TRANSCRIPT

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY LEGAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

Inquiry into capturing data on family violence perpetrators in Victoria

Melbourne—Monday 9 September 2024

MEMBERS

Ella George – Chair

Annabelle Cleeland – Deputy Chair

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Cindy McLeish

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WITNESSES

Lauren Callaway, Assistant Commissioner, Family Violence Command, and

Claire Waterman, Director, Strategy, Policy and Reform Division, Family Violence Command, Victoria Police.

   The CHAIR: Good afternoon. My name is Ella George, and I am the Chair of the Legislative Assembly's Legal and Social Issues Committee. We will now resume public hearings of the Committee's Inquiry into capturing data on family violence perpetrators in Victoria.

I begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we are meeting, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people of the Kulin nation, and I pay my respects to their elders past, present and future and extend that respect to First Nations people across Victoria.

I am joined today by my colleagues Christine Couzens, the Member for Geelong, Meng Heang Tak, the Member for Clarinda, Chris Crewther, the Member for Mornington and Cindy McLeish, the Member for Eildon.

On behalf of the Committee I thank everyone who is participating in the inquiry through submissions and hearings. We greatly appreciate your time and effort in contributing to this important inquiry. The Committee recognises that evidence to this inquiry may be distressing, and we urge people to reach out for support. You can contact Lifeline on 13 11 14, 1800RESPECT or the Blue Knot helpline on 1300 657 380.

All evidence given today is being recorded by Hansard and broadcast live. While all evidence taken by the Committee is protected by parliamentary privilege, comments repeated outside this hearing may not be protected by this privilege.

Witnesses will be provided with a proof version of today's transcript to check, together with any questions taken on notice. Verified transcripts, responses to questions taken on notice and other documents provided during the hearing will be published on the Committee's website.

I am now pleased to welcome from Victoria Police Lauren Callaway, Assistant Commissioner, Family Violence Command, and Claire Waterman PSM, Director of Strategy, Policy and Reform Division, Family Violence Command. I invite you to make a brief opening statement and this will be followed by questions from members.

   Lauren CALLAWAY: Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Committee Members, for inviting us here today to talk with you about capturing data on family violence perpetrators in Victoria. I would also like to begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we meet, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present and we extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples here today, either in person or who may be viewing this hearing online.

As described, I am the Assistant Commissioner for the Family Violence Command in Victoria Police. I have held this role since 2020. I am joined today by Claire Waterman, who is the Director at Family Violence Command, and that is a role she has had for the last three years. Together we have a combined experience of 40 years within Victoria Police working in family violence, sexual assault, child abuse and various operational policing roles.

The role of Victoria Police is to serve the Victorian community and uphold the law so as to promote a safe, secure and orderly society. Victoria Police takes family violence extremely seriously and is dedicated to responding to, investigating and preventing family violence in our community. Victoria Police forms a key component of the statewide effort to act on, respond to and prevent family violence. Victoria Police's role is to ensure a safe, secure and orderly society by serving the community and upholding the law. We do this by preserving the peace, preventing offences, detecting and apprehending offenders, protecting life and property and helping those in need of assistance.

In 2023 Victoria Police responded to 94,170 family violence incidents. This is often in the context of a crisis response. It is estimated that family violence accounts for approximately 40 to 50% of all frontline members' time across all shifts. The volume, complexity and harm linked to family violence in Victoria continue to increase. Over the past 20 years the number of family violence incident reports has increased by approximately 400%. Today nearly one in four criminal offences recorded by Victoria Police are related to family violence, and certainly in my role in the four years that I have been there it has risen from 85,000 to nearly 95,000 reports. In addition to our frontline resources Victoria Police has specialist and dedicated resources that respond to family violence. This includes 29 family violence investigation units comprising approximately

380 detectives and intelligence officers; family violence training officers in each police division; a centre for family violence at the police academy, which delivers specialist training and education to all ranks on family violence; family violence liaison officers embedded in every 24-hour station—that is at the rank of sergeant; family violence court liaison officers; specialist family violence police lawyers who conduct intervention order hearings; a family violence taskforce that investigates family violence offending of a complex, significant or protracted nature and also provides support directly to the family violence investigation units; an interagency information-sharing team; and of course a dedicated family violence command.

