

**Submission  
No 17**

**INQUIRY INTO CAPTURING DATA ON FAMILY VIOLENCE  
PERPETRATORS IN VICTORIA**

**Organisation:** Southern Melbourne Family Violence Regional Integration  
Committee

**Date Received:** 30 May 2024

# Legislative Assembly Legal and Social Issues Committee

## Inquiry into capturing data on family violence perpetrators in Victoria

### Submission by:

Southern Melbourne Family  
Violence Regional Integration  
Committee

May 2024





# Our Acknowledgements

**Acknowledgement of Country:** We acknowledge the people of the Boonwurrung, Bunurong and Wurundjeri tribes of the Kulin Nation who are the traditional owners and custodians of the Aboriginal land of our region. We recognise their continued connection to the land and waters and acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded. It always was and always will be Aboriginal land.

**Acknowledgement of Victim Survivors:** We acknowledge the strength and resilience of victim/survivors of family violence, their voices, bravery and experiences continue to inform the work we do. We also honour those who are prevented from coming forward and those whose voices can no longer be heard.



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## Acronyms List

AFM	Affected Family Member
CIP	Central Information Point
CISS	Child Information Sharing Scheme
CRM	Customer Relationship Management System
CVIMS	Corrections Victoria Intervention Management System
FVISS	Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme
FVIO	Family Violence Intervention Order
FVSN	Family Violence Safety Notice
HLG	Hub Leadership Group
IRIS	Integrated Reports and Information System
IVO	Intervention Order
LEAP	Law Enforcement Assistance Program
MARAM	Multi Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework
MBCP	Men's Behaviour Change Program
NDVO	National Domestic Violence Order under the National Domestic Violence Order Scheme
PEV	Person Experiencing Violence
PIMS	Prisoner Information Management System
PSIO	Personal Safety Intervention Order
PUV	Person Using Violence/Family Violence Perpetrator
RAMP	Risk Assessment and Management Panel
SHIP	Specialist Homelessness Information Platform
SMA	Southern Melbourne Area
SMFVRIC	Southern Melbourne Family Violence Regional Integration Committee
TOD	The Orange Door
TRAM	Tools Risk Assessment and Management
VS	Victim Survivor



## Executive Summary

*“Despite FVISS/CISS, perpetrator information still has this protective/secretive element to it. But in comparison we have EVERYTHING on the victim survivor” (RAMP Practitioner)*

The Southern Melbourne Regional Integration Committee (SMFVRIC) is pleased to provide a submission in response to Legislative Assembly Legal and Social Issues Committee inquiry into capturing data on family violence perpetrators in Victoria. Our submission is a significant milestone for the newly established Person Using Violence Working Group who have been building a system view of the journey through and experience of the system for the person using violence.

The SMFVRIC, established in 2006, supports the integration of services and transformation of service delivery and community responses to family violence working across the Southern Melbourne Area (SMA), which includes the City of Greater Dandenong, City of Casey and Cardinia Shire. The SMFVRIC provide strategic guidance and leadership in improving systems that increase the safety of victim survivors and accountability of family violence perpetrators.

In our submission we have outlined the current approaches to data collection and system integration as well as identification of the critical gaps that inhibit visibility and accountability of the family violence perpetrator, namely:

- Health, mental health, education, alcohol and other drug services may be working with a perpetrator (known and unknown), may conduct assessments key to understanding perpetrator profile, escalating risk, however services rely on self-disclosure from the perpetrator.
- Lack of visibility of prior incidents and/or criminal history where there is a pattern of perpetration against multiple victim survivors. Whilst noted within Victoria Police and The Orange Door (TOD) data, this is not consistently shared with broader service system.
- Disengagement or removal from mandated/voluntary/forensic men’s behaviour change programs is not centrally captured as it is siloed within each service system.
- Family violence perpetrators may engage in non-accredited Men’s Behaviour Change programs, or engage in therapeutic services that are not appropriately MARAM aligned which the service sector has no visibility over.
- Family violence perpetrators moving through multiple agencies in the region is not monitored or recorded centrally.
- Patterns of recidivistic behaviour (for example: re-presentation at services, multiple IVO’s being issued, multiple criminal convictions, multiple L17s generated), is not recorded centrally outside of the justice system and crime statistics, thus it is difficult to predict escalation in behaviours in real time and establish risk profile of family violence perpetrator.
- Closure outcomes of engagement with services is not monitored and recorded centrally.

