

# EVERYBODY MATTERS

INCLUSION AND EQUITY STATEMENT



## **INCLUSION** Noun /ɪnˈkluːʒ(ə)n/

Empowering access to opportunity, addressing structural inequalities, tackling unconscious bias and developing inclusive organisations.

## **EQUITY** *ek-wi-tee*, noun. Just and fair inclusion.

An equitable society is one in which all can participate and prosper. The goals of equity must be to create conditions that allow all to reach their full potential. In short, equity creates a path from hope to change.

## **INTERSECTIONALITY** /ɪntəsɛkʃəˈnælɪti/, noun

A theoretical approach that understands the interconnected nature of social categorisations – such as gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, language, religion, class, socioeconomic status, gender identity, ability or age – which create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage for either an individual or group.

### **Aboriginal Acknowledgement**

The Victorian Government acknowledges Victorian Aboriginal people as the First Peoples and Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land and water on which we rely. We acknowledge and respect that Aboriginal communities are steeped in traditions and customs built on a disciplined social and cultural order that has sustained 60,000 years of existence. We acknowledge the significant disruptions to social and cultural order and the ongoing hurt caused by colonisation.

We acknowledge the ongoing leadership role of Aboriginal communities in addressing and preventing family violence, and will continue to work in collaboration with First Peoples to eliminate family violence from all communities.

### **Family Violence Support**

If you have experienced violence or sexual assault and require immediate or ongoing assistance, contact **1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732)** to talk to a counsellor from the National Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence hotline. For confidential support and information, contact the Safe Steps 24/7 family violence response line on **1800 015 188**. If you are concerned for your safety or that of someone else, please contact the police in your state or territory, or call 000 for emergency assistance.

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# MINISTER'S FOREWORD

The Victorian Government is deeply committed to addressing family violence.

We need to keep all people with lived experience of family violence safe, and hold perpetrators to account.

Individuals, families and communities who experience family violence, as well as perpetrators, are diverse and multi-dimensional.

The Royal Commission into Family Violence told us that for some groups in the community family violence is less visible and less well understood than for others. Many also face additional barriers to reporting, seeking and obtaining the help they need to be safe and recover from violence.

*Everybody Matters: Inclusion and Equity Statement* sets out our long-term vision for the creation of a family violence system that is more inclusive, responsive and accessible to all Victorians. It acknowledges and recognises the diversity inherent within each of us, and the need for family violence and universal services to build a better understanding of the barriers that can prohibit inclusion and access through the understanding and application of an intersectionality framework.

The Statement's vision for an inclusive, safe, responsive and accountable system for all Victorians will mean that anyone seeking help for family violence will be able to choose what service they access and know they will receive the help they need. This is within our grasp if we embrace our roles as champions, challenge our current systems, and strive for change that will deliver choice for all.

Achieving the vision requires collaborative partnerships and efforts from government, family violence services and the broader family violence and social service system. Together we can build a more equitable system that effectively supports all Victorians without discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, age or ability.

While the Statement focuses on the family violence service system, it can also influence the way we undertake a broader range of social service reforms, including for child and family services.

I thank the Diverse Communities and Intersectionality Working Group, a key family violence reform governance group, who provided valuable guidance and contributions to shape this important Statement. I also thank the broad range of stakeholders who devoted their time and expertise. I acknowledge the leadership of the Special Minister of State in supporting the principles underpinning the Statement and his dedication to improving the service system for diverse communities.

I look forward to seeing the positive change and results that will better support all Victorians who access our family violence system.

**Hon Gabrielle Williams MP**  
**Minister for Prevention of Family Violence**



# MESSAGE FROM THE DIVERSE COMMUNITIES AND INTERSECTIONALITY WORKING GROUP

Violence against women and family violence more broadly is a serious social problem that must focus the attention of the entire community.

For those of us who face exclusion as a result of our particular experiences or identity there is an even greater risk of violence and abuse.

We know, for example, that Aboriginal women are 45 times more likely to experience violence than other women. We know that women with disabilities experience more frequent violence over a longer duration with more severe impact.

We know that older people, people from multicultural communities and people from LGBTIQ communities, can experience family violence in unique ways, and will face unique barriers to accessing the help they need.

The different experiences of marginalised women are fundamentally caused by a lack of access to resources and services, and the greater power differential that exists as a result of the way society perceives our identity.

This Inclusion and Equity Statement must be seen as a central foundation of family violence reform.

Historically, family violence services have been severely under-resourced and not well placed to respond to marginalised communities. This Statement will guide the development of inclusive family violence policy and service design that is so critical for those who are currently shut out from support. In this way, it is a vital component of the ten-year vision for family violence in Victoria.

A more responsive and inclusive service system will mean all Victorians will be safer. When support is required, services will be informed and equipped to identify and effectively respond to every individual.

A critical part of this Inclusion and Equity Statement is the presence of champions within the family violence service system. Without question, we must have the voice and expertise of those with diverse lived experience as workers, advisors and service users. As champions of diversity, we will enrich and empower the service system and benefit the entire community. It is beholden on all of us to champion this change.

**Keran Howe**  
**Former Co-Chair**  
**Diverse Communities and Intersectionality Working Group**



# MESSAGE FROM THE DIVERSE COMMUNITIES AND INTERSECTIONALITY WORKING GROUP

We all know that people from diverse communities have fundamentally different experiences of family violence. Those differences are often shaped by social attitudes, which in turn create structural barriers and long-term disadvantage and marginalisation including from the family violence service system.

That's why it's especially important that large-scale social reforms - such as family violence reform - recognise, support and respond effectively to the voices of all people with lived experiences as we work towards a better society. Regardless of whether your lived experience comes through the lens of culture, disability, youth or any other aspect of who you are, those experiences bring a depth of knowledge and expertise about how to create a system that better responds to our diverse characteristics, attributes and experiences.

First and foremost, listening to the voices of people with lived experience from all communities helps to develop a clear vision of how inclusion should be framed. This is critical because how we think about inclusion and equity on a day to day basis informs what we do in practice. On the long journey towards lasting change, we need to begin by partnering with people who have lived experiences of family violence to make sure everyone is both visible and valuable, and all voices are equally heard.

The *Everybody Matters: Inclusion and Equity Statement* has been informed by the work of the Diverse Communities and Intersectionality Working Group, created to provide advice from a range of diverse perspectives about the complex lived experience of family violence. This is an important step in developing a strengths-based, human-rights focused, inclusive family violence service system which is here for all of us.

The Statement presents the case for a broader understanding of how our own characteristics intersect with family violence – through our researchers, our workforce and our champions for change. We welcome all of you who want to learn from our knowledge and share our journey.

**Leah van Poppel**  
**Co-Chair**  
**Diverse Communities and Intersectionality Working Group**

**Chief Executive Officer**  
**Women with Disabilities Victoria**



# Vision

An inclusive, safe, responsive and accountable system for all Victorians

## Intersectionality

Supporting frameworks



Human rights

Strengths-based

Trauma-informed

Cultural safety

Person-centred

## Our call to action

Champions

Challenge

Change

Choice

## Strategic priorities

Building knowledge

Building capacity and capability

Strengthening targeted services

## Diverse communities



Aboriginal communities



Faith communities



Older people



Women in or exiting prison or forensic institutions



People who work in the sex industry



People living in regional and rural communities



Young people



Male victims



People with disabilities



People experiencing mental health issues



Culturally and linguistically diverse communities



LGBTIQ communities

2019–2022 Inclusion and Equity Blueprint

2022–2025 Inclusion and Equity Blueprint

2025–2029 Inclusion and Equity Blueprint

Evaluation

Evaluation

Evaluation

## Family Violence Outcomes Framework





# 1. ABOUT THIS STATEMENT

**An inclusive, safe, responsive and accountable system for all Victorians**

*Everybody Matters: Inclusion and Equity Statement* is a ten-year commitment that supports *Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change* to build an **inclusive, safe, responsive and accountable family violence system for all Victorians**.

This Statement is a key response to the Royal Commission into Family Violence (Royal Commission) recommendations, and represents a framework for building a more inclusive system through an investment in systemic change and through building our capabilities, knowledge and specialisation to achieve a system that is responsive to all. It recognises that inclusive and equitable responses to family violence need to complement the inclusive approach taken by the Victorian Government in preventing violence before it starts.

*Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change* (the Plan) recognised that individual and structural power imbalances are at the centre of family violence. It acknowledged that to address this, we need to create a society founded on inclusion and equity. It referenced the Diversity and Intersectionality Framework, developed by the Diverse Communities and Intersectionality Working Group, as the foundational guide to building an inclusive and accessible family violence service system.

