CRIME STATISTICS AGENCY

Parliamentary Inquiry into Family Violence Perpetrator Data
Legal and Social Issues Committee
Legislative Assembly
Parliament of Victoria

By Email: fvpdata@parliament.vic.gov.au

5 August 2025

Dear Committee Secretariat

Thank you again to the Committee for the invitation to address the Inquiry into Family Violence Perpetrator Data. Please find below my responses to the several questions taken on notice at my appearance at the Inquiry on 22 July 2024.

Kind regards

Fiona Dowsley
Executive Director, Data and Performance
Chief Statistician, Crime Statistics Agency
Department of Justice and Community Safety

QUESTION ONE

The CHAIR: And, Fiona, if you have got any specific recommendations about datasets that you think would benefit a family violence dashboard and what some of those barriers are, if you would like to provide us that information on notice we would be really grateful to have that—some specific examples.

A high priority source to add to the Family Violence Database has been information from the Orange Door, which we are in the process of negotiating at present. Other potential sources of interest include:

- AOD and Mental Health Service data
- Family court data

- Family violence helpline data
- Community Legal Services data.

However, in our engagement with stakeholders and users of the Family Violence Database, the highest demand is for linked service sector data. This is not as much about additional data sources being included in the Family Violence Database, as adding depth to the data that already exists to provide greater insights.

The barriers to expansion of the linked data within the Family Violence Database have primarily been due to privacy concerns and reluctance to provide personal identifiers or linkage keys to enable this work to occur within the Database. For some sources, such as the Community Legal Services data, we anticipate that there may be challenges around standardised collection and the ability to collate across all services would need to be explored. Occasionally, as mentioned at the hearing, agencies advise that they have genuine legislative barriers to providing identified information (for example, in the case of Victoria Legal Aid).

QUESTION TWO

Cindy McLEISH: How many people are in the office?

The Crime Statistics Agency sits within a broader Evidence and Insights business unit within the Department of Justice and Community Safety.

In examining the work of the Crime Statistics Agency within that broader business unit, the staffing profile equates to eight VPS staff, in addition to a proportion of an overseeing Director's workload and my role.

QUESTION THREE

Annabelle CLEELAND: And have you got an example globally where they have done a survey in this space really successfully that we could model or look at?

I am unable to identify any population-level survey of family violence perpetrators.

Population surveys relating to family violence focus on obtaining information from the victim-survivor of family and domestic violence, reflecting the desire to obtain strong prevalence and incidence measures that include cases that may otherwise not have been identified or reported, given the many reasons victim-survivors may choose not to disclose or report. In Australia this has certainly been the default mode, with Australian family violence prevalence data collected primarily through the 'gold standard' Personal Safety Survey run by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. When trying to understand any population-level prevalence of criminal behaviour, it is generally more practical and reliable to speak to victims-survivors rather than alleged offenders or perpetrators, given the ethical and methodological challenges that would need to be overcome to have perpetrators willing to honestly and openly discuss behaviours that are criminal in nature.

The Australian National Community Attitudes towards Violence Against Women Survey (NCAS) goes as far as asking respondents about their understanding and attitudes. The NCAS does not explicitly ask about acts respondents may have themselves committed.

Large-scale surveys related to perpetrators can sometimes be directed at people providing perpetrator programs, sector workers or clinicians rather than being directed to perpetrators themselves.

Where surveys with family and domestic violence perpetrators do take place, it seems to generally be smaller-scale surveys that are conducted with groups of family violence perpetrators who have already

been identified or self-identified and are usually participating in some kind of intervention. As such, whilst these surveys can provide insights into drivers and motivations and effectiveness of interventions, they are limited in their generalisability as they reflect the experience of people who have already found their way into an intervention. These surveys cannot be relied upon to provide reliable understanding of population-level factors, prevalence or incidence.

QUESTION FOUR

Annabelle CLEELAND: With the IRIS data from DFFH, what do you access? What is a part of that IRIS data that you are able to utilise?

The Crime Statistics Agency receives a range of regular data items that feed into the Family Violence Database (Tables 1, 2 and 3 below). The Agency has also received specific data items for one-off analytics projects (Table 4).

