

TRANSCRIPT

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

Budget Estimates 2019–20 (Prevention of Family Violence)

Melbourne—Thursday, 13 June 2019

Members

Mr Philip Dalidakis—Chair

Mr Richard Riordan—Deputy Chair

Mr Sam Hibbins

Mr Gary Maas

Mr Danny O'Brien

Ms Pauline Richards

Mr Tim Richardson

Ms Ingrid Stitt

Ms Bridget Vallence

WITNESSES

Ms Gabrielle Williams, Minister for Prevention of Family Violence,

Ms Kym Peake, Secretary, and

Mr Greg Stenton, Deputy Secretary, Corporate Services, Department of Health and Human Services; and

Ms Brigid Monagle, Deputy Secretary, Fairer Victoria, Department of Premier and Cabinet; and

Ms Annette Lancy, Executive Director, Service Design and Reform, Family Safety Victoria.

The CHAIR: I declare open this hearing of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee. On behalf of the Parliament, the committee is conducting this inquiry into the 2019–20 Budget Estimates, in case anyone was in any doubt. Its aim is to scrutinise public administration and finance like never before, to improve outcomes for the Victorian community like never before. The committee will now begin consideration of the portfolio of prevention of family violence. I welcome the minister, the Honourable Gabrielle Williams, and officers from the department. I thank you all for appearing before the committee—not like you had any choice.

All evidence given is protected by the Parliamentary Committees Act. This means that it attracts parliamentary privilege and is protected from judicial review. Witnesses found to be giving false or misleading evidence may be in contempt of Parliament and subject to penalty, including spending an afternoon with Ms Vallence.

Minister, I invite you to make a very brief opening statement or presentation of no more than 10 minutes, followed by insightful questions from the committee and questions from the Deputy Chair.

Visual presentation.

Ms WILLIAMS: Thank you, Chair, and thank you to the committee for allowing me to present to you all today. I am really pleased to be able to talk to the committee about the Andrews government's investment in the very important work of family violence service reform, and the statistics speak for themselves. As many of you will be aware, more than one woman a week is murdered by her partner or former partner in Australia on average, and Our Watch data tells us that one in three Australian women have experienced physical violence since the age of 15 and one in five Australian women has experienced sexual violence. I think we all agree those statistics are pretty frightening.

In 2015 our government initiated a world-first Royal Commission into Family Violence, and when the commission handed down its 227 recommendations we committed to implementing every single one of those. We set ourselves an ambitious 10-year plan to rebuild the family violence system, and that plan is laid out in *Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change*, but we know that this is more than one system. We talk about a family violence system, but it is in fact more than one system. It is multiple systems that intersect at different points to meet different victim-survivor needs.

Over three years on from that royal commission, we have now implemented or acquitted 120 of those 227 recommendations, and we have invested more than \$2.7 billion across health, family violence service delivery, justice, police, courts, housing, child protection and education—this really is truly a whole-of-government reform. This is a reform that impacts just about every portfolio, as I have just outlined, and it is also an incredibly complex reform. We know that it is going to take intergenerational change to shift attitudes that lead to family violence, and I am incredibly proud of how far we have come in a relatively short space of time. I would like to acknowledge, in saying that, all of my ministerial colleagues for their work and their commitment to implementing the responsibilities that they have on the back of the royal commission. We all stand on the shoulders of giants, and I think in this portfolio nothing more true can be said, obviously, with the wonderful work of Fiona Richardson and then Natalie Hutchins after her, and it has been a great honour for me to follow on from them. I really look forward to continuing that work.

In terms of our progress to date, we have come a long way. As mentioned earlier, we have acquitted 120 recommendations. We have rolled out five support and safety hubs, better known to most of us as the

Orange Door, which offer holistic and integrated service support between specialist family violence services, Child First, family service programs, child protection and also men's services, and those five currently exist in Geelong, Heidelberg, Morwell, Mildura and Frankston. We have committed to rolling out in an additional 12 areas, ensuring that each DHHS region is covered. Of course, though, it is not just about the primary sites but about the systems and networks of services that surround those sites. There has been significant work done to build these networks and to better connect them, and that work—to better connect services and make those services work better together—is really key to the success of the Orange Door going forward. Through investing in partnerships and in Orange Door access points, we are working towards making sure that there is one entry point that supports women and children to be free from violence—that is, that there is no wrong door. That is ultimately the aim.

We have made legislative changes to ensure that information can be shared among professionals to ensure that they can better tailor their support to victim survivors, which of course is facilitated through the central information point, or CIP, as we call it. The multi-agency risk assessment management framework, which we call MARAM, the updated risk assessment system, is also now developed, and this enables practitioners to build a comprehensive risk profile for women and their children that are experiencing family violence so that we can better connect them to the services they need to ultimately keep them safe. This means that we are essentially now getting much better at assessing risk. We are now working through expanding the reach of MARAM so that people coming into contact with victim survivors, such as child and maternal health services and others, also have the tools necessary to identify and refer those people for help. There are over 35 000 workers and 800 organisations that are now prescribed under MARAM. I will not list them all through, but it is a really important part of this reform.

Now, the centrepiece of this budget, and something that I will talk to a bit later, is the improved access to perpetrator intervention. We now have more places available in men's behaviour change programs for men who are using violence, and we are also trialling new ways to better work with these men so that they stop using violence.

