

## Public Accounts and Estimates Committee

## Inquiry into the 2023-24 Financial and Performance Outcomes

22 November 2024

## Department of Families, Fairness and Housing

## Witnesses:

- Ms. Peta McCammon
- Ms. Annette Lancy
- Mr. Argiri Alisandratos
- Ms Sherri Bruinhout
- Mr. Danny O’Kelly
- Mr. Simon Newport
- Ms. Melanie Heenan
- Mr Drew Warne-Smith

## QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

## QUESTION 14 – Prevention of Family Violence

## Number of FTE employed in The Orange Door, including:

- Government employees v external / partner agencies
- Classification breakdown of VPS staff

**Danny O’BRIEN:** All right. I will move on to family violence, if I can. Secretary, Orange Door – there are 54 Orange Doors, I understand, with 18 primary sites, 18 access points and 18 outposts. How many FTE are employed in the Orange Door at each site, by level, classification and in total? Peta

**McCAMMON:** I would be surprised if we have that with us. Some of the FTE in the Orange Door are our staff, and there are also other providers. But I will just check, Mel, whether you have that.

**Melanie HEENAN:** I cannot give you the delineation on the classifications, but I can say that there are 1200 staff.

**Danny O’BRIEN:** 1200?

**Melanie HEENAN:** 1200 staff in the Orange Door.

**Danny O’BRIEN:** Is that to date?

**Melanie HEENAN:** That is right. And just to clarify, Mr O’Brien, they are largely made up of the 51 partner agencies that support the Orange Door, so providers that are providing services within the context of the Orange Door’s work.

**Danny O’BRIEN:** Yes. Could you provide, then, on notice what proportion are government employees and how many are from the partner agencies – also, as I said, by level and classification – if you have got it?

**Melanie HEENAN:** I can get you the number in terms of the number of VPS staff, so the Family Safety Victoria staff that are in the Orange Door, and yes, I think I can get you the classifications. I can certainly let you know that the hub managers, or the Orange Door managers, are all Family Safety Victoria staff at a VPS6 level.

**Danny O’BRIEN:** Okay. If can you let us know these on notice, that would be great.

**Melanie HEENAN:** Definitely.

*Hearing Transcript, p. 23-24*

Name of Committee members asking question: Mr Danny O’Brien

**RESPONSE****Answer:**

The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing can provide the numbers and classification levels of all staff employed by the department working in The Orange Door network.

Table 1 shows the funded and actual full-time staff equivalent (FTE) of all public service employees of the department working at The Orange Door sites, employed in the last full pay period in June of the current reporting period (2024):

Table 1:

<b>Role title</b>	<b>Classification level</b>	<b>Funded FTE</b>	<b>Actual FTE</b>
Administration Officer	VPS 2	21.0	14.0
Client Support Officer	VPS 3	71.0	59.8
Strategic Planning and Reporting Officer	VPS 5	16.8	14.2
Operational Support Officer	VPS 5	22.0	23.0
Service System Navigator	VPS 6	18.0	10.6
Hub Manager	VPS 6.2	18.0	18.0
Advanced Child Protection Practitioners	CPP4	23.6	17.8
Senior Child Protection Practitioners	CPP5.1	44.1	40.5
Community Based Child Protection Managers	CPP5.2	18.0	16.8
<b>Total</b>		<b>252.5</b>	<b>214.7</b>

Table 2 shows the full-time staff equivalent (FTE) of active partner agency staff working in The Orange Door, employed in the last full pay period in June of the current reporting period (2024):

Table 2:

<b>Staff employed by external services</b>	<b>FTE</b>	<b>Actual FTE</b>
All roles (includes non-VPS administration officers, practitioners, Senior practitioners, Team Leaders and Practice Leaders)	1,144.4	980.5

## QUESTION 15 – Prevention of Family Violence

### Details of any site closures due to inability to staff them, including:

- **The Orange Door**
- **Access Points**
- **Outposts.**

**Danny O'BRIEN:** Was there any reduction in service at any point, as in not open for a short period of time or reduced service level?

