

# TRANSCRIPT

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY LEGAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

### **Inquiry into capturing data on family violence perpetrators in Victoria**

Melbourne—Monday 5 August 2024

#### **MEMBERS**

Ella George – Chair

Annabelle Cleeland – Deputy Chair

Chris Couzens

Chris Crewther

Cindy McLeish

Meng Heang Tak

Jackson Taylor

#### **WITNESSES**

Livia La Rocca, General Manager, Integrated Place-based Services, Vic East and NSW, and

Dr Jozica Kutin, General Manager, Policy, Advocacy and Service Impact, Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand.

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

This afternoon I am joined by my colleagues Jackson Taylor, the Member for Bayswater; Meng Heang Tak, the Member for Clarinda; Christine Couzens, the Member for Geelong; Annabelle Cleeland, the Member for Euroa and Deputy Chair; and Chris Crewther, the Member for Mornington.

We recognise today that the evidence being given to the 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 very pleased to welcome from Good Shepherd Dr Jozica Kutin, General Manager of Policy, Advocacy and Service Impact, and Livia La Rocca, the General Manager of Integrated Place-based Services in Victoria and New South Wales. Thank you very much for joining us today. I would like to invite you to make an opening statement of up to 10 minutes. This will be followed by questions from members. Thank you.

**Jozica KUTIN:** Thank you for inviting Good Shepherd to this hearing today. My name is Dr Jozica Kutin, and I am the General Manager of Policy, Advocacy and Service Impact, which includes research and evaluation. I have been employed at Good Shepherd for almost two years. Prior to Good Shepherd I worked at the Victoria Law Foundation and at RMIT University, where I completed a PhD that focused on economic abuse.

With me today is Livia La Rocca. She is the General Manager of Integrated Place-based Services for the eastern part of Victoria and New South Wales. Livia has been with Good Shepherd for 27 years. Livia is a psychologist with experience delivering therapeutic responses to women, children and families. Livia has been leading and managing our programs at Good Shepherd since 2006, which include family violence services, family services, youth homelessness, sexual assault counselling and financial capability. Livia has also been the co-chair of the Bayside Peninsula Risk Assessment and Management Panel, known as RAMP, since its establishment in 2016. I would also like to acknowledge our General Manager of Lived Experience Lula Dembele, who assisted us and played a key role in developing the submission.

I will just give a brief overview of Good Shepherd. We provide place-based family violence services, family support services and financial and housing services across Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia and Queensland. In the financial year 2023 we provided family violence services to almost 10,000 women and almost 1800 children. In Victoria we provide a comprehensive suite of family violence services, including crisis response, refuge and accommodation services, case management, Orange Door involvement for Bayside Peninsula, family violence counselling for women and children and peer support groups. We are also the lead agency for one of the Changing Ways serious risk programs, and as mentioned, we co-chair the Bayside Peninsula RAMP program. Most recently we have partnered with Queensland University of Technology—the project is led by Professor Michael Flood—to pilot a population-based survey on the perpetration of domestic, family and sexual violence. In our submission we have responded to the Committee's terms of reference and made several recommendations regarding administrative data and the collection of population-based data, but I would like to highlight today three issues regarding administrative data in particular.

As part of delivering family violence services, data is collected about victims, children and perpetrators. A significant source of this data, as the panel has already heard through previous organisations, is through the MARAM. The MARAM is comprehensive. It covers serious evidence-based family violence risk factors such as assault during pregnancy, access to weapons, and choking and strangulation experiences. It provides a wealth of information about victims, children and perpetrators. The MARAM primarily assists workers in risk

assessment and developing a safety plan. But it is not a static assessment, it is a document that is continuously updated while the client case is open. As a source of data for insights MARAM provides a comprehensive history of the perpetrator and the use of violence, informed by the victim-survivor's experience and information gathered through other organisations and statutory authorities. Evidence-based risk factors and a number of easy-to-analyse categorical data fields—so this is bringing my data analysis cap here—are coded as 'yes', 'no' or 'unknown', and that informs the assessment of risk and safety. Each assessment question also allows for detailed comments, text-based data, which is usually more time consuming to analyse, but it is actually all there. If you consider we had 10,000 clients in the previous financial year, that is a lot of text data to go through.