Ending family violence cannot be achieved without systemic change. This Statement provides a pathway for system and organisational change to ensure that everyone has access to appropriate services no matter who they are or where they turn to for help. It embeds an intersectional approach as the new standard for a family violence service sector that is inclusive and equitable. A service system where individuals can choose where they go to receive a service and know that they will always receive the right service for their needs. Such a service system must also be complemented by inclusive and responsive approaches to primary prevention.

A set of definitions are utilised in this Statement to build a shared understanding across government, the family violence service system, its workforces and across the community about taking an intersectional approach to better support those who experience or who use family violence. It identifies key frameworks that support an intersectional approach, and strategic priorities that will realise our vision over the next ten years for an inclusive, safe, responsive and accountable system. It provides a call to action to embrace our roles as **champions, challenge** our current systems and strive for **change** that delivers **choice** for all.

## AUDIENCE

This Statement targets government as its key audience, particularly those departments and agencies with responsibilities for family violence and associated Royal Commission recommendations and reforms. It is also for the broader family violence service system and universal service providers that support people with lived experience of family violence and perpetrators.

It is an important Statement for anyone with responsibility for policy development or service planning, design and delivery and will act as a guiding document for the Family Violence Reform Governance groups, such as the Family Violence Steering Committee, Diverse Communities and Intersectionality Working Group, and the Industry Taskforce.

The Statement is unique in that it is the Victorian Government's first attempt to apply an intersectionality framework across an entire reform agenda. Achieving its vision requires all relevant government departments and sector partners to work together. The Statement will provide a common understanding that will guide this work.

## CONSULTATION PROCESS

This Statement is the culmination of a comprehensive consultation process undertaken by Family Safety Victoria that began in late 2017 and involved people with lived experience of family violence, practitioners, community leaders and government representatives. Consultation will continue throughout the life of the Statement, particularly in the development of an Inclusion and Equity Blueprint that will outline the actions required, over three stages, to achieve the long-term vision of this ten-year Statement.

The development of the Statement was driven by the Diverse Communities and Intersectionality Working Group to ensure that the perspectives, experiences and expertise of diverse communities were considered from the outset in the design and development of this Statement.

Comprehensive consultation across government departments and agencies was also undertaken from late 2017. This included consultation through the Inclusion and Equity Family Violence Cross-Government Working Group, which will continue to drive whole-of-government work to achieve the shared vision of the Statement. The development of each stage of the Inclusion and Equity Blueprint will also involve extensive consultation across government and will highlight the ways in which government departments can work together to achieve an inclusive and equitable family violence service system.

## **BUILDING ON THE ROYAL COMMISSION INTO FAMILY VIOLENCE**

The Royal Commission recognised that for some groups in the community family violence is less visible and less well understood by service providers and the broader community, and that their experiences are not necessarily reflected in current frameworks. As a result, these groups may be at greater risk of family violence, may experience it at higher rates and/or face multiple and intersecting barriers to reporting, seeking and obtaining help.

The Royal Commission acknowledged the ongoing impact of colonisation, dispossession and discrimination on Aboriginal communities. It recognised that the disproportionate impact of family violence within Aboriginal communities reflects this traumatic history.

Victoria is diverse. Together, people from the many diverse communities named in the Royal Commission's report make up the majority of Victoria's population.

The Commission identified the following diverse community groups:

- culturally and linguistically diverse communities
- faith communities
- lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) communities
- people with a disability
- people experiencing mental illness issues
- older people
- women in or exiting prison or forensic institutions
- people working in the sex industry
- rural, regional and remote communities
- male victims
- young people (12–25 years of age).

Intersectionality recognises that people have many layers and possess multiple characteristics that are interconnected or intertwined. Intersectionality recognises that people can belong to more than one of the diverse groups described by the Royal Commission.

The Royal Commission called for more accessible, inclusive and non-discriminatory service provision and improved understanding of how family violence is experienced in diverse communities. It also called for government to support organisations to build primary prevention expertise that responds to diverse community needs.



## 2. LANGUAGE IN THIS STATEMENT

The drivers of family violence are complex. Women are disproportionately affected by **gender-based violence**, including **family violence**. The perpetrators of this violence are overwhelmingly men. While gender inequality is the root cause of the violence against women, family violence can, and does, occur within a range of relationships. It is characterised by a pattern of abusive behaviour involving a perpetrator's exercise of **control and power** over the victim.

**Family violence** can take many forms. It can occur within extended families, kinship networks, intergenerational relationships and through family-like or carer relationships. Intimate partners, family members and non-family carers can perpetrate violence against people they are caring for. Young people can use violence or be victims of violence within their family.



Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) people may experience violence in their relationships or from family members.



Elder abuse can be perpetrated by adult children of an older person or non-family carers.



Women and girls from diverse cultural, linguistic and faith backgrounds experience distinct forms of family violence including migration-related abuse.



The disproportionate impact of family violence on Aboriginal people is deeply rooted in the intergenerational impacts of colonisation and violent dispossession of land and culture, and the wrongful removal of children from their parents. The disproportionate and compounding impact of family violence on Aboriginal women and children also reflects that family violence is deeply gendered in nature.



Children and young people are also victims of family violence. Whether they experience violence directly, or witness violence, the resulting trauma can affect their emotional and psychological wellbeing. This in turn can negatively impact upon their future outcomes.

At the centre of all instances of family violence are individual and structural power imbalances. To address this, we need to create a society based on **inclusion and equity**.

The Inclusion and Equity Statement responds to the **diversity** of Victoria's community. As a social descriptor, our **identity** refers to characteristics that have been socially constructed such as but not limited to sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, nationality, migration or visa status, religion, age, ability (encompassing physical, neurological, cognitive, sensory, intellectual or psychosocial impairment and/or disability) and socioeconomic status. For us personally, identity encompasses our sense of dignity, pride and self-worth. Some characteristics are valued more highly than others within different societies and cultures. The way we understand our characteristics informs who we are and how we relate to others.

Most systems such as government, regulatory bodies, health care and education systems are constructed by the dominant groups in society. These systems are developed around societal norms that are also determined by dominant groups and maintained through language, interactions, and the way we implement services. These systems control who has access to resources. A system constructed by dominant groups creates **privilege** for its members and can further marginalise other groups, excluding them from equal access to resources and services.

Systemic **marginalisation** is the result of policies, processes, procedures and practices which operate in a manner that creates **inequality** by privileging the dominant group and reinforcing the **exclusion** of other groups. **Systemic bias** and **discrimination** result when the system creates processes that exclude some groups or individuals. Systemic bias

can appear subtle or be invisible to members of the dominant group because it preferences their societal norms. **Systemic bias** and **discrimination** creates barriers that prevent marginalised individuals or groups from having equal access to resources and services.

Access and equity are key objectives of the Statement. **Access** is about ensuring that information, spaces, services and programs reach everyone and are responsive to everyone's needs. **Equity** means that available information, spaces, services and programs should deliver outcomes that are equal for all. This requires that services are able to consider and respond to the intersecting forms of disadvantage and discrimination to truly cater to all diverse needs.

**Intersectionality** describes how systems and structures interact on multiple levels to oppress, create barriers and overlapping forms of discrimination, stigma and power imbalances based on characteristics such as Aboriginality, gender, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, colour, nationality, refugee or asylum seeker background, migration or visa status, language, religion, ability, age, mental health, socioeconomic status, housing status, geographic location, medical record or criminal record. This compounds the risk of experiencing family violence, and creates additional barriers for a person to access the help they need.

A system that adopts **inclusion** as an active process recognises the impact of marginalisation, values diversity and works to eliminate barriers. Adopting an active process of inclusion creates welcoming environments in which everyone can access services and the services available are responsive to diverse needs. Adopting an active process of inclusion means ensuring diversity of thinking, experiences, and skills are valued and utilised.

An inclusive system is demonstrated by attitudes, behaviours, policies and practices that enable full and **equal** participation for everyone. It is achieved where programs, services and funding are flexible and responsive to diversity and where diverse communities are empowered as active participants at all levels of planning, decision-making and delivery.