Lastly, we are better responding to the needs of our diverse communities, both through *Dhelk Dja*, the Aboriginal family violence agreement, and through *Everybody Matters*, which is our inclusion and equity statement which highlights the government's intersectional approach to family violence prevention and service delivery, making sure that we are catering to our diverse communities.

Now, while we have come a long way in the implementation of our royal commission recommendations, we have got some way to go. I have outlined that this is incredibly complex but also world-leading reform, and we should never lose sight of that. It is also long-term reform, and sustainability is key. Now, under ministerial changes, I have now got lead responsibility for about 40 of the remaining 107 recommendations, and these span from prevention all the way through to service responses. Many include an ongoing commitment to funding and also go to data collection and further building on the foundational work that has been undertaken over the past three years. Other ministers with key work in this area include of course Minister Hennessy, Minister Wynne and Minister Neville.

So in 2019–20 we have continued our investment, committing a further \$185.5 million towards the implementation of the family violence reforms. This includes \$143.4 million specifically for family violence service delivery which, broken down, includes \$85 million to expand existing men's behavioural change programs and trialling new ways to hold perpetrators to account and change their behaviour, which is really about building the evidence base. We have got \$28.7 million to continue the implementation of *Dhelk Dja*, which is our 10-year Aboriginal family violence agreement, which includes \$18.8 million for new services and \$9.9 million to roll out culturally safe access points for our Aboriginal community to Orange Door services. It also includes \$20.9 million to expand therapeutic responses to sexual assault and \$3.1 million over the next year to continue to train and build the capability of the family violence sector and to help it attract and retain staff. It also includes \$2.9 million over four years to support LGBTI people that are victim survivors of family violence and \$2.8 million over the next four years to support people with disability that are victim survivors of family violence. So the service delivery makes up about 77 per cent of the family violence budget. The remaining funding goes towards additional housing for victim survivors, including case management, family violence financial counselling and other justice responses.

Since the development of the prevention of family violence portfolio we have been continuing investment to ensure that reforms keep women, children and families safe, and each year since 2015 when we have delivered our election commitments to boost funding while establishing the Royal Commission into Family Violence this investment has been cumulatively strengthening the service system so that by the next year over \$250 million of new initiatives will be invested annually, and that is what we are looking at in that graph. I will not spell out the year-on-year investment—I think you can probably see that—but the key point in there is that this year there is over \$250 million in new investment, which is a combination of the allocations from this year and also some of the previous commitments that will come online this year as well.

One of the centrepieces of this year's family violence budget is an investment in perpetrator accountability. That is \$85 million, which will promote behaviour change for perpetrators of family violence through those behavioural change programs, through intensive engagement of perpetrators with complex needs and through extending a pilot of the Caring Dads program. The conversation really has moved on from, 'Why doesn't she leave?' to 'Why won't he stop using violence?', and I think the time is right for us to start to have that conversation or indeed be well into having that conversation and working out how we can get them to stop their violence. We really do need to be holding perpetrators to account if we are to end family violence and of course to be challenging men to be changing their behaviour.

More than 4000 men's behaviour change program places are being made available across Victoria, which is delivered in line with the newly revised men's behaviour change program minimum standards. We are also continuing to build case management programs. This means more perpetrators can be provided individualised responses to change their behaviour, including dedicated Aboriginal and LGBTI service provision, which we know is really important.

Delivered by specialist family violence service providers, case management involves tailored responses to address perpetrators' multiple and complex needs, such as alcohol and drug misuse, homelessness and issues relating to mental and physical health. It also involves monitoring victim safety through a family contact worker to ensure that their concerns are being heard and that their needs are being met. We are continuing the pilot of the Caring Dads program, which is a group-based intervention program for fathers who are using violence, and all of this continues to be guided of course by research and evaluation, building the evidence base, because we know this is incredibly important, particularly in a space where the evidence base has been lacking in many components of this reform.

Therapeutic responses: a number of royal commission recommendations—11, 23, 104 and 146—proposed strengthening therapeutic responses to family violence and sexual assault. These programs deal with some of the complex trauma that victim survivors experience. Currently we are running 26 therapeutic demonstration projects, and the outcomes from these, as well as ensuring appropriately geographically spread programs, will be to help inform the continued rollout of those programs. This also includes continued delivery of the Sexually Abusive Behaviours Treatment Service—or SABTS, as we call it. This program provides young people who are showing sexually abusive behaviours towards others and their families with support to change their behaviours, stopping the cycle, and it works with their families as well. Lastly, we are continuing with our commitment to provide culturally appropriate support for Aboriginal victim survivors of sexual assault and family violence through specialist programs for Aboriginal victim survivors.

Building from Strength: 10-Year Industry Plan for Family Violence Prevention and Response is really our plan for the workforces that intersect with family violence. It was released at the end of 2017. It is a direct response to recommendation 207 of the royal commission, which called for the development of such a 10-year industry plan for family violence prevention and response to act as essentially a central plank in the program of change. The plan sets out a long-term vision for creating a system that is flexible, dynamic, collaborative and is working to respond to the complexity and harms of family violence and to prevent it from occurring in the first place. This long-term vision is underpinned by directions across four domains, being a system that works together, building prevention and response capability across the system, strengthening the specialist workforces and supporting workforce health and wellbeing.