Agencies like ours submit our program data every month via the SHIP database to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. However, this data only includes what is necessary for contract monitoring: the number of clients, the demographic information about victims and survivors and the services that were delivered. MARAM, as far as we are aware, is not being analysed to provide a comprehensive profile of perpetrators in Victoria. It is not being used to analyse the association between risk factors and behaviours, nor is it being used to describe or report any insights into the changing nature of perpetrators or the tactics that they are using. We are therefore missing the opportunity to use this wealth of data to understand cohorts who are using violence, therefore more effectively tailoring and targeting prevention and intervention strategies. This leaves victims at risk of experiencing further violence and harm.

Related to the data collected by family violence services is the collection of data by other agencies. When family violence is not the primary presenting issue but is identified, family violence data then sits with other services, such as family services, child protection and health. Different versions of MARAM are then used, such as the brief or intermediate assessment, which again raises the opportunity to merge these data sources to obtain a comprehensive picture of perpetration. This is particularly important because we know that reporting violence to police is limited. We know from the Personal Safety Survey that 79% of women who have experienced physical violence or threat did not report these incidents to police. Hence perpetrators and victims will appear in other services, or not at all, not directly related to family violence. So MARAMs collected by non-family violence agencies should therefore be included with data from family violence services to obtain a broader picture of family violence perpetration.

The next point I am going to make is about the RAMP program and the collection of data there. Good Shepherd, as we have mentioned, co-chairs the Bayside Peninsula RAMP. RAMPs deal with very high-risk perpetrators. We work collaboratively with local agencies and police family violence investigation units to prevent family violence fatalities and harm. RAMPs are effective because of this cross-collaboration. There has never been a RAMP client death for an open case at the Bayside Peninsula RAMP, but longer-term follow-up is required. Again, RAMPs report data to the department, but we are unaware of any insights or analysis based on the statewide program. It is time that the RAMP program is evaluated and that kind of data is shared. For example, how are we preventing family violence-related fatalities, harm and near misses? What is the profile of a RAMP perpetrator? Do we need to expand the RAMP program? Who is not being served by this program, and who should be?

Just in conclusion, too often data collection focuses on reporting for contract and funding compliance. Capturing data on people who use family and domestic violence should also be about the prevention of family violence and being better able to respond to it. We need to not only collect data but to analyse it, to share it, to use it for planning interventions, to learn from it and to make it accessible to those who need it most—service providers, program funders, advocates and policymakers.

There are many opportunities to improve the use of existing datasets through investment in technology, increased database functionality, machine learning, data linkage and upskilling of the family violence workforce in data collection and research capability. We have a fragmented data collection system, and we have heard that already today. We have a wealth of data that is collected that is not used. We can take practical and pragmatic steps to improve the quality of data and how we use data that we are already collecting. If we start with the data we do have, we can harness information collected by family violence and other services to ensure that all women, girls and families are safe, well, strong and connected. Thank you.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you for that excellent opening statement. I would like to start with asking a question around your population-based survey. I am wondering if you can expand on the work you are currently doing on that.

**Jozica KUTIN:** Yes, fantastic. The project is led by Professor Michael Flood from QUT, and we are co-investigators on that project. I understand he is actually coming before the Committee next week.

**The CHAIR:** Yes, that is right. I think we have got that locked in, but if not, we are working to lock him in.

**Jozica KUTIN:** Well, lock it in. This is a project that has been supported by victim-survivors, and Lula Dembele has also been active in advocating for such a study. We were successful in getting funding from ANROWS to run a pilot. The pilot is using survey-based methodology, so we are going to survey 2000 people who are part of a panel and use similar methodologies that have been used in previous studies that have been successful in asking people about their perpetration of violence and other behaviours.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you. All right. Annabelle.

**Annabelle CLEELAND:** Livia, you have had quite a career. I feel like any question will be inadequate for what is inside your brain, actually in life experience. I am just picking up on your comment just then about practical and pragmatic steps that we can do right now—like, the low-lying fruit—what would you want to see as part of recommendations that we could act on quite quickly?