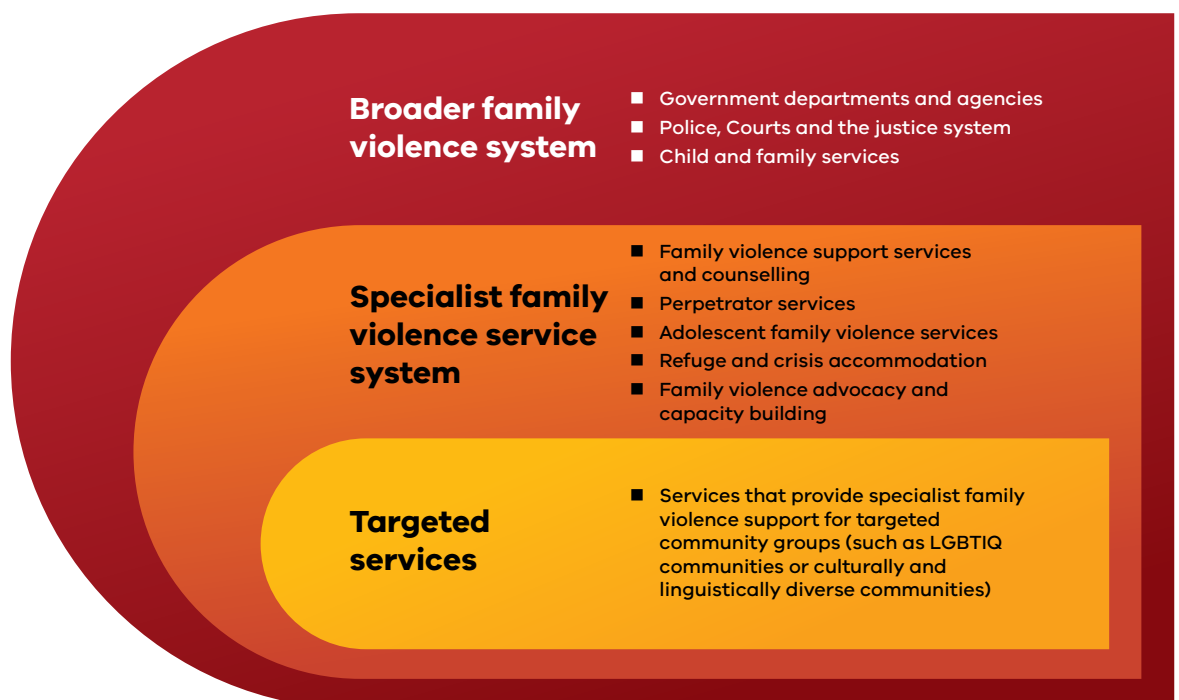
Throughout this Statement, we refer to the **broader family violence system** as government departments and agencies with family violence responsibilities, such as police and the Courts, and all family violence and child and family services working in prevention, early intervention and response.

The **specialist family violence service system** is the range of services which support people with lived experience of family violence and

perpetrators, including family violence support services, men’s services, therapeutic services, adolescent family violence services, and refuge and crisis accommodation providers. It also includes organisations that focus on advocacy and/or capability building.

**Targeted services** are those specialist family violence services with an expert knowledge of a particular diverse community and the responses required to address the unique needs and barriers faced by the group. Targeted services may also include community-specific services, such as ethno-specific, LGBTIQ and disability services that focus on primary prevention or early intervention.

Finally, **universal services** are those which are available to the whole of the population and designed to support positive and connected lives, such as schools and childcare centres.





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Dr. Irie

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# 3. WHY INTERSECTIONALITY AS A FRAMEWORK?

Taking an intersectional approach is at the heart of achieving greater inclusion and equity. This is why intersectionality is the overarching framework that sits at the core of this Statement.

An Intersectionality Framework acknowledges the dynamics of power and social inequality in our society. It recognises that:

- People have many layers and are characterised by multiple, complex social characteristics that are interconnected or intertwined.
- Embedded within the multiple social characteristics are dimensions of perceived power and/or inequality.
- The social characteristics are properties of the individual and of the social environment or worlds in which individuals live. The characteristics and their significance are therefore dynamic and may change.

Intersectionality helps us to understand how power differences can impact across multiple social characteristics and environments in which they are experienced. Adopting an intersectional framework approach:

- Enables the identification of barriers to safety and access to services that individuals experience due to discrimination on the basis of Aboriginality, gender, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, colour, nationality, refugee or asylum seeker background, migration or visa status, language, religion, ability, age, mental health, socioeconomic status, housing status, geographic location, medical record or criminal record.
- Enables the service system to better understand and respond to the complexity and spectrum of family violence experienced and perpetrated by people with a diverse range of social characteristics.
- Works towards creating and sustaining a service system that is inclusive, safe, responsive and accountable for all.

## HOW INTERSECTIONALITY APPLIES

Intersectionality recognises that individual characteristics that inform our social identity do not exist independently of each other. Rather they often intersect to create complex forms of oppression as a result of systems and structures that devalue certain population groups or people with specific characteristics.

Our social identities are based on groups or communities we belong to and give us a sense of who we are. They are multi-dimensional because we can belong to different groups at the same time. Where we are socially located is defined by the identities or groups we belong to.

Systems of oppression result when structures in the way society operates, like service systems, create inequality and result in exclusion. This happens because such structures are often established by dominant groups in society and usually do not take into consideration how differences impact on all individuals.

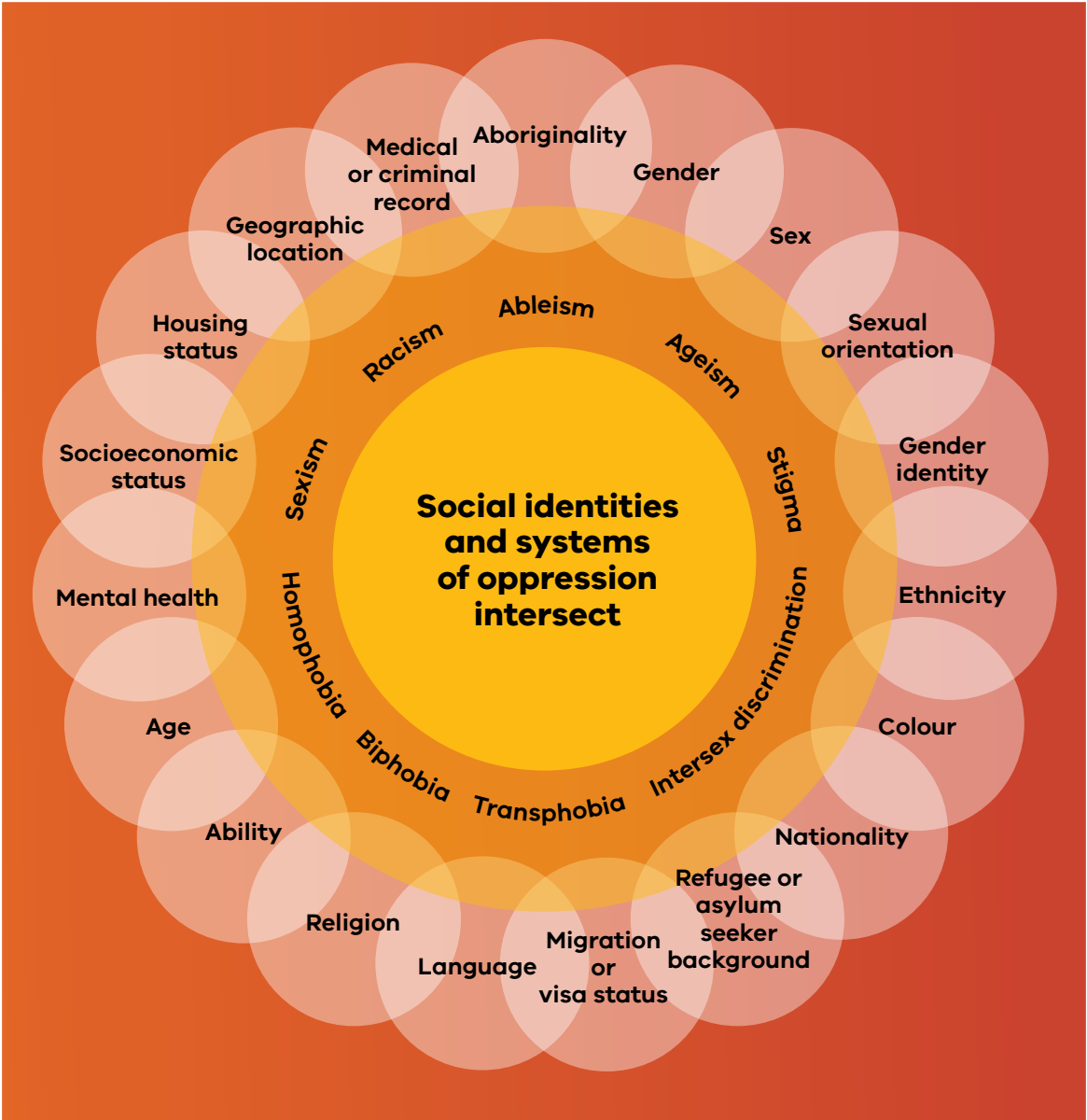
Social identities and systems of oppression do not exist in isolation from each other. They intersect and in service contexts can lead to the simultaneous experience of categorical and hierarchical classifications including but not limited to gender, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, colour, nationality, refugee or asylum seeker background, migration or visa status, language, religion, ability, age, mental health or socioeconomic status.