Victoria Police welcome this inquiry and are committed to working with government and external stakeholders to ensure that we accurately capture perpetrator data in a way that best supports community safety and, most importantly, reduces recidivism. Victoria Police routinely captures a significant amount of family violence perpetrator data, which is both stored on Victoria Police databases and shared with external stakeholders, primarily via the Orange Door portal, which we call the L17 portal, which you would have heard about. Typically this information is first collected by attending officers at an incident in the Victoria Police family violence L17 form, which has been used by police and amended and improved significantly over the years since 2004. The L17 family violence report was created as a means for Victoria Police to record their attendance at a family violence incident and collect information relating to the risk factors that would be present. It is also used for statistical reporting purposes. The specific information captured in the L17 has varied over time, with the last major changes occurring in 2018 to align with the risk factors in the MARAM framework along with other operational reforms in response to the Royal Commission into Family Violence.

Victoria Police collects a range of data on the profile and volume of perpetrators, and this includes a perpetrator's number of reported family violence incident involvements; when and where they occurred and against whom; risk indicators identified during reports of family violence as part of the risk assessment—the L17 has 39 questions aligned to MARAM risk factors, so that is what I am talking about there; demographic information on the perpetrator's gender, age, Indigenous status, country of birth and accessibility needs; the specifics of any criminal offences identified as being committed in the context of family violence—for example, assaults, property damage, trespassing and stalking; and a free text narrative for information about the nature of the current incident, contextual information and updates from supervisors, liaison officers and detectives. The majority of this data is collected by Victoria Police members in the field either recording it at the scene using a mobile device, typically an iPad, or at the end of their shift on a system called LEDR Mk2. LEAP, which is the Law Enforcement Assistance Program, is the primary database used by Victoria Police for law enforcement purposes. When court proceedings arise from a family violence incident, such as an application for a family violence intervention order, this is linked to the L17 incident report in LEAP. This is the case for any criminal charges emerging from the incident as well.

Since 2014 the Crime Statistics Agency has been responsible under legislation for publishing statistical information relating to crime in Victoria and undertaking research into the analysis of crime and criminal justice issues and trends in Victoria. Extensive information sourced from Victoria Police's L17 forms is provided to the CSA for this very purpose. Victoria Police also share all of our L17 incident reports with The Orange Door. The Orange Door then on-share this information with specialist family violence services as they deem necessary. This is done through the L17 portal, which is operated by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. The portal also holds historical L17 reports dating back to 2005 also available for use by The Orange Door. Additionally, Victoria Police operates an interagency information-sharing service, a centralised team within Victoria Police who respond to requests for information under the family violence and child information sharing schemes, the FVISS and the CISS. These requests come from prescribed agencies known as information-sharing entities, and there are over 8,000 such agencies. These are agencies prescribed under regulations that Victoria Police is authorised to share information with under these schemes, including schools, early education centres, general practitioners and justice agencies. The type of perpetrator information commonly shared under these schemes includes data sourced from the L17s and the perpetrator histories, copies of relevant orders and offence histories as well as bail and firearms information.

Victoria Police has been closely monitoring this inquiry and has carefully considered a number of the written submissions and oral evidence that the inquiry has heard to date. We acknowledge that several of the submissions to this inquiry have raised the issue of misidentification of the primary or predominant aggressor, and gaps in rectification of data across systems. Victoria Police acknowledges that perpetrators of family violence can utilise the courts and the criminal justice system to further perpetrate abuse and that this may lead to victim-survivors of family violence being falsely identified as perpetrators. As first responders in the family

violence system we acknowledge and accept Victoria Police's important role in responding to this issue and are committed to tackling this problem. It is also important to note that accurate identification of the predominant aggressor can be a complex matter. We must also bear in mind that police attend incidents where both parties have committed family violence and that police must report the facts and the evidence before them when responding to an incident, as it is often through accurate reporting of family violence incidents over time that a clearer picture of the nature and the dynamic of family violence will emerge.

Complex problems require careful and considered solutions, and Victoria Police is committed to improving accurate identification of the predominant aggressor upon assessment of all the facts and the information. Targeting this issue, between 1 October and 31 December in 2022 we undertook the North-West Metro Division 5 predominant aggressor trial. We will call it the trial. The aim of the trial was to examine police risk assessment decisions to identify opportunities for interventions or practice changes to support early recognition and rectification when misidentification occurs. The trial found that while police identification is correct in the vast majority of cases, improving information capture, acknowledging uncertainty and empowering specialist police are critical to improving the accurate assessments in the first instance and then rectifying misidentification where it may have occurred. The trial identified that strengthening practice guidance and training will support members to better identify when parties are attempting to influence the narrative or unduly escalate police action against another person.