**Jozica KUTIN:** Livia and I have been looking at the MARAM dataset a lot, which we can access through our own organisation, and basically dreaming, ‘Wouldn’t it be amazing if that data was actually taken and used by the department across all services to create a database where they could then analyse and present that data on some kind of data dashboard that the sector can access?’ I mean, I think that would provide invaluable insights. As part of the Good Shepherd Institute we are also collaborating with universities and also with PhD students, because PhD students actually provide the perfect avenue for having these kinds of complex datasets analysed, but we are also making sure that the universities are linked with the sector so that they actually make sense of the data that they are analysing as well. I think that will provide an incredible dataset, just looking at who is coming to the services—who is being assessed at the different levels, what those characteristics are and what their behaviours are.

**Annabelle CLEELAND:** So your experience or what you spoke about is higher risk perpetrators?

**Jozica KUTIN:** That is with the RAMP program.

**Annabelle CLEELAND:** The RAMP program. But with your experience, does data need to be collected and analysed for lower, mid-level risk perpetrators as well? I guess you have got that top tier now, but how do we target those that are escalating their use of violence in the home?

**Jozica KUTIN:** I guess that there are two parts: that is, the population kind of data and the administrative data that talks about people who are connected with services already. Did you want to speak to that, Livia?

**Livia LA ROCCA:** Yes. There are different assessments through MARAM: there is a brief assessment, there is an intermediate assessment and then there is the comprehensive. If you are a specialist family violence service, you will be using the comprehensive assessment, which really does provide a lot of information about perpetrators and their use of violence. As you move down to the less comprehensive, there is less information; of course you would expect that. For family services we are not required to do a comprehensive assessment, but the information that is there is not as comprehensive as it would otherwise be, and our way of storing that information is different.

I think that you have already heard that there is SHIP as one database; there is IRIS, which is used by family services; and perpetrator services or men’s behaviour change programs. IRIS is a legacy system that is going to come to an end. It is not going to continue because of its limited capacity to store information and to integrate what is in it. If you are not a specialist family violence service and you are collecting information about the use of violence, it is likely to be going into a system that really will not be able to provide you with collated or aggregate information about the use of violence. On the other hand, SHIP has MARAM built into it, so we are

able to pull out all the information from MARAM comprehensive reports as a specialist family violence service, and we can provide really rich data from that that is not available as part of our other service provision.

**Annabelle CLEELAND:** Oh, my gosh, how confusing, though, learning and utilising them. Are there points of interaction where people using violence are considered sort of invisible in the system, where there might not be any touchpoints of data but they may be repeat offenders?

**Jozica KUTIN:** Yes. I think this is the reason why we have been advocating for a population-based survey of perpetration, because such a significant proportion is missed in the system. But if you are talking about where victim-survivors have experienced or are experiencing family violence but are not at family violence services—is that what your question is about?

**Annabelle CLEELAND:** Probably more the perpetrator side—following the history and tracking that. But if you think the victim-survivor end is important, then just speak to what you think.

**Jozica KUTIN:** I think that is the argument for having a population-based survey. The survey that we are going to be doing will be looking at not only just their behaviours but also the antecedents and their history and perhaps trying to map out—it will not be causative, because it is a cross-section of the sample—what are the factors that correlate with that perpetration of family violence.

**Annabelle CLEELAND:** Okay.

**Livia LA ROCCA:** There is a lot of missing information about perpetrators, because engagement is really limited. And if I think about the Orange Door and our involvement in the Bayside Peninsula Orange Door, we know that it is less than 5% of people using violence who we are actually able to engage with ultimately, who come through the system. Our engagement with victim-survivors is much greater, and that is why the richness of data about perpetrators is really coming from victim-survivor services—because our engagement levels are so much higher and so the data is richer. One of the ways that we are looking at trying to engage with people who use violence who may not ordinarily want to engage around their use of violence is through the Changing Ways pilot, so the serious risk program. Our model is around engaging with people who use violence when they come through the emergency department at Frankston Hospital for other issues. So as they come in for their substance use or mental health issues and we are able to look into their history and know that they are a person who has a history of using violence, we initially attend to their presenting needs and issues and then try to use engagement with them and build a relationship to hopefully then engage them in a conversation about their use of violence. So we need to be using creative, alternative ways to engage if we really want to make a difference in that space.