As a result, our experiences of privilege or discrimination are a result of our unique positioning in society as determined by these social classifiers.

Using intersectionality as an analytical framework means looking beyond a person's individual identities and focusing on the points of intersection created. These intersections alter the way family violence is experienced by individuals, and in many instances increase barriers to disclosure and accessing the quality of services they need. An intersectionality framework can help us to consider a range of social identities simultaneously. This enables us to understand the way privilege, power and oppression influence to include or exclude and how they shape an individual's sense of power, resilience and wellbeing.

Intersectionality should be seen as a fundamental approach, embedded throughout the work of the broader family violence system.

# UNDERSTANDING INTERSECTIONALITY



## THE CASE FOR CHANGE

Victoria's community is characterised by our collective diversity, founded on the strength, knowledge and rich diversity of Aboriginal people, families and communities as our First Nations Peoples, with their varied languages, heritages and histories.

Today, Victorians express multiple forms of diversity, identity and belonging. Although we know from a human rights perspective that we are all equal, our unique differences as individuals can affect our experiences in different settings and can interact on multiple levels to create overlapping forms of exclusion. This exclusion is a direct result of the failures of systems and structures to adequately respond to our inherent and unique differences.

Recognising the impacts of exclusion and marginalisation enables us to understand and remove systemic barriers and structures that oppress and prevent inclusion, such as institutional bias and systemic racism and discrimination.

**"Everybody – with their unique characteristics and attributes – needs to be visible in the system"**

Stakeholder forum participant

**"There was one counsellor who met me where I was, validated me and my experience, understood what it meant to be LGBTIQ and that made all the difference"**

LGBTIQ Pathways Mapping Project participant





# 4. OUR VISION

**An inclusive, safe, responsive and accountable system for all Victorians**

The Inclusion and Equity Statement supports the vision of *Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change*. It offers the pathway for systemic change to end family violence for all Victorians. It embeds an intersectional approach as the new standard of a service sector that is inclusive and responsive for all and places the individual at the centre of practice.

It recognises that change needs to occur across the broader family violence service system (including the legal and justice system, and child and family services) and the universal service system, and is inclusive of services and organisations that undertake family violence prevention and early intervention work.

Significant systemic change is necessary to create the conditions for an inclusive, safe, responsive and accountable system that empowers and strengthens the resilience of people and supports their individual choices.





## CALL FOR ACTION

The call to end family violence cannot be achieved without systemic change. It requires systems and organisational accountability around ensuring everyone has access to appropriate services no matter who they are or where they turn to for help. This can only be achieved by examining our systems, practices and processes and undertaking measurable actions that remove identified barriers for diverse communities.

The Statement calls for action across four key domains. It recognises our vision is within our grasp if we embrace our roles as **champions, challenge** our current systems and strive for **change** that delivers **choice** for all.



**Champions** are communities, people with lived experience of family violence and their support networks, service system stakeholders and government, recognising that individuals will often represent many of these at once.

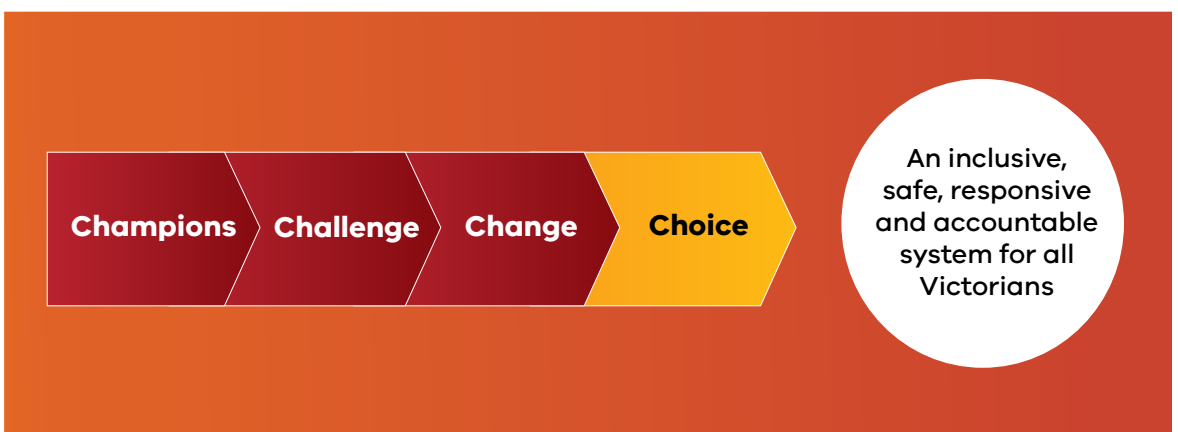
Champions **challenge** current systems, organisational cultures, thinking and attitudes around the way we plan, how we engage and how we deliver systems and services striving towards inclusion and equity for all.

Champions **change** systems, organisations and communities by adapting, transforming and embedding policies, practices and standards informed by intersectionality to ensure inclusion and equity.

Champions who challenge and change systems enable **choice** for individuals between the specialist family violence services or targeted services. As a result, prevention, early intervention and response initiatives are inclusive and deliver equity for all.

**“The onus needs to be on the service system to change its views and processes, rather than saying that the person’s identity and personal attributes is challenging for the system”.**

Stakeholder forum participant



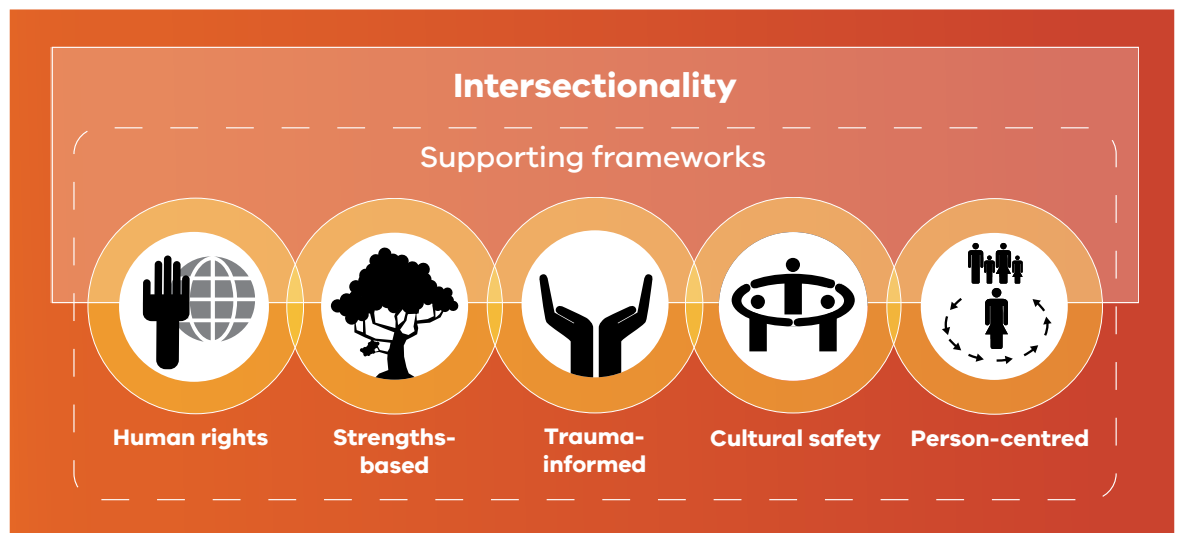


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# 5. SUPPORTING FRAMEWORKS

In addition to the primary framework of intersectionality that sits at the heart of *Everybody Matters: Inclusion and Equity Statement*, a number of supporting frameworks and principles must also be embedded to achieve an inclusive, safe, responsive and accountable system.

A **human rights** framework must be at the heart of everything we do, because family violence is a significant violation of human rights. The way we respond to individuals and families must be **strengths-based** and **trauma-informed** to respond to the impacts of trauma, and must recognise and respect the strengths of an individual. It also must be **person-centred** to support the person within their unique context to exercise their rights, choices and preferences. Embedding **cultural safety** must be a paramount responsibility for all services.



## HUMAN RIGHTS

Human rights are universal, indivisible and an expression of our shared humanity. They apply to everyone equally.

The Royal Commission into Family Violence acknowledged that family violence is an abuse of human rights, and responses to it must be consistent with human rights.<sup>1</sup> The prevention of and appropriate responses to family violence, are therefore an active protection of human rights.

