the women who leave a violent relationship more than once do not enter homelessness accommodation. This is because either they are unable to do so because of lack of availability, they do not meet the criteria (for instance, if their oldest son is over 12 years of age) or they do not wish to enter because they do not consider that it will meet their needs. Some interviewees stated that high-security refuges can be off putting to some women, including Indigenous Australians who are likely to wish to stay very connected to their community and not be removed from it. However, it is known that many users of refuge and crisis accommodation are repeat users, and the reasons for this revealed in the research (including and in addition to leaving the perpetrator on more than one occasion as discussed above) were:

- Women having a series of violent relationships with different perpetrators, each one necessitating a stay in crisis accommodation.
- Women still being at the stage of deciding on their options with the perpetrator and using refuges as a clear space to think things out, sometimes more than once.
- Women are advised by police to re-enter refuge accommodation, for instance, when the perpetrator is released from jail.
- Difficulties in accessing other forms of accommodation.
- The temporary nature of refuge and crisis accommodation means that women may not receive sufficient support in order to build the life skills they need in order to prevent them from having to enter such accommodation again.

- Indigenous women who stay in refuges generally already have had an unstable housing background and their housing arrangements are more likely to break down again.
- Inability to exercise the rights and responsibilities that other Australian citizens take for granted, such as being able to seek work or to feed their children in the way they wish while they are in homelessness accommodation (Hulse and Spinney 2010).
- Research participants noted that clients with mental health or alcohol or drug issues and those with children in their care are much more likely to re-use refuge and other forms of crisis accommodation on more than one occasion.
- Some women need to re-use crisis accommodation because the perpetrator ignores a police or court order intended to keep him away from the family home and the ex-partner.
- Some interviewees considered that there is a cycle of violence that can lead to a cycle of reusing refuge and other crisis accommodation. The perpetrator may be very remorseful, and pursue his partner to return to him with promises of a better life. Once she has returned there can be a 'honeymoon' phase where everything goes well at first until tension begins to build up again. This is followed by a stand-over phase where his behaviour becomes more controlling and fearful, leading to an explosion of violent behaviour. Other interviewees considered that the power and control wheel (see Figure 1) more accurately portrays situations where women may live with everyday violence and fear, rather than on a cyclical basis. There are certainly occasions when the violence from the perpetrator has escalated to a point where women must leave again, and those where the perpetrator promises to change his behaviour but this does not transpire in the long term.
- Failure of the service to provide sufficient support in order to stay away.
- Indigenous Australian women in particular may use refuges differently including for prevention before violence occurs, for instance, at a funeral when lots of people will be in the house and will be consuming alcohol. They do not wish or intend to leave the family home and extended family permanently.
- Women return to refuges because they need the support of others who have been in a similar situation.
- Lack of long-term housing options.

- Interviewees reported that women on lower incomes tend to return to refuge and crisis accommodation, having no other choice. Two-thirds of women who experience domestic and family violence are in work, but 87 per cent of those who stay in refuges are on a pension.
- Women sometimes go to refuges more than once because they are only offered a six week stay at a time, which is not long enough for an effective intervention. Interviewees reported that the longer the women stay in the refuge initially, the less likely it is that they will seek to return later, and that clients able to be supported for 12 months very rarely go back through the system, whether this support comes through staying in a refuge or through an outreach service.
- In the *Families on the Edge* Australian Research Council funded longitudinal study of family homelessness, many of the 50 Victorian female heads of household could trace their history back to a situation of domestic and family violence, even if it was not the immediate cause (Hulse and Spinney 2010).
- Interviewees reported that the nature of refuge clients has changed over time. In Tasmania, for instance, they are no longer used solely for women and children who have experienced domestic and family violence but also for other forms of family homelessness such as losing privately rented accommodation or being evicted from public housing for rent arrears. There are now many more women with mental health, drug or alcohol issues accessing refuge accommodation. Interviewees reported that some of these may continue to reappear as re-users of refuges for 15 years and blamed the lack of connection between specialist agencies and refuges for this.
- Those unable to remain in the family home in the long term with the perpetrator removed are more likely to re-use refuge and crisis accommodation in the future than those who are enabled (and can afford) to remain in their home.
- Child protection agencies sometimes place conditions on women that they must leave the perpetrator and enter a refuge in order to keep their children living with them.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has explored why women remain with or return to the perpetrator of domestic and family violence, and why women and children sometimes access homelessness accommodation on multiple occasions. Interviewees reported that so much is involved in leaving a violent relationship and that it is not a failure of women that they re-use refuges. However, they can be assisted in their process towards independence, and selected enabling strategies are discussed in the following chapter.

5. Strategies to prevent multiple experiences of homelessness and of staying in refuge and crisis accommodation

5.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at examples of early interventions which attempt, in various ways, to prevent and reduce multiple experiences of homelessness and of staying in refuge and crisis accommodation for women and children who have experienced domestic and family violence. They include:

- Community specific interventions, including those specifically designed to suit Indigenous communities and those which aim to alter societal attitudes to the acceptability of domestic and family violence, to women's right to remain in their home, and to men's willingness to seek help for their controlling behaviours;
- Household and family interventions, including those which attempt to reduce the poverty that women and children who experience domestic and family violence and subsequent homelessness so often face, and those which are designed to prevent homelessness by enabling women and children to remain in their own home;
- Individual interventions, including those which work with women to empower and develop their self-confidence or financial capability, those which work with children to ameliorate the damage caused to them by living in situations of domestic and family violence and homelessness, and male perpetrator behaviour change programs.

5.2 Community based interventions

5.2.1 Interventions to assist Indigenous Australians from experiencing domestic and family violence and multiple experiences of refuge and crisis accommodation

State and territory governments, as well as Indigenous communities themselves, have developed innovative responses to family violence and resultant homelessness for the victims and their children. As discussed in Chapter 2, Indigenous women are more likely to experience both domestic and family violence and homelessness. In order for intervention schemes to be effective they have to be culturally and community appropriate and involve Indigenous people in their design and implementation (Cripps 2010).

Memmott et al. (2006) note that the Canadian analysis of successful components of Indigenous family violence prevention schemes points to 13 project characteristics:

- Valuing Indigenous tradition and culture;

- Recognising the importance of ritual and ceremony;
- Valuing the wisdom of the elders who understand the dynamics of family violence and a recognition of their role as important carriers of knowledge;
- A strong sense of community and shared responsibility;
- An emphasis on connectedness – to land, family, extended family, clan, spouse's family – resulting in a view of the individual context;
- An objective of restoring balance;
- Placing value on nurturing and mutually respectful relationships;
- Honouring the central place of women;
- Acceptance of and respect for the client as a whole person;
- A sense of equality between service provider and service recipient;
- A central attitude of caring;
- A preference for forgiveness rather than judgement and punishment;
- A holistic connection of body mind spirit.

A report on Indigenous family violence by the Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research (2008) stresses the need to:

- Consider implications of mainstream domestic and family violence law on Indigenous people;
- Improve training and education for Indigenous police officers;
- Develop community education on rights and responsibilities within the justice system;
- Address the lack of rehabilitation perpetrator programs while they are incarcerated;
- Address inconsistent departmental practices;
- Develop individuals to show leadership out of family violence.

In South Australia, the Domestic/Aboriginal Family Violence Gateway is a telephone based service for women and their children who are experiencing or escaping domestic or family violence (SA Department for Families and Communities 2011). It provides specialist information, counselling, intake assessment and supported referrals to crisis accommodation, regional domestic/Aboriginal family violence services and mainstream services. It is also developing Women's Safety Contact, a new service to provide support to improve women's safety following the issue of an intervention order on their behalf. A new

program called Staying Safe Staying Home in partnership with the Attorney General's Department and the Victim Support Service will deliver individual safety packages and risk assessments across the state to enable women and their children who are experiencing or escaping domestic/Aboriginal family violence to safely remain in or return to their homes.

The Northern Territory's night patrols are organised groups, often involving Indigenous elders or other respected leaders, who patrol town camps talking to residents and liaising with police with the aim of stopping trouble before it begins. The literature reveals that they are particularly effective in Indigenous Australian family violence situations as they can keep an eye on likely perpetrators and have the influence to stop the violence. They are also important as many Indigenous women and others in the community have a poor relationship and image of the police and criminal justice system and are unlikely to contact the police if a domestic or family violence incident takes place. Often Indigenous women do not want to have the perpetrator locked up or for themselves to leave the home; they want to stay with the perpetrator but to have the violence stop. Memmot et al. (2006) found that night patrols demonstrate good practice. They also display some of the elements of good practice for effective Indigenous family violence programs as identified by Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (2008):

- Cultural grounding of programs;
- Community grounding and development of programs;
- Holistic approaches;
- Engagement of men, women and children in programs;
- Ensuring the involvement of appropriate elders;
- Self-empowerment and self-esteem as capacity building by-products;
- Examining intergenerational family history and cultural experience as a healing element;
- Culturally competent responses;
- Capacity building through networking partnerships and interagency collaboration;
- Information collection and dissemination;
- Training and skills acquisition.

Some interviewees also stressed that Indigenous women do not want to be involved with lots of different support workers and can benefit from those who are able to look at the whole picture in an intensive case management approach.

Indigenous domestic and family violence intervention initiatives frequently focus on restorative justice techniques, defined by the Minnesota Department of Corrections as: 'A philosophical framework which has been proposed as an alternative to the current way of thinking about crime and criminal justice. [It] emphasises the ways in which crime harms relationships in the context of community' (Southwell 2003).

In such schemes, crime victims and community members have a more active involvement in the justice process than in conventional Australian justice systems, and offenders are held accountable directly to the people and community they have violated. As such, restorative justice can play a valuable role. This is partly due to fears of alienation from their community and concern over further disintegration of the community resulting from their abuser being imprisoned but also because, for many Indigenous women, 'family' is such a part of self-identify, responsibility and obligation, connection to country and culture that the concept of starting again as an individual in a new location can be totally alien (Southwell 2003).

There is no direct evidence that the schemes discussed here have had an impact on lessening domestic and family violence and consequential homelessness in Indigenous communities. What is clear is that unless these communities are strengthened, they will not be able to break the cycle of intergenerational violence and homelessness. Interviewees stressed that early education in all schools and communities on respectful relationships and boundaries before people enter abusive relationships is likely to play an important role in changing the discourses surrounding the acceptability of domestic and family violence. The next section discusses social marketing schemes which have set out to directly challenge attitudes of power and control of men over women.

5.2.2 Behaviour change social marketing interventions

Social marketing applies the principles and tools of commercial marketing to achieve socially desirable goals. It is characterised by a focus on behaviour change and normally includes:

- Education to inform and guide;
- Marketing to engage and motivate;
- Service provision to 'convert' the guidance and motivation into actual and sustained behaviour change (Robinson and Hunter 2010, p. 54).

The federal government has allocated \$17 million for behaviour change programs, including those targeting young people (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009). This section discusses two social marketing interventions designed to reduce domestic and family violence and homelessness.

5.2.2.1 *Bega SHLV (NSW)*

Bega SHLV is located in rural NSW. In addition to carrying out similar risk assessment and security upgrading work to other schemes, as discussed later in the chapter, it runs social marketing campaigns designed to change the behaviour of perpetrators, to raise community awareness concerning the links between domestic and family violence and women's and children's homelessness, and to encourage women not to accept abusive behaviour. Social marketing campaigns are an integral and important feature of Bega SHLV. Cinema advertising, posters in public toilets, doctors' surgeries and other public areas, wristbands, key fobs and banners across roads have all been used to highlight the message that women do not have to put up with violent relationships and that they do not have to leave their homes in order to end the relationship. An example of promotional material from the scheme is shown in Appendix 2. It would seem that for women to be encouraged to use homelessness prevention measures they must firstly have an understanding that such services are on offer, that women and children are not expected to leave their home, and to have confidence that these services will effectively deter perpetrators from returning. Social marketing can play an important part in this process (Spinney 2012b).

5.2.2.2 *Strength to Change (England)*

It is estimated that around 5 per cent of the Australian population will be victimised in any one year. Behaviour change programs for men began to emerge in the late 1970s, influenced by the understanding of domestic violence in the context of gender and power relationships, and were typically focused on changing attitudes towards women (Day et al. 2010).

Strength to Change was the UK's first health funded domestic and family violence perpetrator program, and the first social marketing campaign of its kind there. It consists of a therapeutic intervention accessed through a helpline, underpinned by a marketing campaign, and is designed for men who voluntarily decide that they want to change their behaviour towards their partners. An important part of the scheme is that men respond to the social marketing advertisements voluntarily to ask for help. Examples of promotional materials are given in Appendices 3, 4 and 5. The domestic violence prevention manager undertakes an assessment of the men who ask for assistance and works with them therapeutically in a group and individually over several months to help them recognise their responsibility for the abuse and take steps to stop it (Robinson and Hunter 2010).

Interviewees stated that although the work is with men, the primary goal is the safety of women and children and can make a real difference to the partners and children of the men who come forward for assistance. One of the reasons they consider it very important to

spend money on men's perpetrator services as well as women's support services is because one man can (and normally does) have several victims during his life. The scheme commenced in 2009 and works with men who are still living with their partner as well as those who have separated. After initial assessment, the perpetrator signs a participation agreement. If they refuse to sign, the program will not work with them. The agreement gives permission for the police, social services and partner or ex-partner to be contacted. A women's worker conducts group and one-on-one work with women who wish to participate, and this is considered a vital part of the work to protect women. Interviewees stated that they would not operate the program without a women's worker. A return on investment study conducted on the project in 2010 compared police call-outs for men engaged with the program, finding that they have been involved in 66 per cent fewer incidents. The average gross savings achieved in seven case studies were £63,937 per man and £35,058 per partner (or ex-partner) (Perfect Moment 2010).

