

NTV Responses to questions on notice

Inquiry into capturing data on family violence perpetrators [people using family violence] in Victoria

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The CHAIR: Okay. Relating to this but also slightly different: how can the government best ensure consistent outcomes evaluations across all men's behaviour change programs?

Olsen CLARK: An outcome, a framework to begin with, would be our number one. Another thing that can be looked into is a review of the minimum standards in Victoria, which were developed quite a few years ago—they could be looked to be reviewed—and ensuring that there is adequate and sustainable funding for these services to ensure that they are able to consistently improve on their service delivery.

The CHAIR: By minimum standards, do you mean the minimum standards for men's behaviour change programs?

Olsen CLARK: Yes.

The CHAIR: Okay. What do you see are some changes in that space?

Olsen CLARK: We might take that on notice.

Response: The 'Men's Behaviour Change Minimum Standards' (the Standards) should be reviewed as there have been significant changes in the intervention service landscape since the Standards were developed in 2017. One major change has been the introduction of the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM) Framework. With consistent and robust risk assessment a central element of men's behaviour change work, the minimum standards must be updated to reflect current processes for identifying, assessing and managing family violence risk.

Interventions for people using violence are also increasingly delivered online since the COVID pandemic. However, the minimum standards don't provide any direction as to how online interventions should be delivered to ensure safety and program objectives.

We also believe a review should consider how the Standards can be expanded to provide guidance for all interventions for adults using violence (i.e. including interventions that are not MBCPs). MBCPs are an important part of the service responses landscape but they will never be suitable for all men using violence. They also do not help provide guidance for service providers working with women and gender-diverse folk. We need a broad suite of targeted, effective, and timely interventions that should include trauma-informed therapeutic 1-1 work, whole-of-family responses, and targeted interventions for specific cohorts, such as high-risk men, men with complex needs, like drug and alcohol problems, and culturally appropriate pathways out, including support for community-led responses. These interventions must be supported by standards to support best practice service delivery.

A review should also consider how the Standards can be expanded to support more thorough and consistent program readiness work. The Standards currently recognise that processes to develop program readiness must be provided (7.3), but with increasing understanding of the

critical importance of program readiness work for program engagement ([Fitz-Gibbon et al., 2024](#)), there is need to articulate what this should include.

A review could also explore providing further guidance to service providers about how they will be assessed for compliance with the Standards, such as through a Compliance Framework. Note that NSW has a Compliance Framework for Men's Behaviour Change Programs.

Finally, the much-needed review of the Victorian Minimum Standards needs to happen in relationship with the recent announcement by the Commonwealth Government to establish national standards for men's behaviour change programmes.

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The CHAIR: That is fine. Within the existing Family Violence Outcomes Framework, and having more of a focus on perpetrators outcomes, would you recommend expanding the existing outcomes framework or would you recommend a separate outcomes framework?

Olsen CLARK: We might take that on notice as well.

Response: We recommend a separate outcomes framework because the existing framework is not fit for the purpose of evaluating service delivery. The existing framework is centred on measuring high level outcomes (such as victim-survivors being safe, and perpetrators being held accountable) and its utility is dependent on having data sources. The existing framework itself does not advise how missing data sources – for which there are many – should be collected. Thus, we recommend a separate outcomes framework for perpetrator interventions, of which the data can feed into the existing Family Violence Outcomes Framework. Illustrating the limited data on family violence perpetration, of the six indicators for perpetrator accountability,¹ only one has a measure that can be collected.²

The existing framework is also unsuitable for evaluating service provision because, despite its name, it conceptualises the efficacy of interventions with men using violence through conventional output measures rather than outcome measures. For example, the indicator '*Increase engagement and retention of perpetrators in programs and interventions*' seeks to evaluate the outputs of programs rather than outcomes. As we highlighted in our submission to this Inquiry, output measures are useful for understanding the level of activity and engagement with intervention services, but are unable to provide insight into the impact of service provision on violence desistance in the way outcome measures can.

¹ The six indicators outlined in the [Family Violence Outcomes Framework](#) are:

- Reduction in all family violence behaviours
- Increase in perpetrators taking responsibility for changing their actions and behaviours
- Increase appropriateness of type and timing of responses, including cultural responsiveness
- Increase engagement and retention of perpetrators in programs and interventions
- Increase the equity and safety of relationships
- Increase perpetrators' overall wellbeing.

² See page 23 of the [Family Violence Outcomes Framework Measurement and Monitoring Implementation Strategy](#).