

**SUPPORT AND
SAFETY HUBS:
STATEWIDE CONCEPT**
JULY 2017

Family violence services and support

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. 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 Safe Steps' 24/7 family violence response line on 1800 015 188.

Aboriginal Acknowledgment

The Victorian Government proudly 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 an incredibly disciplined social and cultural order. This social and cultural order has sustained up to 50,000 years of existence. We acknowledge the ongoing leadership role of the Aboriginal community in addressing, and preventing family violence and join with our First Peoples to eliminate family violence from all communities.



CONTENTS

OUR COMMITMENT	4
ABOUT THIS CONCEPT	5
CONTEXT AND TERMINOLOGY	7
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	10
The Hub Model: An Overview	10
KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS	18
1. Who the Hubs are for	18
2. How people will access the Hubs	24
3. What the Hubs will do	30
4. Features of the Hub team to deliver on core functions	47
5. Coordination with key statutory agencies and institutions	50
6. Next steps in establishing the Hubs	56
APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY	59
APPENDIX B: HUB DESIGN PRINCIPLES	64
APPENDIX C: RELATED REFORMS	66
APPENDIX D: ACHIEVING OUTCOMES	69

OUR COMMITMENT



Special Minister of State
Gavin Jennings

The Victorian Government will establish Support and Safety Hubs across all parts of Victoria, starting with the five launch sites in Barwon, Bayside Peninsula, Inner Gippsland, Mallee and North-East Melbourne areas in 2017 and scaling up operation to provide full coverage across the state over time.

Establishing the Hubs will deliver a fundamental change to the way we work with women, children and families. For too long, women experiencing family violence have had to manage their own safety. At a time of great vulnerability, they have been bounced around the system, ineligible for services they approach, or placed on long waiting lists, while telling their stories over and over.

Families that need support for their children's care, wellbeing and development, struggling with many demands and challenges, find it difficult to know what services are available and how they are accessed. The Hubs will change this. The Hubs will mobilise the service system to work with women, children and families and support their needs and their goals. The Hubs will have close connections to the community and universal services to help identify needs and intervene earlier, not only responding at crisis point after significant damage has been done.

People will no longer have to go to multiple places to figure out what support is available and piece together a plan for their safety and wellbeing. The Hubs will do the work for them and much of this work will be behind the scenes. We will make the experience of getting help as easy and seamless as possible. The Hubs will help people access services, and will make moving between different services and professionals easier. It's our goal that the Hubs will work in ways that are accessible and meet the diverse needs of the Victorian community.

Aboriginal self-determination will be a guiding principle in our approach to establishing Hubs. We will draw on the unique experiences and expertise of Aboriginal people to create a culturally safe network of Hubs across Victoria in partnership with Aboriginal communities and services.

The Hubs are much more than a new service or a new building – they are part of an emerging new service system where all services and systems play their role in keeping people safe and well. The Hubs will be a new doorway to the service system and their establishment will involve bringing together different workforces and practices. We recognise that this is a significant task. We will support workers with this important change.

The success of the Hubs will also depend on, and enhance, broader reforms across health, justice and social services that are working to establish a strong, comprehensive and joined-up network of services working with women, children and young people, and men. The Hubs will be a critical part of our whole-of-system reform to place perpetrators in view, engage them so that they take responsibility for changing their behaviour and choose to end their use of violence. This will start to reverse the onus that too often now sits with women to carry the burden of managing the risk associated with the actions of perpetrators.

We are committed to ensuring that all parts of the system work together to make the Hubs successful. Together, these reforms will bring about enduring change to prevent family violence, hold perpetrators to account, effectively assist children and families, and put people's needs, goals and aspirations at the centre of our work.

This Concept document is a key milestone in the design of the Hubs, but it is just the beginning. The Hubs are a long term, systemic reform that will require a sustained effort over many years and collective leadership from government and non-government agencies across different sectors. This concept document outlines government's commitment and design for achieving lasting change.

About this Concept

Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change, released in November 2016, set out the Victorian Government's commitment to a network of Support and Safety Hubs (Hubs). This Plan describes the vision for the Hubs in a future service system, the approach government is taking and 11 principles for the design of the Hubs (see Appendix B).

The scope of the Statewide Concept

This Statewide Concept is the next step in our co-design process. It describes the intent, scope, key functions and roles of the Hubs and how the Hubs will contribute to the vision and aspirations of the Plan. It outlines what the Hubs will deliver across the state as part of the future service system and provides a catalyst for change.

The Concept is divided into sections outlining:

1. Who the Hubs are for
2. How people will access the Hubs
3. What the Hubs will do
4. Features of the Hub Team to deliver on core functions

5. Coordination with key statutory agencies and institutions – Child Protection, Victoria Police, the courts, and the Victims Support Agency

6. Next steps in establishing the Hubs – including the role of Family Safety Victoria, the new coordination agency, and local Hub establishment groups.

The Statewide Concept does not attempt to set out the detailed practice framework, operational specifications and planning, protocols between the Hubs and the broader service sector, and local design and implementation work. The Concept sets out government's vision for the functionality that the Hubs will achieve to inform and guide this more detailed work.

The conceptual design of the Hubs outlined here will also be developed and delivered over time. The full functionality of the Hubs described in this Concept document will not be available in all Hubs on day one of operations.

