

2015-16 Public Accounts and Estimates Committee Hearing

Fiona Richardson MP

Minister for Women

Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence

Thursday, 21 May 2015

Overview – Prevention of Family Violence Portfolio

Leading a whole-of-government strategy in the prevention of the most serious law and order issue that we face, to shape our responses as a government and as a community, and ensure perpetrators are held to account.

Family Violence - Facts and Figures

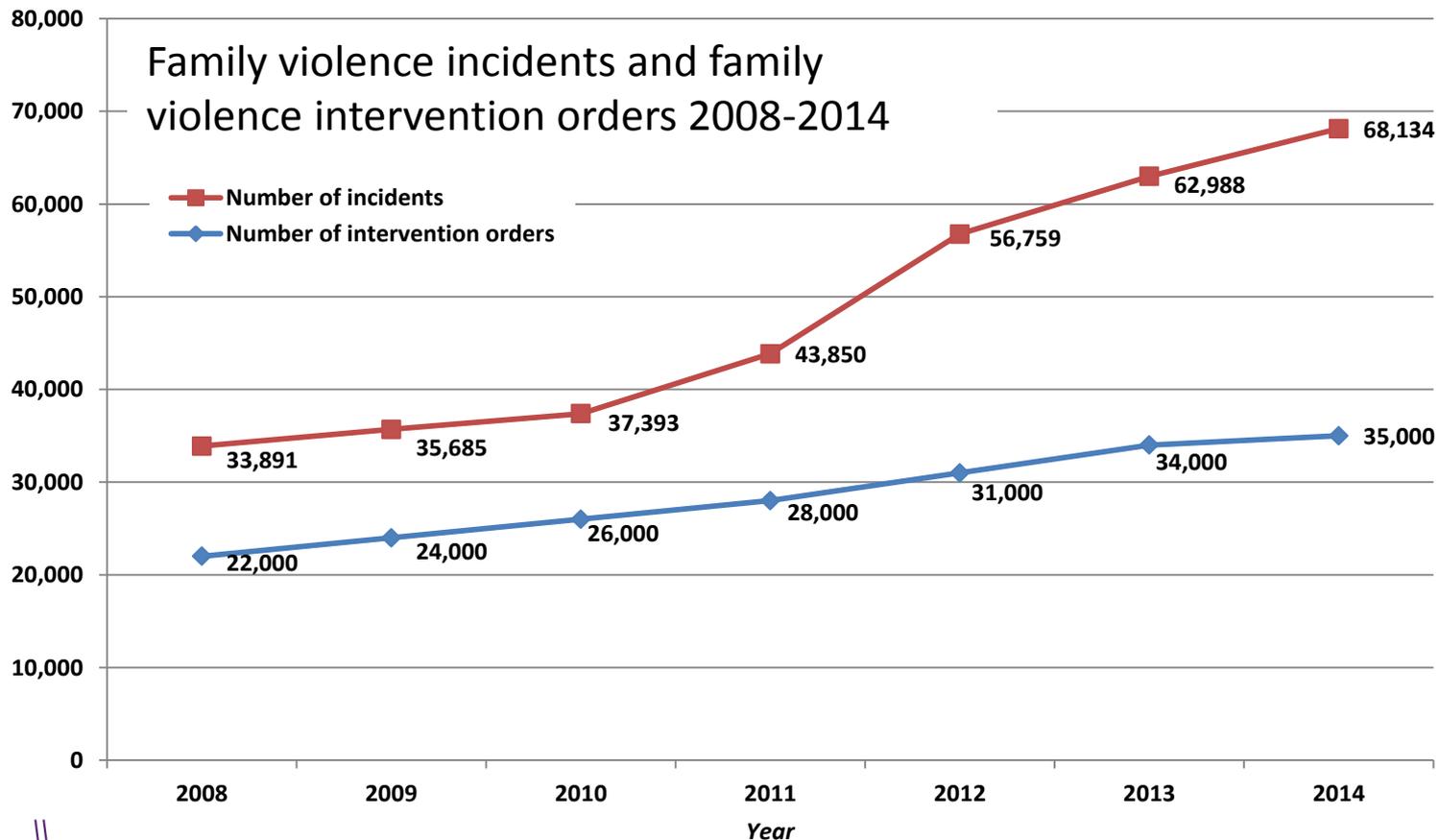
- Family violence is the leading contributor to death, injury and disability in Victorian women aged 15 to 44 years, and is the greatest community safety issue confronting Victorians.
- Last year, on average, one woman per week lost her life in Australia. This year, tragically, we are tracking at two deaths per week.
- 1 in 3 women experience physical violence and 1 in 5 women experience sexual assault from the age of 15.
- More than 68,000 incidents of family violence were reported to Victoria Police in 2014 – an increase of more than 70 per cent from 2010.

Family Violence - The system is broken

“The whole system is broken. It doesn’t protect the vulnerable, it doesn’t punish the guilty and more of the same policies will only mean more of the same tragedies.”

The Royal Commission will shine a light on the gaps in the system and the opportunities for reform.

Prevalence of Family Violence



Gender equality and the prevention of family violence

- Although family violence can happen to anyone, it is overwhelmingly women and children who are impacted by this harm and men who commit it.
- Women are more than three times more likely than men to have experienced violence by a partner.
- Gender inequality is a primary determinant of family violence.



