

# TRANSCRIPT

## PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

### Inquiry into Budget Estimates 2018–19

Melbourne — 14 June 2018

#### Members

Mr Danny Pearson — Chair

Mr David Morris — Deputy Chair

Mr Steve Dimopoulos

Mr Danny O'Brien

Ms Fiona Patten

Ms Sue Pennicuik

Ms Harriet Shing

Mr Tim Smith

Ms Vicki Ward

#### Witnesses

Ms Natalie Hutchins, Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence,

Ms Kym Peake, Secretary,

Mr Terry Symonds, Deputy Secretary, Health and Wellbeing,

Ms Sue Clifford, Chief Executive Officer, Family Safety Victoria, and

Ms Jackie Kearney, Interim Chief Executive Officer, Office of Prevention and Women's Equality, Department of Health and Human Services.

**The CHAIR** — I declare open the public hearings for the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee inquiry into the 2018–19 budget estimates.

All mobile telephones should now be turned to silent.

I would like to welcome the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence, the Honourable Natalie Hutchins, MP; Ms Kym Peake, Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services; Mr Terry Symonds, Deputy Secretary, Health and Wellbeing; Ms Sue Clifford, Chief Executive Officer, Family Safety Victoria; and Ms Jackie Kearney, Interim Chief Executive Officer, Office of Prevention & Women’s Equality.

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All evidence given today is being recorded by Hansard. You will be provided with proof versions of the transcript for verification as soon as available. Verified transcripts, any PowerPoint presentations and handouts will be placed on the committee’s website as soon as possible.

Witness advisers may approach the table during the hearing to provide information to the witnesses if requested, by leave of myself. However, written communication to witnesses can only be provided via officers of the PAEC secretariat. Members of the public gallery cannot participate in the committee’s proceedings in any way.

Members of the media must remain focused only on the persons speaking. Any filming and recording must cease immediately at the completion of the hearing.

I now invite the witness to make a very brief opening statement of no more than 10 minutes. This will be followed by questions from the committee. Minister.

### **Visual presentation.**

**Ms HUTCHINS** — Thank you, Chair. I would like to begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we meet and paying my respects to elders past and present. I will present an overview of our family violence prevention strategies. The Victorian government is committed to ensuring that we stamp out family violence, and as a result we have invested accordingly and have committed to a family violence rolling action plan, which comes with much consideration and recommendations from the family violence royal commission.

I have primary responsibility, as minister for family violence prevention, for driving prevention initiatives to achieve a Victoria where all Victorians experience equality and respect in all types of relationships, are empowered and respected at home and everywhere, and are supported in their relationships to reach their full potential. For us the key to family violence prevention in Victoria is really implementing our *Free from Violence* strategy, establishing a new prevention agency, which it has been announced is to be called Respect Victoria, and rolling out the state’s first gender equality strategy as well. I work with many colleagues across government but in particular the Special Minister of State, the Attorney-General and the ministers for education, families and children, and housing to implement those recommendations that have come from the royal commission.

Why we need to invest in prevention: Victoria’s *Free from Violence* strategy sets the scene for our prevention work, and quite frankly the urgency is in the figures. The needs are there in terms of one in three women across Australia having experienced physical violence, one in four women across Australia having experienced physical or sexual violence from a partner and one in five women across Australia experiencing sexual violence. There has traditionally been, unfortunately, a widespread under-reporting of family violence not only in this state but around Australia. We are starting to see this change, and that is a positive sign. The Victorian community are becoming more aware of family violence and picking up the signs of those who are affected, and this is supported with the evidence we have.

The next slide I have is ‘Why we need to invest in prevention’. This is a piece of work that has been done by Our Watch and Australia’s National Research Organisation for Women’s Safety. It is a really good insight. I

know the slide has some quite small writing there, but if I could just talk to some of those points, the main thing is having a look across the bottom at the medium to long-term nature of this strategy and this work — medium-term being six to 10 years and long term being 10 years-plus. This is the massive challenge that we have as a government, as a society — to turn family violence around. There are a number of peaks and troughs here on this graph which talk about the need for prevention: number 1 down the bottom, infrastructure investment and strengthening, 2, strengthening and basically building programs to put measurements in place but also to start to change the factors that are reinforcing violence against women; 3, if you have a look in the centre there, the demand for formal response services, you can see that that actually goes on the incline around the 6–10-year mark but then dramatically decreases off after 10 years.

This is similar to strategies and observations around many health prevention programs that have run over many years. We know that this is not something that we will fix in two months, 12 months or two years. So 4 on that graph, 12-month prevalence of family violence against women, you will see that it drops off again at that 10-year mark; and also on point 5, lifetime prevalence of violence against women, you will see the decrease to starts in the very long term, and that is 10 years-plus.

I have pulled a quote out of the Royal Commission into Family Violence, which I think is really quite relevant to the work I am going to talk about today and obviously to our budget focus in this area:

If we are to prevent family violence we must change the attitudes and social conditions that give rise to it. There is a need to implement primary prevention strategies that are designed to dismantle harmful attitudes towards women, promote gender equality and encourage respectful relationships. Because family violence takes many forms, a variety of approaches is required. Some programs should be addressed to the Victorian community as a whole, others to particular population groups and places.

We have taken that core view that has come out of the royal commission findings as part of the map that we are using in implementing our prevention strategies. Some programs are going to work for the whole of community, some programs are going to work better in schools, some in workplaces, but there are particular parts of our community who are so over-represented in the statistics of family violence that we need to have particular programs that are relevant to that subpopulation but also to that place.

If I could go to the milestones achieved and the highlights over the last three years of family violence prevention, there are a number of campaigns that happened over the 16–17 period which have then flowed on with success again into the 17–18 period and our planned campaigns and work for the 18–19 period. We launched the *Free from Violence* strategy in May last year and the action plan out of that in January this year. The strategy and action plan address the key drivers of violence by targeting the social conditions, structures and practices that allow it to continue, primarily gender inequality. We have funded 34 community partnerships in primary prevention programs, 21 *Free from Violence* innovation programs, 13 innovative programs in Aboriginal communities, and continued support for the women’s health sector to work with us on this goal.