Table 1. IRIS DATA ITEMS - FVDB
Reference period: July 2019 to June 2024
Source: IRIS_Clients dataset

Number	Name	Description
1	Client code	Unique identification reference that is generated when a new client profile is created by an Agency. Will only refer to unique individuals within a particular Agency. Does not denote unique individuals across entire dataset.
2	Agency client code	The Agency specified code that is given to a unique client. (Can be more reliably used by an Agency to see all cases within that Agency which are associated with a client).
3	STATSLINKAGE	A unique identifier automatically generated from the client's name, DOB and sex. This is the only variable which can be used to identify when same clients are presenting at different locations across the state.
4	Date of birth	Date of birth of the client.
5	Sex	Description of sex as is described on identifying documents.

Table 2. IRIS DATA ITEMS - FVDB
Reference period: July 2019 to June 2024
Source: IRIS_Cases dataset

Number	Name	Description
1	Case code	Case reference number automatically generated every time a case is opened by an Agency in IRIS. Is unique for each case.
2	Client code	Unique identification reference that is generated when a new client profile is created by an Agency. Will only refer to unique individuals within a particular Agency. Does not denote unique individuals across entire dataset.
3	Agency	The DHHS funded organisation whom creates a profile for a client and opens a case.
4	Source of funding	Refers to which department has provided funding for the case.
5	Referral Source	Identifies source which referred the case to the receiving agency.
6	Outlet Suburb	The suburb where the outlet of the Agency which is initiating the case is located. NOTE, an agency may have several outlets.
7	Referral date	Date of referral that initiates new case.
8	Point of closure	Stage in the progress of the case at which it was closed.
9	Date of closure	Date on which a case was closed.
10	Indigenous status	The disclosed indigenous status of the client.
11	Country of birth	The country in which the client was born.
12	Language spoken at home	The language spoken by the client at home.
13	Postcode of client	Postcode in which the client resides.
14	LGA of client	LGA in which the client resides.
15	Fin year	The financial year in which a case referral took place

Table 3. IRIS DATA ITEMS - FVDB
Reference period: July 2019 to June 2024
Source: IRIS Issues dataset

Number	Name	Description
1	Issue code	The unique identifier generated when an issue is created and attached to a case.
2	Case code	Case reference number automatically generated every time a case is opened by an

		Agency in IRIS. Is unique for each case.
3	Issue type	Describes the type of issue that a case is hoping to address.
4	Issue still present at closure	Describes if the issue is still present at the closure of the intervention efforts.

Table 4. IRIS DATA ITEMS – available on special request for one-off projects, not received regularly by the Crime Statistics Agency
Reference period: July 2007 to September 2023

