

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

**STATEMENT OF CHRISTOPHER BARCROFT ECCLES**

Date of Document: 15 October 2015  
Filed on behalf of: State of Victoria  
Prepared by:  
Victorian Government Solicitor's Office  
Level 33  
80 Collins Street  
Melbourne VIC 3000

I, CHRISTOPHER BARCROFT ECCLES, Secretary, Department of Premier and Cabinet, SAY AS FOLLOWS:

1. I am currently the Secretary of the Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet (**DPC**), employed by the Premier under the *Public Administration Act 2004* (Vic) (**PAA**). I have held this role since December 2014. In this position I lead DPC and the Victorian Public Service in advising the Premier and Government of Victoria.
2. I was Director-General of the New South Wales Department of Premier and Cabinet from 2011 to 2014 and Chief Executive of the South Australian Department of the Premier and Cabinet from 2009 to 2011.
3. Between 2007 and 2009, I held two roles at DPC as the Deputy Secretary of the Sector Improvement Group and the Deputy Secretary of the National Reform and Climate Change Group.
4. Prior to my appointment to DPC in 2007, I held a range of government and private sector senior management positions.
5. I hold a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Laws from the Australian National University.

## SCOPE OF STATEMENT

6. I have received a notice from the Royal Commission into Family Violence pursuant to s 17(1)(d) of the *Inquiries Act 2014* (Vic) requiring me to attend and give evidence at the Royal Commission.
7. I have been requested by the Royal Commission to provide evidence on behalf of the Department in relation to Modules 4 and 5 of the Commission's October 2015 public hearings (what should the system look like and how should it be funded?).
8. This statement should be read in conjunction with the witness statements by the Secretary of the Department of Education and Training (Ms Gill Callister), the Secretary of the Department of Justice and Regulation (Mr Greg Wilson), the Acting Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (Ms Kym Peake) and the Deputy Secretary of the Department of Treasury and Finance (Ms Melissa Skilbeck).
9. The views contained in this statement are my views and not necessarily the views of the Victorian Government.

## LIMITATIONS AND ISSUES WITHIN THE CURRENT APPROACH TO FAMILY VIOLENCE IN VICTORIA

10. As the Royal Commission has heard, family violence is a complex problem that manifests across all parts of the Australian community. Violence against women by men is by far the most common form. Gender inequality and negative attitudes towards women are a major driver of family violence.
11. All forms of family violence need to be addressed as part of our response. Family violence can affect a range of specific cohorts differently, including the elderly (where family violence is commonly known as elder abuse), LGBTI families, people from culturally and linguistically diverse (**CALD**) backgrounds and people with disability and complex needs, as well as those living in rural and regional locations. Our response must be tailored to meet the needs of these cohorts.
12. Police data from 2013-14 shows that Aboriginal Victorians represented 3.4 per cent of all victims and 3.8 per cent of all perpetrators of family violence, a significant over-representation as Aboriginal people make up 0.9 per cent of the Victorian population. The government recognises the Aboriginal

community frames family violence through an Aboriginal cultural lens, as well as a lens of gender, recognising the importance of prevention and response strategies that are specific to men, women and children.

13. The Royal Commission has heard from many witnesses that the current family violence service delivery and system response:
  - 13.1 is fragmented and uncoordinated;
  - 13.2 fails to meet the specific needs of victims;
  - 13.3 does not hold perpetrators to account;
  - 13.4 lacks accountability for service delivery and is of inconsistent quality; and
  - 13.5 lacks a focus on prevention and early intervention.
14. Systemic reform must be at the centre of Victoria's response to family violence. Incremental change is not an option if we want to drive improved outcomes for people experiencing family violence.
15. The Royal Commission has noted that redesign of the 'family violence system' needs to achieve broad and enduring impact. To that end, system reforms must be deeply embedded as part of the wider universal service system to achieve the necessary fundamental change.
16. Delivering reform will be a challenge. Redesigning services, addressing governance and funding issues and building collective engagement and responsibility will require a significant cultural and practical change by governments, the public purpose sector and the community.