Prevention of family violence investment: the 18–19 budget commits \$24 million towards behavioural change campaigns and programs that will target workplaces, diverse communities, adults, adolescents and older people. You can see on the chart there the flow of that money over the next four years.

In terms of our campaign to make change in community, we have rolled out the Respect Women: Call It Out campaign, which is a behaviour change campaign and encourages bystander intervention. That has been funded and will continue to be funded in this budget with the \$24 million commitment, which is in BP3, page 73, which will continue behaviour change campaigns in a range of initiatives, which include online, social media, advertising and of course reaching out in printed materials as well. Supporting the state government’s Respect Women: Call It Out campaign is a series of community organisations that are promoting that as well, and we have had really good reach in terms of the first ad campaign that was run out last year, the There’s Nothing Good About Dads Who Abuse Women campaign. We were able to reach one in four Victorians with that campaign. Again, we are having very good success with the short time that we have had the Respect Women campaign running.

We also have a new dedicated prevention agency, which was launched on 29 March this year, on the second anniversary of the Royal Commission into Family Violence, where we announced the details of a dedicated primary prevention agency to ensure that government and successive generations in Victoria continue to commit to addressing the drivers of violence and eliminating family violence before it starts. This will require legislation that I will be bringing to the Parliament in months to come, and I look forward to the bipartisan support for this legislation. Respect Victoria will begin operation in August of this year.

Finally, my last slide, the Free from Violence Fund. The Free from Violence Fund supports creative and innovative family violence prevention activities and will assist us to know what works best in local settings. All of these projects will be reviewed for their success by my department. There are 21 innovative programs that are being supported through the free from family violence fund, with a total investment of \$2.5 million. Some of those that have been announced this year include Barwon CASA and Barwon Adolescent Task Force, who will work with young people to address the drivers of family violence through mediums that really appeal to young people. Also one of the other ones I most recently announced was the Grampians Pyrenees Primary Care Partnership, which will work with farming communities to increase awareness of gender inequality. That is my presentation. Thank you.

**The CHAIR** — Thank you, Minister, for that comprehensive presentation.

**Ms SHING** — Thank you, Minister, and witnesses. At the outset I think that it is really an enormous opportunity to take stock and look not just at what is being done now but what has been done. To that end, the work that you represent in the aggregate at this table today is underpinned by countless hours that have been undertaken within the community sector, within meeting rooms, within decision-making processes that are about creating and driving intergenerational change. To that end, it is a staggering, enormous and, it may seem at times, overwhelming piece of social change that we are in the midst of, but it is having an enormous and profound and very real impact on a day-to-day level, not just for the victims and survivors of family violence, but for those who learn from behaviours and for those who will get the benefit of prevention and education work that is going on. So please take that as a compliment of the highest order for you to take back to those who are working so hard behind the scenes without any expectation of recognition or reward.

In that regard, I know from the work in Gippsland, for example, that we have had a very high incidence of family violence. L17s are overly represented across Gippsland, and one of the cohorts which was referred to in the royal commission and in recommendations is the Aboriginal community. There has been an awful lot of work go into self-determination and work from within the Gunai/Kurnai communities across Gippsland to really trial new ideas to prevent family violence.

With that in mind — and excuse my long preamble — I will take you to budget paper 3, page 82, and the *Free from Violence* strategy. I would like to get a better sense of how the Aboriginal Family Violence Primary Prevention Fund aligns with this particular strategy and how it is intended to drive a specialised suite of initiatives for this cohort into achieving that long-term intergenerational change and improvement that I referred to earlier.

**Ms HUTCHINS** — Thank you, and yes, you are very right in identifying the fact that family violence is very prevalent, unfortunately, in the Gippsland area, as it is in some other regional areas and certainly in parts of Melbourne. Certainly the innovation fund that we have had with Aboriginal communities has been I think one of the kind of star performers in all of the programs that we have been running out in community, in that it has been really, really embraced in terms of unique applications and settings and programs as Aboriginal organisations have been submitting their bids for parts of this money. I was really pleased to be in Gippsland just a few weeks ago to be able to meet with a number of organisations down there to talk about the needs, the desires and the programs that are being successful and running on the ground there already. But I think the thing to acknowledge with Aboriginal family violence prevention programs is that you need to have self-determination at the centre of those programs, so that ensures that you have got complete buy-in by the Aboriginal community.

I just note for the record too that in so many family violence incidences that are reported in Aboriginal community in fact the perpetrators are not in the main Aboriginal. Obviously most of that is partner-related violence. But it is also making sure that women in Aboriginal communities, particularly in regions and remote areas, are connected and are able to report. Quite frankly, there has been a distrust between Aboriginal community and the police for many years. We are breaking down those barriers. I am very pleased to say that some of the money that has flowed through the family violence lens into police has resulted in some really good training of our police, particularly down in Lake Tyers, to understand Aboriginal culture a bit better but also to work with communities around reporting of family violence. I guess the family violence fund that we have designed with Aboriginal communities is really about a community-led approach down there.

**Ms SHING** — Yes, excellent. Thank you very much, Minister, and again I am looking forward to continuing that momentum.

**Ms HUTCHINS** — Thanks.

**Ms WARD** — Thanks, Minister. Welcome, everyone. Minister, you mentioned in your presentation the 24 million that the government has committed towards behavioural change campaigns in the prevention of family violence investment. You also mentioned the Call It Out campaign. Now we know language is incredibly important, as are behaviours, in terms of how people are treated by others and how they are regarded by others. Can you please talk us through the campaign that the government is — I know you mentioned it in your presentation, but could you please talk us through more of what that \$24 million will be spent on and what you hope to achieve?

**Ms HUTCHINS** — Yes. It is a two-phased campaign. The first part of it rolled out last year with the theme ‘There’s Nothing Good About Dads Who Abuse Women’. That was in the form of TV ads and online support ads, really trying to get through the damage that is caused by the action of perpetrators. The second phase, which we are rolling out at the moment, is about Respect Women: Call It Out, and it is really encouraging men to step up and call out bad behaviour within their own social circles or within their own workplaces. That ad was formulated with the advice of the Victim Survivors’ Advisory Council, who did a power of work giving us their feedback on that.

