

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

ATTACHMENT PP-2 TO STATEMENT OF VARUGHESE PRADEEP PHILIP

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This is the attachment marked 'PP-2' produced and shown to **VARUGHESE PRADEEP PHILIP** at the time of signing his Statement on 10 August 2015.

Before me: ... 



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

SERVICES CONNECT

1. Services Connect is a model for integrated community and human services in Victoria, designed to connect people with the right support, address the whole range of a person's or family's needs, and help people build their capabilities to improve their lives. It was developed by the then Department of Human Services to address the challenges facing the system.
2. The Services Connect model seeks to provide people with access to services through an integrated network of access points that incorporate both government and non-government service providers, with access points operating shared processes and using common information, communication and technology platforms. Additionally, the model seeks to improve the system by reducing duplication and inefficiency across the human services system, intervening earlier to reduce the need for intensive statutory or crisis responses, and achieving long-term positive change for families and individuals.

The Services Connect client support model

3. A key part of Services Connect is the client support model. This is the model for planning, coordinating and providing support. The significant elements of the Services Connect client support model include:
 - 3.1 one key worker who is the primary support worker and plans, coordinates and delivers services for a client and their family;
 - 3.2 one holistic needs identification and assessment, by which comprehensive information is collected so that people do not need to keep re-telling their story;
 - 3.3 one plan that considers the full range of a client and their family's needs, goals and aspirations, and covers the full range of services they will receive;
 - 3.4 one client record instead of multiple records held by different services; and
 - 3.5 a greater focus on the achievement of outcomes in service planning and delivery, and in the monitoring and evaluation of services.

4. The model provides for flexible and tiered levels of support depending on the client's circumstances. Services Connect offers three broad levels of support:
 - 4.1 managed support – for people with the most complex situations, who require multiple services and more intensive coordination and assistance;
 - 4.2 guided support – for people with low to moderate support needs, who require some coordination, shorter term support, and occasional assistance; and
 - 4.3 self support – for people who can largely self-manage their support and services with minimal assistance, but who require a small amount of assistance to understand the system and to plan how to address their needs.
5. A key worker is the lead professional working with clients and their families and holds responsibility for identifying and achieving mutually agreed goals with clients across the range of services and supports they require. Key workers ensure that the entire service response to clients contributes to achieving goals in their single plan. They engage with any specialist service required by the client and their family to address specific needs and achieve specific goals.
6. Key workers take a holistic view of an individual's or family's life and work with them to develop a tailored plan that looks at the whole picture of their needs, builds on their strengths and is centred around their goals. Key workers encourage their clients to aim towards self-management from the start of their plan, and ensure the goals of the plan reflect the client's aspirations for self-management.

The initial phase – departmental lead sites

7. The Department has been testing the Services Connect client support model at departmental service delivery sites since 2012. In 2012, the first Services Connect lead sites were established in Dandenong, Geelong and the South West Coast. The lead site locations were expanded to Preston and Shepparton in 2013, and Glenroy, Box Hill, Wodonga and Bendigo in 2014.

8. Internal, or departmental, lead sites were funded until the end of June 2015 and are now being phased down over a period of six months. Lessons from the lead sites, along with lessons to come from testing Services Connect in the non-government sector (outlined below), will be used to inform the development of a future integrated community care system, in line with the Government's reform agenda.
9. While the principles which form the basis of Services Connect are not necessarily contentious, there has been criticism from some in the sector that design of the initiative has been undertaken without sufficient engagement with the sector. Another limitation of the internal government testing sites was the exclusive focus on human services, excluding the broader platforms of health and education.

Lead site review

10. An independent review of the implementation of the Services Connect client support model in the lead sites was commissioned by the then Department of Human Services in April 2014. The review aimed to determine the progress of Services Connect at the five lead sites established at that point in time. A copy of the Lead Site Review report was provided to the Royal Commission in response to Category 97 of the Notice to Produce dated 5 June 2015.
11. Evidence from the review demonstrated that the model was being implemented as intended and was beginning to deliver the following desired benefits:
 - 11.1 progress reports completed by key workers in the lead sites suggested that Services Connect clients were experiencing improved outcomes, with improvement being reported for 77 per cent of clients overall;
 - 11.2 the local operation of the model was increasingly embedded in practice in each lead site;
 - 11.3 staff skill levels were appropriate for performing the key worker role, and client support teams generally had a good multidisciplinary mix across workers;