#### **POSSIBLE GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF A FAMILY VIOLENCE SYSTEM**

17. Redesigning the family violence system should be guided by the following set of principles that seek to improve the functioning of the system.
  - 17.1 *Integrated and coordinated* – all parts of the family violence system should work together to provide the right support.
  - 17.2 *Personalised* – the individual needs of victims, children and perpetrators (as members of a family) should be at the centre of system design and operation.



- 17.3 *Localised* – services for people in their communities or place deliver enduring outcomes.
  - 17.4 *Collective Effort* – responses should be co-designed with the people who use and deliver the system and should leverage strong local partnerships and joint strengths-based leadership across all communities and sectors.
  - 17.5 *Prevention* – the promotion of a violence free society.
  - 17.6 *Early intervention* – providing the right assistance early to reduce the risks of family violence occurring.
  - 17.7 *Enduring* – system reform should be embedded within collective community support and accountability across all tiers of government.
18. The following sections elaborate upon the implications of these principles for the redesign of the family violence service system.

#### ***Integrated and coordinated***

- 19. The Royal Commission has heard compelling evidence regarding the fragmented and uncoordinated nature of the current early intervention and acute service response to family violence.
- 20. The evidence before the Royal Commission has highlighted the difficulties victims face in navigating the wide array of essential supports to meet their individual needs and support their individual choices. Family violence cannot be oversimplified. For many people – victims, children, perpetrators – family violence often occurs alongside broader social and economic problems which require broader and more complex solutions across the human services, justice and health or education systems.
- 21. The realities of the lives of those impacted by family violence is that their engagements with government delivered or funded services and the justice system are not necessarily linear or systematic.

#### ***Personalised***

- 22. A personalised response to family violence means that the array of essential supports that victims, children and perpetrators may require are not only integrated but appropriately tailored to their needs.



23. Personalised can also be understood through the concepts of 'person centered' and 'client choice and control'. A system designed around the person should encapsulate a strong understanding of the life circumstances, diversity and needs of all family members. Responses must be able to manage individual risk and need levels. Therefore, a personalised family violence response may need to be 'nested' within a response to mental health, drug and alcohol, legal services or housing support.

### ***Localised***

24. A localised response takes into account the local characteristics and drivers that impact on a local community and designs solutions accordingly. It also takes into account the significant value of local partnerships – organisations and associations, businesses and local government – that can be leveraged to assist in designing and collectively implementing solutions. The principle of a localised response dovetails with the principle of collective endeavor.
25. While family violence is a state-wide issue, family violence reporting rates vary between communities and population groups. Rates of reported family violence are generally higher in regional and rural communities, which co-exist with high levels of disadvantage as indicated by Socio Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) scores. There are also large volumes of incidents in parts of metropolitan Melbourne, particularly in growth corridors where there can be less developed service infrastructure.

### ***Collective Effort***

26. The traditional role of the public service as a direct deliverer of programs, services and policies in Victoria continues to change. The non-government sector is now a substantial deliverer of government funded services. In contemporary terms, it is helpful to conceive of a 'public purpose' sector that comprises government, not-for-profit organisations, charities, associations, education providers, business, philanthropists, entrepreneurs and communities of interest.
27. Any response to family violence (and the delivery of social services more broadly) requires collective effort and engagement. To achieve this, the principle of co-design needs to underpin policy design, delivery, evaluation and continuous improvement. It is important that the partners in co-design always include the person using the service or the system.



28. At the local level, genuine collective effort and impact requires government to undergo two significant cultural shifts:
- 28.1 to place the person at the centre of everything it does, including by using data to better understand what services a client uses and then adapt the system to respond to that evidence;
  - 28.2 to empower front-line participants (whether government or not) to trial and implement innovations and to be decision makers (by removing barriers such as process and procedural 'red tape' and inserting incentives such as reinvesting saved funding).
29. The *Stanford Social Innovation Review* (2011) identified five key elements to applying collective impact to entrenched social policy challenges. These elements were reiterated in the New Zealand Productivity Commission's recent report, *More Effective Social Services*. Both reports noted that all five of these elements should be at the centre of collective impact:
- 29.1 A common agenda for change including a shared understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed actions;
  - 29.2 Collecting data and measuring results consistently across all the participants ensuring shared measurement for alignment and accountability;
  - 29.3 A plan of action that outlines and coordinates mutually reinforcing activities for each participant;
  - 29.4 Open and continuous communication and commitment to improvement across the many players to build trust, assure mutual objectives, and create common motivation; and
  - 29.5 A backbone organisation with staff and specific sets of skills to serve the entire initiative and coordinate participating organisations and agencies.