Some people have said that this ad can be interpreted as a bit of a soft touch, but quite frankly, it is penetrating through the community. I was at the local cinema myself when the ad came on the screen —

**The CHAIR** — Order! We will come back to that, Minister, and it is a great ad campaign.

**Ms WARD** — Please come back to us on that. I would like to hear the end of that story, Minister.

**Mr MORRIS** — Just before I ask a question, can I just, with the indulgence of the committee, note that this is the fourth year of the hearings of this portfolio and of course for three of those years we had a different minister. No reflection on the current one, but I do want to acknowledge the work of the former minister, the late Fiona Richardson. It is about 12 months, I think, since she was sitting in this room, and I think it was a challenging hearing for all of us, but certainly, I am sure, much more challenging for her. So on behalf of, I am sure, Mr Smith and Mr O’Brien, who is not able to be here, and myself, I just want to place on record our respect for her important work — not only the work that she did but the manner in which she undertook that work. I just put that on the record.

**The CHAIR** — Absolutely. In response, with your indulgence, Deputy Chair, briefly, I think all of us recall that hearing as being a particularly challenging and difficult hearing for Fiona, but she discharged her obligations as a minister of the Crown and as a member of Parliament with distinction on that day, and her legacy in this place will be quite profound. Over to you.

**Mr MORRIS** — Okay. Back to politics as usual. Minister, with reference to BP3, pages 73 and 82, I note that \$9.6 million has been allocated to continue the implementation of the *Safe and Strong* strategy. It has been reported that Darebin council has been provided \$26 000 to promote — I am quoting — ‘positive and respectful roles and relationships at preschool’, with the aim of preventing violence against women. Can I ask you: how many other councils receive money to look at initiatives within preschools that could prevent violence against women, and what was the total funding allocation, please?

**Ms HUTCHINS** — Thank you for the question. I am really pleased to be able to talk about our partnerships with local government. I actually think local government is at the heart of the delivery of many of our strategies in this space, and quite frankly local government has been doing some of this work without the support of federal or state governments for many years, so it is good that we are doing this in partnership. There was a community partnerships for prevention program that ran out under the previous minister, and that particular one that you are referring to was one of those 34 projects, but we are also continuing —

**Mr MORRIS** — Sorry, so it is not under the *Safe and Strong* banner?

**Ms PEAKE** — It is, yes.

**Mr MORRIS** — Yes, it is. Thank you.

**Ms HUTCHINS** — But it is a community partnership program as well. And we have continued that work with the Free from Violence local government grants, which are out of the last 12 months' budget, which are in partnership and being coordinated by the MAV to roll out, in particular their —

**Mr MORRIS** — I am sorry. Did you give me a dollar figure there? I am having a little bit of trouble with the acoustics, which is not unusual.

**Ms HUTCHINS** — I might refer to Jackie.

**Ms KEARNEY** — Thank you. The grant program that Darebin council was funded under for that particular project had a total of 570 000 allocated to it. Of that, 345 000 was provided across 10 council areas. Darebin council was the only council that undertook that particular project, Creating gender equality in the early years. The other nine councils focused on a range of projects that responded to what they identified to be their local council need. The additional 150 —

**Mr MORRIS** — Just quickly, can you give me a flavour of the other projects?

**Ms KEARNEY** — I can, yes. Ballarat City Council did some work around strengthening culturally and linguistically diverse communities to prevent violence against women. Frankston did some work on a program called *Baby Makes 3*. Horsham rural council did some work around Act@Work. Latrobe did some work on developing a gender analysis tool. That is kind of the flavour of those projects.

**Mr MORRIS** — That is useful. Thank you. Minister, how many women fleeing family violence are waiting for appropriate housing?

**Ms HUTCHINS** — I am happy to take that on notice.

**The CHAIR** — Is that currently, Deputy Chair?

**Mr MORRIS** — Yes, as of today.

**The CHAIR** — Or the most recent figures.

**Mr MORRIS** — The most recent figures, yes. So we do not even have a ballpark figure?

**Ms PEAKE** — Sorry, I do not have the housing figures with me, but we do have figures, so I can take that on notice and provide you with that.

**Mr MORRIS** — Obviously it is not up to the minister for family violence to provide housing, but it is not an issue that is monitored by the portfolio?

**Ms HUTCHINS** — I am actually the minister for family violence prevention, and part of the housing question that you just asked is for the housing minister, but I am happy to get that information. There is a service called Safe Steps that takes those calls and coordinates that. That organisation does sit within the realms of the housing minister, but I am happy to provide further information.

**Mr MORRIS** — I appreciate that, which is why I was asking. Sorry about dropping off the bench — we tend to talk in shorthand, having close to 50 hearings — with the name of the hearing. Understanding that you as minister for family violence prevention are not responsible for providing housing, I am asking whether it is something that is monitored on a regular basis within your portfolio?

**Ms HUTCHINS** — I am certainly briefed on the inquiries that come through Safe Steps, which is not necessarily an organisation that sits within my portfolio, but I do get briefed on information that is coming through there. Certainly there has been a high level of demand as our campaign has run out around calling it out, and I guess giving security to women and children that are experiencing family violence — giving them the security that if they step up, speak out and seek advice, that they will get the support — and that is the key message that is coming through, which means we have seen an increase over the last two years really in Family Safety Victoria and Safe Steps receiving phone calls and inquiries around assistance. Now, not every single one of those require housing assistance, and there is a lot of background work that needs to go into responding to those calls and making sure that people are given the services that they need and are connected to the services

that they need. Part of that rollout of that policy also goes to the establishment of our safety hubs and ensuring people are connected that way.

**Mr MORRIS** — Can I ask you how many women have been put into temporary accommodation such as motels while they are waiting for housing to come through?

**Ms HUTCHINS** — I might ask Sue to comment on that.

**Ms CLIFFORD** — Certainly. I will have to take that question on notice and provide you with that detail during the course of the hearing.