While there is a specific focus on the specialist family violence and primary prevention sectors, the scope of the plan is actually quite broad in relation to building prevention and response capabilities across all workforces that intersect with family violence. The additional funding will help us to continue the enhanced pathways

project, which provides students with placements doing family violence work. This, alongside funding from the previous budgets, will help us roll out the plan to build the capabilities of the family violence and related workforces, to get more people qualified as well directly in the sector and to ensure sector wellbeing and sustainability, which we know is incredibly important for the success of this reform.

In terms of supporting diverse communities, with principles of self-determination being front of mind, in October last year the landmark *Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way—Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families* was launched. This is an initiative that is shared with Mr Jennings in his capacity as Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. This 10-year agreement to end family violence in Aboriginal communities builds on the solid foundations of leadership from within the Aboriginal community. It sets out a pathway to ensure that Victorian Aboriginal women, men, children, young people, elders and of course family groupings in the communities which they form a part of are stronger, safer, thriving and living free from violence. The *Dhelk Dja* agreement recognises the urgent need to reduce the disproportionate impact of family violence on Aboriginal people. It also, though, recognises that family violence is not a part of Aboriginal culture and that family violence against Aboriginal people is perpetrated by both non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal people. It takes an Aboriginal-led culture and trauma-informed approach to healing and safety that provides a framework to address the individual and collective needs of families and communities who have experienced family violence, and this year we will continue this work by investing in the actions from *Dhelk Dja*. We will also improve service responses for LGBTI Victorians and people with a disability through working with services to ensure that they are responsive to the needs of these communities. This work has evolved from our government's inclusion and equity statement, which we have called *Everybody Matters*. This statement, guided by the Diverse Communities and Intersectionality Working Group, outlines an approach to taking that intersectional view of family violence to ensure those needs are being met and also recognising that each of us has layers to our identities.

We are continuing to build on the foundations for a responsive, safe and holistic family violence system. We are doing this because we know it matters, and we know it is difficult and challenging work. As you see up there on the screen, a quote from Rosie Batty, where she said:

It's going to take several decades to change society, it's not an overnight thing, but we've now started. I don't think we'd started in earnest before.

And I know that she reiterated those remarks last night in farewelling Fiona McCormack from her role at DV Victoria. We have come a long way. We are not only leading Australia, we are leading the world, and we should be very proud of the progress we have made to date.

Ms STITT: Minister, I want to ask you first off about the rollout of the safety hubs, or the Orange Doors, as we are calling them. There is \$448 million allocated to the rollout of those support and safety hubs. If you go to page 4 of budget paper 3, Minister, it outlines a commitment to establishing Aboriginal access points, which I think you referred to in your presentation. Can you explain to the committee how the Orange Door rollout is giving women and children access to services that they need to be safe in our community?

Ms WILLIAMS: Thank you, Ms Stitt. The Orange Doors, as I have outlined, are a really important component of our reform. Some may know them better as the support and safety hubs. They are essentially a network of services concentrated around the hub, which we are calling the door, and these services are where victim survivors can go in the knowledge that they will get the help that they need. They are also, though—and I did touch on this in my presentation—about better connecting the network of services that operates around them. So there is quite a lot of preliminary work that goes into building that connection between those existing services and trying to get those services across different areas of service delivery to break down silos and work better together and then of course to connect in to the hub, which is the Orange Door, so that we are genuinely giving life to that ambition, which is that there is no wrong door for a victim survivor who is seeking help. So the network around the Orange Door is just as important as the Orange Door itself.

Now, the implementation of the Orange Door is one of the key recommendations from the royal commission—recommendation 37, for those who might want to look at that—which essentially highlighted that many women and children fleeing family violence and those who needed support found the system pretty overwhelming and complex. They would effectively end up slipping between the cracks because the service system was so difficult to navigate. So this is what this recommendation is essentially trying to respond to. Unfortunately, as

the system was, it meant that many were not able to get the assistance that they needed, and this government's commitment to ending family violence in Victoria has been absolutely unwavering since the royal commission, and the Orange Door has been an important part of that. As you alluded to, we have invested \$448 million out of that overall \$2.7 billion to dedicate to the rollout of those 17 Orange Doors—the support and safety hubs—across Victoria. Now, the hubs—to sort of get to what is contained within them—bring together specialist family violence services, family services and men's services to effectively provide a wraparound support for people experiencing family violence. As I have outlined, though, it is not just about those services that exist in that location. There is the ability to obviously refer in and refer out and make sure that the connection points within that broader network are there to support those, predominantly, women and children in need and to break down those silos.

In terms of how they are tracking to date, over 42 000 Victorians have been supported through the Orange Door so far, which include some 16 000 children. That is pretty remarkable, given we are not that far into the rollout—we are talking about a year. So I think the initial indication is that the demand has been strong and the model is developing.

Ms STITT: So how is the rollout tracking in terms of the Orange Door initiative?