Interviewees reported that women consider that men's behaviour programs make them safer because staff are in touch with women and make sure she is not being harassed. Also, if the perpetrator does not change his behaviour, the women know that it is time to permanently end the relationship. Some considered that if women's services run men's behaviour programs they can become much more integrated into domestic and family violence services than would otherwise be the case.

The growth of Sanctuary Schemes in England at a national level has also been partly attributed to an education and awareness campaign, by central government, to local governments and others who set up and operate the schemes. Positive work to change discourse surrounding women's rights and abilities to remain in their own home appears therefore to be an important element of altering both the community's and individual women's views that this can be a viable option. It would appear that the deliberate creation of new discourses concerning 'Right to Remain' (Spinney 2007), and on the responsibility of men to change their behaviour, plus physical and emotional support mechanisms to sustain women at home, all play an equally important part in early intervention and prevention strategies.

5.3 Family and household based interventions

This section looks at family and household based interventions, including those attempting to reduce poverty for women and children and those which are designed to prevent homelessness by enabling women and children to remain in their own home.

5.3.1 Interventions to reduce poverty for women and children

Interviewees noted that one of the major reasons why women and children enter and re-enter refuge and crisis accommodation is poverty. This is also recognised by the Council of Australian Governments (2010) which highlights improving women's economic participation and independence as key steps towards reducing domestic and family violence. We also know that experiencing domestic and family violence actually contributes to poverty for women and children, often in the long term. Decisions to stay or leave abusive relationships can be affected by financial considerations (Braaf and Meyering 2011; Landvogt 2011).

Interviewees repeatedly stressed that women need access to financial assistance to enable them both to stay in their own home, with the perpetrator removed, and to live successfully independently of the perpetrator. An example given was a SHLV client who was unable to afford a bus pass for her children. When it was explained that her ex-partner was threatening to pick the children up as they walked to or from school, the bus pass fee was waived so that she could go to work safe in the knowledge that the children were on the school bus.

5.3.1.1 Centrelink assistance

In Australia, women who are not working and who have experienced domestic and family violence are able in most instances to claim Centrelink assistance. In addition, crisis payments (equal to one week of the basic rate of Social Security payment which the victim would normally receive) can be paid to a person who remains in the home after a family member leaves or is removed because of domestic or family violence. To receive the payment, the victim must have been subjected to domestic or family violence by a family member who left or was removed from the home because of the violence.

Social workers are located in Centrelink customer service centres and call centres. Centrelink social workers are available to:

- Provide counselling and support to clients with difficult personal or family issues;
- Provide information about, or refer clients to, community support services;
- Help with claims for payments from Centrelink.

Interviewees identified two ways in which the Centrelink system can work against women being able to remain in their home following the removal of the perpetrator. The first is the inflexibility of crisis payments for women leaving violent relationships. They provide a relatively small amount of money to cover one week, and have to be applied for within seven days of the violent incident occurring. For women first attending a domestic and family violence service on a Friday, this can mean that they have to be rushed to a Centrelink office to make an application straight away. Some who are unaware of the crisis payment

regulations and time restrictions have to go to refuges or other temporary accommodation because they have no immediate access to money to remain in their home and feed their children. The second issue affects women whose children have been taken into the care system because of domestic or family violence. Their Centrelink payment is reduced which means that they can no longer afford to live in a family sized home. However, reunification of the children with their mother once the violent relationship has ended is not allowed unless there is family sized accommodation available where they can reside together.

Centrelink payments do not enable women and children to get out of poverty and therefore to sort out their housing issues following relationship breakdown attributed to domestic and family violence. If we are to see a reduction in refuge and crisis accommodation use in Australia, subsidies to these clients will need to be improved so that they can either remain in their own home following removal of the perpetrator or they can access new accommodation in the private rental or owner occupation tenures. As refuge and crisis accommodation is very expensive to provide, it is possible that such subsidies could be made available at no additional cost to the public purse.

5.3.1.2 Compensation for victims of violent crime

In Australia, as in other developed countries such as Canada, New Zealand and the United States, states and territories have compensation schemes for victims of violent crimes. To be eligible, victims normally have to be injured and to have sustained medical and related expenses or loss of earnings, or have had belongings damaged or destroyed. Such schemes have the potential to assist victims of domestic and family violence to make a fresh start, and therefore to be less likely to experience homelessness a number of times. However, compensation arrangements vary from state to state, and mirroring legislation for compensation for victims of violent crime is needed throughout Australia if women and children are to receive equitable assistance regardless of where they live.

5.3.2 Homelessness prevention interventions

This section discusses schemes designed either to prevent women from having to leave their home or enabling them to live safely in a new home of their choice by removing the perpetrator and keeping him away. These include SHLV schemes in New South Wales and Sanctuary Schemes which are now mainstream policy throughout England. In order to assist readers, much of the information in this section is taken directly from the companion AHURI Final Report (Spinney 2012b) because it is equally valid to concepts of homelessness prevention and to closely related early intervention and prevention strategies designed to prevent multiple use of refuge and crisis accommodation.

McFerran (2007) identified key features of good practice models to prevent homelessness for women and children by enabling them to remain in their home, including:

- Police removing the perpetrator;
- Courts granting exclusion orders;
- Support services providing information and resources;
- Risk assessment, security upgrades and safety planning;
- Assessment and assistance for violent partners;
- Leadership and legislation from government.

The following sections examine SHLV schemes from New South Wales and Sanctuary Schemes from England which exhibit most of these desired characteristics.

5.3.2.1 *Staying Home Leaving Violence (SHLV) schemes*

SHLV schemes involve collaboration and a degree of integration between police, courts and scheme staff. The police role involves encouraging the victim and children to remain in the home unless there are immediate dangers preventing them from doing so, seeking exclusion orders and (in theory) offering accommodation to the perpetrator at nominated accommodation centres. The SHLV staff teams conduct risk assessments and safety planning to assist the client in deciding whether to remain in the home, ensure necessary protection orders are in place and conduct safety audits (Bega Women's Refuge 2007). Importantly, they also provide ongoing emotional support, sometimes for several years. There are now over 20 of these schemes which began with two pilots in 2007. They form a network of agencies increasingly integrated into the NSW domestic and family violence service system. However, they are not yet statewide, and many women leaving violent relationships are unable to access their services.

The innovators of SHLV looked to Sanctuary Schemes in England, and modified those ideas to work within an Australian setting and within the particular context of their individual location. For the research, three Sanctuary Schemes and three SHLV schemes were visited. For SHLV these were Bega, one of the two pilot schemes, located in a small rural town; Mt Druitt, which is in a suburban area of Sydney; and a scheme covering the regional centre of Newcastle. The schemes each receive funding of \$150,000 per annum from the NSW Department of Community Services and are expected to manage around 30 clients during this period, although those visited had many more clients on their books due to demand for their services. However, even at the contracted ratios, the cost per client only approximates \$5,000 for the provision of risk assessment, security planning and upgrading and for ongoing

emotional support to enable women to remain in their homes or to move to new homes where they can feel safe.

The research established from the interviews and workshops that what is so far lacking in these popular and well regarded schemes is a statewide approach so that there is no 'postcode lottery' of whether women can access SHLV services. Adequate funding so that referrals do not have to be put on hold, culturally appropriate services for Indigenous Australians and those from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, consistency of approach regarding exclusion of the perpetrator from the home by the police and judicial services, and adequate funding so that women in private rental and owner occupied homes can sustain their accommodation also need to be improved. Each SHLV is different as they are auspiced by different agencies and work in different types of area. This diversity is encouraged by the Department of Community Services which considers that different locations and types of clients need different forms of the service. Because SHLV has an objective of enabling women to live in the home of their choice, and because their target group of clients is women who are planning to separate, SHLV cannot always prevent women who become clients from becoming homeless, for example, because they cannot afford to stay. SHLV's are not homelessness services but, even in circumstances where women have to move, they may help to prevent them from becoming homeless in the future (Spinney 2012b).

Newcastle SHLV

Depending on the needs of the client, Newcastle SHLV carries out between three and twelve visits in their homes. The minimum number is three: to conduct the safety audit, to attend while the security upgrading features are being installed, and a final check-up. Interviewees reported that for some clients that is enough and all they want, but many others need longer-term emotional as well as practical support. These further sessions assist the SHLV worker to help the women to come to terms with what has happened and how they came to be in this situation. This can help with building resilience to lessen the likelihood of any future violent relationships, either with the ex-partner or a new one. The service reports that the first 48 hours back in their home following a domestic or family violence incident are crucial to whether women will gain the confidence to remain there in the longer term, and SHLV, the police and the court advocacy service work together in Newcastle to play an important role in building confidence and providing reassurance and support during this time.

What works well in Newcastle

Newcastle SHLV was in the second round of development of schemes and has been running for three years. Project workers reported that things that work really well are:

- Security upgrading, whatever the choice of house, not necessarily where the relationship was based;
- Relationships between SHLV staff and with the police Domestic Violence Liaison Officers. According to officers of the Department of Community Services, senior police are supportive as they can see the advantages in breaking cycles of domestic and family violence. There is a standard protocol covering all SHLV areas, but also local partnership arrangements with police;
- Creation of a wrap-around service of support and partnership to help women to stay in their homes. For example, when a female public housing tenant fled her home as a result of a domestic or family violence incident, the perpetrator would not leave. SHLV contacted the police who informed the perpetrator in writing that he was trespassing. He then left and the woman returned to live in her security upgraded home;
- The fact that SHLV is an outreach service that goes to the women's homes;
- The effective co-relationship between the local refuge and SHLV staff. The refuge deals with women at the time of crisis and when appropriate then refers them onto the SHLV service. In Newcastle most SHLV clients are owner occupiers of their homes.

What doesn't work so well in Newcastle

- Some police officers' attitudes of 'Here we go again' when dealing with repeat incidents, caused by a lack of understanding and training on the cycle of domestic and family violence;
- Magistrates delaying procedures because they need more evidence;
- Women refusing to make a statement or retracting it due to fear;
- Timeframe difficulties caused by only having part-time SHLV workers. Scheme officers do not feel that they are sufficiently staffed to do all the work necessary, especially as much time is spent driving to visit clients over a wide geographical area;
- Those living in their own home can be more isolated from good legal advice than those staying in refuges. However, SHLV is the first service for home owners, a group who previously had found it very difficult to access services;
- Private landlords have to give permission for upgrades such as security doors, and it can be difficult for clients to explain to agents and landlords why these are needed;
- Implementation difficulties caused by trying to 'shoehorn' SHLV into a service system that existed before the scheme became more widespread (Spinney 2012b).

5.3.2.2 *Sanctuary Schemes*

England's Sanctuary Schemes were instigated before SHLV schemes in New South Wales and for very much the same reasons as discussed above. These include homelessness prevention, relieving pressure on housing and homelessness services, cost saving, providing more choice, and meeting the needs and preferences of households fleeing violence. There are a number of reasons why it is in the interests of English local housing authorities to adopt Sanctuary Schemes, apart from the obvious one of providing protection to vulnerable residents. One is that their cost is less than the cost of rehousing the same household as homeless (Spinney and Blandy 2011, p. 30).

This section reports the findings of the fieldwork carried out in England in 2011 from interviews with Sanctuary Scheme providers, policy makers, funders and stakeholders. This is done in order to assess how these schemes compare with existing models of provision in Australia and what can be usefully learnt from their mode of operation. A key feature of Sanctuary Schemes is that they now operate on a national basis in England and that they have been promoted by central government. In 2006 specialist domestic violence advisors were seconded to work with the Department of Community and Local Government for a year in order to help local authorities to develop their own schemes. This mode of promotion has been regarded as effective, and Sanctuary Schemes are now available in almost every local authority area. Although central government has not provided local authorities with any direct Sanctuary Scheme funding, it did provide funding for homelessness prevention measures generally which was frequently used to set up Sanctuary Schemes. Police, the National Health Service, registered social landlords (housing associations) and local authorities have also set up their own charities to establish and run the schemes, which (as with NSW SHLV schemes) are run by a variety of providers (Spinney 2012b).

Norfolk Sanctuary Scheme

Norfolk is a rural county on the east coast of England. Eight local authorities in the county have joined forces to operate one Sanctuary Scheme with the same *modus operandi*, in each of their jurisdictional areas, in partnership with Norfolk police force and specialist voluntary support agencies. The scheme visited for this research is operated by Breckland District Council which covers several small market towns and their rural hinterland. The Norfolk Sanctuary Scheme provides security upgrading to clients' property at no cost to themselves in order to make them feel safer about remaining living in their home. Both tenants (of privately rented and of social housing) and home owners are included in the scheme. Unlike some other Sanctuary Schemes visited, assistance is only available to those who not only wish to remain in their own home where it is safe for them to do so, but also

where it is likely that they will be able to afford to remain there for a 'reasonable time'. It is not open to those who wish to move and have target hardening put in the new home, and as such can be regarded primarily as a mechanism designed to avoid women and children presenting as statutorily homeless, rather than as a means of extending the maximum degree of choice to those leaving violent relationships. In addition, tenants or owner occupiers must have either sole rights to the property (i.e. not be joint tenants or owners) or to have excluded the perpetrator by legal means such as an exclusion order. This is not the case for all Sanctuary Schemes. Although the Norfolk scheme started in 2006, at the time of the interview in 2011 only a few security upgrades had been completed in properties, possibly as a result of these restrictive practices. Staff explained that many prospective clients dropped out because of the length of the application and assessment process, especially if another violent episode occurred.