### **Prevention**

30. As the Royal Commission has heard, to achieve sustained change, prevention initiatives should go 'wide and deep' across the community. Initiatives need to begin at early childhood and continue to engage at key points in the life cycle.



31. The government is undertaking a number of key gender equity and prevention initiatives including:
- 31.1 A commitment that increases the representation of women on paid Victorian Government boards by requiring at least fifty per cent of appointees are women.
  - 31.2 A number of programs targeting women's leadership and economic participation such as the Women's Register, Women's Scholarship Program and the Honour Roll of Women.
  - 31.3 Respectful relationships education being included as part of the school curriculum for prep to year 10 from term one 2016. This will teach students to build healthy relationships and to prevent family violence.
32. Initiatives need to engage with communities, schools and organisations, targeting influencers for key cohorts. Prevention activity must respond to diversity and local experiences. Consideration of prevalence and the community locations where violence is highest must also be taken into account when formulating prevention strategies.
33. For prevention initiatives to have a lasting and enduring impact, they must be embraced and owned by all parts of the community (see paragraph 37 - 41 below). Coordination of prevention activity across all three tiers of government, the community sector and business is vital.

### ***Early Intervention***

34. There is clear evidence that early and effective intervention is the most powerful policy approach at our disposal in changing the trajectory for individuals at risk of family violence. A future system should aim to intervene and assist victims, perpetrators and children as early as possible when signs of family violence are first identified. This approach should aim to reduce the number of families requiring crisis responses.
35. The costs of early intervention services are relatively low and help to offset much larger costs for late intervention. Data from the Australian Productivity Commission's Report on Government Services 2015 demonstrates the costs per day of key Victorian services for children. Attachment CE-1 provides



further details of key data from the Australian Productivity Commission's Report.

36. Effective and high quality early childhood interventions can reduce exposure to abuse, mitigate the adverse developmental impact of such environments and foster a sense of stability and security for children. The Maternal and Child Health service offers a universal platform from birth to school age that supports the health and wellbeing of new families. It has proven to have a significant impact in Aboriginal communities and could play a vital role in both prevention and early intervention.

### ***Enduring***

37. This Royal Commission presents an important opportunity to undertake the necessary reforms to better respond to family violence. It is imperative that reform is undertaken in a way that will have enduring impact. The type of system reforms needed must be deeply embedded to achieve fundamental change.
38. Experience has demonstrated that in order to 'embed' support and prioritise an issue over the long term, there is a need for collective community engagement with all tiers of government. All sectors and sections of the community must 'own' the problem and collectively implement the solution.
39. Efforts over time to reduce smoking rates and to reduce the road toll are examples of collective leadership and sustained policy action on multiple fronts by all levels of government, with remarkable social outcomes.
40. For smoking, a long term investment in prevention campaigns (through Quit Victoria and the Cancer Council) was undertaken alongside regulatory controls on where smoking was permitted, bans on advertising, restrictions on point of sale and education in schools. Taken together, these initiatives supported significant cultural change, which in turn has created a broad response to the acceptability of smoking in public places. Further, it has created an environment of support for tighter regulatory controls such as plain packaging and excise increases. All of these levers are continuing to have dramatic impacts on Australia's smoking rates.
41. The application of these seven guiding principles will reshape the Victorian family violence system in its entirety – they must also be applied to reshape



how government itself supports these reforms in terms of governance, funding, accountability, data and workforce models for the future.