Ms WILLIAMS: Thank you, Ms Stitt. It is a good question. I am proud to say that it is tracking very well. Five of the hubs are now operating. As I outlined in my presentation, the five that currently exist sit within Mildura, Morwell, Geelong, Frankston and Heidelberg, and we are strongly committed to rolling out the remainder of those Orange Door projects, which would see another 12 being rolled out across the state. We are seeing services work together in a more comprehensive and collaborative way. We are seeing fewer victim survivors having to retell their stories over and over again, which was one of the feedbacks we got from the royal commission, which we know can often be retraumatising for victims. I mean, we are fundamentally asking our service system to operate in quite a different way through the door model. We are bringing together service systems that may not historically have operated very closely or indeed very well together. But for the rollout of the first five, we are seeing really important and significant steps towards a better collaboration between different parts of our service system, better information sharing between them and better understanding too of how they each work and what their priorities are and therefore how they can better meet the needs of the victim survivors that are looking to access their services in a fairly streamlined way.

Ms STITT: And it is a complex reform, as I think you said. So what are the early results you are seeing on the ground for those predominantly women and children that are accessing the services?

Ms WILLIAMS: Look, I think the best demonstration of how this is working on the ground is probably to give you a real-life example of what these important safety hubs do in contrast to what would have happened before. So, for example, previously when police were called to a family violence incident, they would potentially send up to four different referrals, so they would attend and then they would send up to four different referral results. So one might go to a specialist family violence service, another one might go to a Child FIRST service if there were children involved in that incident or present for that incident, another one might go to child protection if it were deemed serious enough and there might be a local men's service that would get a referral too, which would essentially mean that on top of the trauma of experiencing violence in and of itself—of the incident that the police were attending, which would often probably come in the context of many other incidents as well—the victim survivor could then get up to four calls from different organisations wanting to talk about the same issue but from slightly different angles. You could see how this could potentially be very traumatic for a victim survivor, quite difficult to cope with and essentially overwhelming. It creates more of a burden for the victim survivor than easing that burden, which is ultimately what we want to be doing.

Add to that if there was an intervention order needed, that victim survivor would also need to navigate the court system in addition to navigating all those service system referrals. If she was leaving, if she decided to leave, she would then also need to navigate the housing system on top of that again. I think we would probably all agree that when you are experiencing trauma at a time of extreme stress, having to juggle that many systems all at the same time while dealing with the physical and emotional impacts of abuse was an incredibly big challenge, and I think the royal commission did well in calling that out for what it was, which was overwhelming and in need of change.

So the purpose of the Orange Door in that context, understanding that that is what the system was doing, is that in that same situation that woman would get one phone call, one intake point, that could then wrap the services that she needed around her, rather than her needing to go and do that. So it manages that for her with one contact point. We have started with the key services in the Orange Door, so at the moment we are laying the foundations; I think that is the best way of viewing it. So those sort of key foundational services being those specialist family violence services, those family services, child protection and men's programs. We have picked those as the foundational services to build on and create, I suppose, that one clear front door, that one entry point, that can then navigate that back end for a victim survivor without them needing to be overburdened with a series of phone calls, a series of referrals, that then they have got to find some way of finding their way through. So hopefully that demonstrates the difference that is being made to somebody who is coming in to access help.

Ms STITT: Yes. Minister, you are aware there is intense interest in those areas that have not had an Orange Door rollout yet. Are you able to give us a bit of an overview of how the rolling out of the next phase is going?

Ms WILLIAMS: Yes, sure. I can talk to you about how we are progressing the next phase of Orange Door rollouts. As you would appreciate, this is a very significant change to the way our service system has operated in the past, and we should never lose sight of just how complex this reform is and how we are essentially embarking on something that is world-leading, that has not been done before. There is no global template for this. It is not like we can look at another jurisdiction that has been doing this for years and say, 'Yeah, sure, we'll take on what you're doing and do it here'. We are carving this out as we go on the advice of experts, using the best knowledge and expertise that we have at our disposal. So it is an incredibly complex piece of work. We are essentially also using the first phase of the rollout and using the lessons from that to inform the next phase of the rollout. We are trying to build and evaluate and adapt all at the same time, making sure that we are heeding those important lessons, and also obviously building the evidence base too so we get a better sense of what works and what does not. And we have learned a great deal, I think it is fair to say, over the journey so far, and we are applying that to that next phase of rollouts. So the model will continue to evolve, and it is important that each Orange Door also reflects the community that it is embedded within, the community that it is essentially there to support, and that it can also adapt as those communities change. So while we want a consistency of quality, we also expect that each Orange Door might look a little bit different because the communities each look a little bit different—and I know many of the committee members represent communities that are incredibly diverse versus some Orange Doors being in communities that do not have that diversity. So the challenges that you might expect will be quite different and the sorts of service responses that you might expect to be required will also be a bit different. So all that needs to be taken into account as we embark upon this rollout.

We are very much dedicated to doing this properly and responsibly; I think that is a key point to make. And it is important to remember too that when we talk about the Orange Door—and you are right, there is significant interest in the Orange Door, and I know that there are a number of locations around the state that are really keen to see their Orange Door operational—it is important to remember it is not just about the Orange Door, that hub itself. It is about all the work that goes into making sure that network of services around it is functioning well as well, and that work begins well in advance of the opening of the Orange Door itself and is indeed happening around the state as we speak. We are investing in services to enable those response systems and services to work collaboratively to wrap around victim survivors in a way that they have not necessarily done previously, which is obviously the core intent of this service model, and as I said the physical Orange Door itself is only one aspect. So we are currently prioritising the rollout in another three sites, noting the lessons learned from the previous five, and we will have more to show on that within the next 12 months.