Four organisations operate the Breckland scheme. The police conduct the risk assessments, and arrange for a community organisation to fit new security equipment. The local authority fund and coordinate the work from their homelessness prevention budget. The police generally require a large amount of security upgrading equipment as a result of the risk assessment process. This has included safe (panic) rooms which cost £5,000 each, and some clients have been turned away because of the prospective cost of the work deemed necessary by the police. Potential clients are also turned down if they are in rent arrears or if they have a court order against them, as the local authority does not want Sanctuary clients who might later be evicted. Most referrals come from refuges and are not emergency presentations. A local refuge provides outreach support to clients of the scheme. Apart from its restrictive practices, one of the reasons why this particular rural scheme has not become more widely used may be because there are alternative and quicker ways of finding accommodation in the private rental sector in the area. The scheme is fairly ponderous and has several bureaucratic stages, but accessing housing benefit that fully covers the cost of renting in this area, and local authority assistance with the deposit costs, ensures that women and children can access a new privately rented home in this area. This scheme therefore demonstrates how both internal and external factors can influence how successful a scheme becomes, and its take-up with clients.

Key findings on Sanctuary Schemes

The findings of the English case study research were:

- Implement and promote Sanctuary Schemes through specialist advisors working on the ground with agencies to demonstrate how it can be done, and through presentations at practitioner seminars and conferences. These two promotional

mechanisms had a positive impact on increasing the number of schemes in operation in a relatively short time span;

- Gain cross-departmental assistance and understanding from agencies, such as the police, about what is trying to be achieved. Agencies such as fire brigades, police and social housing providers can work together on this issue, including co-funding schemes. They can justify this because Sanctuary Schemes lessen their workload on domestic and family violence issues;
- Get the message right: Sanctuary Schemes are about safe spaces for women and children, rather than installing 'panic rooms' which have proven to be unpopular and expensive to install;
- Issue guidance and practical advice at a national level on how such schemes can be set up. Do not leave too much of a gap between issuing the national guidance and promoting the schemes in local areas. This happened in England and in hindsight was regarded as detrimental to a faster roll-out of schemes. See the current good practice guidance, *Sanctuary Schemes for Households at Risk of Domestic Violence: Practice Guide for Agencies Developing and Delivering Sanctuary Schemes*, <<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/sancturyschemesguide>>;
- Schemes should not insist that an injunction is in place before allowing applicants to join a homelessness prevention scheme such as Sanctuary or SHLV. They should be open to all, especially as there are individual and structural reasons why some women cannot gain an injunction;
- Sanctuary Schemes are not an immediate response. It typically can take six to eight weeks to have the perpetrator removed, conduct the risk assessments and security upgrading, and get emotional support packages in place for women choosing to remain in the home;
- The schemes can quickly become popular once made available. Some schemes in England are taking on 300 new cases a month, providing a risk assessment, security upgrade and ongoing support for each one. However, this high workload also means that these women and their children have not had to find new homes.
- The potential to roll out similar schemes across Australia must be assessed in the context of the differing legislation within Australian jurisdictions, as discussed in detail in the AHURI reports.

Key advice from English providers and policy makers

- The importance of women making their own informed decisions about whether they stay or leave, and to where, so that they can begin to have some control over their lives as quickly as possible following the end of the abusive and controlling relationship;
- It is not, in the main, clients staying in refuges who join Sanctuary Schemes; most referrals are from the women themselves or from other services;
- These kinds of homelessness prevention schemes are not just about ‘target hardening’ (through installing security measures following a risk assessment), but also about providing a means to a coordinated community response and providing emotional support;
- Most women’s advocacy groups in England now support Sanctuary Schemes, despite some initial reluctance, because it became clear that they have become popular with the women themselves (Spinney 2012b).

Sheffield Sanctuary Scheme

Officers interviewed for this research reported that all forms of tenure are considered appropriate for target hardening, and that private landlords are normally receptive to having security upgrade work done on their property. Completing work on jointly tenanted properties can be difficult as the perpetrator also has rights to the accommodation and cannot be excluded without an injunction. The Sheffield Sanctuary Scheme does not require an injunction against the perpetrator to be in place. In such cases, clients are not turned away, but similar measures to those used to deter burglars are installed, such as shock alarms to windows and motion sensitive external lighting, rather than changing the locks. Less than 10 per cent of clients have safe (panic) rooms installed as most do not consider them necessary. There is no limit on budget, and individual clients have become clients more than once following another violent relationship.

The largest social housing provider in the area, Sheffield Homes, cooperates by paying for materials and goods for the security upgrading of their tenanted properties (but not the labour costs, which the Sanctuary Scheme funds). Police domestic violence officers are also very involved. Most referrals progress very smoothly, as staff and agencies are well aware of their role in the system. Future plans to improve the scheme include developing an interview package to help to iron out inconsistencies in police officers’ approaches to informing women of the scheme. Once the physical work on the property is completed, the case is closed by the Sanctuary Scheme. Referrals are made to other agencies to provide ongoing support.

Sheffield Sanctuary demonstrates that agencies can work together effectively to operate these kind of schemes. The research also revealed that measures designed to encourage inclusivity (such as not insisting that clients gain an injunction against the perpetrator) do not mean that no steps can be taken in order to lessen the risk of perpetrator incident in homes which remain jointly owned or rented (Spinney 2012b). Further potential transferable lessons from Sanctuary Schemes are to be found in Section 6.5.

5.3.2.3 *Safe at Home in Victoria*

Safe at Home in Victoria was established in its current format in May 2010 by the police. It is an integrated model of partnership through the police and welfare agencies working together, and its programs are now led in the main by the partnership NGOs with funding provided by the Victorian Department of Human Services. In comparison with SHLV, it is based on outreach services, which have been established for some time in Victoria. Safe at Home in Victoria is different from the previous domestic and family violence work model in the state in that the responsibility for safety of women is held not only by their individual NGOs, but within the whole integrated system. This has brought about policy changes which have assisted in helping women to remain in their home post-separation. The risk assessments used by the police are discussed in the following chapter.

Most agency personnel interviewed for this research considered that Safe at Home in Victoria has brought about positive change. Some outreach services now receive brokerage funding for safety upgrading work, and can accept referrals from individuals or from agencies. Once police have issued a Safety Notice they make a referral to an appropriate agency, if there is one operating in that area. The referral includes the date of the court hearing, as police orders are only valid for 72 hours. The agencies then normally endeavour to contact the women either prior to, or at, the court to explain their options about removing the perpetrator permanently.

Both interviewees and participants in the Victorian workshop considered that although there have been some successes in local partnership programs, a program which runs consistently across the state is needed. There is too much reliance on service integration happening because of good relationships and goodwill between workers in organisations, and this needs to be formalised at a statewide level to ensure that women receive a uniform approach and do not get a different service depending on where they live. The extent of partnership working even at state government level is also inconsistent, with the Department of Human Services having a partnership agreement with the Department of Education, regarding Safe at Home in Victoria, but not with the Department of Corrective Services. This was felt to be a negative aspect of the scheme. Participants reported that homelessness

prevention is a more dominant aspect of Safe at Home in Victoria than of the older Safe at Home (Tasmania) discussed below. Outreach services in Victoria run in tandem with homelessness prevention programs such as security upgrading, and tend to have a positive relationship with the court system. At the time of the research fieldwork, Safe at Home in Victoria was newly established and therefore a full assessment of its role in preventing homeless was not yet known. However, research participants appeared positive about the changes to date but were uniformly concerned that agencies cannot access and share data on which individuals are in receipt of its services. This was considered to be to the detriment of their ability to keep women safely remaining in their family home (Spinney 2012b).

5.3.2.4 *Safe at Home (Tasmania)*

Safe at Home (Tasmania) is a leading Australian example of an integrated statewide justice-led response to domestic and family violence across government departments. Its goals are to reduce the level of family violence in the medium to long term, to promote the safety of people affected and to change the offending behaviour of those responsible.

As detailed in the AHURI Final Report (Spinney 2012b), Safe at Home has three levels of governance: the Statewide Steering Committee, the Inter-departmental Committee (IDC) and regional coordinating committees. The first two comprise representatives from the Departments of Justice, Police and Emergency Management, Health and Human Services, Premier and Cabinet, and Education. At the regional committee level there are representatives primarily from the Safe at Home welfare and support provider agencies themselves. These normally discuss every new incident in their area and how it has been dealt with, including whether children were involved and the notification of child protection services.

Safe at Home was implemented in 2005 completely from scratch and the Statewide Steering Committee was most active during the development phase. It now maintains fiscal oversight and overall responsibility, with responsibility to consider review recommendations. The role of the IDC is to establish standardised policies and procedures and involves senior management from the participating government agencies. The Department of Justice is the lead agency, and the IDC chair comes from this department. Commentators interviewed for this research agreed that statewide integration has worked well at a service level. Latterly, however, budget cuts in the police and the Department of Health and Human Services have led to unilateral decision making, to the detriment of the integration of the system. One of the main drivers of Safe at Home was to remove the responsibility for the justice response from the victim, given that they are not always in a position to make these decisions. Safe at Home was considered by the interview participants to have lost some momentum since it

commenced seven years ago, and there was disappointment that it had not achieved everything initially hoped for. Government and non-government sectors have sometimes struggled to work well together in this very government-led system. Generally, however, the model was considered to have positively changed the discourse around domestic and family violence in Tasmania in terms of making clear its unacceptability and the willingness of the justice system to demonstrate this. There do, however, remain discrepancies in practice.

Some commentators did consider that Safe at Home had made a positive difference to women's ability to stay in their home because of:

- The immediacy of police family violence orders that can be issued on the spot by police officers to exclude perpetrators;
- Pro-arrest of perpetrator policies. This was viewed as a demonstration that the state is taking responsibility for both the crime and for removing perpetrators rather than seeing this as the victims' role, putting domestic and family violence more in the same category as other violent crimes;
- Public awareness of family violence has increased;
- There is improved legal recognition, and court support officers are in place for both perpetrators and victims;
- State funded family violence counselling for women and children is available.

Interviewees felt that some improvements to practice would enhance women's and children's ability to remain living in their home. These include more organisations being involved in IDC meetings, including mental health, drug and alcohol agencies. This was considered to be especially important when the IDC considers applications to alter barring conditions when the victim wishes to re-partner with the perpetrator.

Interviewees and workshop participants stated that the following changes need to be made if more women and children are to be prevented from homelessness in Tasmania:

- Increased move-on accommodation and programs for offenders, because some have a lack of ability to manage on their own which makes them more likely to try to persuade their ex-partner to let them return. All too often this leads to repeat victimisation of the women and children;
- More money is needed for security upgrade work, to improve safety and to improve confidence in being safe to remain. Women are not made to feel safe enough in their own home at present. As one workshop participant noted: 'It's not what you do to the house to make it safe, but what you do to make the women feel safe that matters';

- Increased training for police about the cycle of domestic and family violence and that women can be enabled to remain safely in their homes;
- Development of a mandatory perpetrator behaviour change program, as originally envisaged but never implemented;
- More integration of non-government agencies on the IDC, especially regarding decisions about whether domestic and family violence orders can be rescinded or altered to allow the perpetrator to return;
- More multi-agency case conferencing is needed. Although this occurs, it was not considered to be fully utilised;
- Legal Aid in Tasmania does not fund property issues which hinders women who are owner occupiers from receiving good legal advice concerning property settlement following relationship breakdown;
- Women on spousal visas are especially vulnerable and need more assistance;
- Children are sometimes removed from the home if they have experienced domestic and family violence there. As a result, their mothers lose the Centrelink payments for them and cannot afford to remain in their home. As they cannot afford to rent accommodation large enough for the children to live in, Child Protection Services do not allow the children to return to their mother following the cessation of the violence. Answers to this situation need to be found if women are not to lose their homes and be unable to have their children returned.

Safe at Home has added a level of consistency to policy approaches in Tasmania, and research participants universally thought the situation for women and children who have experienced domestic and family violence is better now than before its commencement. Although it has not stopped the need for some women and children to use refuge and crisis accommodation on multiple occasions, it has made clear that it is the perpetrator who is at fault rather than the victims. One of the main strengths is the integrated response by agencies. Participants considered that this was easier to achieve than with the more recent Safe at Home Victoria, because a new system was created in Tasmania from scratch rather than adjustments made to an existing system. South Australia is in the process of implementing a similar statewide system (Spinney 2012b). The potential impact of integrated schemes on reducing multiple exposure to homelessness is discussed below.

5.3.3 *Integrated interventions to reduce multiple exposure to homelessness attributed to domestic and family violence*

SHLV and Safe at Home type schemes are examples of interventions that can reduce women's and children's multiple exposure to homelessness attributed to domestic and family violence through agencies integrating their work in order to be more effective. The Domestic Abuse Partnership (DAP) visited for this research in Hull, England consists of nine organisations working together, in addition to the police and justice system.