Results from the trial have been incorporated into the program of work that Victoria Police is currently undertaking relating to reducing and rectifying misidentification of the predominant aggressor. This program of work includes new policy and practice guidance for our members building on changes that we have already made to the code of practice for the investigation of family violence that identify key roles in our organisation for specialist services to come to discuss possible misidentification, a new specialist training package which builds on the training that is already undertaken on predominant aggressors by the centre for family violence at the academy and providing clarity to our members on how to rectify misidentification within Victoria Police and in the court processes and in practice. I would like to thank you again for the opportunity to appear before this inquiry to provide the police perspective on these important issues, and we look forward to answering your questions.

The CHAIR: Many thanks. The first area that I would like to talk to you in a bit more detail around is misidentification, so thank you for addressing that in your opening statement too. You mentioned the trial that Victoria Police ran to look at ways to address misidentification. You spoke to some of the findings from that trial. Are you able to expand on a timeframe for those things to be implemented across Victoria Police?

Lauren CALLAWAY: As I said, the trial was conducted over three months, and there were roughly 180 cases that we looked at around accurate identification. The program of work that we are looking to—we are shortly about to release for internal input our practice guide. The training package is almost complete. It is being tested at the academy as we speak. So I would expect that what we are calling phase 1 around this program of works would be underway in the next three to six months.

Claire WATERMAN: Everything is essentially as Lauren said—they are all being piloted and implemented with additional input to come in, so we are not far off it all being formally put into policy.

The CHAIR: Great. With the training package that you mentioned, is there a component of that which speaks to cultural safety training to better understand how family violence impacts First Nations communities?

Lauren CALLAWAY: Certainly one of the risk factors that we identified with misidentification had to do with people from culturally diverse backgrounds and in particular First Nations women. So that aspect is part of the training, and it is also one of the aspects that we really reinforce with supervisors too, that if those factors are present then the potential for review is heightened.

The CHAIR: When you talk about the potential for review, can you explain to the Committee what that means?

Lauren CALLAWAY: Okay. Within our trial we focused on women who were nominated as respondents in an intimate partner family violence situation. We know from the issues that have been raised by us and by the sector that that is the highest risk group. Some of the aspects of the practice guidance and the training focus on what we would call the red flag scenarios that would lend themselves to misidentification being more likely

to occur. So we are providing our members with information up-front to say these are some of the risk factors that heighten the chance of misidentification occurring and if they are present when police are doing a report then it is incumbent upon the supervisor to pay more attention to the report and to potentially intervene if the information does not give a complete picture of what has happened.

The CHAIR: Okay. From Victoria Police's perspective, what else is needed to move towards a systems response to address misidentification?

Lauren CALLAWAY: Do you want to answer this, Claire?

Claire WATERMAN: I will say that obviously there is a lot of work happening right across our system around addressing misidentification—so addressing it in the first place, but unfortunately when it has happened, how do we rectify it and remedy it throughout our system? I think one of the things that is just about to happen again, which is great, is that under the MARAM Director's Group in government they are setting up a working group to address the systemwide recommendations that are in the family violence reform implementation monitor's report. I think one of the things through our work in the misidentification space in our program of work is there is still a system piece that needs to be done. There will be times when particularly our agencies or victims themselves may need to go to court, where there may be differing views to those of Victoria Police as an obvious example, so what else within the system and avenues are there for people to be able to seek that recourse if not through us? And recognising that not all of that is happening—whilst Victoria Police is such a big part of the system, there are private applications to court. There are child protection cases and things that may not have come to our attention, so there are other places in the system that are doing that as well.

Lauren CALLAWAY: I think Claire makes a really good point: police data is really valued by other agencies, but it is not a complete picture of the family violence offending. Many people never go near a police station. I think the FVRIM recognised this in their 16 recs, in that five were for Victoria Police, but there were other recommendations for child protection, for the courts—the private application aspect of work on family violence is significant in Victoria.

The CHAIR: Thank you. Chris.

Chris CREWTHER: Firstly, thank you for your time and your evidence today, and the opportunity for us to come to the headquarters of Victoria Police several weeks ago as well. I have a question regarding the L17 reports. Are the L17 reports audited to inform ongoing improvements in data collection and accuracy, and has Victoria Police identified any data points in these reports that require more consistent or improved collection?

Lauren CALLAWAY: We have. The L17 is completely auditable, and Family Violence Command often conducts inquiries into the quality of the L17 reporting. We will look at various questions and do sample reporting against incidents to see where we can find areas where police will need additional training or supervision. That is the role of the Family Violence Training Officers, the Senior Sergeants embedded out in the field. You can think of them as field coaches. So we will report on where we see the L17 data requiring more attention and they will work directly with the areas where they think that they actually need to lift the accuracy.