**Mr MORRIS** — Again, the latest available figures, and by ‘the latest available figures’ I am not asking for the figures at 30 June last year or whatever, but whatever the closest current quarterly — or whatever — figures are. Minister, have any women died in temporary accommodation while they have been waiting for housing?

**Ms HUTCHINS** — Again, I am the minister for family violence prevention, not the deliverer of the services that you refer to, but I would have to come back to you around that. We know that one woman a week, unfortunately, dies at the hands of her partner or former partner around Australia. Whether that has occurred in temporary accommodation or not, I cannot disclose that right now.

**Mr MORRIS** — I was not necessarily asking about partner violence. It could be natural causes, it could be substance overdoses or whatever.

**Ms PEAKE** — We certainly receive critical incident reports from funded services who deliver the refuge services as well as other temporary accommodation. I can go back and have a look at what we have available and, if we have that data available, make it available to you.

**The CHAIR** — Ms Shing has got some questions for Ms Pennicuk, I believe.

**Ms SHING** — Thank you, yes. These, as I indicated earlier, are to be taken on notice and provided in written response, please. Ms Pennicuk has referred to the following: budget paper 3, page 104, ‘Resourcing effective implementation monitoring’, and she also cites the family violence reform implementation monitor’s *Report of the Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor*; Richard Willingham and Erin Somerville’s article ‘Victorian domestic violence reforms: government told to focus on long-term changes’ on the ABC News in 2018; and in 2018 Emma D’Agostino’s ‘‘Urgent need’ for planning to deliver change: family violence reform implementation monitor’ in the *Bendigo Advertiser*. The question is:

I am concerned by recent statements from the family violence reform implementation monitor about the potential for major implementation risks and what the monitor sees as a need for a ‘more strategic response’. Can the minister indicate which components of the \$42.5 million in additional funding are dedicated to address these concerns?

A further supplementary to that question is:

Will the whole-of-government response report on what this investment produces or achieves as a whole reform, rather than simply on acquitting the recommendations?

The second question from Ms Pennicuk is as follows:

The family violence implementation monitor also noted that the Victorian Managed Insurance Authority assisted the Victorian Secretaries’ Board to develop an initial interagency risk register. However, risks in the register are not being actively managed, and the monitor considers that it is not clear how accountability for risks that affect more than one agency are being managed. The question is: has a risk register been compiled, by which agency and what are the top three risks that have been identified?

Question three:

When will the family violence outcomes framework be finalised and will its performance measures be embedded in the next budget?

They are Ms Pennicuk’s questions on notice.

**Ms WARD** — Minister, would you mind continuing to tell the story that you commenced before we ran out of time, please?

**Ms HUTCHINS** — I was just going to say that *Respect Women: Call it Out* actually came on the cinema screen while I was there watching a movie with my son. To hear a group of young men sitting behind me comment on the ad in a way that they completely got the message was like a personal little focus group insight. To hear those young men say to each other, ‘Oh, that’s what you do; you call it out’, and particularly making comments to one boy in the group, who obviously had called out something in front of the other boys, makes me think that we are resonating. We are getting the message through for them to be able to understand and hear that, and to know what is acceptable, what is not, in a very subtle way. I am not sure that a hard-hitting family violence ad with violence in it might have actually had the connection to those boys that there is an element of respect at the heart of all of this for women, and they completely got that.

**Ms WARD** — Absolutely, but I think also the other important message is for people to understand that family violence is not just physical hitting or other forms of physical violence — that there is more to it and there are layers.

**Ms HUTCHINS** — Absolutely.

**Ms WARD** — And it addresses that behavioural issue. You have spoken about that campaign. Are there other behaviour change campaigns that the government is undertaking?

**Ms HUTCHINS** — There certainly are. There are a number of other ads that have been developed for online use only at this stage, where we are really challenging sexism, particularly in a social setting, and getting the image across of men thinking about when it is right to speak up and say something in a personal setting or in a work setting and really challenging the thinking and the action. We know stories and we have heard through the royal commission of men, and people, in our society not knowing when the time is to intervene and call it out, so this gives some tools, some parameters, some discussion points for our community to start to say, ‘Hang on a minute, that sort of behaviour is not acceptable and I should speak out on that’.

**Ms WARD** — Absolutely; also of course people’s unconscious behaviour of being aware themselves of what they are doing and saying. Minister, what other programs or campaigns are you running? Is it only just about women or are there other groups included in this campaign?

**Ms HUTCHINS** — Yes, that is right. We are tailoring the campaign in different areas, ensuring that we are developing specific tools for various communities such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, LGBTIQ communities and also older Victorians that are at risk of elder abuse. A couple of years ago I actually went and sat in the Sunshine Magistrates Court for two days to observe family violence cases as they came forward, and I was shocked at the number of cases that were coming forward: applications for AVOs, at the time, for older residents in the local area against their adult children who were drug and alcohol affected, and from my observations over those two days I probably saw about one-third of the cases were for that. For many families it is just devastating to have to go to those lengths of having an AVO order out against your own adult child. And I think that part of the challenge that we have with family violence prevention is also allowing the conversations in families to happen about that and what is acceptable, but also arming those citizens with what their rights are.

**Mr DIMOPOULOS** — Minister, just to pick up from where Ms Ward was leading the discussion, at page 82 of budget paper 3 it talks about the investment in the Free from Violence campaign, and you have got the Free from Violence innovation grants. I just want to get a sense of who they have been geared towards. Are there any rich examples you can give us of how they have been effective?

**Ms HUTCHINS** — Certainly, there are lots of good examples. Some of those are only just kicking off and need to be reviewed and looked at in terms of their effectiveness, but quite frankly we are paving the way in this policy; we are putting together a whole new program which there are not a lot of examples of worldwide for us to go to to see what is working and what is not, and also there are programs that do exist in other countries that would not be applicable to here. So by having this Free from Violence Fund what we are doing is not only trying to address the underlying drivers of family violence, which are gender inequality and attitudes towards women, but we are also trying to make sure that we are supporting programs that are local and specific to local needs.