5.3.3.1 *Hull Domestic Abuse Partnership*

Hull DAP professionals work together from the same office to provide a support service for women who have experienced domestic abuse. The team is made up of domestic abuse support workers, housing advisors, social workers, health practitioners and police domestic violence coordinators, and provides:

- Emotional support;
- Telephone advice;
- Home visits;
- Housing advice;
- Legal advice and support;
- Support through the criminal justice system;
- Safety planning;
- Home security;
- Financial advice relating to pensions and benefits;
- Referrals to specialist health, drug and alcohol, and children's support agencies;
- Support to access emergency accommodation;
- Support to attend MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Committees, further discussed in Chapter 6) and other meetings.

This truly integrated service also includes a male perpetrator behaviour change program. Practical support to enable women to remain in their home includes a free lifeline emergency alarm system, new mobile phone or SIM card, home safety repairs and provision of personal alarms, when appropriate. The multi-faceted and integrated approach within which the Hull Sanctuary scheme is embedded has demonstrated a high degree of commitment to tackle

domestic and family violence and subsequent homelessness in an area where it is widespread.

5.3.3.2 *Bsafe personal emergency alarms*

The Victorian Bsafe pilot project provided personal emergency response alarms (similar to those used by the elderly) to women assessed as being at high risk of violence from their ex-partner. The project was funded by the Commonwealth through Community Crime Prevention funding and ran from 2007-11 in the Hume region. This initiative by Victoria Police and Women's Health Goulburn North East aimed to reduce the incidence of domestic and family violence, reduce fear of assault and abuse, and ensure that high risk victims have the option of remaining safely in their homes. Alongside the alarm system there was an integrated multi-agency response providing emotional and practical support.

The Bsafe final report (Taylor and Mackay 2011) found that nearly 70 per cent of clients (who were all at high risk of repeat victimisation, and many of whom had had to move house to escape post-separation violence in the past) were able to remain in their own home once the alarms were installed, and that a further 20 per cent moved house but were able to stay in the local community. Some chose to tell their ex-partner about the alarm and reported that this was successful in deterring some from breaching their injunctions and returning to the property. For others, pressing the alarm at times of breach meant that the perpetrator could be quickly apprehended, and also that there was proof because the control room could record the sounds of the incident and so increase perpetrator accountability. The Bsafe project demonstrated that women at high risk of repeat victimisation can choose to remain safely in their own homes once the perpetrator has been removed, even in rural areas where police response times may be longer than in metropolitan areas, at much less cost than relocating them to another home.

Four key elements were identified as important to Bsafe's success:

- Women had to have a family violence order with exclusion clauses in place and did not want ongoing contact and a relationship with perpetrator;
- Ongoing contact and risk assessment with clients, as many had long-term needs;
- Employment of a Bsafe coordinator to oversee the referral process, ensure timely kit installation, monitor activations and police response, and communicate with key stakeholders;
- Training workers (police, service providers' workers) in the use of Bsafe and also women using it whenever a breach occurred, however minor.

Two types of alarm systems were used: a home based model that works with a landline, and a unit designed to work with mobile phones. The latter proved particularly useful for use out of the home, allowing women and children to resume a more normal life. Some women gave units to their children to use so that they could go out alone without fear that they would be defenceless if the perpetrator approached them.

Interviews with the project officer revealed that approximately a quarter of the female clients had occasion to use their alarm when a breach occurred. These clients reported several advantages to using the push button alarm rather than simply phoning 000:

- The alarm service operators know immediately who is contacting them and that it is a domestic or family violence situation, and how many children are living in the household;
- If the women are unable to speak, the operator can use the loudspeaker to talk to them and ask if there is something they wish to say. Some women had an agreed password with the alarm system operators so that they could request emergency assistance without risking the perpetrator being enraged by their request;
- The alarm system is easy for children to use;
- There have been cases where police have arrived and apprehended the perpetrator without him even knowing that the alarm system was installed or had been activated;
- Women could activate the alarm and then escape out of the back of the house, knowing that the incident was being recorded. In one case, the alarm service operator spoke to the perpetrator to inform him that he was being recorded in an attempt to moderate his extreme behaviour.

20 per cent of the clients were under 25, and 143 children were living in the homes of Bsafe clients, of whom three-quarters were aged eight or under. The project coordinator reported that children had the pressure taken off them from feeling they had to protect their mother, and the alarm helped those suffering from hyper-vigilance to relax.

Bsafe operated in the following way:

1. Potential clients, including women whose ex-partners were shortly to come out of prison for their domestic or family violence crime, were discussed at a multi-agency meeting;
2. Victoria Police made a referral to VitalCall;
3. VitalCall installed the alarm unit and trained the women how to use them;
4. The quarterly monitoring fee for each installed alarm was paid by Bsafe;

5. The coordinator continued to emotionally support the women.

Despite the pilot taking place in a rural area, only one client referral was unable to be processed because there was no mobile phone coverage available. The Bsafe project officer reported that it provided a valuable service to women with disabilities and to Indigenous Australian women, helping them to have more positive perceptions of the police. The project received the 2010 Australian Crime and Violence Prevention award.

The following advice was given by the project officer for agencies considering using alarm systems as a homelessness prevention strategy:

- In order to be effective in building confidence to remain in the home, a coordinated approach is needed, rather than just distributing the product with no ongoing support;
- A comprehensive risk assessment needs to be completed first, and police and domestic and family violence services have to be aware that there is a unit in place;
- The project highlighted the need for inter-agency partnership working. Many clients had ongoing support needs, and some had experienced ongoing abuse from their former partner for several years. They considered that without the project they would have no choice but to just disappear from the community and their supports, or risk being seriously injured or murdered (Spinney 2012b).

Bsafe clients interviewed for this research considered that the scheme had been fundamentally important in giving them the confidence to remain in their homes with the perpetrator removed.

5.4 Individual interventions

In this section, individual interventions including those which work with women to empower and develop their self-confidence or financial capability and those which work with children to ameliorate the damage caused to them by living in situations of domestic or family violence and homelessness are discussed.

5.4.1 Interventions designed to empower and develop women's confidence

The fieldwork revealed examples of good practice in providing non-residential support to assist women to successfully live independently. One of these is EASE (Emergency Accommodation and Support Enterprise) based in Bendigo, Victoria which provides a range of outreach domestic and family violence services. These include recovery and counselling programs, intensive case management and an Indigenous Women's Case Management Program in partnership with the Bendigo and District Aboriginal Co-operative. This work is done in close collaboration with the delivery of men's behaviour change programs.

Hobart Women's Shelter runs programs for residents of their safe houses and for women who remain in their own homes, plus those who are unable to access their supported accommodation because of over-subscription. These include KYSS (Keeping Yourself Safe and Sane), a weekly education and peer support group for women who are experiencing or have experienced domestic or family violence. They also run WISPP (Women's Integrated Support Pilot Project), an early intervention program providing one-on-one support and advocacy, and FLAVERS (Family Literacy, Adult Vocational Education Resources and Support), providing literacy and education programs, plus mother and child support groups.

Mt Druitt SHLV also provide group work and peer support opportunities as they recognise that building a network of support is an important element in enabling women to remain in their home. Newcastle SHLV provide up to 12 visits to clients' homes to counsel them on coming to terms with what has happened and to provide them with resilience and recognition skills to ensure that they do not re-enter an abusive relationship in the future (Spinney 2012b).

5.4.2 *Tools for Change financial capability project*

Women who have experienced domestic and family violence normally become poorer as a result, and this is true whether they remain in the family home, enter the homelessness system or access alternative accommodation. The Tools For Change women and financial capability project is trialling a new way to support women and children to regain financial confidence and capability and hence reduce the number who return to violent relationships. This project has received funding for three years from the William Buckland Foundation to work with women planning to exit or exiting violence in the Shepparton and Wangaratta areas. It provides volunteer financial mentors for women exiting violence with low financial confidence. Client interviewees stated that the scheme had given them confidence and support in an area of their lives which really needed building up. Mentors help with explaining bills, setting up direct debits, dealing with credit card debt, declaring bankruptcy and assisting with disentangling finances from those of the ex-partner.

5.4.3 *Early interventions for children*

As discussed in Chapter 3, our knowledge of the extent of damage done to children by experiencing domestic and family violence and homelessness has increased radically during the last 15 years. Many children stay in homelessness accommodation; in South Australia, for instance, children accounted for just under half of all residents in refuge and crisis accommodation in 2009-11 (Government of South Australia 2011). In Tasmania, interviewees reported that 30 per cent of boys who stay in refuges as children go on to become perpetrators, sometimes seeking out their victims in the refuges where they

themselves had stayed. Early intervention schemes to ameliorate some of this damage in the hope of preventing multiple experiences of domestic and family violence and of homelessness have been developed. Three examples are discussed below.

5.4.3.1 *Safe from the Start, Tasmania*

It is known that under extreme stress children use play, an activity normally done 'just for the fun of it', for very specific purposes. They often have an overwhelming need to play out crisis or trauma, and to use play 'to master their fear-provoking pasts and anticipated futures' (Webb 2007, Introduction). Play can therefore be used as a means of communicating with children, because through using toys the child can show how he or she feels. This can act as a prompt to a conversation about feelings that might not otherwise arise. Playing with a purpose in this way means that refuge workers and others involved with children who have experienced domestic and family violence can provide a 'first aid' role in allowing them to explore their experiences in a safe and supportive environment. The Salvation Army Tasmania Safe from the Start project aimed to identify and form a register of intervention activities and therapeutic play which children's workers and parents living in refuges could use for working with children aged up to six exposed to domestic and family violence. Materials and resources were sourced from around the English-speaking world and trialled with the children by their mothers and/or workers, who were then surveyed for their views on the effectiveness of the products. The final kit was put together from the books and toys that parents and workers felt to be the most effective, and 24 have been included in the kit: 16 books, four sticker and card sets, three tactile puppets and toys, and one action songs book. All were available individually on the open market before being assembled together; what was new was that they had been brought together for the specific purpose of assisting young children who had become homeless as a consequence of domestic and family violence to begin to come to terms with their situation. Projects such as this reveal that effective early intervention work need not be overly complicated or expensive. More than 500 kits have been distributed in Australia, and in October 2011 the project received the Australian Crime Prevention and Reduction Award (Spinney 2012a).

5.4.3.2 *Peek-a-Boo Club, Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne*

This was developed in 2005 with the aim of creating a therapeutic arena for infants and mothers to build a healthy attachment. Exposure to domestic and family violence can prevent a mother's ability to focus on her infant's attachment needs. The club engages women and children early to challenge domestic and family violence and creates links into supports in order to disrupt intergenerational cycles of violence.

5.4.3.3 *BuBs on Board (Building up Bonds), Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne*

This mother and infant group work early intervention in Tasmania was designed for children staying in refuge and crisis accommodation who have experienced domestic and family violence:

- To deliver an intervention which enhances the affectional bonds between infants and mothers where this has been compromised by their exposure to the trauma of severe family violence;
- To provide hands-on training, transferable skills and cultural change to refuge staff with regards to the mental health needs of infants affected by relational violence (Bunston 2008).

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has revealed the findings on intervention measures which separately and together can improve women's and children's chances of not experiencing domestic and family violence on multiple occasions, and of not having to re-use refuge and crisis accommodation. A diverse range of approaches are being developed to try to protect women and children. These will need to be promoted and expanded if they are to make a difference throughout Australia to the numbers reusing such accommodation. The next chapter discusses the findings regarding best practice risk assessment process standards.

6. Risk assessment processes and service standards

6.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the research question of which best practice risk assessment processes, service standards and arrangements are needed if Safe at Home/SHLV models are to be implemented more widely in Australia. The information was acquired through the fieldwork in the case study locales in Australia and England in 2011. Some of the relevant passages are also contained in the companion study AHURI Final Report (Spinney 2012b).

6.2 Risk management and safety planning

If women and children are to be encouraged and enabled to remain in their own homes through SHLV type schemes rather than become homeless, it is of paramount importance that the risk in staying, with the ex-partner knowing where they are, is measured against the risk in moving. Walking into homelessness is an enormous step, and comes with its own risks of having to live in inappropriate (and perhaps unsafe) accommodation without security of tenure. When families do move out, perpetrators are often aware of where they have moved to, especially if there are family law requirements for shared parenting arrangements. Not all forms of domestic and family violence involve physical or sexual assault, and emotional, financial and spiritual forms of control, for instance, are widespread. Even where physical or sexual assault has occurred, it can be that the breakdown of the relationship brings to an end these controlling behaviours. However, it can also bring about new extremes of behaviour as the perpetrator now has 'nothing to lose' in terms of fearing that his actions may cause the woman to leave the relationship. This can be when women and their children are in the greatest physical danger, whether or not she remains in her home or seeks refuge elsewhere. For these reasons, SHLV schemes have been developed that involve both assessing and managing the risk to family members, and planning and implementing security steps to minimise this risk. Such procedures allow women to make more informed decisions about their choice of whether to stay or leave (Spinney 2012b).