**Melanie HEENAN:** No. There would only be a closure or a reduction in service for a small period of hours if there was an incident that was being managed, but certainly no reduction in hours. In fact there has been growth in Orange Door services.

**Danny O'BRIEN:** What about in terms of inability to staff a site? Have there been any closures in that respect?

**Melanie HEENAN:** I can definitely make that inquiry. I guess what you are talking about is the Orange Door primary sites. The 18 Orange Doors are quite substantial sites, so that would not be possible in terms of not being able to stand up a service. There are also the outposts, which are –

**Danny O'BRIEN:** I am actually asking for all 54, including the outposts and including the access points.

**Melanie HEENAN:** The access points, likewise, are walk-in access points, so they would not be closed or reduced in service unless there was a very particular critical incident. The outposts are a little bit different, possibly, because you have to make an appointment to go into an outpost. It is a little bit different in that sense; staff would be sourced for outposts. But again, there has been growth in the number of outposts, so I cannot imagine that would have resulted in a reduction of service.

*Hearing Transcript, p. 24*

Name of Committee members asking question: Mr Danny O'Brien

### RESPONSE

#### Answer:

The Orange Door network operates during business hours, Monday to Friday (closed public holidays) and is accessible via telephone, email and in person at primary sites and access points. No primary site was closed during 2023-24 due to inability to staff the site. The Orange Door network in every area has a business continuity plan to ensure that clients are supported during critical incidents such as disasters and emergencies, or when infrastructure issues or host agency opening hours affect regular service delivery.

The Orange Door network Hub Leadership Groups (HLGs) determine the access network for The Orange Door in that area based on a range of factors including demand, transport pathways for community members and infrastructure availability. Several networks, particularly those in rural and regional areas are considering adopting the virtual outpost approach which has been led by The Orange Door in Wimmera.

#### Access points

People can attend The Orange Door for support without an appointment at an access point. The Orange Door access points are open during business hours and have a permanent team of staff that can respond to people who attend the access point needing support that day.

The Coburg access point which was part of The Orange Door Hume Merri-bek Area permanently closed on 20 December 2023 after a decision by the HLG. A key factor in the decision to close the access point was that the site was not fit for purpose and did not meet the health and safety needs of staff and clients. There is work underway to explore an alternative access point in Craigieburn at the new purpose built DPV Health Hub due to open in 2025.

Access point closures due to staff availability during the 2023- 24 reporting period:

<b>The Orange Door network</b>	<b>Site</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Total (days)</b>
Outer Eastern Melbourne	Yarra Junction	12/02/2024, 28/02/2024	2

### Outposts

People can attend an outpost for support by appointment only. The addresses are not listed on The Orange Door website. This is because The Orange Door staff attend as part of a visiting schedule across the area each week/month which is negotiated with the host agency.

Virtual outposts are the exception. Virtual outposts are located within existing services in the community. People who walk-in to those services during opening hours are provided with direct access to staff at The Orange Door primary site via an encrypted video link. This approach was designed to address the impact of rurality on the availability of services for people needing to contact The Orange Door.

Outpost closures due to staff availability during the 2023-24 reporting period:

<b>The Orange Door network</b>	<b>Site</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Total (days)</b>
Goulburn	Seymour	08/02/2024, 05/04/2024, 18/04/2024, 30/05/2024, 13/06/2024	5
North Eastern Melbourne Area	Collingwood	26/12/2023, 02/01/2024, 02/04/2024	3
Mallee	Kerang	2/6/2024	1
Central Highlands	Ararat	5/12/2023, 7/12/2023, 12/12/2023, 14/12/2023, 19/12/2023, 21/12/2023, 28/12/2023, 02/01/2024, 04/01/2024, 9/01/2024, 11/01/2024, 16/01/2024, 18/01/2024, 23/01/2024, 25/01/2024, 30/01/2024, 22/02/2024, 14/03/2024, 26/3/2024, 28/03/2024	20
Central Highlands	Hepburn	13/12/2023, 27/12/2023, 10/01/2024, 24/01/2024, 20/03/2024	5
Central Highlands	Bannockburn	11/12/2023, 08/01/2024, 22/01/2024	3

**QUESTION 16 – Prevention of Family Violence**

**L17 referrals to The Orange Door:**

- Provide a breakdown of L17 referrals to The Orange Door including a breakdown by 18 key sites, and to output / access point level if available
- How many L17s were not responded to within 7 days?
- What was the longest time for a response to an L17?