We have had 21 programs from across Victoria be supported through this fund at a cost of \$2.5 million, and there has been an incredible range of programs supported with that money, including one I just announced a few weeks ago in partnership with Victoria University, where they are developing an innovation program to prevent



violence against women on university campuses. They are the first university in Victoria to step up to the plate and do this, and I congratulate them for doing that, but if this model program works, then it is something we know we can then approach other university campuses with and really empower some of the students who have been quite voiceless in this space in the past.

There are many other programs as well. There was also the one I mentioned in the slide, which is the \$100 000 grant to the Grampians Pyrenees Primary Care Partnership, which is really how we break down the barriers of isolation for women in rural communities, and their program is called Talking Gender on the Farm. Quite often we have heard that women's voices in country settings are under-represented, so the project empowers local women to challenge sexism and encourages them to embrace leadership opportunities and to seek help where family violence is prevalent.

**Mr DIMOPOULOS** — Minister, in my community the City of Monash has been one of the leaders in local government in terms at least of the elected level, with councillors and mayors talking about these issues for several years. One of the components of the grants is for local government. People's minds do not automatically make an immediate connection between family violence and local government — roads, rubbish and rates, as you would know, being the former minister. What was the thinking behind that investment — also, in partnership with local government; why local government?

**Ms HUTCHINS** — Thanks for the question. The programs that have been run by various councils, whilst they have been absolutely fantastic in reaching out with partnerships to, say, local health networks and directly to residents in various areas — and Monash is a great example of that — we are doing it in a way that is really focusing in on the local needs and local community support, because what you want is for people to be talking about this in their local setting and making that change. Rather than just relying on an advertising campaign that is statewide, you need to have these sort of programs to generate the conversations and changes locally.

I am pleased to announce that we have had a program open for applications from local councils that is being administered by the Municipal Association of Victoria. That closed on 30 May. There are 51 applications — some of those are multiple council applications as well — so with 79 councils across Victoria we know there is a massive take-up. We have seen a really successful program that has been underway for about 18 months now called Together We Can, which is an example in Cardinia of getting community, media, police and a health service all working together there to make some real difference and stamp out family violence, and as a result they have actually seen a decline in incident reporting in their area. We are still to do a full analysis of that program because that is yet to conclude, but from early indications it has been a very successful prevention program at a local level.

**Mr MORRIS** — Just continuing on the earlier thread, particularly around local government, Minister, can I ask: it has been reported that Manningham City Council checks books for gender modelling and diversity.

**Ms HUTCHINS** — Sorry, can I just ask what council?

**Mr MORRIS** — We will try again. It has been reported that Manningham City Council checks books for gender modelling and diversity. Are you aware of that?

**Ms HUTCHINS** — Manningham — not in particular, but we have been working with a range of councils.

**Mr MORRIS** — Perhaps the same question a different way: have councils been instructed by your department to check books for gender modelling and diversity?

**Ms HUTCHINS** — No, they have not.

**Mr MORRIS** — No, they have not — okay.

**Ms HUTCHINS** — Not to check or eliminate or get rid of any books based on gender modelling, but what we have done in partnerships with councils — and I am happy to take the specifics on Manningham on notice — with any of the funding that we are working with councils on, it is about promoting further books and further options for kids and families to be able to get examples of different sorts of gender focus, rather than eliminating any sort of book out of the library.

**Mr MORRIS** — Going back to *Safe and Strong*, page 21 says:

Children are able to 'self-socialise', which means that children's books and toys ... all influence how children think about themselves in the world.

From two years old, children begin forming concepts of gender and gender difference.

Can I ask you: what is the criteria, with regard to books particularly, for gender modelling and diversity in terms of the extension that you were just talking about?

**Ms HUTCHINS** — There has not been a criteria issued by my department to councils/libraries around gender modelling, but there has certainly been a focus on encouraging libraries to profile books that, I guess, challenge the traditional gender stereotypes — so ensuring that we have books that promote girls as superheroes or girls in construction and so forth and also having boys in caring roles as well, because quite frankly when you go to libraries and you look at the material that is on display, quite often it is gender biased. We are not trying to eliminate that; we are trying to add to that conversation.

**Mr MORRIS** — Given that you said there is no criteria imposed, are there any guidelines that councils or preschools or whatever might use with regard to that model?

**Ms HUTCHINS** — There are no guidelines issued by government or my department. Are there guidelines that have been researched by universities that perhaps council libraries might pick up? Possibly. I am not going to rule that out, but certainly there is nothing that comes from government with us supporting gender diversity through our councils and our libraries.

**Mr MORRIS** — So you are not providing even any recommendations with regard to where —

**Ms HUTCHINS** — Not criteria, no. There could be discussions happening within libraries about what are the best books for gender diversity. Yes, that could be happening, but it is not issued by government.

**Ms SHING** — Does this fall into the women's portfolio? It is a very strange overlap here. We are in the prevention of family violence hearing at the moment. It is a deeply strange experience right now.

**The CHAIR** — Order! I am happy for the line of questioning to continue. The Deputy Chair to continue.

**Mr MORRIS** — Minister, you are effectively saying that there is no auditing process in place. Is that correct?

**Ms HUTCHINS** — All of our programs, upon completion, will be assessed for their success, but there is no auditing of books or criteria for libraries to ban books or anything like that. That in itself is a fairytale.

**Mr MORRIS** — So in this instance what does success look like?

**Ms HUTCHINS** — Going back to the graph that I put up earlier in my presentation around the decline of family violence, as I read out with the quote in my presentation, changing —

**Mr MORRIS** — I am thinking with particularly the gender equality strategy and in the context of libraries and preschools.

**Ms HUTCHINS** — I think fundamentally success looks like a decline in family violence firstly, and an increasing —

**Mr MORRIS** — It is a bit hard to link that outcome to this specific. I mean, surely there is a more specific successful outcome in terms of this particular subprogram.