**Annabelle CLEELAND:** I will share the mic, and maybe at the end –

**The CHAIR:** Thank you. Christine.

**Chris COUZENS:** Thank you for your time today. Do you have a view on what data should be collected?

**Jozica KUTIN:** By service providers or, for example, in a –

**Chris COUZENS:** Yes, across the board in terms of the men's behavioural program that we have been talking about.

**Livia LA ROCCA:** Do you mean the men's behaviour change program?

**Chris COUZENS:** Yes.

**Livia LA ROCCA:** We do not have men's programs specifically, no.

**Jozica KUTIN:** With that program that Livia was talking about, the men in that program who have used violence go to a different service for their intervention, and then it is the victim-survivors that come to our –

**Chris COUZENS:** That is the RAMP you are talking about?

**Jozica KUTIN:** RAMP is different.

**Livia LA ROCCA:** No, this is Changing Ways. This is the serious risk program. So Peninsula Health is our partner in that. They provide the support to the person using violence. We provide the victim-survivor support.

**Jozica KUTIN:** I think the comprehensive MARAM, because we have discussed this as well, actually covers all the points that you need to cover. But as you have seen, that is very comprehensive, right? It is not something that a GP is going to be able to sit there and ask a client or a patient—all those kinds of questions. It is a matter of context, what you can ask. Also, in terms of the MARAM assessment—and Livia can speak to this more—it is not something that is completed in the first session. You cannot go into that amount of detail when you are assessing the needs of a victim-survivor who is presenting to your organisation.

**Chris COUZENS:** I suppose what I am asking is: what detail needs to go into those questions?

**Livia LA ROCCA:** I think the MARAM is really great at identifying the evidence-based risk factors that really lead to more serious perpetration of violence and what they are, so those risk factors are really critical and victim-survivors reporting of those behaviours. There is the list of them in MARAM, and we identified just a few of those, including strangulation, pet abuse, stalking—all those behaviours that we are all aware of. That information is captured from the perspective of victim-survivors, and we need to be looking at those trends and patterns. I think we also need to be looking for changing ways that violence is perpetrated. It is not static, either, in how it presents: coercive control—we are becoming more and more familiar with them; we understand it better now than we used to—and some of those more subtle ways that violence is perpetrated. So I think we do need to capture all of those things and try to stay a step ahead to look at what the next way is that it is going to present.

**Chris COUZENS:** Thank you.

**The CHAIR:** Great. Chris.

**Chris COUZENS:** Thank you, Chair. Firstly, thank you again for your evidence and submission. You note that MARAM is not being analysed. Who, in your opinion, would be best placed to undertake this analysis? I know there are particular sets of data that are not being utilised or would be best utilised, such as through the Orange Door or others, going forward. And could the Centre for Victorian Data Linkage also be utilised to enhance data linkage? It is a sort of three-part question.

**The CHAIR:** Maybe we can do those one by one.

**Chris CREWETHER:** They are all linked to each other.

**Jozica KUTIN:** They are all linked. It is all about data linkage, so that is a very well linked question. I think your first question, if I recall, was about who should analyse the MARAM data. I think the owner of the data, which is the department, which is the central collection point of that, in conjunction with—if you just look at it as a static set, that might be something that they might then take ownership over in terms of analysing or providing a dataset that is available for researchers to be able to analyse, obviously de-identified and all those kinds of things but using a statistical linkage key so that you do know whether there are any repeats of a person within that dataset or across clients. For example, you might have victim-survivors with the same perpetrator. You do not want to lose that information, even though you might have different victim-survivors. Combining that data then with other data I think is where the richness comes from, because at the moment within that Victorian dataset there are things like health—emergency department presentations and community health centres. I think the IRIS dataset is mentioned in there, but SHIP is not mentioned in there. So you are losing out on that detailed family violence information in there.

Generally what happens with the big, linked datasets—because the ABS also has kind of a warehouse of federal datasets as well—is that they are made available to researchers. In fact in my research I have used the Personal Safety Survey at that individual item level to run that kind of analysis to determine what the risk factors there are in relation to economic abuse. That then takes it to another level of complexity. But I think there are things that the department could do, for example, providing a dashboard across the state, either by geo-locations or by being able to demonstrate that this is the profile of perpetrators at the moment, or this is the profile of victim-survivors—but obviously not using aggregated data in that way.