Our key recommendations include:

1. Establishing a funded mechanism for a central information point that a set of agreed prescribed agencies, developed in cross-sector consultations have access to under Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS). This would allow data across the service system to be aggregated, creating a consistent, dynamic system view, as well as a behavioural profile to build a contemporary



- evidence base on risk. This will also require legislative, policy and practice guidance on FVISS and Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS).
2. Family Safety Victoria sharing TOD data, beyond the Hub Leadership Group (HLG) to support agreed prescribed agencies without the need for multiple information sharing requests.
  3. Review of emerging evidence to build understanding of what is “risk relevant” when it comes to the behaviours/profile of perpetrators supported by clearer practice guidance for cross sector workforces.
  4. Legislative changes that allow services to access federally held data from Services Australia and the Immigration Department.
  5. Family Safety Victoria to provide implementation guidance of FVISS and Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) and wider accessibility to data and perpetrator information held in the service system.
  6. Centralisation of perpetrator data both behavioural and system engagement to ensure enhanced service integration and management of risk among sector agencies.

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*“Whilst a great deal of work has gone into building the evidence-base, there is still a lot that we do not know about who perpetrates violence and the triggers for this” (Micaela Cronin, Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commissioner)*

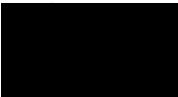
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## Submitting Parties

This is a submission endorsed by the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Southern Melbourne Family Violence Regional Integration Committee (SMFVRIC). Holding a key strategic leadership role in developing a more effective family violence service system by strengthening system integration, members include government and non-government agencies, family violence services, children and family services, Victoria Police, justice and legal services, housing, mental health, alcohol and other drugs, community and health services.

### Chair:



#### **Bel Berry**

Senior Manager Early Help and Entry Point  
Uniting Vic Tas

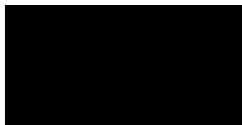
### Deputy Chair:



#### **Robyn Roberts**

General Manager – Family Violence  
Wayss

### Person Using Violence Working Group Chair:



#### **Dominika Szadura**

Orange Door and A Better Way Program Manager Southern Region  
Anglicare Victoria

This submission brings together contributions from a network of organisations who are members of the SMFVRIC Person Using Violence Working Group including:

1. Anglicare Victoria
2. Department of Justice and Community Safety
3. inTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence
4. Magistrates Court of Victoria
5. Relationships Australia Victoria
6. The Orange Door
7. Uniting Vic Tas
8. Victoria Police
9. wayss

For questions or for further information, please contact:

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Principal Strategic Advisor, Southern Melbourne Family Violence Regional Integration Committee







## Submission Questions

### 1. What data on the profile and volume of family violence perpetrators is collected in Victoria?

#### Who, when and how is data collected?

Each agency collects data on family violence perpetrators that is relevant to their service or statutory purpose. However, when reviewing the data platforms and information gathered it is strongly apparent that each agency operates in silos in relation to what data is collected, at what point it is collected and how it is stored and shared.

Across these systems, each agency collects varying amounts of qualitative and quantitative data on family violence perpetrators ranging from demographic data, details on recent incidents, history of prior incidents, safety considerations for victim survivors, criminal history, mandated programs, child protection history, mental health history, alcohol and other drug history, and risk assessments. Agencies and services collect data relevant to their role with the family violence perpetrator, and this is collected at various points of engagement including intake, assessment, time of incident and case management. Table A, outlines the different points of data capture and information obtained for the various agencies.

Due to the nature of the current service system, each agency develops a systems profile of family violence perpetrators entering their individual service rather than establishing a behavioural profile of risk. Furthermore, this systems profile is disjointed and fails to create a comprehensive picture of family violence perpetrators and their journey through the system at a local, state or national level. The systems and information gathered above is not centrally linked in anyway and thus the amount and quality of data gathered is disparate and is often heavily dependent on discussions with and disclosures by the perpetrator. Whilst The Orange Door (TOD) was designed to act as a central hub of information regarding family violence perpetrators and victim survivors, policy frameworks have prescribed narrow interpretations of what is deemed to be 'risk relevant' to share with external agencies.

The Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes (FVISS) and Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) legislation are the primary mechanisms agencies use to share and collate data to build a profile of the family violence perpetrator. However, this legislation has limitations, as each agency assesses what data is 'risk relevant' to share with external agencies undergoing this process. Thus, although comprehensive system profiles can be created within agencies, there is no consistency of how this is shared. Each agency assesses risk differently, resulting in disconnected family violence perpetrator system profiles.

Further to this, undertaking multiple information sharing requests also places a higher administrative burden on practitioners who are also heavily reliant on varying time frames for responses to requests. Despite agencies and services undergoing Multi Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM) Framework alignment, a gap remains in constructing comprehensive perpetrator profiles that is built upon and consistent as the perpetrator moves through the service system. This is a key challenge in holding perpetrators to account.

Examples of where data is currently siloed in different systems include information on the following:

- Health, mental health, education, alcohol and other drug services may be working with a perpetrator (known and unknown), may conduct assessments key to understanding perpetrator profile, escalating risk, however services rely on self-disclosure from the perpetrator.
- Lack of visibility of prior incidents and/or criminal history where there is a pattern of perpetration against multiple victim survivors. Whilst noted within Victoria Police and The Orange Door (TOD) data, this is not consistently shared with broader service system.



- Disengagement or removal from mandated/voluntary/forensic men’s behaviour change programs is not centrally captured as it is siloed within each service system.
- Family violence perpetrators may engage in non-accredited Men’s Behaviour Change programs, or engage in therapeutic services that are not appropriately MARAM aligned which the service sector has no visibility over.
- Family violence perpetrators moving through multiple agencies in the region is not monitored or recorded centrally.
- Patterns of recidivistic behaviour (for example: re-presentation at services, multiple IVO’s being issued, multiple criminal convictions, multiple L17s generated), is not recorded centrally outside of the justice system and crime statistics, thus it is difficult to predict escalation in behaviours in real time and establish risk profile of family violence perpetrator.
- Closure outcomes of engagement with services is not monitored and recorded centrally.

**Table A: Service System Data Summary**

Sector	Data Platform	When Data is Collected	Data Held on Family Violence Perpetrator
Men's Services	IRIS Agency specific CRM	As the Family Violence Perpetrator moves through intake, Men's Behaviour Change (MBC) and Case Management	Family Violence Perpetrator Contact Details – Name/Address Demographic Information Case Management/Men's Behaviour Change Records Program Engagement Program attendance Information Sharing Requests Made/Received Referrals to other service supports Person Experiencing Violence (PEV)/Victim survivor and Case Notes MARAM Assessments
Specialist Family Violence Services	SHIP Agency specific CRM	As the victim survivor moves through intake to case management and recovery programs	PUV contact details Demographic Information MARAM Risk Assessment and Safety Plan for Victim Survivor/Children/Young People Current incident information Any other perpetrator information included in the referral from The Orange Door
Housing and Homelessness Services	SHIP	People are not screened for using violence necessarily, however data will be captured in relation to involvement with housing services.	Demographic data relevant to housing service. Contact details. Only risk relevant information is stored for perpetrator (relating to risk to victim survivor). Unless it is information about the perpetrator (i.e., a CIP report, or FVISS info obtained from Victoria Police etc, then this is stored on the SHIP profile of perpetrator.)
The Orange Door	Family Safety Victoria CRM TRAM	Referrals for the family violence perpetrator occur through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• L17 Referral</li> <li>• Child Protection</li> <li>• Agency third party referral</li> </ul>	L17 Report/Narrative CIP Report – either brief or comprehensive *refer to image A below. Referrals for perpetrator – current and prior Any prior records of relationships to others (children, other victim survivors) Current points of engagement of the perpetrator within the system MARAM Risk Assessment for Victim Survivor
Victoria Police	LEAP L17 Portal	At point of incident	Victoria Police Intelligence relating to all prior history on incidents / matters involving Victoria Police L17 Incident reports
Magistrates Court	Court Link	At point of engagement with court processes	Perpetrator Contact Details Demographic Details All IVO initiated. Information noted on application orders/matters History of previous court engagement
Department Justice and	E*Justice Centurion,	At the time of court assessment (or parole assessment)	Perpetrator contact details. Criminal history of perpetrators including the number of FVIOs the perpetrator has been named on. Clinical assessments and other relevant assessments (including referral information).