Ms STITT: I wanted to ask you about perpetrator accountability, so I take you to page 50 of budget paper 3 and refer you to the \$85 million commitment to 'Perpetrator responses' and just ask you to outline in some detail what this is about and what this initiative will cover.

Ms WILLIAMS: Thank you, Ms Stitt. As I outlined in my presentation, our investment in perpetrator interventions is really a centrepiece of this year's budget commitment to implementing the recommendations of the royal commission. The budget does rightfully put the responsibility of family violence on those who commit it, and this has obviously been a topical part of the public conversation around this issue as well.

Working with men is an essential part of the puzzle. In fact it is really one of the only ways we will ever see an end to family violence, and we have got organisations like No to Violence doing great work in this space who are very clear of that need to make perpetrators accountable for their violence.

So the funding, the \$85 million that you have referred to, will go towards—well, essentially it is funding for a range of existing programs, such as the men’s behavioural change program, and it is also about trialling a range of new ways of working to keep perpetrators accountable. Part of that is dealing with some of the barriers that inhibit men’s ability to change their behaviour, including issues with, say, mental health, with drug and alcohol abuse or homelessness—so working with them to address those issues while also addressing the issue of their behaviour. But what we do know is that new approaches to dealing with these very complex issues are needed, and this really is quite a new area, and as with other reforms, we are really leading the way here in Victoria.

There have been a number of programs and ideas embarked upon internationally and locally which we are still testing the evidence base for, which is where that word ‘trailing’ is so very important. We should never underestimate the value in this reform of the research and evaluation that takes place with each phase of this, and we should also never lose sight, I guess, of the ability for us to inform reform in this area, not just in Victoria but around the rest of Australia, because all eyes are on us—and indeed not just in Australia but in the rest of the world, where I am very conscious we have also got many jurisdictions looking at what we are doing and looking at the evidence base that we are building so that they can in turn get better direction about what sort of programs they should be putting in place. So this investment in this budget goes a long way towards, one, expanding the number of places available for men to go through these programs, but also on building that evidence base to inform our work going forward in this space.

Ms STITT: I understand what you are saying about behavioural change being such an important focus, but how are you going to make sure that the money is going to programs that work?

Ms WILLIAMS: Thank you. That is also a very good question. As I alluded to in my previous response, this really is about building the evidence base. I am pleased to say that the programs that are currently being trialled are being evaluated, and we will be at a stage in the near future where we will get a stronger sense of what is working and therefore where to target investment into the future.

We have also commissioned a group of experts to report back to the government on what we already know so far, which is obviously a very important part of that puzzle. So the Expert Advisory Committee on Perpetrator Interventions, as it was known, completed their report recently, and that report highlighted the need for programs that deal with trauma, that address the drivers of men’s use of violence and that build an internal motivation to change, and the outcomes of this report will help guide our investment into the future, as will the ongoing research and evaluation of different programs that we are undertaking.

Ms STITT: I hope you do not mind, in the very short time that I have got left, if I ask you about something in my electorate, the Western Metropolitan Region, and ask you to reflect on the package for women and children in my part of Melbourne.

Ms WILLIAMS: Sure, it would be absolutely expected for you, Ms Stitt, to be asking about how this impacts on your constituents in the western region of Melbourne—western metro.

The CHAIR: What about southern metro?

Ms WILLIAMS: I am sure we can get to that as well.

Ms STITT: If you had the call, you would be able to ask.

The CHAIR: I might take the call back.

Ms STITT: I did say, ‘I hope you don’t mind’.

Ms WILLIAMS: No, we don’t mind at all.

As I have said many times—I will continue to say it because it is true but also because it is really important for us to fully appreciate this—we are really leading the way here in Victoria, but there are also opportunities for us to learn from other jurisdictions who have over time focused on particular aspects of family violence reform. To go to an interesting development in your area of western metro, one such example that we have taken from Canada is the Caring Dads program, which we have re-funded in this budget.

As I said, it has come out of Canada. It is running at a few locations, including in the inner west. So Caring Dads is essentially a program that is built around the critical assumption that working with fathers is integral to ending violence against women and children and indeed using their position as a father to help motivate them and encourage them to reflect on their behaviour and look at ways to change. It is evidence informed. It is a 17-week early intervention program which is being piloted by Kids First.

As I said, it engages fathers who have either committed family violence or who have been identified as being at risk of committing family violence. The program focuses on the effect that a father's violent behaviour has on their child and the child's mother, and it also encourages men to take responsibility for their actions, and also—and I think this is a really important element of this program—to develop skills in parenting, because we should not assume that everybody has got those. So I think that is a really valuable part of that particular program, as it has taken quite a holistic approach to helping men take responsibility for their behaviour but giving them tools to be able to change that behaviour as well. Now, that has been independently evaluated and is already showing really, really promising results, and this next phase of funding will allow us to build on that knowledge base that we have so far managed to build with a view to expanding on these programs that we know are working.

Mr D O'BRIEN: Good afternoon, Minister, and welcome. Can I begin with an important program led by Women's Health East called the Speaking Out program. You would probably be aware of it. They wrote to you in December. The Speaking Out program provides training and ongoing support to women who have experienced family violence and/or sexual assault, enabling them to become advocates for change.

