

ISSUES PAPER

Background

Current Victoria Police [REDACTED]

Previous VicPol Investigator at Sexual Offences & Child Abuse Unit. Performed duties at the [REDACTED] between:

I investigated a very difficult family violence and physical assault investigation in [REDACTED] involving serious family violence incidents and assaults against a pregnant mother and her [REDACTED] children (aged- [REDACTED] years) by their step-father.

In short- failures by VicPol investigators and DHS Managers occurred after repeated mandatory notifications occurred over a approx. [REDACTED] year period. This resulted in undetected incidents of family violence and serious injuries inflicted to the mother and children.

These notifications were not adequately investigated by DHS resulting in continued family violence and physical abuse against mother and step-children. Injuries against the boy include broken [REDACTED] [REDACTED] injuries.

I believe inadequate investigations occurred by VicPol Managers who "closed too early" on cases due to high number of investigations and office burn-out issues. This and other investigations were subject to an Ombudsman enquiry in which I agreed to give "whistle-blower" evidence.

An Ombudsman's Report "Investigation into DHS-Child Protection Program (November 2009) was published citing my investigation and others and was very critical of DHS.

This investigation and DHS shortfalls were also leaked to the Media and highly publicised by Channel 9 who reported on the DHS response and investigations. Articles in Herald Sun and The Australian also followed. The media campaign; public outcry and Ombudsman Report resulted in a Brumby Government 200 million initiative to project funds into the DHS.

The offender step-father received a [REDACTED] year, [REDACTED] years minimum sentence and is currently imprisoned.

Throughout this investigation I was heavily focused on VicPol's failure in the death of [REDACTED], some of the investigator's involved I knew.

I do believe we are failing in our "learning's" from previous investigations. It is fairly damning when we see other similar investigations and subsequent deaths ie Luke BATTY.

Question Ten

What practical changes might improve integration and co-ordination? Victoria Police to return to role of Lead Agency and to issue *Protection Applications* against suspected parents for removal children from abusive relationships. Often when children are removed we see co-operation from parties.

NB, VicPol still have powers to issue Protection Applications- but we don't utilise it anymore due to the DHS having the lead agency (welfare) role.

What barriers to integration and co-ordination exist? Often DHS Child Protection managers don't work well with police and are ever fearful of criticisms, For example during the initial investigation when I requested more information from their holding's ie medical reports, number notifications and identity of notifier's (teachers and doctors) this was denied and I was informed to obtain a warrant. With a time critical investigation occurring this was ludicrous!

I am still in contact with the mother and her [REDACTED] children today. She informs me she has registered to give evidence at the commission. I am also happy to support her if required.

[REDACTED]