**Danny O'BRIEN:** Okay. On the whole, how many L17s were presented by Victoria Police to the Orange Door network for the reporting period? For the benefit of everyone else, an L17 I understand is the form the police fill in when they have been called to a domestic violence, family violence –

**Melanie HEENAN:** I can tell you the proportion, and I will just get your number as well. So the proportion of TOD referrals, so sources of referrals into the TOD, there are 9 per cent of child protection referrals and 52 per cent are L17s in terms of the referrals into the Orange Door.

**Danny O'BRIEN:** So 52 per cent are referrals to Orange Door?

**Melanie HEENAN:** L17s, correct.

**Danny O'BRIEN:** Can you tell me the actual number of L17s?

**Melanie HEENAN:** I will get that number for you, definitely.

**Danny O'BRIEN:** Are you able to also provide that broken down by the 54 sites?

**Melanie HEENAN:** I will definitely be able to break it down into the 18 key sites, so the actual support and safety hubs, and I will certainly make an inquiry into whether or not we can break it down even further.

**Danny O'BRIEN:** Whatever level of detail you can provide that would be great.

**Melanie HEENAN:** Certainly, and I can give you now the figure in terms of L17s: what that 52 per cent is made up of is 98,816.

**Danny O'BRIEN:** 98,816?

**Melanie HEENAN:** Reports, L17 reports.

**Danny O'BRIEN:** In 2023–24?

**Melanie HEENAN:** Correct.

**Mathew HILAKARI:** Is that 92,000 or 98,000, sorry?

**Melanie HEENAN:** 98,000.

**Mathew HILAKARI:** 98,000, thank you.

**Melanie HEENAN:** Because when we look at the total number of referrals into the Orange Door it is 206,000 a year.

**Danny O'BRIEN:** Right, so that was 2023–24?

**Melanie HEENAN:** Correct....

**Danny O'BRIEN:** Can you tell me then how many L17s were not handled in the required period? Is it simply mathematics of the 98,000 – just say 24 per cent?

**Melanie HEENAN:** Well, we are dealing with raw numbers there and percentages here. I can absolutely undertake to get that information for you.

**Danny O'BRIEN:** If you want to clarify that. And what is the longest completion of an L17 that you had last year, as in obviously one that did not meet, but –

**Melanie HEENAN:** I am sure we would be able to get that information for you.

*Hearing Transcript, pp. 24-26*

**Name of Committee members asking question: Mr Danny O'Brien**

**Provide a breakdown of L17 referrals to The Orange Door including a breakdown by 18 key sites, and to output / access point level if available**

All professional referrals, including L17s, are screened and triaged at the eighteen primary sites of The Orange Door network. The table below provides a breakdown of L17 referrals by area (key site).

Area (Key Site)	Number of L17 Referrals
-----------------	-------------------------

Barwon	5,257
Bayside Peninsula	9,560
Brimbank Melton	5,832
Central Highlands Area	3,711
Goulburn	4,133
Hume Merri-bek	4,768
Inner Eastern Melbourne	4,451
Inner Gippsland	5,272
Loddon	4,137
Mallee	2,852
North-East Melbourne	6,931
Outer Eastern Melbourne	4,758
Outer Gippsland	3,051
Ovens Murray	2,352
South West (WSW)	1,784
Southern Melbourne	9,647
Western Melbourne	8,585
Wimmera (WSW)	1,204
<b>Total</b>	<b>88,138</b>

Note that the total is lower than the sum of each area's referrals due to some referrals being re-routed between The Orange Door networks.