**Ms HUTCHINS** — In terms of us measuring it?

**Mr MORRIS** — Yes.

**Ms HUTCHINS** — I am happy for Kym to supplement that.

**Ms PEAKE** — Certainly. Both *Safe and Strong* and the prevention strategy had outcomes frameworks that were embedded within them that had specific indicators that are now being further developed into an evaluation framework for the three major programs that are being funded by government. With the particular program that

we have been talking about, that was funded through the community partnerships program, or any grants that were over \$150 000 were required to be evaluated by the councils themselves. Those evaluations will be with us from August. For the latest grant rounds that are funded in the latest budget, we are out in the market at the moment to procure an evaluation framework for those. But more specifically the sorts of measures that will be applied in relation to specific initiatives —

**Mr MORRIS** — Sorry to interrupt. Just before we get more general in terms of the projects that are effected by the councils and then presumably passed through to the department, is it the council that defines what success looks like as part of the original application and then it is judged against that, or is it the original application and then what success looks like is figured out later?

**Ms PEAKE** — The guidelines that went out for the community partnerships for primary prevention grants spelt out both the purpose of the grants, which was to support local organisations, businesses and cultural and diverse community groups to challenge social norms, structures and practices that lead to family violence, and then there were specific criteria around what would be funded and what would not be funded. The evaluations will go to measuring against that purpose and ensuring that they were consistent — in actual delivery as well as in selection — with those criteria.

In addition the Equality Institute is going to evaluate the program as a whole, so there will be individual evaluations by local councils and then the whole program, which was the 34 organisations for 25 projects, will be evaluated for their impact as a whole. That is where the body of work I was just starting to unpack a bit — where we are out to market to look at a broader evaluation framework — will be relevant so that we look at in total not only the community partnerships grants but also local government grants, which is a program that is being administered by DELWP and then, as the minister mentioned, the Free from Violence grants that are being rolled out at the moment, how all of them contribute to the outcomes that are in both the gender equality strategy and in the prevention of family violence strategy.

More specifically there are really four outcomes that are relevant. The first is that Victorians hold attitudes and belief that reject gender inequality and family violence; that they understand the causes and forms of family violence, who is affected and the impact. Secondly Victorians actively challenge attitudes and behaviours that enable violence, so Victorians discuss and condemn violence through challenging rigid gender roles, gender equality, sexism —

**Mr MORRIS** — Is that information publicly available?

**Ms PEAKE** — It is. These are outcomes that are in the gender equality —

**Mr MORRIS** — Okay. That is fine. Given that we have only got a few seconds left, the information in the local government assessments, are they available or could they be made available to the committee?

**Ms PEAKE** — They will be. We are receiving those in August, and then the summaries will be made publicly available.

**Mr MORRIS** — They will be made publicly available. Thank you.

**Ms SHING** — Thank you, Minister, for your answers to date. I would like to go into the detail of the agency and Respect Victoria's work as it will commence from 1 August. I would like to go back squarely to the matters within your ministerial portfolio rather than to the circuitous subject matter that we have been addressing in recent questions to you.

In relation to Respect Victoria and achieving the implementation of recommendations from the royal commission, what are the processes that are anticipated within the allocation of the \$12 million over four years within the 17–18 budget and the 24 million in 18–19 for prevention activities to make sure that the establishment of the prevention agency takes us further in the right direction towards achieving the implementation of those recommendations?

**Ms HUTCHINS** — Thank you for the question. The establishment of a primary prevention agency, which we have named Respect Victoria, is a fulfilment of recommendation 188 in the royal commission recommendations. I am really pleased that the government has committed the money for the next four years to establish the agency and then of course ongoing prevention activities beyond that. Respect Victoria will address

two pillars of primary prevention — firstly, research and evaluation and, secondly, community engagement. Whilst we are putting the money into many programs at the moment, not just this year but in previous years as well, and we need to evaluate their success, there are also many programs that currently exist in community already, established by organisations such as women’s health organisations, Domestic Violence Victoria, Our Watch and ANROWS. So there are a number of organisations that have developed some very specific tools that can be used — White Ribbon is another one — but what does not exist anywhere in Australia is an accreditation process to see what are the best ones and how do we make them accessible to the entire community.

**Ms SHING** — So that qualitative analysis has not been there to date?

**Ms HUTCHINS** — It has not. Quite frankly, having a prevention agency of this nature is not only a first in Australia but it is a first around the world, to have an agency that is giving assessment, research and a stamp of accreditation to the work that has been done by the sector and the work that has been sponsored in partnership by government. Those objectives have been embedded into the legislation that is yet to come before Parliament around supporting this agency going forward. In the meantime we are getting on with actually delivering Respect Victoria and having that up and running in August of this year with the roles that look at community engagement and research and evaluation.

**Ms SHING** — In relation to the work and how that will roll out on the ground, how will we make sure that recruitment and appointment of staff is consistent with achieving those medium to long-term outcomes that you referred to in your presentation? What will be the roles and functions as they align with the *Free from Violence* strategy, because again it is about, to my mind, taking things from a top-tier principle-based approach to large-scale social change and implementing it in everyday practices that consolidate information and data from a range of sources? How do we embark on that with the resources and staffing within the organisation?

**Ms HUTCHINS** — There is no doubt that it is a challenge for a government to be running a prevention agenda, because you need to have partners for success. There is no doubt about that in this. Like we have VicHealth, who are out there running prevention and promoting health and prevention in regard to all sorts of health issues and chronic diseases and so forth, we do need an independent agency — an independent arm — to do this work so that it starts to grow and flower outside of the government’s realm. The functions of the agency will align with our *Free from Violence* strategy.

**Ms SHING** — That is even if the legislation was not passed in time — it will still begin from 1 August?

**Ms HUTCHINS** — There is an opportunity for the agency to begin as an administrative body, but in time it is really important that we have the independence around the agency. Recruitment is underway now for the appointment of a CEO but also for board members as well. We are hoping and aiming for operation of the agency to commence on 1 August and looking to coordinate, as I have said, the key elements of research and evaluation and community engagement going forward.