## **GOVERNANCE DESIGN**

42. Governance arrangements as applied to the delivery of public policy and services can be understood as two separate but related elements:
  - 42.1 institutional governance (the overarching architecture); and
  - 42.2 system-level governance (the arrangements to inform decision-making).
43. Institutional governance is the overarching architecture that establishes roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for the making of public policy, the delivery of services and the achievement of outcomes. Institutional governance, in part, comprises the Westminster based eco-system of Cabinet and its committees and taskforces. It also provides the framework for public entities to perform their roles efficiently and effectively in line with government priorities.
44. At the institutional governance level, services are delivered by a large number of entities with governance arrangements supporting varying degrees of operational autonomy from government.
45. System-level governance comprises the forums and processes to engage with stakeholders to help inform government decision-making. Relevant stakeholders include people who use the service or system, other public agencies, advocacy groups and the non-government sector. There are currently a range of multi-disciplinary decision-making family violence forums at a Ministerial, interdepartmental and community sector level, as well as regional partnerships to operationally improve services at a local level. A diagrammatic overview of the family violence service delivery, coordination and policy development framework is at Attachment CE-2.

### ***Principles of good governance***

46. An assessment of the current system of governance for the family violence system should have regard to the following commonly agreed features of good governance:



- 46.1 Devolved decision-making – decisions are made as close as possible to those affected to ensure that opportunities for citizen engagement are maximised and risk associated with unforeseen consequences can be minimised.
- 46.2 A whole of government approach – ensures that all affected portfolios are engaged in, and responsible for, the policy development and implementation processes.
- 46.3 Collaboration – collaboration is required where the power, resources and expertise for solving or managing the problem is dispersed. Collaboration means sharing information in good faith, listening to other stakeholders and working constructively.
- 46.4 Coordinated and integrated action – coordination is critical during the implementation stage and, similarly to collaboration, requires sharing information in good faith and communicating openly.
- 46.5 Citizen engagement – citizen engagement is not just information sharing and is more than consultation. It occurs when citizens actively and genuinely participate in the policy and decision-making process.
- 46.6 A shared understanding of the problem – having a shared understanding does not mean agreement on a singular problem definition. Rather it is about acknowledging that there may be a number of different problems and building a shared commitment to the possible solutions.
- 46.7 Measurable outcomes and performance monitoring – outcomes need to be measurable and performance should be monitored regularly so that policy development is a circular process that promotes continuous learning, adaption and improvement.
- 46.8 Agile and innovative systems – the circular process at 46.7 also helps build an agile system that is open to change and innovation, which is a more effective way of addressing a constantly changing or evolving problem.



### ***Governance mechanisms to deliver Family Violence Reform***

47. Having regard to these principles of good governance, the institutional and system level governance to deliver family violence reform should be designed to:
- 47.1 Drive leadership on policy, system and service design through mechanisms at Ministerial and senior public service levels;
  - 47.2 Foster partnerships through collaboration across government and non-government sectors, providing input on system design and leading cultural and practice design;
  - 47.3 Coordinate and integrate multiple portfolios to ensure coherence and drive improvement;
  - 47.4 Create partnerships at a local level to coordinate service delivery and identify specific priorities for joint action; and
  - 47.5 Support system improvement through performance monitoring and oversight mechanisms, such as the development of family violence-related performance measures and the creation of formal analytics functions.

### ***Opportunities for refreshed governance***

48. As previously noted, family violence is complex and multifaceted and requires a comprehensive system-wide response that crosses portfolios and agencies, sectors and tiers of government. In particular, the service delivery response to family violence must be integrated and coordinated.
49. The governance to support reform to the family violence system covers all the processes of interaction and decision-making and involves the three arms of responsible government: the executive, the Parliament and the judiciary.
50. The organisation of executive governance needs to support the system design in its entirety and comprehends everything from the development of broad public policy and service settings, through the global allocation of funding, to the individual transactions between a service provider and a family violence victim, child or perpetrator.

51. Against this backdrop, a model of executive governance that promotes joint and shared Ministerial, portfolio and departmental accountability is appropriate to deliver a commonly agreed set of system-wide outcomes (i.e. the reduction of family violence over the long-term; ensuring victims of family violence are safe, stable and thriving; and securing the accountability of perpetrators). This model sits comfortably with a service delivery approach that puts individual needs at the centre of a system which is strongly localised.
52. Such a model of governance would also benefit from access to an independent source of:
- 52.1 expert advice on best practice, including a strategic approach to research, evidence and evaluation; and
  - 52.2 public information on, and analysis of, the performance of the family violence system – both qualitative and quantitative in nature.