Chris CREWTHER: Are you getting positive feedback with respect to the L17 reports, and do you think they are an effective means of referral and information sharing? How could they be generally improved, and I guess, what can government do as well to assist in that? That is multiple questions in one.

Lauren CALLAWAY: The L17 is a valuable report, and in the absence of any other agency information collection that is at that high level—we are fairly confident we are getting L17s for over 95% of family violence incidents attended. So our submission rate is very high. If you go back 20 years, the complaint around police was, 'Police don't take a report.' Well, we take the reports now—95,000 of them shows that we are doing that aspect. What was the other part of your question?

Chris CREWTHER: More about how it can be improved—how could the government assist you in improving that in Victoria?

Lauren CALLAWAY: Certainly I have read the submissions, and there are aspects of the L17, of data, that are not collected. Ethnicity would be one of the areas that the submissions have raised needs improving. You

have got to imagine it: there are 39 questions to the police report. When the MARAM was developed, they went with a professional structured judgement and assessment. Now, that takes several hours to undertake. The police report is designed for what is practical for a police officer in the field at the time, out at a scene. There is a lot of information in there, but we are always open to refining it. It has been through a process of being refined since its introduction back in 2005. There is always room to improve its data collection, and I acknowledge that there are aspects of the data that probably do not provide a full picture on perpetrators, but it was built fit for purpose for a police officer and what you could reasonably ask of both the AFM and the perpetrator at a scene.

Chris CREWTHER: Do you think it—sorry.

Claire WATERMAN: I was just going to say, Chris, that is exactly right: remembering the information is often being collected in crisis. It is even about where we can improve data collection, and we consistently work on it; also sometimes people do not always want to share some of that information with us, so there can be best endeavours by members, but you are not always going to be able to collect the info. They do not necessarily want the police to know, and we cannot make them share it either.

Lauren CALLAWAY: What is really encouraging about the L17 is that the police have up to 14 days to add more information to it, and we can see in our system that that is happening regularly.

Chris CREWTHER: Do you think there needs to be greater investment put into digitisation of L17 reports, particularly to make them very user friendly for frontline officers and others who are inputting the data?

Lauren CALLAWAY: We have gone through a process of digitising the L17 onto IRIS pads that have been rolled out to Victoria Police. Now, the IRIS pads have been successful in lots of police reporting, but the L17 is probably one where there is a lot of information to collect. It is designed to sit down and build rapport with both a victim and a perpetrator. So there is definitely room for improvement as far as the automation of information into the system and the ability to fill in the report in the field without having to go back to the station and update it. Police come to us with enhancements all the time. One of them was that they wanted to be able to save a draft report in the field. We enabled that technology for them. At times they want keyboards to be attached to the IRIS pads. We have provided keyboards. But if you look at the L17 report it is not a tick-and-flick-type report, so it does require a fair bit of data entry.

Claire WATERMAN: At the same time members are often seeking intervention orders or applying for safety notices or investigating criminal charges arising as well, all of which sometimes at a desktop is an easier exercise than in the field; hence the draft component. They do not always want to quite finalise it before they are 100%.

Chris CREWTHER: Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

The CHAIR: Thanks. Christine.

Chris COUZENS: Thank you both for your time today; we really appreciate it. And thanks for all the work Vic Police do in our communities as well. I know they have a big presence in Geelong doing some great work. Going back to the trial that you talked about, on misidentification and those issues, we have heard from Aboriginal communities and multicultural communities how that occurs. For the Aboriginal community in particular, they are saying there is a risk of child protection stepping in and taking the child, even though it is a misidentification. How quickly do you think the misidentification will be addressed to avoid some of those unintended consequences?

Lauren CALLAWAY: Certainly we recognise that problem. We identified five different points along the process. The first one is obviously at the scene, going all the way to the fifth one, which is at court. Rectification of misidentification at a court is the last option. There have been consequences in between, which can disadvantage particularly women. We have not set ourselves a timeframe or a target to get it fixed in, but we are confident that we can certainly, with this program of work, reduce the incidence of it happening in the first place. But then when it does, we have done this in a very non-punitive way, because what we heard from police is that they want to get it right. They actually do not want to get these things wrong. We are hoping that we can get rectification down to something around maybe 48 hours, 72 hours. That is the goal.

You heard me describe this misidentification as phase 1. Once we do that big rollout of what we would call a statewide capability uplift of members, then we will roll into phase 2 and look to see where it is still occurring and what more we can do to actually bring that rate down. We acknowledge that the quicker that we identify the misidentification and rectify it, the quicker the true victim in the incident can actually get access to services and undo some of those things in motion.

