

Introduction

The following pages are in response to question eighteen:

- a) What barriers prevent people in particular groups and communities in Victoria from engaging with or benefiting from family violence services?
- b) How can the family violence (FV) system be improved to reflect the diversity of people's experiences?

a) Not benefiting from family violence services

I have spent time volunteering at Court Registry to help Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) affected family members (AFM) complete the Family Violence Intervention Order application form (FVIO1).

The FVIO1 application is a relatively complex 12 page form with some questions expressing concepts that are unfamiliar to many people. CALD community members coming to Court to make an application typically work through the form with the assistance of a telephone interpreter slowly, one question at a time. This procedural obstacle (that is, the form is only available in written English) can unintentionally lead to frustration for both applicants and Registry staff. Completion of the application almost always exceeds the amount of time expected by applicants and prolonged engagement with Registry staff is often the norm. I have never met any applicant who anticipated the level of detail required to explain their circumstances.

What barriers need to be overcome?

- 1) How to retain the text of the FVIO1 application form but also make it more intelligible (don't dumb it down).
- 2) How to comprehensively and succinctly explain the FV Intervention Order application process.
- 3) How to make a user-friendly version of the FVIO1 form widely available so the questions asked are known in advance.

b) Improving the FV system

If the form were available in languages other than English and if the form could be spoken like an audio-book and the questions explained; applicants would be more self-empowered to manage their issues.

To overcome the barriers, please see the following link:

www.fvivo-audioguide.org.au/

Access the above link provides CALD and English speaking applicants with access to a user-friendly rendering of the FVIO1 form regardless of literacy level.

The next step in helping people benefit from family violence services?

- Identify CALD groups in each region of Victoria
- Collaborate with Family Violence workers and Court officers of each Victorian region to make additional languages available online at www.fvivo-audioguide.org.au/

I would like to provide some background to the [fvivo-audioguide](http://www.fvivo-audioguide.org.au/)

How were the identified barriers overcome?

1) *How to retain the text of the FVIO1 application but also make it more intelligible (don't dumb it down).*

Qualitative consultation with professional family violence workers; asking how they help CALD applicants understand the questions of the FVIO1 lead to "explanatory text" added to the FVIO1 online form where deemed necessary.

Much of this additional text originated out of discussions with Family Violence case workers; principally: **InTouch Inc.** – Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence.

2) *How to comprehensively and succinctly explain the FV Intervention Order application process.*

With support of the senior project manager at the Neighbourhood Justice Centre (NJC), the following steps in the FV Intervention Order application process is comprehensively and succinctly explained in the online guide.

- Differentiate civil procedure from criminal procedure
- Explain how the Police will serve the Respondent
- Explain coming back to Court for the hearing
- Address immediate and future safety concerns

3) *How to make a user-friendly version of the FVIO1 form widely available so the questions asked are known in advance.*

For all intents and purposes the Internet is possibly the best way to distribute information widely and freely.

Costs on Internet projects however can easily become exaggerated by a number of factors, such as:

- IT professionals blinding departmental staff with “science”
- Lethargy and gamesmanship within the bureaucracy leading to delays

The [fvivo-audioguide](#) project was delivered for less than \$5,000.

The timeline from concept to delivery of the [fvivo-audioguide](#) was 14 weeks (working on a part-time basis).

- Professional translation of the non-English text* cost \$1,200 per language.
- The spoke voice-over for each community language cost \$1,250 per language on average.
- The English spoke voice-over was made by interested volunteers at no cost.
- Other costs include: Internet hosting fees, domain name registration and image library purchases amounting to a total of less than \$500.

The creating Internet based projects ‘in-house’ delivers cost minimisation.

**The non-English languages [fvivo-audioguide](#) represents the major community languages used in the catchment area of the NJC. The cost to add other languages has been shown in the figures above.*

Submission of a future idea

Introduction

The following pages are in response to question nineteen:

- a) How can responses to family violence in these groups and communities be improved?
- b) What approaches have been shown to be most effective?

a) Overview

Many people state they find it difficult to recall the decisions/agreements reached following “their day in court”. All participants in court proceedings are provided with “*outcome documents*”, however the language used in the documents can be difficult for laypeople to understand, particularly when English literacy or the lack thereof is the barrier.

Many participants in Court proceedings rely heavily on their remembrance of what occurred and what was agreed.

Proposed new project

Start with the CALD community members to make it possible to download or stream an ‘audio-copy’ of the Final Intervention Order.

- Approximately 90% of Final Orders are comprised of “standard information”
- This information can readily be held by a database in any language
- Make use of Interpreters attending Court to record the unique 10% of the Final Order
- Enable the Family Violence Court case-number to link into the audio database.

Benefits include

a) The outcomes of FV Intervention Order application proceedings will be reinforced to Affected Family Members (AFMs’) and Respondents (who arguably recall less about Court proceedings than AFMs’) through the ability of all participants to hear the Court Order spoken in their “first-language” when ever, and as often as they choose.

b) Affected Family Members will have increased confidence in notifying Police about breaches to the Order by the respondent.

c) Affected Family Members and Respondents will be better able to understand how to seek variations to the Order, subsequent to the proceedings, leading to a lowering of breaches caused by misunderstanding or lack of knowledge.

d) Respondents will be more readily accountable for their conduct subsequent to proceedings as the barriers of miscommunication and misunderstanding are removed.

Methodology to overcome hurdles

- Work with Interpreters and ‘Family Violence Applicant and Respondent support workers’ on a trial project
- One-off Translation and Interpreting and voice-over fees approx. \$900 for each language (starting with Vietnamese, Somali)
- Database design - estimated \$4,000
- Project Management – Grade 4 VPS