Column name	Column description	Table name
ActivityCategoryRefId	Service activity category	FS_FamilyViolenceActivity
ActivityCode		FS_FamilyViolenceActivity
ActivityDescriptionRefId	Activity description	FS_FamilyViolenceActivity
Age	Age of client	FS_FamilyViolenceCase
Age	Age of related person	FS_FamilyViolenceRelatedPerson
AgencyRefId	A unique identifier for the agency	FS_FamilyViolenceCase
AncestryRefId	Ancestory of client	FS_FamilyViolenceCase
BirthDate	Date of birth of client	FS_FamilyViolenceCase
CaseCode	Unique case identifier for associated case	FS_FamilyViolenceActivity
CaseCode	Unique case identifier	FS_FamilyViolenceCase
CaseCode	Unique identifier for a case	FS_FamilyViolenceIssues
CaseCode	Unique case identifier for associated case	FS_FamilyViolenceRelatedPerson
CaseOutcomeRefId	The final outsome of the case once closed	FS_FamilyViolenceCase
ClientCode	Unique client identifier for associated client	FS_FamilyViolenceActivity
ClientCode	Unique client identifier	FS_FamilyViolenceCase
ClientCode	Unique client identifier for associated case	FS_FamilyViolenceRelatedPerson
ClientDivision	DHHS division of client address	FS_FamilyViolenceCase
ClientLGA	LGA of client address	FS_FamilyViolenceCase
ClientLGBTIRefId	LGBTI status of client	FS_FamilyViolenceCase
ClientSuburb	Suburb of client address	FS_FamilyViolenceCase
ClosureDate	Case closure date	FS_FamilyViolenceActivity
ClosureDate	Date the case was closed	FS_FamilyViolenceCase
ClosureDate		FS_FamilyViolenceIssues
ClosureDate	Case closure date	FS_FamilyViolenceRelatedPerson
ClosureReasonRefId	Reason that case was closed	FS_FamilyViolenceCase
CountryOfBirthId	Birth country of client	FS_FamilyViolenceCase
CountryOfBirthId	Related person country of birth	FS_FamilyViolenceRelatedPerson
DHHSLocalArea	DHHS local area of agency	FS_FamilyViolenceCase
DobDeclined		FS_FamilyViolenceCase
EnrolledInNDISflag		FS_FamilyViolenceCase
EnrolledInNDISflag		FS_FamilyViolenceRelatedPerson
EnrolledInNDISRefId	Is client enrolled in NDIS	FS_FamilyViolenceCase
EnrolledInNDISRefId	Is related person enrolled in NDIS	FS_FamilyViolenceRelatedPerson
FinancialYear	Financial year when service activity occured	FS_FamilyViolenceActivity
FinancialYear	Financial year of referral date	FS_FamilyViolenceCase
FirstYearOfArrival	Year client arrived in Australia	FS_FamilyViolenceCase
FS_FV_ActivityDW_PK	Primary key	FS_FamilyViolenceActivity
FS_FV_CaseDW_PK	Primary key	FS_FamilyViolenceCase
FS_FV_IssuesDW_PK	Primary key	FS_FamilyViolenceIssues
FS_FV_RelatedPersonDW_PK	Primary key	FS_FamilyViolenceRelatedPerson
GenderId		FS_FamilyViolenceCase
GenderId		FS_FamilyViolenceRelatedPerson
GoalAchievedRefId	Goal achievement for individual issue	FS_FamilyViolenceIssues
GoalInServicePlanRefId	Was goal placed into service plan	FS_FamilyViolenceIssues
IndigenousId		FS_FamilyViolenceCase
IndigenousId		FS_FamilyViolenceRelatedPerson
InterpreterBilingualWorkerRefId	Does client require interpreter	FS_FamilyViolenceCase
IRIS_AgencyCode	Unique identifier for an agency	FS_FamilyViolenceCase
IssueCode		FS_FamilyViolenceIssues
IssueStillPresentAtClosureRefId	Status of issue at case closure	FS_FamilyViolenceIssues
IssueTypeRefId	The category of the issue	FS_FamilyViolenceIssues
MemberCode	Unique identifier for related person	FS_FamilyViolenceRelatedPerson
OutletSuburb	Suburb of the agencies outlet	FS_FamilyViolenceCase
PreferredLanguageId	Language the client prefers to speak	FS_FamilyViolenceCase

Column name	Column description	Table name
ReferralDate	Date associated case started	FS_FamilyViolenceActivity
ReferralDate	Case start date	FS_FamilyViolenceCase
ReferralDate		FS_FamilyViolenceIssues
ReferralDate		FS_FamilyViolenceRelatedPerson
ReferralSourceRefId	Where case was referred from	FS_FamilyViolenceCase
ReferredToSpecialistAgencyRefId	Was the client referred to a specialist agency due to issue	FS_FamilyViolenceIssues
RelationshipRefId	Type of relationship with client	FS_FamilyViolenceRelatedPerson
ReportingDate		FS_FamilyViolenceIssues
ServiceDate	The date service was providied	FS_FamilyViolenceActivity
ServiceHours	The number of hours to provide service	FS_FamilyViolenceActivity
TotalHours	Service hours plus travel hours	FS_FamilyViolenceActivity
TravelHours	The amount of hours to travel for the service activity	FS_FamilyViolenceActivity
WithClientFlag	Was related person with client at case open	FS_FamilyViolenceRelatedPerson