Human rights, in practice, acknowledges human diversity, equality and non-discrimination and gives individuals a framework for advocacy, community development work and direct service delivery across primary prevention, early intervention and response. Human rights are above politics and ideology so they are a useful tool in arguing for change. Human rights means that individuals, whether they are accessing or providing services, respect the dignity and worth of every person and respect the human rights expressed in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in Victoria's *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (the Charter).

The key principles of the Charter are that:

- human rights are essential in a democratic and inclusive society that respects the rule of law, human dignity, equality and freedom;
- human rights belong to all people without discrimination, and the diversity of the people of Victoria enhances our community;
- human rights come with responsibilities and must be exercised in a way that respects the human rights of others;
- human rights have special importance for Aboriginal people of Victoria, with their diverse spiritual, social, cultural and economic relationship with their traditional lands and waters.

**“Everyone’s human rights should be upheld and everyone should have choice and access. Nobody should experience discrimination because they don’t speak English or because they look different”**

Diverse Communities  
and Intersectionality  
Working Group member

<sup>1</sup> State of Victoria, Royal Commission into Family Violence: Report and Recommendations, Vol V, Parl Paper No 132 (2014-16), p.2.

## **STRENGTHS-BASED**

A strengths-based framework recognises and respects the strengths of an individual and the knowledge gained through lived experience. It works to identify the diverse strengths that individuals and communities bring to a situation, and works in collaboration to foster these strengths and build upon them to address challenges.

Organisations that operate within a strengths-based framework demonstrate a deep belief in the capacity of all to participate in the decisions and actions that define their life. Workers who operate within a strengths-based framework have developed a critical stance towards assumed ways of understanding the world, including their own assumptions. They understand that concepts used to understand the world are culturally and historically specific. They never assume that their ways of understanding are necessarily the same as others' and never assume they are an expert on someone else's life.

## **TRAUMA-INFORMED**

Family violence is a form of complex trauma. It is interpersonal and experienced in what should be a caring relationship.

Trauma-informed practice is grounded in an understanding of, and responsiveness to, the impacts of trauma. It emphasises physical, psychological and emotional safety for both service providers and individuals, and creates opportunities for individuals to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment.

For Aboriginal Victorians as First Nations Peoples, the devastating impacts of colonisation and the dispossession of land and children has resulted in an accumulation of intergenerational trauma. Many people from migrant and refugee backgrounds have traumatic experiences of dispossession, persecution and marginalisation. When cumulative intergenerational trauma is untreated, individuals do not receive the holistic healing they require to heal.

A trauma-informed service system demonstrates an understanding of how trauma impacts the life of an individual who is seeking services – whether as a person with lived experience of family violence or a perpetrator. It is strengths-based and responds to the impact of trauma emphasising the physical and emotional safety of the individual, while rebuilding a sense of control and empowerment. A trauma-informed service system recognises the risk of vicarious trauma and burnout for workers and minimises this risk by encouraging self-care and providing worker support systems.

## **CULTURAL SAFETY**

Government and all family violence services have a responsibility to deliver services that are culturally safe, culturally responsive and free of racism. It is imperative that services are provided in a manner that is respectful of a person's cultural identity and beliefs, and that supports are free from discrimination or prejudices. Cultural strengths must be supported as part of the healing journey.



## CULTURAL SAFETY FOR ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

Cultural safety for Aboriginal people is an environment 'where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need'.<sup>2</sup>

A culturally safe and responsive family violence system for Aboriginal people is one in which government and service providers take responsibility to understand the importance of culture, Country and community to support Aboriginal health, wellbeing and safety. This can be achieved by government and services analysing their own organisational culture, and working with Aboriginal communities to design and deliver culturally responsive services.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Williams, R. (2008), *Cultural safety; what does it mean for our work practice?* Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health, 23(2):213–214.

<sup>3</sup> Korin Korin Balit-Djak: Aboriginal health, wellbeing and safety strategic plan 2017–2027, p.45.

## PERSON-CENTRED

A person-centred approach focuses on the needs, preferences and knowledge of each person. It supports the individual within their unique situation to exercise their rights as experts on their own lives. Services must be flexible and treat each person with dignity and respect in empowering them to make their own informed choices that are free from external judgement.

A person-centred approach respects each person's choices and involves listening, coaching, sharing ideas and seeking feedback. Applying this approach to service development and service delivery sees services provided in a manner that respects the individual's choices, and addresses the issues that places them at risk of family violence.







# 6. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Family Safety Victoria consultations and background research have led to the following priorities to build and advance greater systems of inclusion, accessibility and choice.

These strategic priorities articulate the ten-year strategy, vision and long-term partnership between government, the service system and organisations, and the directions required to change the way we work together.

The strategic priorities require a commitment to innovation, collaboration and placing the voices of individuals and communities at the centre of our work. They address the gaps that have been identified in achieving a system that is inclusive and responds to all people. They shift the responsibility for inclusion from the individual to government and the service sector, so that people with lived experience of family violence will no longer carry the burden of securing their own safety, and to change the way the service sector works with perpetrators to support their behaviour change and accountability.

Upholding the right of all individuals to live free from violence is an unconditional and collective responsibility of government, the service sector and communities, and an individual responsibility of workers in the service system. To achieve this, intersectionality must be embedded at all levels and inform the way we undertake our work.

The strategic priorities of the Statement are the foundation of workforces, structures and systems that place the individual at the centre, and ensure that everyone has access to the same level of services no matter who they are or where they go to access support.

Across the lifespan of this Statement, Family Safety Victoria will continue to engage and consult across government, the sector and communities to understand the best way to implement these priorities.

## PRIORITY 1: BUILDING KNOWLEDGE

Building knowledge focuses on research and data collection to fill gaps in current knowledge. Understanding the unique experiences of people who access the service system from early intervention to response, will be vital in measuring effectiveness, impact and informing ongoing innovation. It will enable us to direct resources to the responses that make a difference in achieving access and inclusion for all.

### WHAT WE KNOW

There remains a significant gap in research and data collection around access, inclusion and responsiveness to diverse communities within the service system. We cannot effectively build capability without developing our knowledge of the barriers to people accessing services, and the experiences people have when seeking help. We also know that there is good work taking place in the service sector that is contributing to inclusion and responsiveness. However, documenting this as an evidence base remains a gap.

Building knowledge across family violence prevention, early intervention and response will require:

- Ensuring that research and data collection is informed by an intersectionality framework
- Working in collaboration across the service system to create appropriate research models and effective measures of success to ensure data reflects intersectional needs
- Documenting and aligning good practice with data collection systems
- Documenting intersectionality in practice to demonstrate 'how to' in an inclusive and responsive system
- Documenting engagement, collaboration and co-design in practice to support knowledge building and sharing across the sector
- A commitment to co-design processes that ensure equal power distribution and levels of contribution
- Undertaking research that improves our understanding around the diversity of lived experience
- Influencing and building the capacity of current research agendas to reflect intersectional experiences and strengthen access, inclusion and responsiveness

- Collecting base line data that improves knowledge of existing responsiveness and identifies gaps
- Collecting person-centred data that improves knowledge of barriers to seeking help and current experiences when people seek help
- Conducting research on the commonality of causes of family violence and what leads to family violence in different contexts
- Improved mechanisms for organisational feedback of data to government that reflect the complexities of intersectionality
- Embedding appropriate research and evaluation processes as part of organisational practice.

## WHAT WE HEARD IS NEEDED

- Investment in research that documents people's lived and diverse experiences of family violence to address knowledge gaps and inform systems change.
- Establishing pathways that develop an evidence base of intersectional practice to enable shared learning and contribute to strengthening inclusive practice.
- Prioritising research that addresses knowledge gaps around inclusion and strategic responses that reduce risk of marginalisation.
- Establishing communities of practice to share approaches around collaboration, co-design and intersectionality in practice.

## WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

- The voices of people with lived experience are heard and inform the way the service sector works.
- The service system is integrated and joined up to respond holistically to the diverse needs of service users.
- Mutual learning and reflective practice are enduring features of service system cultures.
- We have a greater understanding of who is accessing and using services in the system, and who is missing out and why.

**"Everyone should have access to the same level and quality of services, no matter who they are and where they go to get help"**

Diverse Communities and Intersectionality Working Group member

## PRIORITY 2: BUILDING CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY

A focused effort is needed to acknowledge that the onus is on the service system to change its processes and practices to achieve access and equity. This will shift the service system culture from one that perceives individual identity as the barrier to one where anyone, anywhere can access an appropriate service response.