Ms WILLIAMS: Yes.

Mr D O'BRIEN: And they wrote to you at the end of last year about the fact that their funding was running out in June. There was \$150 000 required, I believe. Was this issue resolved, and is their funding for this program to continue in the budget?

Ms WILLIAMS: Thank you for your question, Mr O'Brien, and yes, indeed I am familiar with the work of Women's Health East, who are a great organisation out there in the eastern suburbs. They have received from the state government, I think, about \$684 000 in women's health promotion funding from us, and we really remain committed to continuing to work with those organisations, including of course Women's Health East, who do wonderful work supporting victim survivors of family violence and of course victim survivors of sexual assault as well.

Now, there are a few things that should be stepped out about that particular program. Firstly, the program that you are referring to, Speaking Out, was actually operated by Women's Health East prior to the specific funding that it received that you are referring to. That specific funding that you are referring to was effectively funded as a one-off project to build the capability of our VSAC members—VSAC is the Victim Survivors Advisory Council—to speak publicly and do their work and essentially equip them with the skills that they need to fulfil their roles as members of the Victim Survivors Advisory Council. So that was a time-limited project and a one-off project to essentially run that program that they had already been running for a specific cohort of people—that is, the members of the Victim Survivors Advisory Council.

Mr D O'BRIEN: But, Minister, when they wrote to you they indicated that they believed they could dramatically expand the program to have more women who have experienced family violence speak out and be the advocates of change that you have already talked about and that they could not only continue the program but actually expand it in a number of different ways. So the question remains: has it been funded again going forward?

Ms WILLIAMS: So that \$684 000 of funding for Women's Health East is the funding for women's health promotion that they continue to receive from the state government. They were originally funding out of their

allocation the Speaking Out program, from those funds. We have funded them a time-limited project specifically for our VSAC members. They remain welcome to continue to fund the Speaking Out program from the other funding that they get from the state government, and that is a discussion that we have been having with them, and I—

Mr D O'BRIEN: But presumably, Minister, they already use that funding for other programs. So the question is: is there specific ongoing funding or even one-off funding beyond 30 June 2019 for Speaking Out?

Ms WILLIAMS: As I have explained, the Speaking Out funding that you are referring to that was granted to them, the \$132 000, was for a very specific project. They funded the project through their existing funding prior to that time-limited project, and they are welcome to continue funding the Speaking Out program as they did previously. Of course they are open to doing that, and we will continue to support them through our funding to do that.

Mr D O'BRIEN: Okay. Minister, can I go back to the hubs that you talked extensively about before? So you mentioned there are five currently open. Can you just—sorry—say where they were again?

Ms WILLIAMS: Yes. So the five are in Geelong, Heidelberg, Morwell, Mildura and Frankston.

Mr D O'BRIEN: Mildura and Frankston. Are they at full operation? So when I say 'at full operation', there is a list I think in the monitors report that indicates that a hub should have an initial contact point, screening and multidisciplinary triage, immediate crisis response et cetera et cetera—there is a big long list that defines full operation. Are they all at that now?

Ms WILLIAMS: They are in a phase of building up. As I said, the essential establishment of the Orange Door starts with a foundational piece. I might hand over to Kym Peake or to Annette, actually, to talk to the details of how that build-up looks and what that foundational piece looks like in respect to where we want them to be over time.

Mr D O'BRIEN: Okay. Briefly, if we could.

Ms LANCY: There is a range of foundational services that we require to start the hub: a visible contact point where people can either come in or phone in or be supported through a referral; then the hub offers a range of services, some of which are indicated in the implementation monitors report, that allow the workers within the hub to establish the level of risk and the needs of a particular client to refer to the hub, make an assessment and work with them in terms of how to best deliver the service response. There is capacity in all of the five hub sites that are already operating for them to provide some level of service directly from the hub, particularly if that is something that can be delivered in a relatively contained manner. But if the client either has an existing relationship with a service provider or requires more intensive and longer term support, they then work to refer that on to the broader service network.

Mr D O'BRIEN: They will get a referral. So can I just confirm from that that of the five that are open, none of them are at that full operational capacity as yet?

Ms LANCY: I think the plan is to build over time in consultation with what the local community and the service network needs, but all five offer the foundational service model that is included in the service model and the service specifications that the hub partners are funded to deliver.

Ms PEAKE: Sorry. Really I think, Mr O'Brien, the answer to your question is: they have all got the core services. Over time there will be opportunities that will be different in different communities to provide additional services.

Mr D O'BRIEN: Okay. Minister, you mentioned another three sites. I think you said you will have more to show in the next 12 months. Where are they, and what do you mean by 'more to show'? Will they be fully operational, open, starting?

Ms WILLIAMS: We are expecting that we will have more open within the next 12 months. We are effectively looking at potentially three more sites, but we have essentially got a process where we are scouting

for the remaining 12 while we go and trying to stagger the rollout where we can most appropriately so that it is staged in terms of where the most appropriate locations for the rollout are next, taking into account a number of considerations. So, for example within—

Mr D O'BRIEN: You mentioned three. You have not identified where they will be yet?