Chris COUZENS: Great. And in some areas there are Aboriginal community liaison officers. Do they have a role to play in the family violence area that you are aware of, and if they do, what is that role?

Lauren CALLAWAY: The Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer has a really broad role in Victoria Police. They are engaging with the Aboriginal community on lots of issues. We have been in discussion with Priority and Safer Communities around specific family violence training. What I get concerned about is the volume of family violence that is occurring—it could almost subsume the original role. One of the things that we really want to protect is that the community liaison role for an Aboriginal person is about all things. There is a lot of negativity attached to interfering in family violence incidents. It has never been designed to be a role that just focuses on family violence.

Chris COUZENS: And with elder abuse, we know it is being recorded in our community. Are they easily identified through L17 reports, and how is elder abuse data analysed?

Lauren CALLAWAY: The age of a person who is either an AFM or a perpetrator is easily identified within our L17s because we capture that demographic. Our command has also done some work on elder abuse, and I hold the seniors portfolio for Victoria Police, where elder abuse is a really hot topic with our seniors portfolio reference group members. So it is identified. We do observe the trends and the data, and we do a lot of work on communicating the risk factors that are identified for elderly people experiencing abuse. It is kind of a two-way piece of work. There is a bit we do outwards to the community around reporting. We have World Elder Abuse Awareness Day and other aspects. And there is an internal piece that we work with our members to give them scenarios and practice guidance around being able to identify it, because it presents itself in a different way to normal intimate partner violence.

Claire WATERMAN: That is exactly right. We have had additional focus on elder abuse in our work programs for that exact reason. It can present itself differently, financial elder abuse particularly. We have got new pathways through Crime Stoppers that we have set up as well, recognising that it is not always going to be the 000 call-out that we get on elder abuse, and we are working with a lot of other agencies on doing that given it is growing, sadly. It is something –

Lauren CALLAWAY: It is part of it.

Claire WATERMAN: Yes.

Chris COUZENS: Great. Thank you.

The CHAIR: Thanks, Chris. Cindy.

Cindy McLEISH: Thank you. I have just got a couple of questions. We talked about the L17 before, and you said that it does not record ethnicity but it might have something like ethnic appearance or something like that. Are they drop-down boxes?

Lauren CALLAWAY: Yes. I have actually got a copy. Have you got a copy of the L17? I actually brought a copy with me.

Cindy McLEISH: That is helpful.

Lauren CALLAWAY: It is, yes. I am happy to provide it. We have got ethnic appearance, and what we can also ascertain—you have got under the respondent and also the AFM material as well. We acknowledge that the ethnicity piece is more complex than just that part of the box. One of the other issues is also whether or not we needed an interpreter and what language was spoken when police attended the incident. We have also got a box capturing country of birth, which is in line with the ABS data. But when you take that further, there is definitely an opportunity to collect more data around CALD communities and how they present in family violence incidents.

Cindy McLEISH: So the police officers would get an interpreter at the time, and then they would just have to rely on what they say.

Claire WATERMAN: Accessing interpreters can be challenging sometimes depending on language or dialect and what is available through the Victorian Government services that we are all contracted to use, but yes, we do that. The other important information for why we do that is one, we have got pretty strict and clear policies around doing that and not using family members as interpreters where possible for obvious reasons of not colluding or having one version, but also because this information is shared with the agencies and/or also it is about us telling the courts about it, in the language example, or accessibility needs around making sure those services can also be brought in the other parts of the system where we know.

Cindy McLEISH: You mentioned earlier that the officers can add data for up to 14 days where, for example, now that you have provided it the information is not available. If the information becomes available, they would go in and update that view at the time. I noticed that information from LEAP says 'if there is information that is not available'. Why would that be not available? Is it something that is not captured previously? If they are being charged—and I look at intervention orders. 'Has the respondent ever been charged with contravention of an intervention order'—is that something that is not easy to find?

Lauren CALLAWAY: Sometimes you have to go within LEAP to look for the nature of the offending to see, because there would be personal safety orders. There may be orders within there that you would need to get into the actual narrative to ascertain whether it is a family violence related order or not. And it may be against other relationship dynamics. For some of this information it is easier for the police officer to go back to the station and actually interrogate LEAP in order to complete it. What we do know from family violence incidents is that in at least 30% of those incidents both parties are not present by the time the police officers get there. So filling in the information can be quite one-sided depending on who is at the scene. That is why we allow that 14-day period to update the information, because it may require time back at the station to go through, or even trying to locate the other party to get information to make the report complete.