### ***Ministerial Arrangements***

53. Ministerial arrangements in the Westminster system are particularly conducive to resolving defined single issue policy problems and delivering portfolio specific public services efficiently and effectively. Exercising roles and responsibilities through discrete portfolios does, however, present challenges to sharing resources, achieving joint outcomes and being mutually accountable when policy problems are multifaceted and cross portfolio boundaries.
54. Nonetheless, the Cabinet system of government is highly adaptable and when effectively mobilised can support the achievement of an integrated and coordinated policy and service delivery response delivering collective outcomes.

### ***The Victorian Secretaries Board***

55. The Victorian Secretaries Board (**VSB**) is a key governance mechanism established to drive high quality public policy, public administration and public sector performance. It comprises the Secretary of each Department, the Chief Commissioner of Police and the Victorian Public Service Commissioner. Formerly known as the Secretaries Co-ordination and Management Committee, VSB has evolved over time from a traditional, directive 'Chair and members' environment to a collective forum with joint accountabilities.



56. VSB takes a joined-up approach to progressing shared outcomes. In addition to traditional responsibilities relating to supporting Ministers and leading Departments, emphasis has also been placed on whole of Government coordination of key activities of government. The VSB will be a critical forum to drive the government's long term response to family violence.

***The Violence against Women and Children Forum***

57. The VAWC Forum is a key part of the system-level governance in relation to family violence. The VAWC Forum includes senior departmental and sector leaders and officials. The Forum's role is to advise government on policy and system operation.
58. In recent times the forum has been more of an information sharing body. Work is currently underway to significantly enhance the VAWC Forum's advisory role to departments and for it to reflect the principles of co-design.
59. In particular, a work program for the forum is being identified that combines sector and government priorities to improve the approach to family violence. This work will also ensure that the deliberations of the VAWC Forum feed into the Cabinet decision-making process.

***NSW Safer Pathway***

60. The NSW Safer Pathway approach (diagrammatic representation at Attachment CE-3) is a good model to illustrate a holistic approach to victim safety assessment, referrals and service coordination. Safer Pathways facilitates an integrated and coordinated response from government and non-government providers and is part of a broader reform framework that also prioritises early intervention, person-centred responses, workforce capability and a strengthened criminal justice system.
61. The Safer Pathway model utilises system-level governance to create collective accountability as well as an integrated and coordinated response. Because of the multiple agencies and departments involved, it is led and overseen by a multi-member ministerial group supported by expert advisory groups comprising government and non-government members. The model highlights the value of collective ministerial leadership and coordinated interventions.



62. This case study demonstrates the value in enhancing and strengthening current systems in innovative ways to build and strengthen collaboration and a holistic approach to complex policy problems.

### **FUNDING DESIGN**

63. As Ms Skillbeck (Deputy Secretary, Department of Treasury and Finance) has noted in her witness statement, there are multiple levers within the current framework that could be mobilised or enhanced to deliver improved funding of family violence services and programs.
64. In considering possible funding models, it is important to choose a model that is based on the objective the reforms are trying to achieve. I provide further detail on a range of potential funding models in Attachment CE-4 and CE-5. Building on this, there are two particular models I would like to highlight as offering opportunities for reform in family violence funding – pooled program funding and social impact investment.

#### ***Pooled program funding***

65. In order to achieve shared accountability and integration across portfolio programs at a local level, a dedicated pool of funding could be sourced from various departments. This funding could be allocated to achieve local outcomes that have been determined in consultation with the community. Oversight of the pooled fund could be through a board of local government officials and community leaders. Allocations and re-investment would need to be informed by clear evidence as to what programs are achieving the outcomes. The New South Wales Human Services Data Hub described in paragraphs 81 and 82 provide a good example of where evidence of use and effect can drive funding decisions.