Building capacity at an organisational level and building workforce capability across the broader family violence system, including in government, specialist family violence, and universal services is vital to achieving the vision of an inclusive, safe, responsive and accountable system for all Victorians.

*Building from Strength: 10-Year Industry Plan for Family Violence Prevention and Response (Building from Strength)*, which was launched in December 2017, sets out the long-term vision for a workforce that is collaborative, valued, skilled and diverse. Developed in consultation with a range of stakeholders, including those from diverse communities, *Building from Strength* aims to sustainably shift the way we prevent and respond to family violence.

A key focus of *Building from Strength* is ensuring that the specialist family violence system is inclusive and accessible to everyone. It aims to do this by increasing the diversity of the specialist family violence and primary prevention workforces, to better reflect the rich diversity of the Victorian community. It also aims to ensure that all workers and organisations in the specialist sectors understand diversity and intersectionality and are able to provide inclusive and equitable services.

Structural change will involve the adoption of practices that reflect engagement, collaboration and co-design so that community voices inform enhanced responses that are accessible, inclusive and non-discriminatory. This structural change will also result in a workforce that reflects the diversity of the Victorian community.

**“Building the capacity of all services to understand intersectionality and how to apply it in practice, will enable better responses and support for everyone and eliminate the need to refer people on to another service”**

Stakeholder participant

## WHAT WE KNOW

Targeted efforts in Victoria's response to family violence continue to transform and improve the way we work in vital ways, but there remain ongoing challenges in ensuring inclusion for all.

### **Whole-of-organisation change of systems and culture**

Access for all means there is no wrong door for anyone who seeks support. To achieve this we need greater flexibility in systems, revisiting what does not work and innovating in collaboration with our communities. Transforming organisational capabilities requires:

- an intersectional approach and inclusive processes embedded at all organisational levels
- listening to the experiences of those who have been adversely impacted by the system
- utilising settings where communities are already engaged to involve them in service design
- a shared language and understanding
- service system collaboration
- systems responsiveness by continuously measuring the impact of our work and undertaking ongoing improvement to advance practice
- a workforce that reflects our community and contributes to inclusion.





### **Building workforce capacity**

To provide services that are accessible and inclusive there must be an effective, well supported and multidisciplinary workforce that reflects the diversity of the Victorian community.

Enhancing workforce capacity to support capability building requires:

- skills development that embeds intersectionality in practice
- a commitment to continuous learning, self-reflection and reflective practice
- an ability to engage, collaborate, respect and support self-determination
- flexibility and accountability.

Stakeholders recognised the need for ongoing investment in workforce training and resources and a systematic approach to workforce planning and development. Stakeholders highlighted the importance of a strengths-based approach that harnesses existing and invaluable workforce knowledge in transforming the way we work to achieve innovation and systems responsiveness.

## WHAT WE HEARD IS NEEDED

- Adopting a whole-of-organisational approach to embedding an intersectionality framework across government and the broader family violence service system.
- Investing in capability development through training, professional development and resources that build capacity across the broader system, and build the capability of the workforce to apply an intersectional approach, and to support the application of the Statement in policy and practice.
- Building on policy and practice that works towards achieving a multidisciplinary workforce that reflects the diversity of the community.
- Improving collective capacity through community co-design, service collaboration and innovation.
- Investing in monitoring and evaluation that measures systems responsiveness, flexibility, impact and accountability around inclusion.

## WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

- The workforce effectively understands need and is skilled in responding to all service users.
- Service system responses are person-centred and available at the right place at the right time. Service users participate in the decisions and actions that define their world.
- Service systems ensure everyone has access to the same level of service no matter who they are or where they turn to for help.
- All service users trust the system.

## PRIORITY 3: STRENGTHENING TARGETED SERVICES

Our aim is to shift the service system culture from one that perceives individual identity as the barrier to one that offers choice to all. This does not erase the need for targeted services. They contribute to a holistic and contextual approach in systems responses.

Whether they stand alone or integrated within family violence services, targeted services complement and build the capacity of the service system to achieve inclusion. Their complex, nuanced and tailored work across the spectrum of family violence – primary prevention, early intervention and response – is critical in offering choice without fear of discrimination.

### WHAT WE KNOW

Targeted services are critical to an inclusive system. They offer choice for service users and safe environments. They contribute a unique skill set and support generalist services with complex cases. In the current system, they can also often be the only choice for the most vulnerable in our community.

Strengthening targeted services does not remove responsibility from the broader family violence service sector to provide inclusive and responsive services. A genuine commitment to *Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change* demands that all family violence service providers are

equipped to apply an intersectionality framework to respond to the diverse needs of all Victorians.

An intersectional approach to practice is core business for all. The availability of targeted services should not result in reduced access to the broader service system or replace the responsibility of the service system to respond to different needs. Similarly, an intersectional approach will be fostered within targeted services to continue to improve responses to the layered experiences of individuals from diverse groups.

An inclusive and equitable system is where universal, specialist and targeted services complement and work in partnership with each other. Capability building of the broader service system requires engagement, collaboration and respect for the specialist knowledge of targeted services. No one service can do everything alone. Working together, mutual learning and sector wide accountability are necessary for a holistic system that ensures inclusion and equity.

### WHAT WE HEARD IS NEEDED

- Supporting and strengthening targeted responses to ensure choice as a prominent feature in an inclusive and equitable service system.



- Building pathways that enhance collaboration, referral, secondary consultation and mutual learning between targeted services and the broader family violence service system.
- Developing pathways for improved collaboration and establishment of community of practice between targeted services to strengthen and improve intersectional practice.

## WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

- The service system understands and responds to the complexity and the spectrum of lived experience in diverse communities.

- The strengths, preferences, decisions and knowledge of each person is respected and at the centre of the response and service they receive.
- Individuals have genuine choice to access mainstream services or targeted services that are culturally safe and which embed an intersectionality framework.
- There are no consequential barriers to safety, such as discrimination or stigma, experienced by individuals as a result of their diversity.
- Targeted services and the broader family violence service system work together to ensure that supports are person-centred and responsive to individuals' diverse needs.





# 7. NEXT STEPS

*Everybody Matters: Inclusion and Equity Statement* outlines the ten-year vision, direction and strategic priorities required to ensure that family violence and universal services achieve the vision of an inclusive, safe, responsive and accountable system for all Victorians.

## DEVELOPING A BLUEPRINT

The next step is to develop an Inclusion and Equity Blueprint, over three stages, that will identify the actions required to achieve the long-term vision outlined in this Statement. Each stage of the Blueprint will be developed in collaboration with relevant government departments and agencies, communities and the service sector.

The first stage of the Inclusion and Equity Blueprint will identify actions for 2019–2022 and will be released in the first half of 2019. It will contain the specific actions, initiatives and funding investments that will be taken in the first three years to bring the strategic priorities of *Everybody Matters: Inclusion and Equity Statement* to life, and outline who is responsible for delivering them. It will also serve to identify existing and potential areas for collaboration and coordination of effort. The further two stages of the Inclusion and Equity Blueprint will cover 2022–2025 and 2025–2029.

A monitoring and evaluation framework that aligns with the Family Violence Outcomes Framework will be developed and overseen by the Diverse Communities and Intersectionality Working Group to track progress against this Statement and the subsequent Inclusion and Equity Action Blueprints.

## IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES TO EMBED AN INTERSECTIONAL APPROACH

Extensive family violence and social service reform work is already happening across the Victorian Government, to build an inclusive, safe, responsive and accountable system for all – led by Family Safety Victoria, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Justice and Community Safety, Victorian Courts, Victoria Police, the Department of Education and Training and the Department of Premier and Cabinet. This section outlines a sample of the work that is currently underway, with a particular focus on the work led by Family Safety Victoria.

The immediate priorities will be implemented by the relevant departments, with progress overseen by the Inclusion and Equity Family Violence Cross Government Working Group.

### INTERSECTIONALITY CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT

As an immediate priority, Family Safety Victoria commenced work in the second half of 2018 on the development of the Intersectionality Capacity Building Project for family violence and universal services workforces. This work will seek to build organisational capacity and workforce capability to equip specialist family violence services and universal services to recognise and provide appropriate, inclusive and responsive services for all people with lived experience of family

violence, including through the formation of partnerships with targeted services. It is intended that this work will build the capacity of workforces to better understand, recognise and respond to the intersectional needs of all people they support.