The work that is already done by so many fantastic organisations here in Victoria, like Women With Disabilities Victoria and others, will be engaged by the new agency to make sure that we have got that diversity that is required, but it will also coordinate prevention activities, quality assurance and best practice research and make sure that all of the programs that the agency is promoting are evidence based and well researched.

**Ms SHING** — Obviously I do not want to anticipate the way in which at an operational level the body may do its work, but how does that reach into the specific cohorts that you referred to earlier in answering Ms Ward’s question? Again we referred to the Aboriginal community and we referred to LGBTI people in Victoria. We have also got culturally and linguistically diverse communities where the needs are quite specific around those discussions for community education within the prevention matrix. Will this organisation also turn its mind to those specialised prevention frameworks and understandings around data and around the research that it undertakes?

**Ms HUTCHINS** — Yes, no doubt, and most importantly, rather than re-creating the wheel, they will work with current organisations who are already kind of leading in those particular areas — whether that be services like InTouch, which does a lot of outreach work with the CALD community, migrant resource centres, women’s health organisations or family violence prevention organisations that already exist in our suburbs and

in our country towns — to make sure that there is networking that happens there and that all of the work that gets evaluated and accredited by the new agency is available to all of those organisations.

We have not had a coordinated approach in the prevention space around information sharing and evaluation, and that has been the missing element that this agency delivers on. I think within its own right it will really boost the industry as a starting point, lift the standards in the industry and give it the really important recognition that many in the workforce in the prevention space do not necessarily get. Respect Victoria will fulfil that role as well, and it will help roll out the community campaigns that we have currently got underway. And who knows what will be developed into the future.

**Ms SHING** — Again just an issue that is very dear to my heart as a regional member: those really small regional towns and settlements that are often in very remote areas, often where there is a lot of interface between victims and survivors on the one hand and perpetrators on the other who may wear a number of different hats within these small communities — I imagine that these will also present considerable challenges around tailoring a body of prevention work that really does provide the best of the work that is already being undertaken with a respect for the individual circumstances of those remote communities. Will that also be part of what Respect Victoria does as a body once it is operational?

**Ms HUTCHINS** — It certainly will. When we talk about prevention strategies, we are actually very mindful of the different settings that they need to happen in. It is not just workplaces, and it is not just schools. We have some good strategies in both those areas, particularly with Respectful Relationships programs in schools. We know that part of the solution is really penetrating community groups and sports clubs and making the changes there and encouraging new dialogues that have never happened within the doors of some of those clubs. Supporting women into leadership roles in some of those areas as well is really important in making the change.

**Ms SHING** — Within the work that has been done already, are we seeing a return on that investment around disclosure and around having these difficult conversations?

**Ms HUTCHINS** — Until we do the assessments and complete the assessments on these programs, I do not have the hard and fast evidence, but —

**Ms SHING** — Hence the need for the data, I suppose.

**Ms HUTCHINS** — Yes, and we have not collected data in this space ever before as a Victorian government. This data has not been collected before, and I think up until a few years ago the true nature and the true intensity of family violence was not appreciated — until we had the royal commission.

**Ms SHING** — It is groundbreaking.

**Mr MORRIS** — Can I address a question to the secretary regarding budget paper 3, page 255, ‘Family Violence Service Delivery’. Secretary, according to the rolling action plan 2017–2020, which focuses on the first phase of the implementation of the eradication of family violence, can you tell us how many of the 227 royal commission recommendations have been fully implemented to date?

**Ms PEAKE** — Certainly. Just bear with me for one moment. Just while I am finding that — you might find that number for me, Terry — I do just have one bit of comeback for you on a previous question which was around the deaths in emergency accommodation, just to let you know what we will be able to provide. The data that we collect at the moment is around homeless services generally and there is work that is happening to build a flag in around family violence, but we do not have a flag. That is part of the work that is happening around the index. What I can let you know is that there have been 28 deaths reported by homelessness services in the past 12 months, but again they are not all victims of family violence. It is a broader cohort. That is just to let you know what I can provide there.

In terms of the question around the royal commission, the most recent data that has been confirmed and gone through the process with the implementation monitor is November 2017. At that point, all recommendations were underway, with 164 in process and 63 implemented. There will be further reports, facts, through this year as we work through the process with the implementation monitor.

**Mr MORRIS** — Can we get the up-to-date figures on notice, please?

**Ms PEAKE** — It goes through a process with the implementation monitor for him to verify, that the individual departments assessments of whether recommendations are complete, that he confirms.

**Mr MORRIS** — So when will more up-to-date figures be available?

**Ms PEAKE** — My understanding is that he is going through that process again at the moment. It will be in the next few months that an update would be provided.

**Mr MORRIS** — Can I ask you what project management expertise has been utilised for the implementation of the family violence royal commission recommendations?

**Ms PEAKE** — Sorry, Mr Morris, I just missed the start of that question.

**Mr MORRIS** — This is obviously a significant project. I am just wondering what sort of project management expertise has been employed or utilised to implement the process?

**Ms PEAKE** — Yes, certainly. We have both whole-of-government and department project management processes that have been put in place. Within the Department of Health and Human Services there is a dedicated project management office. That is within our strategy and planning division. There is also, I know, project management dedicated capability within Family Safety Victoria. Centrally, the Department of Premier and Cabinet also has a project management function and we report in through our project management teams. There is a whole-of-government application which enables us to both report on the individual recommendations, progress against them, but we also obviously monitor, and this was really highlighted as an important part of the reform by the implementation monitor. We have, in DHHS and across government, moved to look at routes of recommendations and how they contribute to the outcomes framework which I mentioned earlier and how we are making sure that we are linking up across government, and I am obviously happy to talk to some more specifics about that.

**Mr MORRIS** — Thank you. Page 9 of the implementation monitor's report expressed concern over the government's approach to implementation and in particular the need for the government to:

... make clear the overall sequence of implementation activities, when engagement will occur, and how it will be used.

I am happy for either the secretary or the minister to respond to this, but can I ask: what is the sequence of implementation activities for implementation — and perhaps the minister — across the 227 recommendations?