Community Safety	CVIMS, PIMS	Departmental intelligence system which also assists in informing appropriate case planning. Court assessment, parole assessment, case management, custodial sentence.	
Integrated Family Services	IRIS Agency specific CRM	As family moves through intake and program services (may include the perpetrator)	Perpetrator Contact Details Demographic Details MARAM Risk Assessment and Safety Plan for affected family members
Child Protection	Client Relationship Information System (CRIS)	If a perpetrator is connected to a child when a report is made to Child Protection for a child and during intervention.	Perpetrator Contact Details Demographic details All information relevant to Child Protection assessment which can include information from other sources (health, corrections etc) External assessment information (if obtained) MARAM and safety planning for adult and children victim survivors IVO copies if available L17 details Child Protection history

**Image A – Table detailing Central Information Point (CIP) information held at The Orange Door.**

TOD CIP Comprehensive Report		TOD CIP Brief Report	
Service	Data Collected	Service	Data Collected
Police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recent &amp; historic offences relevant for risk assessment</li> <li>Five most recent L17s + MARAM risk</li> <li>Detailed FVIO breaches information</li> <li>Current Complaint and Warrants/Summons and FVSN and NDVO's</li> <li>Warrants/whereabouts</li> </ul>	Police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recent &amp; historic offences relevant for risk assessment</li> <li>Most recent L17 involving listed AFM + MARAM risk</li> <li>Summary of FVIO breaches</li> <li>Current Complaint and Warrants/Summons and FVSN and NDVO's</li> <li>Warrants/whereabouts</li> </ul>
Courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detailed final, interim and previous IVOs &amp; IVO summary</li> <li>Narratives and conditions of all active and inactive Orders listed on the report</li> <li>Magistrates' Court upcoming criminal proceedings with bail conditions</li> </ul>	Courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most recent in date IVO for VS listed on the request &amp; IVO summary with narrative and conditions</li> <li>Most recent in date PSIO/IVO if no VS listed on request with narrative and conditions</li> <li>Magistrates' Court upcoming criminal proceedings with bail conditions</li> </ul>
Child Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subject's own child protection history</li> <li>Child demographic information</li> <li>Relationship between subject and child</li> <li>Current child protection involvement</li> <li>Detailed historic information of the subject's behaviour and involvement with children</li> </ul>	Child Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subject's own child protection history if subject is under 25</li> <li>Child demographic information</li> <li>Relationship between subject and child</li> <li>Current child protection involvement</li> <li>Whether Child Protection considered family violence as a protective concern in the subject's behaviour and involvement with children.</li> </ul>
Corrections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detailed custody information</li> <li>Detailed recent and historical Orders</li> <li>Detailed current and historic prison history</li> <li>Youth Justice and relevant criminal history</li> </ul>	Corrections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current custody status and location</li> <li>Upcoming release dates</li> <li>Current and historic prison history</li> <li>Prison incidents, other relevant reports and relevant criminal history</li> </ul>

*Image A: Whilst this information is stored at TOD and may be shared amongst the services listed in the table, this data is not distributed, accessible or shared amongst the wider service system.*

### **Where is it stored? Who has access to it?**

Agencies each have their own secure client management systems that holds data on family violence perpetrators. Access to these systems is restricted to clinicians or professionals who are either managing or overseeing the case, as well as those who are required to access the information for administration reasons.

### **How could processes be improved?**

Processes for collecting and understanding perpetrator profiles and the volume of perpetrators could be improved by:

1. Establishing an integrated funded mechanism for a central information point that a set of agreed prescribed agencies, developed in cross-sector consultations have access to under Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS). This would allow data across the service system to be aggregated, creating a consistent, dynamic system view, as well as a behavioural profile to build a contemporary evidence base on risk. This will also require legislative, policy and practice guidance on FVISS and Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS).
2. Family Safety Victoria sharing TOD data, beyond the Hub Leadership Group (HLG) to support agreed prescribed agencies without the need for multiple information sharing requests.
3. Review of emerging evidence to build understanding of what is “risk relevant” when it comes to the behaviours/profile of perpetrators supported by clearer practice guidance for cross sector workforces.