Cindy McLEISH: So in a situation where you have handed something to The Orange Door and they find out additional information, do they come back and tell you so you have a more complete picture?

Lauren CALLAWAY: Yes, they do, and they can.

Cindy McLEISH: So if that is 28 days down the track, they can still update the L17, or is it a different thing that gets updated at that point?

Lauren CALLAWAY: The original L17 can only be updated from the police perspective up to the 14-day mark, but what we can do is put in supplementary reports linked to the original report.

Claire WATERMAN: And you can update. While maybe the tick boxes might not be changing after the 14 days, that case progress narrative will. We have got text on LEAP where members can go in and add information from agencies or case progress updates for offences and things like that in a text way all through our Central Data Entry Bureau.

Cindy McLEISH: And what do the CSA get?

Claire WATERMAN: They get all of the L17 data.

Cindy McLEISH: And with the case notes that get done later? I mean, if that has got really good data on perpetrators, how does that get captured?

Claire WATERMAN: I will take that on notice to make sure I am giving you the exact correct answer there. They do get all the L17 data, but the case progress narratives, I will just double check. Because it is free text, I am not sure we can get it. We might have to refer to the CSA to double-check that one.

Lauren CALLAWAY: But one of the things with the CSA data is it is quarterly, and there is a good reason for that. It gives the LEAP system three months of what we would call settling time—parties changing, additional charges being laid or withdrawn. That is why our CSA data reports that come out have that three-month lag, because there are changes to the data. Putting aside the narrative piece, which we will take on notice –

Cindy McLEISH: You find more information. You are building the picture all the time.

Lauren CALLAWAY: Or additional information is coming in and the outcomes of the incident are changing.

Cindy McLEISH: With some of the questions that are asked, and bearing in mind changing technology such as tracking devices and things like that are being used, which is being told to me, is that something that can be included in one of the updated versions of an L17 or does it become too cumbersome at a point?

Lauren CALLAWAY: The L17 and the scoring of it have been developed in partnership with Swinburne University and Forensicare, so it is what we call an actuarial tool. It is weighted against different risk factors and those risks factors are given a number, as opposed to the MARAM which is professional structured judgement that was developed by the University of Melbourne. The thing that underpins the weighting of those scores is years and years of data –

Cindy McLEISH: Yes, I get it.

Lauren CALLAWAY: and the evidence base. But, interestingly, I take your point that there are some offending behaviours that are on the rise—technology facilitated abuse; certainly child abuse material for the last 20 years has gone on the rise; stalking. So what we would require if we were to go forward and change the scoring and the structure of the L17 is a significant dataset behind it that accurately predicts the weighting of the risk rating numbers in order to either elevate risk or not weight it so highly.

Cindy McLEISH: So given that I think you said it was last changed in 2018, which is six years or so ago, would that be something that should be done again with Swinburne having another look at the weighting on the risk factors and repeating that actuarial work?

Lauren CALLAWAY: What we have done in the last two years is work with Swinburne on the case prioritisation response model which sits above this report. This report produces a score, and four and above in part A and four or below in part B elevate the report up to the family violence investigation unit. That is our specialist tier. They will look at the scoring. There is the ability for uniform members, if the score is under, if they feel there are certain factors in there like stalking or something quite nasty in the material that did not weight the score high enough, they can elevate it up to the family violence investigation unit. Then that unit will have a look at it and decide whether or not they will retain the job and the investigation of the offender or management of the offender, or it is a job that could be handled by uniform. What we have done is a revised version. It is called the case prioritisation review model version 3. It is more accurately predicting which cases within the 95,000 are more likely to have family violence reoccur, so a frequency aspect, and the severity— more accurately predict the severe offending within the information that is in the report. We are rolling out a new version of that case prioritisation.

Cindy McLEISH: Great. thank you.

Claire WATERMAN: And we have had revised data scoring since 2018, so we have done that.

Lauren CALLAWAY: They have used that latest five years of data to inform the first lot of data, and they have tested it and it is more accurate in its predictions.

Cindy McLEISH: Great. Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

The CHAIR: Thank you. Just on the L17 form, is that something that you could table to the Committee so that we can publish it, or is it not publicly available?

Claire WATERMAN: It is not publicly available –

Lauren CALLAWAY: For various reasons around –

Claire WATERMAN: for various reasons like it is a police form and getting access, but we are happy to share it with the Committee so you can have it formally as part of your deliberations.

The CHAIR: Great. Thank you. Heang.