**Ms PEAKE** — Certainly. There has been quite a lot of work that has been done both through the Victorian Secretaries' Board and between the individual projects to look at what are the interdependencies and sequencing of reforms. I think that has really been reinforced and strengthened as a result of the engagement with the implementation monitor. If I give you a couple of really practical examples. There is a lot of work that has been done in the planning for the Support and Safety Hubs, to understand that the hubs themselves really have two parts to them. One is about the linking up of services so that services are better connected on the ground, and the second is the physical manifestation of the hub as a place where there is triaging assessment, brief interventions and referral out to that more connected set of services. There is now quite a substantial plan around, ahead of there being a physical hub that is put into a community, the work that needs to precede that. That includes the rollout of initiatives from other portfolios, so, the work that we have done to, for example, build the capability of mental health, AOC, community health, emergency departments and public health services so that the notification of victims happens more quickly and there is a good understanding of how then to link through to specialist supports. We have also — I will just give you —

**Mr MORRIS** — Sorry. I appreciate the fullness of the answer but I need to move on. Minister, can I ask: with regard to the implementation of the 227 recommendations, how many agencies are involved?

**Ms HUTCHINS** — I am certainly happy to come back to you with exactly how many agencies are involved —

**Mr MORRIS** — That would be fine. Can I also ask —

**Ms HUTCHINS** — but every single department is touched on by the implementation of the 227.

**Mr MORRIS** — I appreciate that, but obviously departments are one thing but agencies are another. So if we could have a complete list of the agencies involved, and perhaps also with that answer can we get an indication of how many personnel that equates to? So FTEs.

**Ms HUTCHINS** — I actually do not think that that is possible because we are implementing these changes through the courts system, through the police and so forth. I mean, are you asking for us to identify every single police officer that has received family violence training?

**Mr MORRIS** — No. I am asking just in terms of the resource that is devoted to this issue.

**Ms HUTCHINS** — A devoted resource?

**Mr MORRIS** — So if you have got, say, 5000 police officers working for 0.5 of their time — and obviously this is not an accurate figure, but just to give an example — on the implementation, then 2500 FTEs in that agency. I am just trying to get, for the committee, an idea of the scale of the resource that is devoted to this issue.

**Ms PEAKE** — Mr Morris, I do think it is really important to say that certainly if I think about DHHS it is not only that there are dedicated teams. For example, training is rolling out across child protection as a whole.

**Mr MORRIS** — I understand and that is why I am taking in terms of FTE. So if it is 5 per cent of someone's time, then that is 0.05 of an FTE.

**Ms PEAKE** — That was not quite my point. So if I think about the child protection workforce, we have updated the procedures for child protection and we are rolling out training across the whole workforce so that in everything they do they are applying a deeper understanding of family violence.

**Mr MORRIS** — Yes. I am not going to hold you to the third decimal point. I am just trying to get an idea of the scale of the resource.

**Ms HUTCHINS** — For example, if I just could say: as of March 2018, the annual report for DHHS reported that Family Safety Victoria had 163.3 FTE.

**Mr MORRIS** — Yes. Obviously there are a lot more agencies involved, so if we could get the whole picture.

**Ms HUTCHINS** — Yes.

**Mr MORRIS** — Minister, are you satisfied with the governance arrangements for the implementation of the family violence royal commission recommendations? Do you believe they are operating as they were intended?

**Ms HUTCHINS** — Yes, I am. But I think the thing to bear in mind is that this government is the only government, only political party, to actually commit to the 227 recommendations and implementing them all. We are creating a new pathway that has never been taken before in terms of dealing with the 75 000 incident reports that come through police in a 12-month period and how we turn that around to not only service everybody in the most appropriate way —

**Mr MORRIS** — So you believe it is operating as it was intended?

**Ms HUTCHINS** — I think we are doing a sterling job in terms of implementing the 227 recommendations. I take the feedback from the implementation monitor about how we can improve that, but I think two-thirds of those recommendations —

**Mr MORRIS** — Do you think the governance is okay?

**Ms HUTCHINS** — will either be completed —

**The CHAIR** — Order, Minister. We need to wrap up the hearing now, but Ms Shing has a couple of questions on notice on behalf of Ms Patten, who is unable to be here.

**Ms SHING** — Yes, late breaking news. My apologies for not giving you the heads up about this earlier, but Ms Patten has emailed through the following for consideration and response in writing please. She says as follows:

From some of the discussions I've had with family violence organisations in north metro — in particular, I'd like to acknowledge the Whittlesea Community Connections family violence project, who have identified a huge need for practical casework support amongst culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities.

Aside from the language barriers, there are significant structural barriers to engaging with information and services, particularly for new arrivals.

Women escaping violence often have difficulty in accessing the private rental market because, in many cases, they have only one income and they have no rental history.

Of course, we know how important it is that they find housing in their area so they can stay connected to their community and the kids don't have to change schools.

Within the department's service delivery (paper 3, page 226) and the industry plan (paper 3, page 73), can you provide information on some of the programs that provide practical casework support for people with a CALD background and perhaps a breakdown of funding if available?

I would break cover at this point in time to say in my own right it would appear that that may well fall under a different portfolio. But again, that is something for the witnesses and the minister to consider before responding.

**Ms HUTCHINS** — Yes.

**Ms SHING** — The other thing that Ms Patten has indicated she would like an answer to is as follows:

'Behavioural change programs' in the *Free from Violence* action plan that was released last year and has continued spending in this budget (paper 3, page 82). If you could possibly outline some of those programs, specifically ones that empower culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities to engage with and contribute to behavioural change initiatives for their communities. How do these programs ensure that information is culturally and linguistically relevant and targeted and also responds to the experiences of new arrivals to the community?

They are the questions from Ms Patten to be taken on notice if you would. Thank you.

**The CHAIR** — I would like to thank the witnesses for their attendance: the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence, the Honourable Natalie Hutchins, MP; Ms Peake; Mr Symonds; Ms Clifford; and Ms Kearney. The committee will follow up on any questions taken on notice in writing. A written response should be provided within 10 business days of that request.

**Witnesses withdrew.**