Ms WILLIAMS: In the next 12 months we will expect that there will be likely one in Bendigo and one in Ballarat. We are still looking at the most appropriate option for a third site. You would appreciate that in considering where to locate those services there are a number of considerations that I have outlined that need to be taken into account. We also need to make sure that we get within a region the site itself right. There are quite specific real estate requirements essentially for each site. So a lot of our preliminary work goes to looking at the service systems that obviously operate in those areas and where the need is and where the demand is, but also looking to ensure that we can find the right real estate that has all the right qualities, taking into account of course that we have a number of considerations, security and others, and making sure that we can—

Mr D O'BRIEN: And geography, no doubt too when it comes to the rural and regional ones as well.

Ms WILLIAMS: Pardon, what was that?

Mr D O'BRIEN: No doubt geography, too, when it comes to the rural and regional ones.

Ms WILLIAMS: Absolutely. Of course, yes.

Mr D O'BRIEN: Can I ask then on the 17—I think it is 17—fully proposed, what is the time line for them to all be fully operational?

Ms WILLIAMS: They should be all up and running by the end of this term.

Mr D O'BRIEN: End of this term of government?

Ms WILLIAMS: Yes.

Mr D O'BRIEN: Right. This may be a question again for Ms Lancy, but how does the government plan to get all those hubs from foundational operating model to the full service model, as articulated in the statewide concept paper, when there is no specific funding outlined for this in the budget papers this year?

Ms WILLIAMS: Well, the hubs themselves I have outlined—the money for those hubs was allocated in a previous allocation. It was about \$450 million-odd, so they have effectively already been funded, those full 17, from the outset. So that has been allocated already in previous budgets. In terms of our—

Mr D O'BRIEN: That is output and asset funding, presumably?

Ms PEAKE: And recurrent.

Mr D O'BRIEN: Yes, okay. Minister, budget paper 4, page 62, indicates the establishment of these, under the existing programs column, has had a \$14.5 million increase, so a blowout in the cost for them. In the report, the monitor said that, and I quote:

The implementation of the first five Support and Safety Hubs was rushed. I understand the urgency all too well, but would like to see the government take the opportunity before the next Hubs open to balance the advantages of maintaining momentum and opening quickly against the additional costs this approach incurs and the increased risks.

So I guess, Minister, the question is: why have you rushed the implementation of the first five to the detriment of the services provided and at additional cost?

Ms WILLIAMS: I will break that question down into two, if I can. I am happy to address the remarks that you quoted then from the implementation monitor. In terms of the costs, I might hand over to my colleague Ms Peake next to me. But to address the implementation monitor's remarks: I think I have outlined pretty clearly in my opening address, one, the urgency around the need to be addressing family violence in our community. We should not be flippant in reflecting upon those words that it is the number one law and order

issue in our community. It is also a very significant public health issue in our community as well. So we make no apologies for wanting to act on those 227 recommendations swiftly, for wanting to make sure that our investment is delivering outcomes: \$2.7 billion. It is more than any other jurisdiction in Australia, including the commonwealth, combined. We have got a very strong—

Mr D O'BRIEN: I understand that, Minister, but I guess what the monitor was getting at is that there is a balance between getting it out swiftly, as you said—and we all understand the need for that—but actually doing it right, so that we make sure the services are there and so that we do not blow money on wastage. I guess that is the question I am asking.

Ms WILLIAMS: Yes, and in relation to the implementation monitor's comments and report, in rolling out those first five hubs—and I said this in my previous response to Ms Stitt, actually—we have been very keen to heed the lessons from that phase of the rollout to make sure that we are properly analysing how things have tracked, what worked, what changes to preparation there might need to be in terms of our preparation for the next phase of rollout. We have never shied away from the fact that this is an incredibly significant, complex, world-leading reform—that we do not have another template to look at in delivering this. This is very, very unique. We do not apologise for trying to improve our system as quickly as possible because, to be frank, there are lives at stake if we do not. We are certainly taking—

Mr D O'BRIEN: Sorry, can I just go to that point. It may well be a question for the secretary. In the footnote for that—

Ms WILLIAMS: Sorry, Mr O'Brien, would you like the secretary to respond to the other part of your question before you move to a new one?

Mr D O'BRIEN: No. Perhaps I will just go to this one, and it may well reflect the original question. On the TEI of \$14.5 million additional, so the blowout on the costs so far, the footnote says it is 'due to the redirection of project output funding for capital purposes'. Can I just ask why the capital cost has blown out? Is that to do with construction, land purchase?

Ms PEAKE: I think, Mr O'Brien, actually what you are seeing in the budget papers is the profile as more hubs come on line. If I take you to page 221 of BP3, the initial phasing of the rollout of the hubs envisaged that there would be an additional three hubs that would be stood up in 2018–19. As the minister has indicated, taking account of the time that it takes both to source properties, to staff up the Orange Door—

Ms WILLIAMS: Appropriate properties.