We came across a very neat example from a homelessness project in Queensland called Brisbane Zero. They have a really neat little public data dashboard, powered through Power BI, where when clients complete a survey when they are accessing a service, you can then see the responses to the survey and you can then, as a public user, filter that survey by a few characteristics. We have also invested in these types of systems at Good Shepherd, because at Good Shepherd we are not just a family violence service. We provide family and youth services, we have services like supported playgroup services and we also have our very large no-interest loans program and financial capability and financial resilience services. So we actually have—a bit like what you are facing now—six different datasets, and we have to try and get a picture of who our clients are. We have actually, as part of our new strategy, invested in data warehouses so that that data can come in from one source and another source, and now I can access our information through a Power BI dashboard and therefore filter that data by whatever queries or questions I might have.

I cannot see—well, I can see—why that could not be done, for example, at a statewide level using the live data. Jim Chalmers' Measuring What Matters website has the data dashboards for a whole variety of data points, but it is fairly static. The data points do not change as the population changes, because it is based on surveys that might be run every four years or every two years or on the census. Something that is much more dynamic and interrelated—I am not a tech person to speak to it, but it is possible—is utilising data warehouses, where you can extract the back ends from antiquated systems such as SHIP and IRIS and put them in a place where you can then bring them out into a more modern system, to be able to read and interpret that data that way.

**Chris CREWETHER:** Yes. Thank you.

**Jozica KUTIN:** But you need to get somebody a bit more techy—and IT. When IT talk about the levels and the complexity around that –

**Chris CREWETHER:** Yes. It was a very comprehensive answer, so thank you.

**Jozica KUTIN:** Yes. It made sense to me. It does what I need it to do so then I can answer those questions when I need to answer those questions for our organisation.

**Chris CREWETHER:** Thank you.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you. Heang.

**Meng Heang TAK:** Thank you, Chair. Thank you. My question is to your experience: are there any particular services or points of interaction where people who are using violence—perpetrators—are rendered invisible in the system, gone missing or something?

**Livia LA ROCCA:** Yes. I think if we do not ask the question, and we are not trained to really see the signs of it, then of course they are going to be missed. One of the things that impacts that is demand and services becoming more narrow in their focus. So if a service is funded to deliver a very narrow service within their scope, then they are more likely not to pick up on some of the other indicators or signs of violence or perpetration of violence. One of the things we are doing in our own organisation is we have created a service navigation and support function so that more comprehensive assessments can occur across the board—so that if someone comes into Good Shepherd, regardless of the service that they are coming in for, we would hope to be able to provide a comprehensive assessment of needs and therefore hopefully a more comprehensive view and picture of what is occurring for them in their lives. I think it is through comprehensive assessment more broadly that we are likely to pick up on what could be invisible otherwise if we have got a very narrow, siloed way of operating.

**Meng Heang TAK:** Thank you. I guess my next question would be to your submissions, in which you asked for enacting of laws that mandate and protect the data collections process, develop clear protocols and address privacy issues through robust data protection measures. Are you able to elaborate more on that?

**Jozica KUTIN:** Yes. I think it is part of having a system whereby you can integrate data from different services while you are still protecting privacy but also protecting data as you need to. For example, within Good Shepherd we might have services that are relevant for other parts of our service program to know about but not relevant to other parts of the service sector. If we can better integrate the data that is available and those systems

while maintaining privacy and safety for people within those systems, then we can better achieve what we want to be able to achieve in terms of getting a comprehensive picture of what is going on.