## **2. How is the current data on the profile and volume of family violence perpetrators used in Victoria?**

### **What is the purpose of the data collection?**

The purpose of each agency’s data collection varies significantly and is dependent upon the purpose of engaging with the family violence perpetrator and the period of engagement with perpetrators. Some services may collect data to establish a risk profile, a systems profile or an individual profile. For example, Victoria Police’s purpose for collecting data is to establish a risk and incident profile given they have access to all family violence incidents and criminal history. This contrasts with the purpose of community services agencies, who would primarily hold information to build an understanding of risk management, case plan goals and achieved outcomes within a period of engagement.

Currently, there is no standardised purpose for data collection across the service system, thus no standardised purpose for establishing a family violence perpetrator profile in Victoria. This is further compounded by the lack of shared information, contributing to a disjointed profile of family violence perpetrators across the state. Without visibility in the system, holding the family violence perpetrator to account is significantly compromised.

### **How could the way this data is used be improved?**

A strategic and systematic approach to improving data collection would strengthen regional and statewide understanding of:

- Current/future demand and resource allocation.
- Risk escalation patterns and refine risk management and safety planning strategies for the person experiencing violence.
- Service system gaps and opportunities for innovation.
- Efficacy of intervention strategies.
- Emerging data trends informing a contemporary evidence base to improve collective understanding of perpetrator behaviours, indicators for risk, safety considerations, as well as frameworks for working with perpetrators.

## **3. What additional data on the profile and volume of family violence perpetrators should be collected in Victoria?**

### **Additional data and how this will help to achieve a full understanding of this cohort?**

1. A wider accessibility and rapid response to requests for federal data including Services Australia, Medicare, Centrelink, Australian Tax Office and Immigration.

For high-risk perpetrators that are not connected with the service system, this data is the only mechanism enabling visibility of family violence perpetrators in a system. Visibility of perpetrators is critical for managing risk and implementing safety interventions with victim survivors as well as children and young people. This would also facilitate timely and accurate responses to the management of family violence perpetrators. Tax and income information would also enable higher levels of intervention of child support. Ultimately, a greater access of family violence perpetrator information will contribute to the systems capacity to hold them to account; a key recommendation of the 2016 Royal Commission into Family Violence.

2. Health, mental health, alcohol and other drugs and psychosocial assessments conducted by service sector.

This information is often key to understanding periods of increasing risk for family violence perpetrators, which is essential to managing the safety of victim survivors, children and young people. This information is often lacking under the FVISS and CISS as it is not always deemed 'risk relevant' as previously stated above. Understanding the intersections of substance use, mental health, acquired brain injury with the perpetration of family violence is directly linked to greater sophistication in data collection and analysis.

3. Instances of misidentification and data pertaining to how the system responds to these cases.

A key consideration for improving the system response for victim survivors includes limiting the capacity for services to incorrectly identify family violence perpetrators. To ensure the safety of victim survivors and the accountability of family violence perpetrators, it is essential to capture data on how often the system misidentifies family violence perpetrators, as well as how systems repair this error. This will contribute to a contemporary evidence base of the volume of family violence perpetrators in Victoria.

4. Data on adolescents using violence in the home and how this is captured in the context of also being victim survivors of family violence themselves.

Literature and anecdotal evidence indicate that often adolescents who use violence in the home have been victim survivors of family violence themselves. Currently, there is no consistent narrative of this trajectory for young people in Victoria due to our siloed mechanisms for capturing data. Capturing this data can inform critical periods of therapeutic intervention for young people, preventing the risk of perpetration and cycling through systems in the future.

### **How can these be overcome?**

1. Legislative changes that allow services to access federally held data from Services Australia and the Immigration Department.
2. Family Safety Victoria to provide implementation guidance of FVISS and CISS and wider accessibility to data and perpetrator information held in the service system.
3. Centralisation of perpetrator data both behavioural and system engagement to ensure enhanced service integration and management of risk among sector agencies.

Data is critical to understanding perpetrator behaviour, system interaction and visibility of perpetrators. Addressing these gaps will improve mechanisms to gain visibility on perpetrators that have been detected by our systems, as well as those that remain undetected or invisible (Flood et al; 2022). Additionally, comprehensive family violence perpetrator profiles will enable understanding of protective factors that mitigate perpetration, thereby improving system response to this pervasive issue (Flood et al; 2022).

## References:

Flood, M., Brown, C., Dembele, L., and Mills, K. (2022) *Who uses domestic, family, and sexual violence, how, and why? The State of Knowledge Report on Violence Perpetration*. Brisbane: Queensland University of Technology.