Interviews in all case study locations highlighted the importance of assessing the personal and individual risks to women and children in order to maximise their safety and to enable them to make informed and appropriate decisions. Several interviewees queried which is the most appropriate agency to conduct risk assessments. It can be difficult for police to take on a care role regarding domestic or family violence, especially deciding which security measures should be offered to women who wish to remain in their home. A Tasmanian

Police Domestic Violence Liaison Officer argued that these decisions are often about making women *feel* safer rather than *be* safer, and that police are not trained to deal with emotional rather than practical issues. A dual assessment by police and service agencies would enable the emotional wellbeing of the women and children who wish to remain at home to be given improved consideration. At the moment in Tasmania, security upgrading is only funded for those deemed to be at high risk (Spinney 2012b).

In some Sanctuary Schemes in England, risk assessments are carried out by local authority housing department officers. Some advocacy organisations commented that this can be inappropriate in a situation where if the woman chooses to leave her home, the local authority may have a statutory duty to house her and her children. In some Australian case study jurisdictions, assessments are conducted by police officers (Tasmania, Victoria and some parts of New South Wales) and in others by staff from domestic and family violence welfare organisations (parts of New South Wales). However, and by whom, risk assessments are conducted, several issues came to the fore during the data collection process. For some services, assessing the client's financial ability to remain in their home, as well as their risk of harm, was important. Agencies report that conversation regarding financial risk prompts the client to think of how short-term remaining might be, and whether they need to consider other options. At Bega SHLV, the answers to financial questions are not used to assess whether or not to fund security measures to the home, as they are not seen as appropriate to the risk of harm assessment process. However, one of the visited English Sanctuary Schemes stated that financial and affordability considerations are an integral part of whether clients were considered suitable for the service (Spinney 2012b).

6.2.1 Multi-agency risk assessment committees (MARACs)

MARACs (multi-agency risk assessment committees) were first developed in Wales and now operate throughout the UK. They are often chaired by a senior police officer and are made up of all the welfare agencies involved with a woman assessed as having a high risk of repeat domestic violence. This may be as many as 15 to 20 professionals who meet together to discuss the case and to allocate and share resources. Interviewees in England commented that although the meetings are very staff intensive they can work well as a risk assessment and safety planning mechanism, particularly in smaller areas where those attending are more likely to know each other. At the meetings, agencies talk together about the risk of serious harm to individual women and make safety plans for them. Their aim is to increase safety and wellbeing of these high risk clients and reduce the risk of them becoming repeat victims. Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs) are appointed to act as advocates on behalf of the women to provide advice about the best options for them and attend the MARAC meeting. In Hull in northern England, one of the areas visited

for this research, the domestic abuse MARAC meets monthly to consider the needs of new referrals and to review the needs of those whose situations have changed. Women are welcome to attend the meeting with their IDVA who is there to represent their views. The meetings can arrange for a police officer to check on their welfare, provide extra security, help with emergency social housing transfers, ensure that schools do not allow children to leave with anyone except their mother, and arrange for a health visitor to check on the family's wellbeing. An information leaflet about the scheme is included in Appendix 6. In parts of Victoria, a similar scheme named the Risk Assessment and Management Panel (RAMP) has recently been introduced (Spinney 2012b). The DASH (Domestic Abuse, Stalking, Harassment and Honour Based Violence) model (Hull CitySpace) is used as a risk assessment checklist, and referral criteria to MARAC are included in Appendix 7.

Risk assessments are not foolproof, and inaccurate decisions may be made as to the level of risk a woman is exposed to. Women assessed as at a low level of risk can still unfortunately be injured or even murdered by their ex-partner, but there is no evidence either from the UK or Australia that those who choose to remain in their home with security measures installed are at any greater risk than those who feel the need to leave.

6.2.2 Victoria Police Code of Practice for the Investigation of Family Violence (2010)

The 2010 Victoria Police Code of Practice for the Investigation of Family Violence (2nd edition) was widely praised for the specific procedural requirements it sets out. This edition reflects the changes in the Victorian integrated family violence system and specifically includes supporting affected family members to stay safely in their own homes where they wish to do so. Family Violence Safety Notices (FVSNs) can be issued by individual officers as a means of placing temporary conditions (including exclusion from the home) on the respondent where a police member responding to an incident believes on reasonable grounds that, until an application for a Family Violence Intervention Order (FVIO) can be decided before the court, a FVSN is necessary to ensure the safety of the affected family member. FVSNs are now issued in 80 per cent of cases which police officers attend. Police can share information relating to such incidents with specialist family service services. Since the Victoria Police Code was first issued in 2003, police referrals to family violence service providers have increased by 15 per cent, and reporting of family violence to police increased by 22 per cent, from 28,000 incidents in 2003-04 to 34,000 in 2008-09. The number of intervention orders applied for by police on behalf of affected family members increased by 212 per cent, from 2,627 in 2003-04 to 8,203 in 2008-09. Interviewees from the Domestic Violence Clearing House considered that Victoria Police was a very good model because it has senior staff accountability and is far more integrated than other police systems such as NSW (Spinney 2012b).

The code states that risk assessment must always precede risk management. The primary purposes of the Family Violence Risk Assessment and Management Report are to:

- Identify and record the most relevant evidence-based risk factors and indicators;
- Ensure that decisions by police or others regarding the safety and welfare of affected family members are well informed;
- Make a structured assessment on the likelihood of future family violence;
- Determine the most appropriate risk management strategy.

The report includes information on:

- History of violence;
- Evidence-based risk and vulnerability indicators;
- Affected family members' own assessment of their level of fear;
- Professional judgement of the level of risk based on the evidence available.

However, even within this improved system, interviewees still complained of disparities in individual police officers' expertise, especially concerning a good understanding of the cycle of domestic and family violence and how it can impact on women's lives. Comprehensive training of officers not only in jurisdictional procedures but in what domestic and family violence entails and how it impacts on victims has the potential to impact on whether women and children are prevented from experiencing homelessness and the homeless system a number of times. In spite of these reservations, it is recommended that a common risk assessment tool (based on the Victorian model) should be used throughout Australia. Common risk assessment should lead to common standards of risk management based on the models detailed in this report.

6.2.3 Client and staff safety

Several welfare organisations stressed the importance of involving the women closely in the risk assessment process, and of learning from them what is making them feel unsafe and what they feel needs to be done in order to make them safer in that property. SHLV Bega hold an initial meeting with the client, before going to the home to conduct the safety audit. They use the meeting to tease out issues and assess the risk to staff of conducting a home visit. This meeting can also include issues concerning who else might become involved in the situation, and how they are talking to their children about the issues. This is different from Tasmania where police conduct the safety audit and make decisions on security upgrading. There normally once-only visits take place for clients who are assessed as being at a relatively low level of risk.

In order to keep staff safe, welfare agencies generally have procedures in place whereby staff inform colleagues where they are going and leave an address. Some staff cars have an alarm installed that is linked to a security firm and the office. Agencies sometimes ask the police to accompany workers on home visits, but this is not normally the case. Several felt hindered from arranging for two staff to conduct the visit because of their workload. Some SHLV schemes in NSW, for example, have less than two full-time equivalent workers. In cases of extreme risk where the advice is to leave and go to a refuge but the client chooses to remain, Mt Druitt SHLV continues to work with them but workers do not go to their home. Although some perpetrators are generally violent or have mental health or drug and alcohol issues and so do pose a risk to staff, many are physically violent only to those they have control over, that is, their partners and sometimes their children (Spinney 2012b).

6.2.4 Security upgrading and target hardening

Workers from throughout the case study areas stressed that expenditure on relatively inexpensive items such as padlocks for manholes, meter cupboards and loft hatches, torches and rape alarms can go a long way to making women feel more secure, and that most women do not want their home to be turned into a 'fortress' with the provision of a panic, or safe, room. Bega SHLV scheme has been successful in enabling women to remain in their home, even in isolated rural properties. While some clients have a sense of urgency and wish for both the assessment process and the security upgrades to be completed quickly, for others the risk assessment process is part of a more measured weighing up of what their next steps should be. Each individual case is different because it depends not only on the aggressiveness of the perpetrator and whether he is in custody, but also on the determination of the women not to have to leave their home. Agencies from all the case study jurisdictions tended to make few referrals from their outreach support services to refuges because the client group for remaining in the home schemes is very different from refuge clients. This was not due to differences in socio-economic status but because, unlike some refuge clients, their clients realised that the relationship had come to a permanent end and that a new way of living was called for (Spinney 2012b).

6.2.5 Take-up of safety planning and security upgrading

The court advocacy worker at Frankston in Victoria whose job is 'to enhance safety and to enhance access to the justice system' takes her clients through the 'scariest scenario' with the perpetrator that they can imagine, and then gets them to plan what they would do in that instance. Some clients may temporarily leave the family home while the locks are changed and other security upgrades carried out, but only a few choose not to remain living there. Most have not been to a refuge before approaching the court and do not wish to leave their

home, work and support networks. Although it is rare for a woman not to take up that option at Frankston court, the same cannot be said for all of Victoria which has an integrated, but not statewide, domestic and family violence system. The security upgrades arranged through the Frankston court are paid for by South East Water and managed by the Salvation Army.

In Western Australia as in Victoria, a common Family and Domestic Violence Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework is used (Department for Child Protection 2011). The use of the same risk assessment process by all concerned agencies is recommended. Both models are based on the UK DASH tool discussed above. As these are already being used in at least two states, it is recommended that this Victorian model is rolled out across Australia in order to ensure a common understanding and effective screening by using a common tool.

Ashiana, an Asian women's domestic violence advocacy group in Sheffield in the UK, conduct safety planning with clients so that she 'knows what to do, and who to inform'. This can include schools and other agencies. They label the risk assessment process as 'keeping safe' rather than 'reducing risk' because their clients find this more confidence building. Clients who remain in their home, and those who wish for security upgrades and support in their new home, receive the same level of service. Interviewees stressed that memorandums of understanding between organisations are important to the use of common tools for risk assessments and for the risk management tasks that flow from this.

6.2.6 Information sharing and confidentiality issues

The ways in which agencies share information and get around confidentiality issues in the case study jurisdictions in order to work together varied depending on which state homelessness prevention system they are operating within and its degree of integration at a local or statewide level. NSW workshop attendees confirmed that a policy on privacy and information sharing from NGOs and agencies often restricts coordination, although some agencies do have sharing information consent forms for clients. They felt that their system was not as good as the Victorian Safe at Home model in this respect. They reported widespread misunderstanding on privacy legislation and what can and cannot be shared. NSW reforms were implemented by the Children Legislation Amendment (Wood Inquiry Recommendations) Act 2009. This established a scheme for exchange of information between government agencies and NGOs involved in the safety, welfare or wellbeing of children and young people. A staged approach was taken to implementation to ensure that sufficient training and support was in place before it took effect. Conversely, research

participants considered that there is an important gap in the Safe at Home in Victoria system because there is no data base that can be shared by organisations (Spinney 2012b).

6.3 Mt Druitt (Blacktown) SHLV

Mt Druitt (Blacktown) SHLV started in 2007 and comprises the local police area command areas of Mt Druitt and Blacktown in Sydney. For the first two years it was federally funded through the Attorney General, for Mt Druitt only. The scheme still receives the same amount of funding as then but now covers Blacktown as well. A poster from the scheme is shown in Appendix 8. There are 1.6 full-time equivalent workers and the scheme is contracted to work with 30 client families a year. In 2010 it worked with 86 clients because it was so over-subscribed, and had to close to new referrals for five months. Most referrals come from the police, and the scheme's work consists mostly of assessment of risk and liability, creation of a safety plan, ongoing case work, court support and advocacy and referral to other specialist agencies. The workers report that once women know they have the option of staying, they are mostly keen to do so.

The collaborative referral protocol process at Mt Druitt works in the following way:

1. Referral (normally from police);
2. Phone contact with prospective client by SHLV agency;
3. Sometimes women are not ready for, and do not want, a SHLV service at that time, so they are sent information so that in the future when they do feel ready they know how to make contact;
4. New clients come in and visit the service for an initial assessment. This can take a couple of sessions;
5. Staff visit clients at home in order to conduct a risk assessment and safety planning. Mt Druitt gathered knowledge on safety planning by researching what was happening in the UK and Victoria, and by gaining experience on the ground of what works effectively, what is needed and what is not so useful in their local area;

The client may not have an apprehended violence order (AVO) at this stage. The service helps women with this and with family law regarding child custody etc. It is not a requirement in NSW that a client needs to have an AVO to receive SHLV services. The reason for this is that granting of AVO by the courts is considered to be very patchy and would not therefore be a fair requirement. It is preferred, however. AVOs are granted by the court but the police can issue interim orders which can be later ratified by the court. Interviewees considered the AVO process to be an important part of the integration between SHLV, the police and the courts. This is because SHLV staff gain detailed information on the history of the violence

during the assessment process and are therefore able to communicate this back to the police who inform the courts, so making the case stronger;

Some clients choose to move out of their home. The Mt Druitt service continues to work with these women and regards 'planned moves' as a success, because they do not tend to lead to the homelessness that is created by leaving at a time of crisis. Most clients do not enter refuge or other forms of crisis accommodation either before or after becoming SHLV clients (Spinney 2012b).

Most Mt Druitt SHLV client referrals come from the police. The SHLV workers carry out assessments and safety audits of homes, put the safety plan in place, install security features and, in many cases, carry out ongoing case management in order to maximise client's chances of success of remaining in their home. Organisations conducting assessment of security upgrade needs do not budget for a fixed amount for each property, as needs vary considerably. Agencies sometimes find that they cannot contact a referral in order to conduct a risk assessment because she has changed her phone number or given the police a false mobile number. In these instances they know that she is not yet ready to consider her relationship over, and therefore not yet ready to become a client (Spinney 2012b).