I think it leads to your question about who is invisible in the system, because we know, for example, from the Orange Door that a lot of the referrals to Orange Door are based on L17, so police reports. When services come under pressure or there is a backlog, then you are only going to be serving those at highest risk. People at lower risk who might become high risk later on kind of either have to wait or find some other services to get access. So really at that service level end you are seeing kind of the tip of the iceberg, where there is such a risk or their behaviours are so obvious that they have been reported or captured, essentially captured, or their data is becoming known, or they are becoming known to police. That is the argument for having a population-based survey—to find out what is actually going on in the community. I give the example of we wonder if people are going to tell the truth in an online survey. It is the same kind of scenario as if you went home and asked your kids, ‘Have you used cannabis, alcohol or all these other kinds of drugs in the last 12 months?’ They are going to say no to you, right? But when we have done school-based surveys of drug and alcohol use, they will give that information in the survey about their drug and alcohol use. It is because of the context in which that information is being accessed. A perpetrator before the courts or speaking to police or their friends or whoever it might be is likely to behave much more differently and is likely to answer those questions differently than in a private survey that is being conducted.

**Meng Heang TAK:** Thank you, Chair.

**The CHAIR:** Anything else?

**Meng Heang TAK:** That is all for now.

**The CHAIR:** Jackson.

**Jackson TAYLOR:** Thank you, Chair. Thank you very much for coming along today. I have got two questions. The first one is probably going to be I think quicker. You talk about in your recommendations upskilling the workforce in data collection and research capability, including through comprehensive training. Can I ask: would that be, in your view, coordinated by the department? Is that building on what exists or is that creating something entirely new?

**Jozica KUTIN:** Livia could probably speak more to the specifics around the training, for example, in relation to MARAM, because I know the department has a whole series of tools and modules for that MARAM type of training. The issue that happens with data collection and data use and data quality—and I have done similar things when I worked in drug and alcohol—is that when people do not see the utility of the data that they are collecting, they are less likely to be invested in that data collection. If there is a minimum requirement, for example, to collect data for reporting on contracts and for compliance, then that data will get collected—often because it is mandatory—and delivered. But when it is about other components that are much more valuable in terms of describing perpetrator behaviours or about describing victim-survivors, unless people soon after get some kind of real time or feedback about that information that they are collecting, then there is less investment in that data that is being collected. What is also really important—and we just had that discussion today—is there is a box that says ‘unknown’. Is that something that is unknown because you did not ask the question or because the person did not know the answer—you asked the question and that person did not know the answer? There is a whole lot that can be done in terms of data quality and consistency and to ensure that people who are not only collecting the data but entering the data—and then those people analysing the data—all understand what that data point means.

**Livia LA ROCCA:** The other thing I would add from a service delivery perspective is there is no doubt that when demand is high there is a barrier already to really comprehensive data collection. As Jozica talked about, the mandatory fields—we are more likely to get rich data and more comprehensive data if services are not under pressure through demand that drives trying to meet that demand, and then that reduces us to really just capturing the data that we have to capture. Then that is not as rich as the data we could be capturing. I think that is true across the board. Demand is probably one of our greatest barriers to collecting great data and information.



**Jackson TAYLOR:** Thank you very much. Just on the training component, though, are you suggesting that this training around data collection is something that is not occurring, or are you saying to build on it moving forward—to build on what currently exists and have a bit more coordination to it?

**Jozica KUTIN:** I think it is about building on what currently exists and really showing staff and practitioners the value. The MARAM is used for safety planning, right, so practitioners are using that data. But if you can show that, for example, that data is also valuable in terms of getting a clearer picture of what happens at your own service, what happens in your area and what happens in your state, then there is going to be more investment, I guess, in that data and also perhaps in having a more complete picture or complete data collection, in a way.

**Livia LA ROCCA:** Yes, so currently, as Jozica said, the MARAM data that we collect is very much used to assess risk and manage that risk for the individual. So for the individual client it really is at that level. But if we could promote that there is a wider use for that data and applicability of it, maybe we could be making a difference in the space of understanding people's use of violence and informing policy or informing interventions in that space. We may through that process get more rich data from the practitioners who are using it for their specific purpose only.

**Jackson TAYLOR:** Thank you. Just a follow-up question: you have made a number of recommendations, and I will read them out as quickly as I can, around improving the interoperability between databases such as through APIs to improve real-time information sharing, including across jurisdictions; examining existing government datasets to identify for collecting data on the prevalence of family violence perpetration, relevant risk and protective factors; making data and datasets more research ready; enacting laws that mandate and protect data collection processes; and undertaking an intersectional review of Victorian data collection standards and protocols to identify inherent biases. What would it look like in practice in Victoria to implement those recommendations?