### THE ORANGE DOOR

Family Safety Victoria will also develop an Inclusion Action Plan for the 17 Orange Door Support and Safety Hub sites commencing with the five Orange Door sites that became operational in 2018 in the Barwon, Bayside Peninsula, Inner Gippsland, Mallee and North East Melbourne areas. A further three Orange Door sites will become operational by the end of 2019 in the Central Highlands, Loddon and Goulburn regions. The Orange Door has been designed to meet the needs of people from diverse backgrounds and be accessible to all. The Orange Door will use an intersectional approach that recognises that a person's identity will affect the way they experience family violence or issues with the care, development and wellbeing of children, how willing they are to report it or to seek help and finally, what kind of support they require from The Orange Door.

Working alongside the Orange Door Network, Aboriginal Access Points will be established to provide culturally safe and appropriate support services and deliver choice to Aboriginal Victorians. The access points will provide Aboriginal people with a familiar and safe place, staffed by a predominantly Aboriginal workforce.

The Orange Door workforce has a strong understanding of family violence and the complexities and barriers typically experienced by people from diverse communities. The Inclusion Action Plan will support workers to further enhance their understanding and build their capacity to respond to diverse community members, by applying an intersectional lens.

## THE FAMILY VIOLENCE WORKFORCE

In addition, *Building from Strength* outlined a number of immediate priorities for the family violence workforce, including:

- Building a workforce of skilled and supported specialist family violence interpreters and translators
- Mapping the intersectional training landscape, and developing diversity and intersectionality training and organisational capacity building initiatives
- Building prevention capacity in areas of intersectional need by continuing to support the disability sector through funding for the Gender and Disability Workforce Development Program
- Building prevention capacity in areas of intersectional need including within the LGBTIQ, seniors and Aboriginal sectors
- Ensuring approaches to minimum qualifications for specialist family violence workers including accessible pathways for workers who bring valuable cultural knowledge and experience, or lived experience (e.g. of disability, migrant or refugee experience of family violence) and experience barriers to tertiary education

- Developing an Aboriginal Family Violence Industry Strategy to build the capacity and capability of Aboriginal family violence services, organisations and the sector to meet future service needs
- Scoping a workforce inclusion strategy for the specialist family violence sector.

*Building from Strength's* first Rolling Action Plan is due for release in 2019. It shares an area of focus with this Statement and the two documents will align and complement each other, and collectively work to ensure our broader family violence system, specialist family violence and targeted services are equipped to deliver the inclusive and equitable services and initiatives that we require.

## FAMILY VIOLENCE RISK ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The redeveloped Family Violence Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework, which commenced in September 2018, aims to embed intersectionality in all risk assessment tools and operational practice guidance. The suite of family violence risk identification, screening and assessment tools under the framework will include questions specifically relating to risks for diverse communities. Further, training on the redeveloped framework will emphasise the gendered and intersectional nature of family violence, contributing to a strengthened understanding of the specific experiences of people from diverse groups.

## **IMPROVING DATA COLLECTION**

A further immediate priority for the Victorian Government is reforming the way we use and collect family violence data, specifically for Aboriginal communities and diverse communities. This will help to build a comprehensive evidence base and to inform policy reform and service delivery. This will be driven by the Family Violence Outcomes Framework and current work to define indicators and measures that will show us the impact our reforms are having in the community. As recommended by the Royal Commission into Family Violence, the Crime Statistics Agency has been leading work to review the quality of family violence data collection for Aboriginal communities and diverse communities and to move towards a standardised and comprehensive approach for collecting data.

## **DHELK DJA: SAFE OUR WAY – STRONG CULTURE, STRONG PEOPLES, STRONG FAMILIES THE NEW ABORIGINAL 10 YEAR FAMILY VIOLENCE AGREEMENT 2018-2028**

*Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way – Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families* was released in October 2018. The subsequent Dhelk Dja Action Plans will embed initiatives that will strengthen the understanding of intersectionality and its application in practice across Aboriginal communities and services.

In accordance with Aboriginal self-determination, this work will be Aboriginal-led and overseen by the Dhelk Dja Partnership Forum as the primary family violence governance group for Aboriginal communities.

## **DESIGNING FOR DIVERSITY FRAMEWORK AND RESOURCES**

Family Safety Victoria will work with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) in 2019 to tailor its Designing for Diversity approach to progress each stage of the Blueprint under this Statement.

Designing for Diversity is the DHHS framework for embedding responsiveness to diversity at the outset of policy reform and service design processes. The approach provides guidance for addressing the many barriers facing diverse communities, and further reinforces the importance of accounting for the diversity within those communities, highlighting the need to address issues arising from overlapping forms of disadvantage and discrimination.

This will provide the building blocks and enhance the capability of Family Safety Victoria staff – who are leading the implementation of a number of key government reforms including the Family Violence Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework and the rollout of the Orange Door sites – to effectively embed an intersectionality framework across all aspects of family violence policy and service design.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF FREE FROM VIOLENCE: VICTORIA'S STRATEGY TO PREVENT FAMILY VIOLENCE AND ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The Office for Women in the Department of Premier and Cabinet has prioritised delivering on the commitments of the First Action Plan 2018–2021 of *Free from Violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women* (Action Plan). Released in January 2018, the Action Plan focuses on five key priority areas to deliver on primary prevention objectives including:

- building prevention structures and systems
- research and evaluation to build knowledge
- innovation to trial and evaluate new techniques
- scaling up and building on proven prevention projects
- engagement with the community and building prevention structures and systems.

The Action Plan focuses on diverse communities through programs such as the Aboriginal Free from Violence Fund, pilots to prevent violence among migrant and refugee communities, commissioning research on family violence impacting LGBTIQ communities, support for elder abuse prevention networks, and cohort specific approaches to behaviour change campaigns.

In addition, the Office for Women will also trial initiatives that recognise intersectionality as a key factor in shaping the ways in which people experience inequality, disadvantage and violence. An example, from a primary prevention perspective, is the Achieving Gender Equality through Attitudinal Change in Media and Reporting Project. The project includes the development of a media and reporting guideline for journalists to support reporting on violence against women and their children. The guideline will adopt an intersectional lens to support reporting relating to family violence involving Aboriginal communities, LGBTIQ communities, culturally and linguistically diverse women, older women, and women with a disability. A capacity building strategy to support the use of the reporting guideline within Victoria will also be developed.

## INTEGRATED MODEL OF CARE FOR RESPONDING TO SUSPECTED ELDER ABUSE

The Department of Health and Human Services and Family Safety Victoria is continuing work on the *Integrated model of care for responding to suspected elder abuse*. Based on a person-centred framework, the model aims to strengthen elder abuse responses and support within Victorian health and community services by creating multiple entry points for older people, their carers and families to access specialist support services to address suspected elder abuse.

The integrated model, which is currently being trialled in five health settings across Victoria, consists of four key components:

- workforce development to enable capacity building so that services can respond to elder abuse and develop appropriate pathways of care
- the development of inter-agency protocols to respond to elder abuse
- an Elder Abuse Prevention and Response Liaison Officer located in each of the five trial sites to provide specialist clinical advice and consultancy for complex discharge planning in relation to older people at risk of or experiencing elder abuse, including secondary consultation to services requiring advice or referral support
- counselling and mediation services to provide therapeutic options as an alternative to the legal pathway where appropriate; and an elder abuse prevention network to raise awareness and address the drivers of elder abuse in local communities.

An evaluation of the effectiveness of the integrated model in responding to suspected elder abuse is scheduled for completion in June 2019.

## INNOVATION IN PERPETRATOR INTERVENTIONS

The Department of Justice and Community Safety's Family Violence Perpetrator Intervention Grants initiative is providing \$1.75 million across five projects to pilot and evaluate innovative and emerging models of

best practice in perpetrator interventions.

This will deliver funding to programs that target women and gender diverse perpetrators, male perpetrators with complex needs, perpetrators that are fathers and Aboriginal men that choose to use violence.

## ENHANCING SAFETY: FAMILY VIOLENCE STRATEGY FOR THE VICTORIAN CORRECTIONS SYSTEM 2018–2021

*Enhancing Safety* recognises that perpetrators and people with lived experience of family violence are over-represented among prisoners and offenders, and that Corrections Victoria has a unique role in supporting people with lived experience of family violence and holding perpetrators to account for their behaviour.

The strategy recognises the inherent complexity and challenge of family violence among Aboriginal prisoners and offenders, including that perpetrators also often have a lived experience of family violence. It also recognises the different experiences of family violence for culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and reaffirms Corrections Victoria's commitment to considering the needs of prisoners and offenders from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

*Enhancing Safety* also promotes and supports the delivery of the following objectives:

- identifying perpetrators; delivering targeted family violence programs and services; and supporting prisoners and offenders who are victims of family violence
- creating an environment for cultural change, and
- working with other service systems.