#### ***Social impact investment***

66. Social impact investment is a growing global policy approach to confronting social challenges that brings together investment and expertise from across the public, private and public purpose sectors. At its heart, social impact investing measures and rewards delivery of outcomes, enables innovation and removes input controls. This, in turn, allows greater risk taking, shifts spending away from acute services into prevention and early intervention and finally promotes partnership by sharing risks and benefits across the public, private and public purpose sectors.



67. Social Impact Bonds (**SIBs**) are the most well-known form of social impact investing. SIBs are a funding approach that commissions social services from non-traditional providers or from non-government investors and has a focus on outcomes based payments. Social impact bonds rely on a clear, agreed set of outcomes and targets, and require the collection and use of data to accurately measure progress. The financial return to investors is dependent on the outcomes achieved in the program.
68. The New South Wales Newpin Social Benefit Bond is an evidence-based, intensive, therapeutic program aimed at breaking the cycle of inter-generational child neglect and abuse. Services are funded to return children in out-of-home care safely to their families.
69. This approach stimulates innovation by linking payment outcomes while leaving the players to work out how to achieve them. Investors receive a return that is based on success. This approach could be applied in the family violence context if the incentives are carefully designed and applied, particularly when dealing with vulnerable cohorts.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT**

70. Accountability and oversight incorporate two elements:
- 70.1 regulation of quality and safety standards and financial, accounting and probity standards; and
  - 70.2 accountability for performance and achieving outcomes.
71. The Acting Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, Kym Peake's witness statement discusses regulation and oversight. The following sections briefly review accountability for performance and outcomes.
72. Contemporary policy approaches that use outcomes to drive budget and operational decisions potentially offer a model for facilitating collective responsibility for departments, agencies and the non-government sector.
73. The broad and inclusive terms in which outcomes are articulated (for example 'reducing long-term welfare dependence' or 'reducing recidivism') naturally accommodates the variety of contributions from multiple government and non-government agencies. Rather than more prescriptive outputs, outcomes allow departments and agencies to strategically coalesce



their activity around these clear priorities. In turn, this facilitates a collective responsibility for delivering on these outcomes.

74. Benefits of an outcomes driven approach include:
- 74.1 clarity of purpose regarding what must be achieved and what success looks like;
  - 74.2 clear articulation and monitoring of the relationship between the person and system level achievements and change at the population level;
  - 74.3 a clear and rigorous framework for assessing both the potential and achievements of reform, policy and program options; and
  - 74.4 high quality and transparent monitoring of performance.
75. As examples in Scotland, Ireland, New Zealand and the United States show, outcomes performance frameworks provide a collective sense of the strategic priorities across government, as well as a means for assessing the collective impact of government and its partners (for instance, Ireland's Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures framework provides a shared framework for assessing the collective impact of government, statutory and non-statutory services for children, young people and families; while Scotland Performs provides real time tracking of national targets, outcomes and indicators that provide a unified vision of achievement).
76. Ultimately, government is accountable to Parliament for the use of taxpayer's funds and must utilise accountability mechanisms to ensure that these funds are being used in an appropriate manner. Any regulatory and oversight model should be designed to maintain government's responsibility to ensure the proper use of public funds and to ensure probity and accountability in service contract design and administration.

## **COLLECTION AND USE OF DATA**

77. The Royal Commission has heard evidence about the limitations of current information sharing practices in Victoria, including legislative, technical and cultural impediments. The majority of information captured is used for a single, immediate purpose and the broader value of data for operational or research purposes is not systematically considered.