**Jozica KUTIN:** I think it would look a little bit like what I was describing beforehand with having a data warehouse and then having a platform or a data visualisation type tool that people can use to access that data. I think that is kind of what that would be—the ideal scenario where you have got to that position to be able to do that.

**Jackson TAYLOR:** What do you foresee as some of the challenges to implementing that?

**Jozica KUTIN:** It is cost. It is cost and time. Creating that kind of data infrastructure is expensive and takes time. I guess you have got systems already in place in terms of the centralised data systems that can be utilised and harnessed in that way.

**Jackson TAYLOR:** Just very briefly, do you see the lack of linkage of systems being one of the biggest challenges—like, in the top two or three—when it comes to this Committee's work?

**Jozica KUTIN:** That is a good question, because I think that there are two parts to that. One is about the de-identified, population-based statistical linkage key type data, and the other one is about whether services have access to data readily and easily. I think the statistical linkage key component is something that we already have capability for as a country, because the ABS does that for a whole variety of datasets. I think in terms of the linkage between various systems and having that more readily available, it is a question for service provision. Overlaying on that is the issue around privacy, but Livia may wish to speak a bit more to that point.

**Livia LA ROCCA:** I think others have spoken about the number of systems that do not speak to each other. I was documenting, as I heard Tania speak, that we use four of those six that she mentioned at Good Shepherd. We use SHIP, IRIS, RISS for RAMP and the CRM because we are in the Orange Door as well. Do any of those speak to each other? No. Does that mean that we are missing out on the really great, rich data that could come from those systems collectively? We are. So it requires people to speak to each other through information-sharing mechanisms to try to get what you can from other services that may have information in some of those other systems, and our capacity to do that only goes so far in terms of being able to speak to each other and collect data from the different sources that are there.

**Jackson TAYLOR:** Thank you very much.

**Livia LA ROCCA:** And you have to know it is there in other systems; that is the other problem.

**The CHAIR:** I might just finish with one final question for you. In your opening statement you spoke about how MARAM data being collected by non-family violence agencies should be included with data from family violence services so that we can obtain that broader picture of family violence perpetration. That is something that we have also been thinking about as a Committee—what data is there and how you collect that data about non-reported family violence. Do you have a recommendation about how we could practically do that and pull in MARAM from non-family violence services into a database or a dashboard?

**Jozica KUTIN:** Yes. That is a good question, because I am sure there is a very neat tech solution, as there is for all of these fragmented and separate data systems. I understand ANROWS is doing a review of data systems and how they are capturing family violence and family violence perpetration data. We also have a component of that within our project that we are doing, to look at the systems. The usual way that it gets done is through a statistical linkage key. But the problem in terms of being able to merge that data is that you need to have consistency across those data systems and across those organisations about what family violence is and what the things that are going to be measured are. We know that that problem exists within population surveys as well. Different surveys will use different tools and define the different components of family violence differently, so you actually need that consistency across them. And you need to determine what is going to be that minimum dataset, because you cannot expect, for example, the emergency department physician to do a comprehensive MARAM, but there might be certain data points that they can capture that will give more insights into that presentation, which could then be linked to the more detailed datasets.

**Livia LA ROCCA:** If I think about family services as opposed to our family violence service, family violence has MARAM integrated within SHIP, so that data is readily available. For family services it is a PDF document that is uploaded into our system, not even on IRIS, because you cannot upload documents in IRIS. So the fact that the data is collected and stored in different ways means that it becomes a challenge. If it was integrated as part of all of our client management systems, we would at least have some hope, but for family services not being a family violence program and using a different database, that information is not readily available within the database itself. It would have to be entered somewhere else.

**The CHAIR:** Just to finish off, if there is anything that you would like to bring to the Committee's attention throughout the course of the inquiry please do not hesitate to do so. Please feel free to get in touch with us.

Thank you very much for appearing here today and for your contribution to the inquiry, both through the evidence you have provided today and your submission. The Committee greatly appreciates the time and effort taken to prepare your evidence.

I also thank all the witnesses who have given evidence to the Committee today, as well as Hansard, the Committee Secretariat and the security team here. I declare this hearing adjourned.

**Committee adjourned.**