Victoria Police completed a total of 98,816 L17s. The number of L17s referred to The Orange Door is slightly lower as some L17s may be directed elsewhere, for example to child protection or Safe Steps for an After Hours response.

It is important to note that L17s are only a portion of the full number of referrals received by The Orange Door network. The Orange Door network also receives referrals from other professionals, including child protection, as well as people presenting for help themselves.

### How many L17s were not responded to within 7 days?

All referrals to The Orange Door are first responded to by being screened and triaged by the Screening, Identification and Triage team to determine risk and need. Those referrals triaged as being at highest risk and/or need will move to the Assessment and Planning teams more quickly than those at lower risk/need.

An analysis of referrals into The Orange Door Network for the 2023-24 financial year found that over 93% of L17 referrals were screened and triaged within seven days and 7% took more than seven days. See table below.

	1 day	2-3 days	4-7 days	8-14 days	> 14 days
<b>Number</b>	36,516	31,095	14,457	4,048	2,004
<b>Percentage</b>	41%	35%	16%	5%	2%

The main reasons for L17 referrals taking longer than seven days to triage include:

- 1) Demand
- 2) Administrative errors where the referral hasn't been closed even though the triaging process has been completed
- 3) Incomplete referrals where the respondent (Person Using Violence) has not been spoken to and so the team are waiting on advice from Police to support the triaging process

### What was the longest time for a response to an L17?

In 2023/24 the longest recorded response to an L17 referral is 177 days.

**QUESTION 17 – Prevention of Family Violence**

**Please provide the proportion of funding that was spent on prevention of family violence versus support.**

**Danny O'BRIEN:** Okay. No worries. Of the total family violence budget, can you provide a breakdown of what is directed towards prevention and what is directed towards support services?

**Melanie HEENAN:** In output funding I think we can, but are you interested in a particular program?

**Danny O'BRIEN:** No, overall.

**Melanie HEENAN:** Okay. Let me find that. The output funding is – excuse me for a moment.

**Peta McCAMMON:** It is \$27 million.

**Melanie HEENAN:** Pardon?

**Peta McCAMMON:** I think it is \$27 million. So there is an output 'Primary prevention of family violence'; the actual was \$27 million. And then in terms of our 'Family violence service delivery' actual, it was \$721 million. They are the two BP3 outputs that we have.

**Danny O'BRIEN:** The question, though, is: what percentage is directed to prevention and what is directed to support? Do you have that information?

**Melanie HEENAN:** No, but we can calculate it. Someone should be able to calculate that.

**Danny O'BRIEN:** That would be great.

**Peta McCAMMON:** We will be able to calculate it for you in time.

**Danny O'BRIEN:** I will have to move on, so if you can provide that on notice, that would be fantastic.

**Melanie HEENAN:** Of course. Sure.

**Danny O'BRIEN:** And equally if there is a target that you are heading towards on that, if you can –

**Melanie HEENAN:** For prevention or for output?

**Danny O'BRIEN:** The proportion that is spent on prevention versus support services. I do not know if you do have a target or not, but if you do –

**Peta McCAMMON:** We do. That is published in the budget paper. So our target was \$30.1 million, our actual was \$27 million. Our target for service delivery was \$622.5 million, and our actual was \$721.3 million.

**Danny O'BRIEN:** No, what I am talking about is the proportion of funding that is spent on prevention versus the –

**Peta McCAMMON:** We can take that. Sure.

*Hearing Transcript, p. 26-27*

**Name of Committee members asking question: Mr Danny O'Brien**

**RESPONSE****Answer:**

The proportion of funding spent on the prevention of family and gendered violence was 3.6 per cent compared to 96.4 per cent for family violence responses. This includes funding administered by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing and Respect Victoria through the Prevention of Family Violence portfolio but does not include investment in prevention or response through other portfolios.