78. Recognising that the Royal Commission has heard extensively about the collection of individual person's data, I note that the availability and quality of data is essential to the success of an outcomes framework.
79. Victoria's Family Violence Index is intended to measure the scale of the family violence emergency, and help inform improvements to the service system and outcomes for those affected by family violence. The indicators are still being determined and will likely identify gaps in data. However, in the future the Index may provide a building block to inform system reform through the development of a broader set of outcomes that measure the impact of prevention and response activities in this area.
80. There may be lessons for Victoria from the approach taken by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (**WSIPP**). WSIPP carries out practical, non-partisan policy research at the direction of the legislature or its Board of Directors. It assesses high-quality studies to identify options for a policy response, estimate the implementation costs and develop comparable cost benefit ratios through a system of common outcomes. The benefit of this approach is that it provides policy makers with a set of well researched policies that can, with a high degree of certainty, lead to better outcomes and more efficient use of taxpayer dollars.
81. There may also be lessons from New South Wales' recently established Human Services Data Hub, which provides consolidated information on human services delivered across the State via an online portal. The Hub provides aggregated data about the scope and coverage of government funded services which can be organised by location, client type, services type, provider, value and duration. This information is valuable to assist and adapt service planning, management and coordination of services. In particular, it helps to identify service gaps, as well as service duplication and overlap.
82. Both case studies provide Victoria with an example where data and evidence have been used to drive reform and improve outcomes for individuals and communities.

#### **GOVERNMENT WORKFORCE CAPABILITY AND PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM**

83. To facilitate and implement genuine family violence system co-design, the public service needs to shift from a traditional, top-down, centralised approach

to the design and delivery of services to one that facilitates appropriate levels of devolution, sharing of information and ideas and collective responsibility. This will require a significant overhaul in the prevailing culture, with government's systems, processes, policies and training coalescing around this objective.

84. We also need to strengthen the relationship between the public service and the community sector through harnessing and connecting emerging leaders in both sectors. We need to share data and develop joint capability strategies to support constant dialogue. For example, individuals need to shift their perception of a distinction between 'we are policy makers, they are service deliverers' and understand that the practices occur on a continuum that should be mutually reinforcing.
85. Just as the sector partners and government departments or agencies require the right range of incentives to adapt, so too does the workforce. Funding and governance models need to reward innovative behavior and encourage and facilitate the 'front-line' feed-back to policy makers to enable policy and program improvement.
86. Incentives should be designed to ensure that middle management actively facilitate innovation and move away from a fixation on 'red-tape' compliance and processes. There is an important role for VSB in driving this kind of cultural change, to encourage and facilitate innovation at the front line.

## **THE ROLE OF THE COMMONWEALTH AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS**

87. The Commonwealth Government holds many critical levers that impact on the experience of victims of family violence including employment programs, industrial relations and pay equity policies, income support and child care policies and programs. Applying a family violence lens to each of these Commonwealth responsibilities would improve outcomes for people experiencing family violence.
88. Over the last twelve months the Council of Australian Governments work program has significantly increased in relation to family violence. First Ministers are now accelerating work on the national domestic violence order scheme and a national awareness raising campaign.
89. Further Victorian priorities for Commonwealth action in family violence include:



- 89.1 confirming funding arrangements in existing national partnership agreements - particularly homelessness and legal assistance;
  - 89.2 better data sharing to underpin evaluation and decision making. For example the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Productivity Commission all offer expertise and platforms to improve data;
  - 89.3 the intersection of the federal courts with state based systems; and
  - 89.4 interstate policing of key orders.
90. Other related areas where the Commonwealth could apply their levers to respond to family violence include Aboriginal affairs, welfare and social services, the Medical Benefit Scheme and mental health policy.
91. The role of local government in preventing and responding to family violence is often overlooked and under utilised. Local government is well placed to deliver localised family violence responses based on local needs. In particular, opportunities to leverage further the existing jointly run maternal child health service to implement prevention and early intervention approaches should be explored.
92. In addition, local government plays an important role in delivering public education and community development initiatives, supporting local partnerships, influencing a range of local settings via prevention activities and pursuing their own organisational change.

## CONCLUSION

93. There is no single, or simple, solution to addressing family violence.
94. Driving this response will require leadership and a sustained commitment to change. It will also require a close collaboration between all reform partners. I cannot over emphasise the significant cultural change required within the public service to foster the new ways of working that I think are required to deliver an integrated, evidence based, personalised, localised and collective family violence response with a stronger focus on prevention and early intervention.



95. I look forward to working with the Royal Commission, the Victorian community and most importantly people who have experienced family violence to build the strongest possible response for the future.

Signed by )  
**CHRISTOPHER BARCROFT ECCLES**)  
at Melbourne )  
this 15th day of October 2015 )

.....

Before me