- 11.4 workers demonstrated familiarity and confidence using Service Connect tools and resources and in the adoption of client-driven planning;
 - 11.5 there was emerging evidence that client support was enabling more targeted and coordinated service delivery;
 - 11.6 the quality of referrals into Service Connect had improved;
 - 11.7 there was preliminary evidence of a reduction in the number of individual workers involved with Services Connect clients over time; and
 - 11.8 there was evidence of a reduction in the number of crisis support services accessed, and in the volume of services accessed overall.
12. The review also identified three key areas for improvement. Those three areas and the actions taken by the Department in response to the review are as follows:
- 12.1 There was uncertainty about the application of tiered levels of support for clients with statutory orders that lasted beyond the Services Connect client support period. In response, the Department is undertaking further policy work to identify the best way for the model to work with statutory clients, and to define the roles and responsibilities of all service providers involved.
 - 12.2 There was a need for improved access and referral pathways into Services Connect. At the date of the evaluation, referrals had come from established departmental program areas. The review suggested that an integrated access model would be required to test Services Connect with non-government providers. The introduction of the Services Connect Partnerships, which are outlined below, sought to address this suggestion.
 - 12.3 The review identified a need for consistent use of planning tools, as well as improved establishment of care teams. In response to this finding, a comprehensive review and update of all Services Connect client support tools was undertaken as part of the development of the Services Connect partnerships. Feedback from

the operations of the Services Connect partnerships will further influence the refinements and improvement of supporting tools.

The second phase – Services Connect Partnerships

13. In October 2014, the Department commenced the next phase of testing and development of Services Connect through a collaborative process with the community services sector, by the establishment of Service Connect Partnerships (**Partnerships**).
14. The Partnerships are groups of non-government service providers in eight local areas across Victoria. They were established to integrate service delivery in local areas and further test, develop and refine the Services Connect model. The Partnerships are currently delivering services for clients, have developed governance arrangements, and are scheduled to run from October 2014 to October 2016.
15. The purpose of this phase is:
 - 15.1 to test the Services Connect model in different locations and for different client groups;
 - 15.2 to better understand the extent of change that will be required to introduce more integrated human services across the sector; and
 - 15.3 to determine the best ways to transition to a more integrated human services system.
16. Over the two years of the trial, the Services Connect Partnerships have four key deliverables:
 - 16.1 to test and refine the Services Connect client support model;
 - 16.2 to test and refine the associated information technology platforms, tools and data-sharing processes;
 - 16.3 to participate in the design, development and testing of integrated access within the local area; and
 - 16.4 to lead Services Connect skills and leadership development at an area level.

17. The Partnerships are supported by governance mechanisms at both the local and statewide levels that provide a mechanism for active involvement of participating agencies in the further design, testing and refinement of Services Connect.

Services Connect Partnerships and family violence

18. All eight Partnerships have a family violence agency as a member. When family violence is identified, consultation and support is provided to ensure that people receive the most appropriate service and supports in a timely manner. A formalised referral pathway model and process has been developed with the members of Domestic Violence Victoria and the Partnerships. Staff in client support at each Services Connect Partnership received training, including in relation to:

- 18.1 Services Connect and Client Support;
- 18.2 Client Support Key Work;
- 18.3 CRAF;
- 18.4 Building Aboriginal Cultural Competence;
- 18.5 Introduction to the Outcomes Star (or case planning tool in use);
- 18.6 Motivational Interviewing.

19. The referral pathway model describes the process for those people experiencing a serious and imminent threat risk level. In such instances, a key worker is able to connect these women and children to a family violence service or a Risk Assessment and Management Panel (**RAMP**). As a client's support needs stabilise over time, the decision may be made by the panel and lead provider for Services Connect to take a more active role in working across the broader range of supports required.

The Services Connect Interim Platform

20. The Services Connect Interim Platform is an information management system that records client and service provision data. Use of this platform commenced in February 2015. It includes a number of specific data fields relating to family violence. The platform has built in functionality to

document the findings of the CRAF screening process. The platform creates an individual or family plan that captures all the needs and actions for a group in one place and measures outcomes achieved throughout the support provided.

Evaluation of the Partnerships

21. The Department is also committed to undertaking a formal and independent evaluation of the Services Connect Partnerships to ensure a comprehensive understanding of what service integration can achieve. PricewaterhouseCoopers, in partnership with the University of Melbourne and the Parenting Research Centre, has been engaged to undertake this evaluation over the relevant two-year period. Upon completion of the testing in October 2016, it is anticipated that more in-depth qualitative and quantitative outcome-focused data will be available to inform policy and service development, based on a comprehensive evaluation.
22. The Department seeks to undertake a significant re-engagement with the sector concerning the fundamental principles underlying the Services Connect initiative. This will include identifying necessary redesign of services, including to ensure that services move people as much as possible out of the service system, building on and leveraging the universal service platforms of health and education. To this end, the Department is commissioning work to engage with the sector about lessons learned from the Services Connect initiative, informed by insights generated through evaluation of the Services Connect lead sites and Services Connect Partnerships.