Royal Commission into Family Violence

- The Royal Commission into Family Violence has commenced and has been tasked with examining the entire system from the ground up.
- \$36 million is funded to the Royal Commission and \$4 million provided as an initial investment to boost support services.
- Its Terms of Reference tasks the Royal Commission to make recommendations that consider the needs and experiences of a broad range of groups within our community.
- The causes of family violence are well known- what is needed is a root and branch investigation of family violence in Victoria.

'I cannot promise that every woman and child will be safe. I cannot promise that every family will be free of violence. But I am prepared to try' – Daniel Andrews, 2014



The 2015/16 Budget

Family Violence

- Under the Andrews Labor Government, total new expenditure directed to family violence in the 2015-2016 budget is **\$81.3 million**.
- Funding delivers in full on Labor's election commitments and focuses on the need to address the increased demand.

The 2015/16 Budget – Labor’s Election Commitments

Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence	✓	Implemented
Australia’s first Royal Commission into Family Violence	✓	Underway
\$2.5m for crisis accommodation	✓	Funded
\$2.5m for counselling services	✓	Funded
\$1.4m for boost to Domestic Violence Victoria	✓	Funded
\$100k for victims to access pet foster care	✓	Funded
\$500k to reduce the waitlist for court-ordered men’s behaviour change programs	✓	Funded
\$1.2m for more Family Violence duty lawyers from Community Legal Centres	✓	Funded
\$900k to trial duress alarms and CCTV for at-risk women	✓	Funded
Undertake a safety audit of the Magistrates’ Court	✓	Funded
\$1.6m boost to the Community legal assistance fund	✓	Funded
Re-establish the Death Reviews in the Coroners Court	✓	Funded
\$500k for additional support at Ballarat Centre Against Sexual Assault	✓	Funded

The 2015/16 Budget – Additional to election commitments

Family Violence Fund

The \$16 million Family Violence Fund has been created to be ready to respond to urgent and high priority needs.

- \$2 mil urgent boost in 2014/15 for crisis support and counselling services.
- \$2 mil boost in 2015/16 for L17 Family Violence Access Workers in locations across Victoria
- \$6 mil of unallocated funding to be utilised for urgent funding for unforeseen and high priority needs while the Royal Commission is underway
- \$6 mil set aside for other family violence activities that was deferred from the current year to the 2015/16 year.

The 2015/16 Budget

Additional to election commitments

In addition to Labor's election commitments and family violence fund

- **\$2.1 mil for legal assistance for victims of family violence**
- **\$2 mil for responses to family violence for culturally and linguistically diverse people**
- **\$1.9 mil for responses to family violence for Aboriginal people**
- **\$3.9 mil for additional workers to address the impact of family violence on the child protection system**
- **\$3 mil for men's family violence services, including behaviour change programs**
- **\$2 million for prevention of violence against women and children programs**

Partners in Prevention

Additional to election commitments

The 2015-16 Budget includes **\$2 million** to extend **four evidence-based prevention programs** targeting key settings and populations:

- Preventing Violence Against Women and Children in our Community (Local Government Clusters) Project
- Workplace Equality and Respect Program
- Disability Sector Violence Prevention Resources and Training
- Partners in Prevention Program

Other Budget Initiatives contributing to the family violence response

Other initiatives funded in the 2015-16 Budget contributing to the Government's response to family violence include:

- Homelessness Innovation Action Projects (\$40.3 million), which will provide innovative early intervention approaches for people experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness
- Child FIRST and Family Services (\$48.1 million), which will strengthen the system's capacity to assist vulnerable families

Other initiatives announced prior to the 2015/16 Budget

New Budget funding builds on Government's existing investment to address family violence, including funding for other specialist initiatives commencing this year:

- Court Integrated Services Program expansion (\$7.1 mil over three years)
- Specialist family violence courts program expansion (\$12 mil over four years)
- Information sharing and risk monitoring pilot (\$2.5 mil over two years)



2014/15 Funding

\$2 mil funding from the Family Violence Fund is available immediately.

Consultation with service providers and the DHHS has already commenced.

- **\$1 mil for crisis support and transport** for women and children
 - The state-wide crisis service Safe Steps has been funded \$600,000
 - \$400,000 will be provided to family violence services for their crisis accommodation and rental brokerage programs
- **\$1 mil for counselling services** for women and children
 - Funding is being allocated to existing community service organisations
 - Services are being prioritised to support counselling and specialised service responses for children and young people

Family Violence Index

- The Victorian Labor Government has commissioned Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) to develop the first Family Violence Index.
- While we know the causes of family violence, we don't know just how extensive this crisis is.
- The index will draw on a variety of indicators and statistics from across crime, justice, healthcare, education and community attitudes to create a single indicator of family violence.
- The Family Violence Index will quantify the magnitude of the problem.



The 2015/16 Budget- Summary

- **This budget delivers on Labor’s election policy in full as well as delivering a boost to services to respond to increased demand.**
- **Demand for family violence services has far outstripped funding increases over the past five years.**
- **We know that the interest in the Royal Commission and greater public awareness of family violence has increased that demand even further.**
- **We are gearing up for the Royal Commission’s recommendations – we have committed to implementing them all.**
- **Next year’s budget will respond to the Royal Commission’s recommendations.**