Ms PEAKE: So appropriate properties. And to ensure that we have an appropriate level of staffing, but also the work that is involved that the implementation monitor pointed to, to make sure that there is appropriation and planning with staff to be able to work in a very different way, a very different service model, very different business processes, three of the hubs have been moved into the next financial year, so into 2019–20, and that—

Mr D O'BRIEN: Secretary, could I just cut you off. Sorry. I am going to run out of time, but I just want to get one very important question on notice. Could you provide, please, for us, Minister, a table including all of the royal commission recommendations, the progress to implement the recommendations and the individual expected completion dates for each recommendation and the whole-of-reform interdependency in that? I assume we—

Ms WILLIAMS: It is publicly available what recommendations have been acquitted so far and those that have not been acquitted so far or those that are underway. I am more than happy to put you in the direction of that list of recommendations, what has been implemented so far and what is still yet to come.

Mr D O'BRIEN: The additional part of that is the time lines for completion.

Mr HIBBINS: Thank you, Minister and your team, for appearing today. I would like to ask about the relationship between family violence and the new build of public housing. I appreciate this is not specifically under your portfolio, so maybe the secretary might handle that one. In the government's initial media release it indicated that 200 of the 1000 new homes would be allocated to people experiencing family violence, but that

commitment seems to be absent from the budget papers. Will 200 of the new public housing homes still be allocated—

Ms PEAKE: That is correct. That is the commitment.

Mr HIBBINS: And how many of the 160 within the first year?

Ms PEAKE: Look, I do not have my housing folder with me, but I am very happy to take that on notice. I think we did discuss briefly in the housing hearing last week that in addition to planning that is going on for the new 1000 homes in the public housing renewal program there are also additional properties that are coming online through that program specifically targeted for women who are victims of family violence as well. So I can provide you with, over the portfolio as a whole, the contributions to family violence from housing if that would be helpful.

Mr HIBBINS: I would appreciate that. And will they be allocated through the normal public housing allocation process?

Ms PEAKE: That is correct. So the new public housing register is the Victorian Housing Register and the allocation that happens through that. Women and children fleeing family violence have been, post the royal commission, added as a priority category into the VHR, and yes, that is correct, it is through that allocation process.

Mr HIBBINS: Thank you. I would just like to refer to the Family Violence Housing Assistance Implementation Taskforce and the work that they have been doing. In their report into Victoria's social housing supply requirements they did indicate that there would be at least 1700 more social housing homes to be built—per year, at a minimum, just to have the current levels kept up to speed—but my understanding is that they recommended that they were:

... undertaking work to develop a model that will aid decision making based on long-term housing assistance demand and supply requirements.

Has that work been completed?

Ms PEAKE: That work is continuing.

Mr HIBBINS: Okay. And will it be made public when it has been completed?

Ms PEAKE: Really that is a matter for the Minister for Housing.

Mr HIBBINS: All right. Thank you. I would like to just follow up with some more detail on the places for men's behaviour change and just ask where those places are actually being made available.

Ms WILLIAMS: Okay. In terms of the expansion of the men's behaviour change program?

Mr HIBBINS: Yes.

Ms WILLIAMS: I might seek Annette to give the further detail about those places and how they will be allocated.

Ms LANCY: I do not have the full list with me, but in the existing program there are allocations made within each of the 17 DHHS areas. The other component—the minister talked about continuing some of the trials of innovative programs for people who use violence, for whom a men's behavioural change program is not the most appropriate. We have been running seven trials which deal with specific cohorts as well, and we can provide that information.

Mr HIBBINS: Great. So the 400 places are spread across the state?

Ms LANCY: The 4000 community-based places.

Mr HIBBINS: Sorry, 4000? Sorry, I have underquoted you there.

Ms WILLIAMS: It is okay. You forgot a zero.

Mr HIBBINS: Okay. Thank you. They were the main issues that I really wanted to cover. Can you provide any more information about any other housing support you are providing for—

Ms PEAKE: I can certainly, Mr Hibbins, take you through. I think Minister Wynne referred to his lead role for 10 of the recommendations from the royal commission, and the particular actions that we have taken to improve access to housing since the royal commission were: in April 2016 there was the release of the \$152 million family violence housing blitz; we supported 12 983 people citing family violence to move from homelessness into housing—

Mr HIBBINS: Can I just ask what the funding profile for the \$152 million is?

Ms PEAKE: Yes, and certainly that is set out in the budget papers, so I can certainly come back to you with the reference of that. But within that, just to give you a bit of a sense, we have invested \$8 million to support 120 head leases to help victims and perpetrators access private rental accommodation; we have provided long-term social housing to 324 new social housing homes for households citing family violence since 2016; and 6000 households have been assisted into private rental to assess or maintain private rental and housing options who are family violence victims or perpetrators.

I can give you from the previous budget—let me just check if I have got that. Certainly I can give you then the breakdown for the 2019–20 budget, which focuses, obviously, on the refuge and crisis case management response that the minister referred to in her presentation. So \$4.8 million will go on to go towards supporting 24-hour operations, women on temporary visas without income who need refuge accommodation, victim survivors from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, CCTV cameras, the Centre Against Violence women's refuge and specialist children's counselling in Wangaratta and Wodonga, as well as upgrading of crisis accommodation in Horsham.

Mr HIBBINS: All right, excellent. Thank you. No further questions, Chair.

The CHAIR: In that case, thank you very much to you, Mr Hibbins. We thank the minister and the officials for appearing before the committee today. The committee will follow up on any questions taken on notice in writing, and responses will be required within 10 working days of the committee's request. I declare this hearing adjourned.

Witnesses withdrew.