6.4 Safe at Home Tasmania risk assessments

Risk assessments and security upgrading are also carried out as part of Safe at Home Tasmania, in order for women and children to have the choice to stay in their home if they wish. The budget is controlled by the police and eligibility criteria are quite stringent. Police attending domestic and family violence incidents immediately assist to relocate about 13 per cent of victims, most of whom are classified as at high risk of experiencing another incident.

Interviewees recommended that it should not be the police alone who conduct the risk assessments and who hold the budget for practical assistance such as security upgrading and short-term temporary accommodation. This was because the police method of assessment does not take into consideration how women feel about remaining, or how security measures can increase their confidence to do so. Not enough security upgrading work is done on homes in Tasmania, and none at all on the homes of women assessed as being at less than high risk. Consequently, those not in public housing (Housing Tasmania fund some physical security upgrades for tenants) find it difficult to have such work carried out. The police cannot, and do not, take into consideration that *feeling* safe to remain (through security lighting etc.) can be equally as important as *being* safe to remain in terms of giving women the confidence to stay in the property. This is an important insight into what makes SHLV and similar measures such as Bsafe (Chapter 6) successful in preventing

homelessness compared to Safe at Home. In Tasmania both the State Housing Authority and the police are very restrictive in what they will provide for added security, compared to Safe at Home Victoria and SHLV schemes in NSW. The discrepancies in what preventative measures welfare agencies and public housing landlords will provide in order to prevent the homelessness of women and children will have to be addressed (perhaps through national guidance) if effective measures are to be rolled out across Australia. Advice from interviewees regarding risk assessments in Tasmania were:

- Risk assessments should be conducted by police in conjunction with another agency. Such joint assessments would help in the development of effective safety planning to enable women to remain in their homes;
- The Risk Assessment Safety Tool (RAST) used is constantly being amended and quite prescriptive. Most of those assessed are scored at low to medium risk, making them ineligible for most security upgrading work. This is not effective in encouraging women to feel able to remain in their homes (Spinney 2012b).

6.5 Potential transferable lessons from English Sanctuary Schemes regarding risk assessments and management and other relevant matters

As in this study, Jones et al. (2010) interviewed national stakeholders, local case studies (interviews with service providers, support providers, local stakeholders and service users). Their findings showed that overall Sanctuary Schemes were thought to have been successful in meeting their main aim of providing a safe alternative for households and preventing the disruption associated with homelessness. Most service users said they felt much safer following the installation of Sanctuary measures although there was evidence that a few households had moved from their Sanctuary because they did not feel safe.

They found that, although there are issues of variation in the way schemes operate after the installation such as follow up or linking households to other support services: 'Nevertheless, respondents in all areas reported similar outcomes and, for the most part, service users reported positive experiences' (Jones et al. 2010, p. 8).

These findings concur with the positive feedback obtained from English Sanctuary Scheme policy makers and practitioners. Some potential transferable lessons for Australia are examined below. The information has been gained from a review of the evaluation literature and from interviews with academics, policy makers and practitioners in England:

1. Sanctuary Schemes can produce a reduction in homelessness attributed to domestic and family violence;

2. Sanctuary Schemes have the potential to reduce repeat victimisation of the crime of domestic and family violence both by helping women to consider that they have options other than to return to a relationship with their violent ex-partner, and by deterring him from returning to harm her;
3. There is a cost saving to the criminal justice system and other agencies which can effectively be funnelled into funding Sanctuary Schemes. Police forces, fire brigades, the National Health System and social housing providers have all been able to justify contributing to such funding because of the cost savings to their core business;
4. Children are less disrupted and the damage done to them by experiencing domestic and family violence is not worsened by having to lose their home. This can have long-term consequences for their wellbeing;
5. In some circumstances, women and children also need to be made to feel safe outside their homes. Emergency alarm systems linked to mobile phones can greatly assist with this;
6. Women generally benefit from contact with other survivors of domestic or family violence. Peer support and personal development groups can play an effective role in replacing the support that was traditionally found in Refuge settings;
7. Multi-agency working (such as local councils and the police) and cooperation results in a better service;
8. National good practice guidance has had a positive impact in England and it is likely that this would occur also in Australia;
9. Although schemes can differ significantly from each other in their mode of operation, they generally provide a good option for women. They do not have to all be identical, but the more they are integrated into domestic and family violence systems, the more they will have to offer;
10. Homelessness prevention schemes that enable women to remain in their home can be regarded as emblematic that society deems domestic and family violence to be wrong. This is important because it shifts the power balance away from the perpetrator, and demonstrates to the children of the family what constitutes unacceptable behaviour. This can impact on their later ability to sustain relationships themselves;
11. Women are empowered to stay away from the violent relationship and are not condemned to return to the perpetrator in order to maintain their children's home;

12. Some refuges can be frightening places to stay, as they can be occupied by women with specialist support needs who have major problems, including but not restricted to domestic and family violence. Sanctuary Schemes can remove the need for some women to stay in refuges. This is one reason why they have become so popular;
13. Injunctions are not necessary in order for Sanctuary Schemes to work, and in many schemes are not a requirement for service. This is important for states such as Queensland where the level of granting such orders is much lower than the Australian national average. In such areas and where there is not yet a system of working in close liaison with the police by domestic and family violence agencies, Sanctuary/SHLV schemes can still effectively operate and open up positive choices for women leaving violent relationships;
14. The more restrictive practices in place (for example, insisting on injunctions, requiring proof that the women can afford to remain in the property for a reasonable time), the less likely women are to assess that remaining in the home is a viable option or to feel that society supports their wish to do so (Spinney 2012b).

6.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, tools used to assess risk and management have been examined. Common risk assessment tools used by multiple organisations have the potential to reduce risk and promote standards of good practice. It is recommended that a common model such as that used in Victoria is adopted throughout Australia in order to assist effective SHLV type schemes to be established across the country.

7. Implications for Australian policy

This report has detailed the findings of research into early intervention strategies to prevent multiple experiences of homelessness and of the use of homelessness accommodation for women and children who have experienced domestic and family violence. The comparative methodology employed for this research involved two case studies: England and Australia. The latter included three embedded units of analysis, New South Wales, Tasmania and Victoria, which the literature revealed have made substantial steps towards intervention approaches enabling women and children to avoid multiple incidents of violence and multiple exposure to homelessness.

This report has been produced using information obtained from the analysis of the literature review, the case studies and the workshops, and has been reported by analytical theme in order to create a useful document for policy makers. It provides good practice examples and includes issues raised by the research participants concerning applicability and relevance in the Australian context, together with guidance on how they could be implemented. When relevant, information from the companion study has been replicated in this report.

In terms of considering both repeat incidents of domestic and family violence and of homelessness attributed to the violence, interviewees stressed that it is not the woman's behaviour which is the problem, but the perpetrator's. It is therefore important that women should not be blamed or criticised for their actions. It is also important that interventions enabling them to successfully leave the relationship do not result in the abuser being left unaccountable for his actions and free to form a new relationship with his values and beliefs about women unchallenged and unchanged.

The innovations, interventions and projects investigated were:

- Staying Home Leaving Violence (NSW);
- Safe at Home in Victoria;
- Bsafe (Victoria);
- Sanctuary Schemes (England);
- Safe at Home (Tasmania);
- Strength to Change (England);
- Hull Domestic Abuse Partnership (England);
- Tools for Change (Victoria);

- Safe from the Start (Tasmania);
- BuBs on Board (Victoria);
- Peek-a-Boo Club (Victoria).

Interviewees and workshop participants in both England and Australia were exceedingly generous in their support of the two companion research projects, and very open in sharing the advantages and disadvantages, opportunities and challenges of schemes which they have particular knowledge of. They did this because they are aware that early intervention strategies to prevent homelessness for women and children are an important issue, and they understand that the things that have both worked well and not so well for them can provide valuable and useful learning for others.

One of the most significant overall findings of the two companion studies is that integrated schemes, such as SHLV and Safe at Home, can play an important role in preventing homelessness for women and children who have experienced domestic and family violence, and that this is true for women living in very different situations in very different areas of Australia, including those not previously thought to be suitable. Women living in metropolitan areas, rural isolated areas, in owner occupied, privately rented, public, jointly owned and jointly tenanted housing, with injunctions and police orders or without, have all been assisted to remain living safely in their homes, with no evidence that they are more at risk than if they had left. Separating from a perpetrator of domestic and family violence unfortunately carries an element of risk, whether women choose to remain or to leave their home (Spinney 2012b).

The findings of this research and of the companion study are that Australia should move to the provision of SHLV type schemes that are as extensive as the current provision of refuge and crisis accommodation, and that a common risk assessment tool (based on the Victorian model) should be used throughout Australia. Common risk assessment should lead to common standards of risk management based on the models detailed in this report.

Some specific findings have implications for early intervention strategies to reduce the need for women and children to make repeated use of refuge and other crisis accommodation and for improvements to practice. They are consolidated below as items for consideration:

1. Creation of mirroring legislation relating to all aspects of homelessness prevention attributed to domestic and family violence throughout Australia, as detailed in the AHURI report. States and territories need to be much more uniform in their approach if women are to consistently receive good practice;

2. Provision of police powers throughout Australia to offer immediate protection to women by the removal of the perpetrator. The 12 month notice used in Tasmania (and detailed in the AHURI reports) is recommended;
3. Development of common methods of risk assessment and risk management, and national sharing of information between accredited agencies on domestic and family violence victims and perpetrators;
4. Development of a national training and instructions package for magistrates in order to provide a standardised response and consistency of service throughout Australia;
5. Offending perpetrators to be charged on every crime, not just the breach of injunction or order conditions, as national practice;
6. The use of 'monitoring bracelets' for high risk offenders to be considered, so that their location can be tracked;
7. The provision of specialist domestic and family courts to be legislated for throughout Australia. These would include court support workers for victims and perpetrators, as detailed in the AHURI reports;
8. Consistent police training on domestic and family violence;
9. Dual risk assessments to be conducted by police and support agencies;
10. Re-provision of legal aid for property matters in family law, as detailed in the AHURI reports;
11. Free telephone legal support services throughout Australia for women considering separating from the perpetrator;
12. Court fines to be cancelled, as detailed in the AHURI reports, if women choose to remain in their home following domestic and family violence, not just if they become homeless;
13. Provision of SHLV type schemes, using non-restrictive eligibility practices (such as not insisting on an injunction or police order and not using long-term affordability as eligibility criteria) throughout Australia. The schemes would include the existing services of practical and emotional support and also the provision of emergency alarm systems, peer support provision and personal development and financial confidence training, with social marketing as an integral part of each scheme. The Commonwealth government should take the lead in encouraging the normalisation of these schemes by providing advisors to 'teach' agencies how it can be done and by issuing national guidance on good practice;

14. Adequate funding for homelessness prevention schemes, so that women are not turned away or kept on a waiting list;
15. Provision of culturally appropriate schemes for Indigenous women. The implications of mainstream law, legal and judicial systems and the practices of mainstream welfare agencies on Indigenous Australians need to be specifically considered in each jurisdiction;
16. Financial mortgage assistance for owner occupiers, similar to Commonwealth Rent Assistance, to be available throughout Australia for low income earners who choose to remain in their home with the perpetrator removed following a violent relationship;
17. Publication of information for women on how they can afford to leave their violent relationship;
18. The Commonwealth government to take the lead in negotiating with mortgage lenders their expectations on keeping owner occupying women leaving a violent relationship in their home through mortgage payment breaks, interest reductions, extending length of mortgage etc.

The popularity of England's Sanctuary Schemes, even in a legislative situation where many of the women there would be entitled (and indeed have a statutory right) to alternative assistance in the form of the provision of another home, indicates that they play a vital role in meeting the hitherto unmet need and choice of many. Although women escaping domestic and family violence relationships are often prioritised for both temporary and permanent social housing in Australia, they do not have any rights to alternative accommodation and are frequently turned away and have to make their own arrangements or return to the perpetrator as a result (Spinney 2012b). It can be considered therefore that the widespread provision of homelessness prevention and early intervention schemes in Australia is even more important than in England where the welfare safety net ensures that women and children who have experienced domestic and family violence are afforded a higher degree of statutory protection.

The findings reveal that long-term support for women and children who have experienced domestic and family violence is very important in keeping them from becoming homeless on more than occasion. Without such support, women may not even recognise that they are in an abusive relationship and therefore will not have the skills to stop the situation happening again with a new partner. It can take a long time for women to make these changes and to become less reliant on others to make them feel good about themselves and their ability to manage as independent adults. At present, service providers often do not have sufficient resources to provide longer-term support, and this will need to be addressed if women's and

children's need to use refuge and crisis accommodation is to be reduced. The research revealed that those most likely to re-use such accommodation are also likely to have substance abuse and/or mental health problems as well as experiencing domestic and family violence. These needs too must be addressed effectively, alongside the domestic and family violence issues, if women are to have their vulnerability reduced and resilience heightened.