Meng Heang TAK: Thank you, Chair. In terms of early intervention, we heard from a previous submitter about having police understand multicultural or First Nations people. Also we heard that there is only 30 minutes mandatory in the police training. Is that correct?

Lauren CALLAWAY: On the First Nations training, there is a learning hub course that needs to be done. That may be where you are getting the 30 minutes from. But there is also Aboriginal cultural awareness training which I think about 80% of the organisation has completed and that goes for—I have done the training; I think it is about three hours.

Meng Heang TAK: Three hours.

Claire WATERMAN: That is compulsory force wide. It is happening at the moment. Our entire workforce will undertake that. ACLOs are involved in the facilitation of that as well.

Lauren CALLAWAY: On the multicultural training, I would have to take that on notice as to the actual time spent. We have multicultural liaison officers and it is a golden thread woven through almost all courses at the police academy, but I would not be able to quantify the time for you.

Meng Heang TAK: Thank you. How does Victoria Police help people to feel more comfortable or confident to accurately report family violence or disclose information, in particular in diverse communities?

Lauren CALLAWAY: I was a Commander at the Police Academy for two years, and the specialist family violence programs were under my remit, the Centre for Family Violence. Part of the training focuses on rapport building. It is also training from recruit through to superintendent. There is an aspect around our first responders having the confidence to sit down with both AFMs and perpetrators to elicit this information, because not everybody wants to talk to police officers, and we recognise that. In fact there are a lot of perpetrators who go to great lengths to avoid having contact with us, particularly once they have committed family violence. But the rapport-building aspect, the open-ended questioning—there are specialist interviewing techniques when you get to the investigation of criminal offences through our specialist units. We also have our SOCITs, which have particular interviewing training for sex offences, which we know occur within a family violence context as well. So there are a range of skills. We give particular information to supervisors to assist them to oversight family violence incidents and to intervene to ensure that the response that we take, whether it is a criminal, civil or referral response, is the right response for the circumstances.

Meng Heang TAK: In terms of when a case is at court, could you tell us about Victoria Police's experience in terms of sharing information with Victorian courts? Are there challenges or opportunities for improvement?

Lauren CALLAWAY: I noticed that the sharing of police and court data has been raised a fair bit in this inquiry. It is interesting because there is actually daily sharing between the court system and the police database, LEAP. I think we are up to almost hourly updates, but there are at least four batches a day where data is coming from the courts management system into the LEAP system and vice versa. I also sit on the courts case management system IT project, where they are doing a full enhancement of their system. Victoria Police is a stakeholder in the project, so there is definitely a program to enhance their system and how it talks to ours. We recently launched between the courts and ourselves –

Claire WATERMAN: The streamlining intervention order application. It is a new system, probably more at our end but obviously interfacing with courts, where we are having statewide visibility of intervention orders and where they are being served so that we can do more auditing and monitoring.

Lauren CALLAWAY: So they are all going into a centralised bucket now from the courts, so police across the state have visibility of every intervention order that has been issued and can serve it. There is a lot of work going on between us and the courts to improve that information sharing above and beyond that daily batch system that happens.

Meng Heang TAK: All right. Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

The CHAIR: Thank you. All right. A few more from me just to round this out. How is information about people using family violence shared across borders and with other interstate police agencies?

Lauren CALLAWAY: Do you want to talk to that?

Claire WATERMAN: Sure. The National DVO scheme is probably the first one to highlight there, where through our LEAP system or the NCIS, they call it—there is a program that all police agencies use, where they can access information from other jurisdictions. We have a fair bit of information sharing between the other jurisdictions. I think there are always ways to improve that. For those that are paying attention to the national cabinet findings last week, I think they announced a high-risk perpetrator flag as part of that. Things like that we can continue to enhance. There is always that part of needing to agree on what would define that across states, because we do have different legislation. Across borders, as you say, Ella, I think there is different legislation on different sides, and there is complexity with that. But I think it is something that police forces are working quite hard on. But there is still plenty more that we can all do to do that better at a legislation level, at a risk-assessment level and a systems one too.

Lauren CALLAWAY: We sit on an interjurisdictional advisory group run by ANZPAA. Victoria and all the other police jurisdictions are on it, specifically on the family violence issue. We meet at least twice a year to share ideas and work on projects and concepts that would benefit every police jurisdiction.

The CHAIR: Do you have any other recommendations to the Victorian Government about how the government can reduce some of those barriers that exist to sharing information across jurisdictions?