# APPENDIX

## POLICY CONTEXT

### ENDING FAMILY VIOLENCE: VICTORIA'S PLAN FOR CHANGE

The Victorian Government's 10 year Plan commits to meeting the needs of all Victorians by designing for diversity and intersectionality at the outset. It aims to do this by creating and sustaining a family violence and social services system that is inclusive, non-discriminatory and accessible for everyone from primary prevention to crisis response and recovery.

The Plan recognises that due to individual and structural power imbalances that exist within society, difference from the dominant group can result in a person experiencing overlapping forms of inequality, discrimination and stigma. This can compound power imbalance and exacerbate the risk or experience of family violence and amplify barriers to reporting, accessing and receiving appropriate services.

The Plan commits to:

- strengthening the broader family violence system to better understand and respond to the complexity and the spectrum of family violence experienced in diverse communities
- targeted prevention initiatives and capacity building to address the drivers of family violence within diverse communities, and
- strengthening targeted services specifically designed to meet the needs of diverse community groups.

The focus on enhancing the broader family violence system as well as building targeted services is reflected in the vision and the priorities of this Statement.

### DHELK DJA: SAFE OUR WAY – STRONG CULTURE, STRONG PEOPLES, STRONG FAMILIES (2018–2028)

The Inclusion and Equity Statement recognises Aboriginal self-determination as a fundamental right. Aboriginal self-determination is the foundation of the new Aboriginal 10 Year Family Violence Agreement 2018–2028.

The Statement explicitly foregrounds Aboriginal knowledge of family violence and aligns with the approach taken in the Dhelk Dja Agreement, led by the Dhelk Dja Partnership Forum.

In a family violence context, Aboriginal self-determination is a systemic shift of power and control from government and the non-Aboriginal service sector to Aboriginal communities and their organisations. It involves investing in Aboriginal self-determining structures to lead governance, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of family violence reforms. These include but are not limited to the Dhelk Dja Partnership Forum, the Dhelk Dja Action Groups (formerly Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Groups) and Aboriginal services.

Further, embedding self-determination will require government to transfer decision making for policy development and program design to Aboriginal communities and their organisations, including through prioritising funding to those communities and organisations and through investment in community sustainability, resourcing and capacity building to meet the requirements of the new reforms.

Growing and supporting the skills and knowledge base of the Aboriginal workforce and sector is also a critical element to support self-determination.

Ensuring that government and the family violence service system is culturally safe, transparent and accountable will result in people from Aboriginal communities having genuine choice of service between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal services, which has been identified as a priority.

## CONNECTIONS WITH OTHER REFORMS, STRATEGIES AND LEGISLATION

This Statement provides an opportunity for two-way learning between government departments on embedding an intersectionality framework across family violence and social service reforms, strategies and supporting legislation.

In addition to *Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change* and *Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way – Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families*, the Statement connects with and complements family violence and social service reform work across the Victorian Government. This includes, but is not limited to, work being undertaken across the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Justice and Community Safety, Victorian Courts, Victoria Police, the Department of Education and Training and the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

The Statement is strategically aligned with:

- *Building from Strength: 10 Year Industry Plan for Family Violence Prevention and Response*
- *Free from Violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women*
- *Roadmap for Reform: strong families, safe children*

The Statement also aligns with other social and human services strategies and legislation that target specific or multiple diverse groups. This includes:

- *Korin Korin Balit-Djak: Aboriginal health, wellbeing and safety strategic plan 2017–2027*
- *Wungurilwil Gaggapduir: Aboriginal Children and Families Agreement*
- *Safe and Strong: Victorian Gender Equality Strategy*
- *Victorian. And proud of it – Victoria’s Multicultural Policy Statement 2017*
- *Absolutely everyone: Victorian state disability plan 2017–20*
- *Multicultural Victoria Act 2011 (Vic)*
- *Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 (Vic)*
- *Guideline: Family violence services and accommodation > Complying with the Equal Opportunity Act 2010*

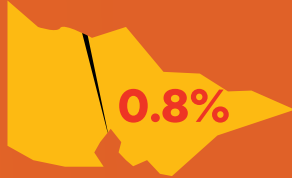
In addition, the Statement complements the following Australian Government strategies and legislation:

- *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and Their Children 2010–2022*
- *National Disability Strategy 2010–2020*
- *Sex Discrimination Amendment (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Intersex Status) Act 2013*

## ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES



**0.8%** of the Victorian population identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander in the 2016 Census.<sup>1</sup>



**X45**

Victorian Aboriginal women are **45 times** more likely to experience family violence and, where violence occurs, **25 times** more likely to be killed or injured than non-Aboriginal women.<sup>2</sup>

## CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE COMMUNITIES



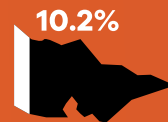
**22%** of the Victorian population were born in non-main English-speaking countries.<sup>3</sup>

Women's Health West Inc. reports that in 2013–14, **47%** of women who received case management support identified themselves as coming from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background and **44%** of residents in their crisis accommodation service did not speak English as their first language and required an interpreter to communicate.<sup>4</sup>

## YOUNG PEOPLE



**31.3%** of Victoria's population is aged **24** and under.<sup>5</sup>



From July 2016 – June 2017, **10.2%** of victims in Victoria Police family violence incidents were young people (17 or younger).<sup>6</sup>

## PEOPLE WHO WORK IN THE SEX INDUSTRY



It is estimated that there are up to **20,000** people working as sex workers in Australia in any one year.<sup>7</sup>



**55%**

**55%** of Victorian based Project Respect's clients who were sex workers between 2011–12 had experienced family violence.<sup>8</sup>

## FAITH COMMUNITIES



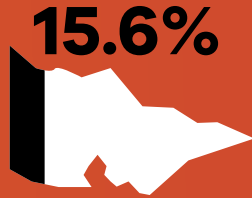
**59%** of Victorians follow more than **130** different faiths.<sup>9</sup>





## OLDER PEOPLE

**15.6%** of the Victorian population are aged over 65 years.<sup>10</sup>



**14%**

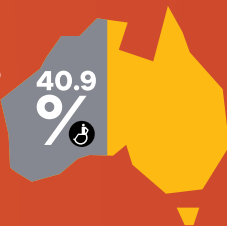
The World Health Organisation estimates up to **14%** of older people in high and middle income countries may be experiencing elder abuse.<sup>11</sup>

## PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES



Almost one in five Victorians (**18.4%**) have a disability.<sup>12</sup>

In the 2012 Australian Public Safety Survey, women with disabilities represented **40.9%** of all female victims of male intimate partner violence, whilst only representing **32.3%** of respondents.<sup>13</sup>



## RURAL, REGIONAL AND REMOTE COMMUNITIES

**23.7%** of the Victorian population live outside of Greater Melbourne.<sup>14</sup>



In 2013–14, the 10 Victorian local government areas with the **highest rates** of family violence incidents reported to Victoria Police per 100,000 population were outside metropolitan Melbourne.<sup>15</sup>

## LGBTIQ COMMUNITIES



Same-sex couples made up **1%** of all Victorian couples counted in the 2016 Census.<sup>16</sup>



A 2014 NSW report *Calling it what it really is* found that:

- **34.8%** of all LGBTIQ participants reported that they had been abused sexually or physically by a previous partner
- Rates of sexual and physical abuse were higher (**52.5%**) for trans and gender diverse and intersex participants
- Only **12.9%** made a report to the police and **31.3%** never sought support, information or advice on the abuse.<sup>17</sup>



## WOMEN IN OR EXITING PRISON



Women make up **7%** of the Victorian prisoner population. The number of women in prison almost doubled between 2007 and 2017.<sup>18</sup>

**87%** of female prisoners in Victoria in 2003 reported experiencing emotional, sexual or physical abuse as an adult, with primary perpetrators being intimate partners.<sup>19</sup>



## MALE VICTIMS

# 13.9%



In 2016-2017 adult men (18+) constituted **13.9%** of affected family members on original applications for a family violence intervention order.<sup>20</sup>

**39%** of Australian men since the age of 15 have experienced violence by a male perpetrator, compared to around **12%** who have experience violence by a female perpetrator.<sup>21</sup>

## PEOPLE EXPERIENCING MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES



Each year, approximately one in every five Australians will experience a mental illness.<sup>22</sup>

# 40% ↑ 50-90% ↓

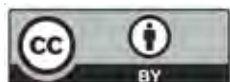
The Royal Commission into Family Violence heard that mental illness is more likely to be an outcome of family violence, with between **40%** of male and **50-90%** of female mental health clients reporting having experienced family violence in their lives.<sup>23</sup>

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## **Everybody Matters: Inclusion and Equity Statement**

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