7.1 Final conclusion

There are a great variety of social, demographic, economic and emotional reasons, both structural and personal, for women's decisions to stay with or return to the perpetrator, as discussed in this report. All have implications for the design of effective early intervention strategies to reduce the need for women and children to make repeated use of refuge and crisis accommodation. Importantly, refuge and crisis accommodation services are not designed to solve permanent housing needs, and their effectiveness to deal successfully with clients during a single intervention depends very much on the clients' ability to move on to other housing options such as private rental, public housing or owner occupation after they have received temporary accommodation and services while in crisis. As a consequence, many clients, including women and children who have experienced domestic or family violence, return to a homeless situation after receiving temporary assistance. This is likely to be a major reason why women may return to emergency accommodation at a later date.

Appendix 1: Research participants

The following people participated in this research project. The author would like to wholeheartedly thank those who are listed and also those who preferred to remain anonymous and/or unacknowledged.

UNITED KINGDOM

Interviewees

There were 15 interviewees, all of whom agreed to be acknowledged:

Andrea Dennis, Breckland District Council
 Darryl Smith, Breckland District Council
 John Bentham, Homelessness Strategy, CLG
 Davina James Hanman, Director, AVA Project
 Karen Ann Hockney, Sheffield Sanctuary Scheme
 Sanha Bokhury, Volunteer coordinator, Ashiana Network
 Maureen Storey, Director, Sheffield Domestic Abuse Forum
 Jane McCracken, Domestic Abuse Floating Support Service Manager
 Louise Robinson, Hull Primary Care Trust, NHS
 Professor Hal Pawson, Heriot-Watt University
 Professor Suzanne Fitzpatrick, Heriot-Watt University
 Cathy Sharp, Heriot-Watt University
 Hull Sanctuary Scheme personnel
 Clare and Team, Sheffield Sanctuary Scheme
 Mark Coulter, Project Officer, Strength to Change

NEW SOUTH WALES

Interviewees

There were 14 interviewees, twelve of whom agreed to be acknowledged:

Catharine White, The Wash House, Mt Druitt (and team)
 Caroline Long, Bega Women's Refuge
 Cat Gander, NSW Women's Refuge Movement
 Taryn Champion, NSW Women's Refuge Movement
 Ludo McFerran, Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearing House
 Gaby Marcus, Director Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearing House
 Racquel Smith, Acting Principal Policy Analyst, Housing NSW, Department of Family and Community Services
 Judith Atkinson, Housing Assistance Unit, Service Development Strategy Branch, Housing NSW, Department of Family and Community Services

Catherine Dobbins, Principal Policy Analyst, Housing NSW, Department of Family and Community Services

Janet Schoer, Director, Staying Home Leaving Violence, Department of Family and Community Services

Maria Kissouri, Senior Project Officer, Staying Home Leaving Violence, Department of Family and Community Services

Tracie Richards, Newcastle SHLV

Research Workshop

Twelve people attended the Research Workshop, all of whom agreed to be acknowledged:

Maria Kissouri, SHLV, Family and community Services, NSW

Mary Sullivan, Street Care Hunter

Adrienne Lucey, Coordinator, Homelessness Health, Randwick, South Eastern Sydney Local Health District

Karla Fritis, DV worker, Bondi Beach Cottage

Madelaine Berry, Manager, Bondi Beach Cottage

Tracy Howe, Manager, Domestic Violence Support, Western Sydney Service

Gillian Cohen, Domestic Violence Support, Western Sydney Service

Louis Schetzer, Homeless Persons Legal Service, NSW

Dougie Wells, ICIS Project Officer, Homelessness NSW

Susan Barnes, People with Disability Australia

Baria Bodzak, Homelessness Unit, Housing NSW

Anoop Johar, South Eastern Sydney Local Health District

TASMANIA

Interviewees

There were nine interviewees, seven of whom agreed to be acknowledged:

Jenny Bertram, CEO Magnolia Place, Launceston Women's Shelter

Sgt Darren Hill, VSRT Sergeant, Tasmania Police North

Sabine Wagner, CEO, Hobart Women's Shelter

Jane Fleming, Manager, Family Violence Counselling and Support Service North, North West, and the Family Violence Counselling and Support Service Team

Ruth Bamford, Specialised Family Violence Coordinator, Centacare Tasmania Family Service

Robin Yaxley, Senior Consultant, Strategic Policy and Projects Branch, Department of Justice

Kathleen Kerr, Family Violence Counselling and Support Service, Team Leader, Adults and Children Team

Research Workshop

Seven people attended the Research Workshop, all of whom agreed to be acknowledged:

Bev Marchant, Centacare, CTSS
 Debbie Dunn, Hobart Women's Shelter
 Lynette Sikkema, Jireh House
 Nancy Roldan, Hobart Women's Shelter
 Mary Paterson, Women's Legal Service Victoria
 Sabine Wagner, Hobart Women's Shelter
 Ruth Bamford, Centacare, CTSS

VICTORIA

Interviewees

There were 13 interviewees, all of whom agreed to be acknowledged:

Joanna Fletcher, Women's Legal Service Victoria and Family Law Legal Service
 James Farrell, Homeless Persons' Legal Clinic, PILCH
 Maryclare Machen, EDVOS
 Jill Faulkner, EDVOS
 Sandy King, Tools for Change Project Officer, Women's Health Goulburn North East
 Robyn Trainor, Loddon Campaspe Regional Integration Coordinator, Family Violence Court
 Welfare Officer, Justice, Vic
 Rose Soleman, CEO, WDVCS
 Sue Thomas, Acting Detective Inspector and Officer in Charge of Violence Against Women
 and Children Strategy Group (VAWC)
 Fiona Stubbs, Senior Policy Officer, VAWC
 Sergeant Charlie McIntyre, VAWC
 Sergeant Peter Benjamin, VAWC
 Detective Senior Sergeant Campbell Davis, VAWC
 Rachel McKay, Bsafe Project Officer, Women's Health Goulburn North East

Research Workshop

Seven people attended the Research Workshop, all of whom agreed to be acknowledged:

Alison McDonald, Policy Officer, DV Vic
 Jacky Tucker, Women's Health West
 Marita Nyhuis, DH Project Leader, Family Violence Accommodation and Support Unit, Client
 Services and Programs, Housing and Community Building Division, Department of
 Human Services
 Yvonne James, DHS, Housing and Community Building
 Danny Blay, Executive Officer, No to Violence, Men's Referral Service

Wendy Austin, Brenda House and Maroondah Halfway House
Lahitha Nair, Australian Institute of Family Studies

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Research Workshop

Eight people attended the Research Workshop, all of whom agreed to be acknowledged:

Georgia Williams, Acting manager Offender Development, Adelaide Women's Prison,
Department for Correctional Services

Maria Hagias (Executive Director) and Ginny Cisneros, Central Domestic Violence Service

Ryan Harber, Principal Policy Officer Offender Development Directorate, Department for
Correctional Services

Dr Carole Zuffery, Program Director, School of Psychology, Social Work and Social Policy,
University of South Australia

Professor Donna Chung, University of WA

Fiona Mort, Manager, Policy Office for Women SA

Ingrid Sciclina, DFC Housing SA Homelessness Strategy

Danielle Bament, Senior Project Officer, Homelessness Strategy Division, Housing SA,
Department for Families and Communities, Housing SA Homelessness Strategy

QUEENSLAND

Research Workshop

Ten people attended the Research Workshop, eight of whom agreed to be acknowledged:

Diane Mangan, CEO, DV Connect

Yasmine Hassan, Practice Manager, DV Connect

Chantal Eastweu, Gold Coast Domestic Violence Integrated Response

Barb Crossing, Women's House

Leanne Williams, Helping Out Families Program Coordinator, Senior Practitioner Domestic
and Family Violence Team, Youth and Family Services (Logan City)

Annette Fuller, Acting Principal Policy Officer, Domestic Violence Policy, Department of
Communities

Temi Oladapo, Manager Major Projects and Review, Strategic Policy and Performance,
Department of Communities

Cecilia Barassi-Rubio, Director, Immigrant Women's Support Service

Appendix 2: Social marketing poster,
Bega SHLV

**Staying Home
Leaving
violence**

**Whoever you are,
you have the right
to live safely in
your own home!**

Phone 6492 6239

Funded by NSW Department of Human Services, Community Services
Supported by the Bega Valley Domestic Violence Committee & BVSC

Appendix 3: Social marketing poster 1,
Strength to Change



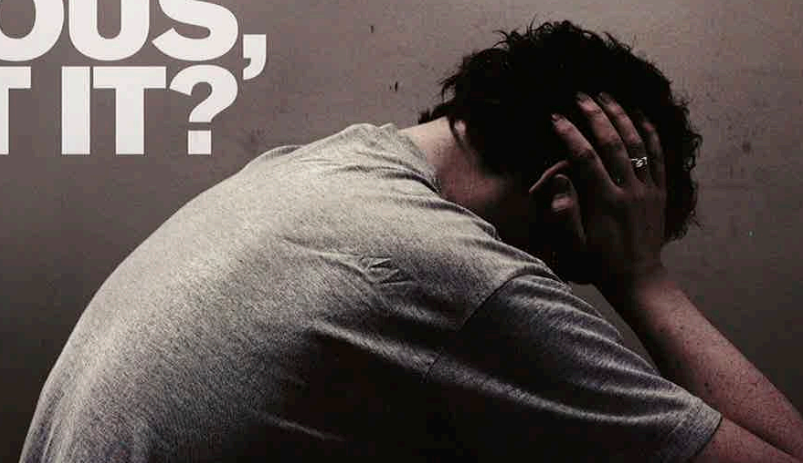
**DO YOU SCARE
YOURSELF
SOMETIMES?**

FIND THE STRENGTH TO STOP DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

CALL 01482 613 403 **STRENGTH TO**
or visit strengthtochange.org **CHANGE**

CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE FOR MEN IN HULL

Appendix 4: Social marketing poster 2,
Strength to Change



**DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE
LEADS
TO DESPAIR.**

**DESPAIR LEADS
TO DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE.**

**VICIOUS,
ISN'T IT?**

FIND THE STRENGTH TO STOP DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

CALL 01482 613 403
or visit strengthtochange.org

**STRENGTH TO
CHANGE**

CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE FOR MEN IN HULL

Appendix 5: Social marketing poster 3,
Strength to Change



**ARE YOU
AFRAID
YOUR
FAMILY IS
SCARED
OF YOU?**

**IMAGINE
HOW
THEY
FEEL.**

FIND THE STRENGTH TO STOP DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

CALL 01482 613 403 **STRENGTH TO**
or visit strengthtochange.org **CHANGE**

C O N F I D E N T I A L A D V I C E F O R M E N I N H U L L

Appendix 6: Information leaflet, Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), Hull DAP

Does the victim/survivor need to know they are being discussed at MARAC?

If you are the referring agency, it is good practice to discuss the referral with the victim/survivor if it is safe to do so. You will need to use your professional judgement to decide whether it is safe. The MARAC follows a consent-based approach and each victim/survivor is offered the opportunity to attend the initial part of the meeting. If consent is refused this may be overruled (Section 115 of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 and Children Act 1989).

If you are not the referring agency, you should check with the referring agency before contacting your client to gather relevant information to ensure it is safe to do so.


What about the Common Assessment Framework, Children in Need, Child Protection and the Safeguarding of Adults?

The MARAC process does not replace the procedures for dealing with concerns about a child or a vulnerable adult. Those protocols must always be followed but in high-risk cases of domestic abuse you may need to follow both and make more than one referral.

What happens after a MARAC?

After a MARAC, the IDVA/support worker, or a practitioner in regular contact with the victim/survivor, will contact them to let them know about the risk management action plan developed and the support each agency is offering.

The case is reviewed at the next MARAC to ensure all the allocated actions have been completed and that there have not been any significant changes that have increased the risks.



How to contact
The Hull Domestic Abuse Partnership (Hull DAP)

Office Hours
Monday–Thursday 9.00am–4.30pm
Friday 9.00am–4.00pm

Tel: 01482 318759

Out-of-hours messages can be left on an answer phone

Out-of-hours
For emergency accommodation contact the Emergency Duty Team

Tel: 01482 788080

Hull Domestic Abuse Partnership (Hull DAP)
Tel: 01482 318759
Fax: 01482 318763
Email: hulldap@hullcc.gov.uk


This document can be made available in other formats (large print, audio, computer disk, British Sign Language and Braille as appropriate) and different community languages.
Please phone (01482) 300300.
Minicom users please phone (01482) 613839.

Domestic Violence & Abuse

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference

MARAC

A Practitioner's Guide to the MARAC Process




HullDAP
working in partnership to tackle domestic violence

Domestic violence & abuse is a crime... there are NO EXCUSES

MARAC

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference

What is a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)?



The main aim of the MARAC is to reduce the risk of serious harm or homicide for a victim/survivor and to increase the safety, health and wellbeing of victims/survivors and any children. In a MARAC local agencies will meet to discuss cases in their area, where victims/survivors of domestic abuse are considered to be at high risk of serious harm.

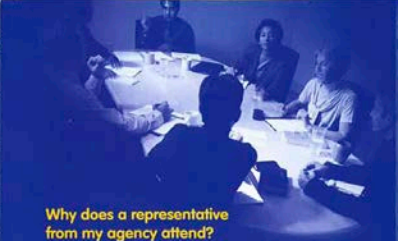
Information about the risks faced by those victims/survivors, the actions needed to ensure safety and the resources available locally are shared and used to create a risk management plan involving all agencies.