Lauren CALLAWAY: Claire mentioned legislative constraints that you would need to have a look at with other states to see where are the choking points and barriers that actually exist. With the high-risk perpetrator flag that Claire mentioned, I can anticipate that one of the issues will be the definition of high risk. That then goes to risk assessment tools in each police jurisdiction and whether or not they are relying on an actuarial tool, like we do in Victoria, bearing in mind Victoria is advanced on other states because of the investment post royal commission. That aspect I think would require some working through for it to land. We notice even in national homicide data definitions vary as to what is classified as a family violence death in other states' legislation.

The CHAIR: Does Victoria Police collect data on animal abuse and have a relationship with the RSPCA?

Claire WATERMAN: We do, yes, and one of the questions on the L17 is about pet abuse specifically. I even remember we did force-wide training when we rolled out the *Family Violence Protection Act* that was specifically on pet abuse back then because it is defined in the Act as an example. It is highlighted particularly because of that, and Victoria Police as a whole has pretty strong relationships with the RSPCA.

Lauren CALLAWAY: We also did a pet abuse project with—which university?

Claire WATERMAN: It was Melbourne University.

The CHAIR: How is data relating to animal abuse in the context of family violence analysed, and is it passed on to the CSA?

Claire WATERMAN: Yes, because everything here is. As Lauren was just saying, we did a project before on pet abuse with Melbourne University. So also where people are wanting to do research with us on that, we have definitely done that before—not in the last 12 months necessarily, but absolutely. I think the other thing about the L17 and what is reported on the website is sometimes there is more available than necessarily is reported. As CSA are building their datasets, things like that could be highlighted as well—or people can make requests. Even though it might not be on the dashboard, people can apply to the CSA and make a specific data request to have a look at it if they want.

The CHAIR: How will feedback mechanisms to Victoria Police, such as whether referrals to The Orange Door were acted on or whether men's behaviour change programs were completed, contribute to a fuller understanding of people who use family violence?

Lauren CALLAWAY: Certainly closing the feedback loop, because the L17 portal does appear as though it is very one-way: police data going in. We do not necessarily hear or see the results unless there is specific case conferencing between the FVIUs and the Orange Door. We ran a series of workshops with frontline police not last year but the year before, 250 police. They expressed to us they wanted more information about perpetrators, about AFMs, so they are keen to know that information. What I think inhibits it is the demand piece. They are going from job to job, so the time that it takes to get back and hear—and we appreciate from The Orange Door perspective as well around their ability to make contact with clients referred to them through

the portal, through the L17—may take weeks or months. They may never actually make contact with that person, so there is often no referral loop to be closed.

The CHAIR: Thank you. Cindy.

Cindy McLEISH: Just one more. I hear quite a bit about violence against parents, particularly by mostly young boys and let us say teenagers. They would have the same L17 completed on them. Would that be passed to The Orange Door as well?

Lauren CALLAWAY: Yes.

Cindy McLEISH: So The Orange Door would be able to tell us about incidents from child to parents?

Lauren CALLAWAY: Absolutely the CSA can identify that data. Adolescents committing family violence and experiencing family violence are a priority group that both we and Family Safety Victoria are working on. We recognise again that the data and the risk factors look very different for young people committing family violence. We also appreciate from a police perspective that the last thing parents want to do is call the police on their children, but that is a growing different dynamic within family violence reporting, a bit like elder abuse. So we have got to continually tailor our responses to give police the tools to recognise what might be the best option when they attend these incidents.

Cindy McLEISH: I imagine the actuaries would look at that quite differently if you are saying that they play out. When they do their work do they do under-18 and over-18, or do they have a group between 15 and 20 or something like that that they would try and identify to give the different weightings to the risk factors?

Lauren CALLAWAY: There is not enough data in the system to weight that. That is where the actuarial tool needs to be supplemented with practice guidance.

Claire WATERMAN: There is a MARAM arm developing under the MARAM framework, which we are all legislated to comply with. There will be a children and young persons dedicated one that will be coming out, which FSV are leading through significant consultation at the moment, which I think will also help to move us all along.

Cindy McLEISH: When will that be out?

Claire WATERMAN: You will have to check with FSV about that one, sorry, but we have been involved in all the consults and everything.

Cindy McLEISH: Thank you very much. Thank you, Chair.

The CHAIR: Thank you. Thank you to Lauren Callaway and Claire Waterman from Victoria Police for appearing before the Committee today. We greatly appreciate the time and effort you have taken to prepare your evidence. I also thank the witnesses who appeared earlier today, as well as Hansard, the Committee Secretariat and security. I declare this hearing adjourned.

Committee adjourned.