What is the key element of MARAC?

The key element of MARAC is the CAADA (Coordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse) risk identification tool which will have been carried out by a practitioner from any agency supporting people affected by domestic violence and abuse. The CAADA risk identification model is used in Hull which is a consistent and nationally evaluated risk identification tool developed from analysis of previous domestic homicides.

The CAADA risk identification has three main objectives:

- To gather detailed and relevant information from victims/survivors, which can be shared with other agencies if the level of risk is high or becomes high
- To identify those that need more intensive support and multi agency action planning
- To make agencies aware of the risk posed by the most dangerous offenders



Why does a representative from my agency attend?

Matching the information you have about risks to a client with that known to other agencies will help to ensure that the action plan drawn up by the MARAC is more likely to succeed. Your representative will also be best placed to know what actions you can offer within the safety plan and what might need to be put in place to address client, child and staff safety.

Which cases are discussed?

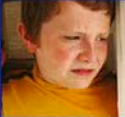
The highest risk cases of domestic abuse are discussed in a MARAC. A practitioner from any agency using a CAADA risk identification tool will have identified these.

How do I refer a case to MARAC?

If you identify a case that you consider is high risk you should first discuss it with your manager. Clarify that the victim/survivor has given consent to refer to MARAC and if not, that there is legal authority to override consent (see over). Complete the CAADA risk identification and referral form and ensure that it is forwarded to the MARAC Coordinator at the Hull Domestic Abuse Partnership (Hull DAP). The case will then be listed and circulated to agencies who will be asked to complete a Research Form prior to the MARAC meeting. Meetings are held every four weeks in Hull. The responsibility for the case does not transfer to the MARAC, it is a forum to support you to develop a risk management plan with your client.

What information should my agency bring?

You or your agency representative should bring relevant and basic details about the client and the services they require that might relate to the domestic abuse. This could include, names, DOBs, dates of attendances at your agency, summary of injuries sustained, whether domestic abuse was disclosed, who attended and what relevant services have been accessed. This can highlight the severity of abuse and risks to other agencies.



What can the MARAC do?

Actions volunteered by your agency representative will frequently focus on ensuring that the response to the individual in the future reflects the fact that they are a high risk victim/survivor of domestic abuse and that further incidents may prompt an enquiry into their case and a possible referral to the appropriate person/agency. For example, it would be important to see the individual alone at appointments, to do this safely and where possible to "flag" files to highlight that the case has been referred to MARAC. The MARAC ensures that a risk management action plan is in place and that a coordinated approach is taken.

What are the legal grounds for sharing information?

Disclosures to MARAC are made under the Data Protection Act, Human Rights Act and Caldicott Guidelines. Relevant information can be shared when it is necessary to prevent crime, protect health and/or safety of the victim/survivor and/or the rights and freedoms of those who are victims/survivors of domestic abuse and/or their children. It must be proportionate to the level of risk of harm to a named individual or known households.

'The MARAC has huge benefits; we see things here all the time we are very concerned about. Previously we would have hesitated before calling the police. Now we can refer direct to MARAC' Professional

Appendix 7: DASH Risk Assessment Model 2009, Hull CitySafe

DASH RISK ASSESSMENT MODEL 2009 DOMESTIC ABUSE, STALKING, HARASSMENT & HONOUR BASED VIOLENCE

RISK ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST – DASH			
Victim Name: Perpetrator Name: Date Completed: Support Worker Signature:			
CURRENT SITUATION The context and detail of what is happening is very important. The questions highlighted in bold are high risk. Tick the relevant box and add comment where necessary to expand.		YES	NO
1	Has the current incident resulted in injury? (Please state what and whether this is the first injury)		
2	Are you very frightened? Comment:		
3	What are you afraid of? Is there further injury or violence? (Please give an indication of what you might think (name of abuser(s)) might do and to whom) Kill: <input type="checkbox"/> Self <input type="checkbox"/> Children <input type="checkbox"/> Other Further injury & violence: <input type="checkbox"/> Self <input type="checkbox"/> Children <input type="checkbox"/> Other Other (please clarify) <input type="checkbox"/> Self <input type="checkbox"/> Children <input type="checkbox"/> Other		
4	Do you feel isolated from family / friends i.e. does the (name of abuser(s)) (name of abuser(s)) try to stop you from seeing friends / family / Dr. or others?		
5	Are you feeling depressed or having suicidal thoughts?		
6	Have you separated or tried to separate from (name of abuser(s)) (name of abuser(s)) within the past year?		
7	Is there conflict over child contact? (Please state what)		
8	Does (name of abuser(s)) (name of abuser(s)) constantly text, call, contact, follow, stalk or harass you? (Please expand to identify what and whether you believe that this is done deliberately to intimidate you? Consider the context and behaviour of what is being done)		
CHILDREN / DEPENDENTS (if no children / dependents, please go to the next section)		YES	NO
9	Are you currently pregnant or have you recently had a baby (in the past 18 months)?		
10	Are there any children, step children that aren't () in the household? Or are there other dependants in the household (i.e. older relative)?		
11	Has (name of abuser(s)) (name of abuser(s)) ever hurt children / dependents?		
12	Has (name of abuser(s)) (name of abuser(s)) ever threatened to hurt or kill the children / dependents?		
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HISTORY		YES	NO
13	Is the abuse happening more often?		
14	Is the abuse getting worse?		
15	Does (name of abuser(s)) (name of abuser(s)) try to control everything you do and / or are they excessively jealous? (In terms of relationships, who you see, being 'policed at home', telling you what to wear for example. Consider honour based violence and stalking and specify the behaviour.)		

**DASH RISK ASSESSMENT MODEL 2009
DOMESTIC ABUSE, STALKING, HARASSMENT & HONOUR BASED VIOLENCE**

16	Has (name of abuser(s) _____) ever used weapons or objects to hurt you?		
17	Has (name of abuser(s) _____) ever threatened to kill you or someone else and you believed them?		
18	Has (name of abuser(s) _____) ever attempted to strangle / choke / suffocate / drown you?		
19	Does (name of abuser(s) _____) do or say things of a sexual nature that makes you feel bad or that physically hurt you or someone else? (Please specify who and what)		
20	Is there any other person that has threatened you or that you are afraid of? (If yes, consider extended family if honour based violence. Please specify who)		
21	Do you know if (name of abuser(s) _____) has hurt anyone else? (children / siblings / elderly relatives / stranger for example). Consider HBV. Please specify who and what <input type="checkbox"/> Children <input type="checkbox"/> Another family member <input type="checkbox"/> Someone from a previous relationship <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)		
22	Has (name of abuser(s) _____) ever mistreated an animal or the family pet?		
ABUSER(S)		YES	NO
23	Are there financial issues? For example, are you dependent on (name of abuser(s) _____) for money / have they recently lost their job / other financial issues?		
24	Has (name of abuser(s) _____) had problems in the past year with drugs (prescription or other), alcohol or mental health leading to problems in leading a normal life? (Please specify what) <input type="checkbox"/> Drugs <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health		
25	Has (name of abuser(s) _____) ever threatened of attempted suicide?		
26	Has (name of abuser(s) _____) ever breached bail / an injunction and / or any agreement for when they can see you and / or the children? (Please specify what) <input type="checkbox"/> Bail conditions <input type="checkbox"/> Child contact arrangements <input type="checkbox"/> Non-molestation / Occupation Order <input type="checkbox"/> Forced Marriage Protection Order <input type="checkbox"/> Other		
27	Do you know if (name of abuser(s) _____) has ever been in trouble with the Police or has criminal history? (If yes, please specify) <input type="checkbox"/> DV <input type="checkbox"/> Other Violence <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Violence <input type="checkbox"/> Other		

DASH RISK ASSESSMENT MODEL 2009
DOMESTIC ABUSE, STALKING, HARASSMENT & HONOUR BASED VIOLENCE

	Other relevant information (from victim and officer) which may alter risk
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Recommended Referral Criteria to MARAC

1. **Professional judgement:** if a professional has serious concerns about a victim's situation, they should refer the case to MARAC. There will be occasions where the particular context of a case gives rise to serious concerns even if the victim has been unable to disclose the information that might highlight their risk more clearly. **This could reflect extreme levels of fear, cultural barriers to disclosure, immigration issues or language barriers particularly in cases of 'honour'-based violence.** This judgement would be based on the professional's experience and/or the victim's perception of their risk even if they do not meet criteria 2 and/or 3 below.

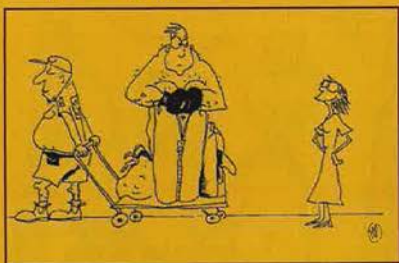
2. **'Visible High Risk':** the number of 'ticks' on this checklist. If you have ticked 14 or more 'yes' boxes the case would normally meet the MARAC referral criteria.

3. **Potential Escalation:** the number of police callouts to the victim as a result of domestic violence in the past 12 months. This criterion can be used to identify cases where there is not a positive identification of a majority of the risk factors on the list, but where abuse appears to be escalating and where it is appropriate to assess the situation more fully by sharing information at MARAC. It is common practice to start with 3 or more police callouts in a 12 month period but this will need to be reviewed depending on your local volume and your level of police reporting.

Please pay particular attention to a practitioner's professional judgement in all cases. The results from a checklist are not a definitive assessment of risk. They should provide you with a structure to inform your judgement and act as prompts to further questioning, analysis and risk management whether via a MARAC or in another way.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS A PATTERN OF ABUSE AND CONTROL THAT CAN INCLUDE:

- Physical violence
- Threats of violence
- Verbal/emotional abuse & put downs
- Social isolation
- Controlling your money
- Forcing you to have sex
- Stalking, including by phone, text and internet



Take him away officer, there's no room in my home for violence.

FAMILY VIOLENCE AFFECTS KIDS TOO

Children live in a small world made up of their family, friends, school and home.

Children are traumatised when they see someone they love being harmed. They are also at risk of becoming victims and/or perpetrators of violence themselves.

Children have the right to live in their own home safely.



For more information contact
WASH House
 Lot 5 Kelly Close
 Mt Druitt NSW 2770
 Phone 9677 1962

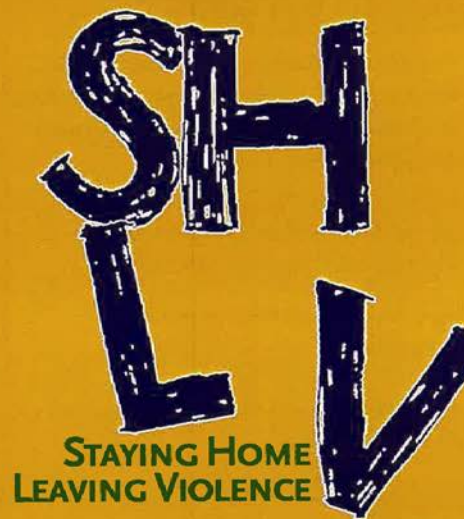
Police/Ambulance	000
Domestic Violence Line.....	1800 65 64 63
NSW Rape Crisis Centre.....	1800 424 017
DoCS Help Line	132 111
Indigenous Women's	
Legal Contact Line.....	1800 639 784
Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's	
Legal Centre.....	1800 686 587
Domestic Violence Advocacy Service	
Sydney	(02) 8745 6999
Outside Sydney	1800 810 784
Kids Helpline	1800 55 1800
Financial Assistance Centrelink.....	13 10 21
Mount Druitt Local Court.....	9881 9100
Mount Druitt Police Station.....	9675 0699
Blacktown Local Court.....	9672 2610
Blacktown Police Station.....	9671 9199

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Supported by Family Violence Response and Support Strategy.



**supporting women and children
 to stay in their home safely
 after ending a
 violent relationship**



**W.A.S.H. HOUSE
 PH: 9677 1962**



YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO STAY AT HOME

If you have suffered from domestic/family violence why should you and your children suffer the trauma of leaving your home, your routine, your support networks and all that is familiar to you?

DO YOU WISH TO REMAIN IN YOUR HOME WITHOUT THE PERPETRATOR OF VIOLENCE?

Do you need some support or assistance to be able to do so?

Has the perpetrator of violence left or been removed from the family home?



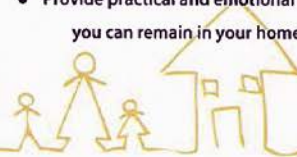
**Why should I leave with my kids, and let him stay when he's committed the crime?
It would be a lot easier for him to go.**



YIPPEE! I've got my life back, my kids and I are living without violence!

THE STAYING HOME LEAVING VIOLENCE PROGRAM CAN ASSIST YOU AND YOUR CHILDREN IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:

- Carry out safety assessment and help you to develop a safety plan,
- Provide security equipment such as monitored alarms, new locks and improved lighting to make your family home safer,
- Provide advice and support about Apprehended Violence Orders, including exclusion orders,
- Provide practical and emotional support so you can remain in your home.



If you think we can help you,
or you would like more information;

- Come in to the WASH House to see us,
- Call us

**Lot 5, Kelly Close
Mount Druitt 2770**

Ph 9677 1962



My child just pretends to smile, the violence has hurt her too.

THERE'S NO EXCUSE FOR ABUSE; EXPECT RESPECT

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