The operation and delivery across the state will be scaled up incrementally, with a subset of core functions being rolled out in the five launch areas in 2017. The intention is that all of the functionality of the Hubs described in the Concept will be operational across the state in the future.

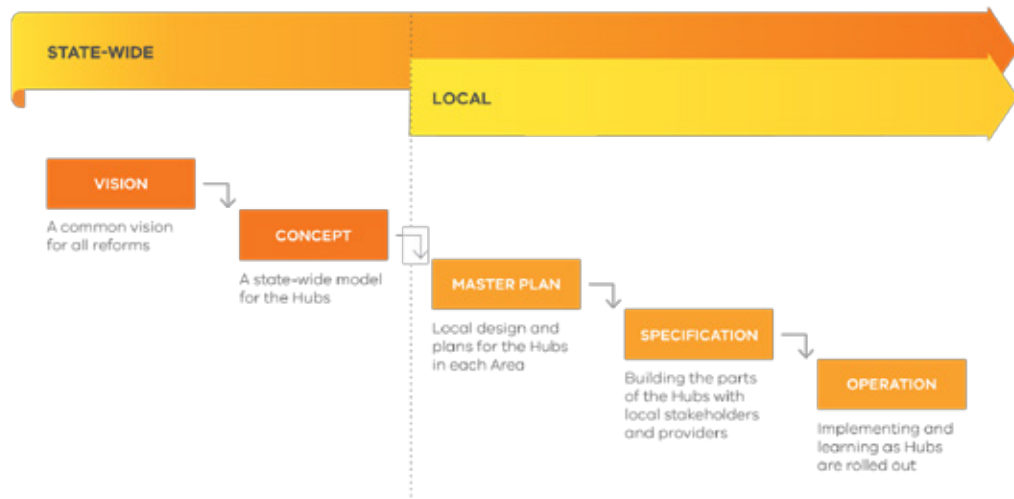


Figure 1. Approach to the design and delivery of the support and safety

Co-design and consultation

The development of the Statewide Concept has been informed by the generous input of many victim survivors, workers from across the service system, and other community members. This has included a series of regional forums held in October 2016 which were attended by over 700 people, which helped shape the vision for the Hubs outlined in Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change.

Building on this work, in early 2017 the Department of Premier and Cabinet held a series of workshops with an expert design group comprised of practitioners and leading thinkers from across the social, community and justice service systems. The Government has also worked with the Family Violence Steering Committee, the Aboriginal Family Violence Co-Design Forum, the Diverse Communities Intersectionality Working Group, an inter-departmental Project Control Group, and other sector and stakeholder groups to inform this Concept document.

In addition, a number of small group discussions with people who have experienced the service system, including victim survivors and families engaged with child and family services, have provided insights which have been used to develop this Concept document. We are particularly grateful for the generosity of the participants in these discussions in sharing their experiences and perspectives with us to help make the system better for people in the future. Quotes embedded throughout this concept document have come from participants in these sessions.

An evolving model

The Concept articulates the Victorian Government's long-term design and aspirations for the Hubs. Achieving these aspirations will require further development of the design and model for the Hubs. This work will take place at both statewide and local area levels, and will build on the co-design and collaborative processes undertaken to develop this Concept document.

The implementation of the Hubs will involve a carefully supported transition over time for the Hubs to achieve this full vision and aspiration.

The role and operation of the Hubs will not be static or fixed at one point in time. Just as the practice of the Hubs will be informed by emerging needs and evidence, and firmly embedded with the principle of continuous improvement, the design and implementation of the Hubs will continue to develop and be informed by community needs, co-design, and practice learnings.

The design of the Hubs will also develop as the reforms to the rest of the system develop. The Hubs will be a doorway to a system that is undergoing significant reform. These reforms (outlined at Appendix C) will inform the functions and interface with the Hubs over time.

The Concept hopes to strike a balance at this point in time by providing statewide consistency to an overarching concept, while allowing flexibility for growth, development and Local Area needs.

Context and terminology

All forms of family violence

The design of the Hubs, and this Concept document, uses the broad definition of family violence in the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008* (Vic).

Family violence includes physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, economic abuse and coercion, and control or domination that causes the family member to feel fear for the safety or wellbeing of themselves or another person, and the exposure of these behaviours, or the effects of them, to a child.

The design of the Hubs also recognises the many relationships in which family violence can occur, including spouses or domestic partners, other intimate personal relationships, parent-child, child-parent, elders, siblings and other relatives, extended families, kinship networks and family-like or carer relationships.

The gendered nature of family violence

The use of gendered language in this concept document is deliberate. It recognises that most victims of family violence are women, most perpetrators are men, and that violence perpetrated by a man is the most prevalent form of family violence. It recognises that the causes of family violence are complex, and include gender inequality and community attitudes towards the roles of women and men in society. Throughout this concept document, references are made to 'women, children and young people' in relation to people who are victim survivors of, or at risk of, family violence, and to 'men' in relation to people perpetrating violence.

The design of the Hubs recognises that a gendered understanding of family violence is critical to effective services and systems. The design of the Hubs, and this Concept document, also recognises that victims are not always women or children, perpetrators are not always men, and family violence occurs in relationships other than male-female intimate partner relationships.

Victims of these forms of family violence face many barriers to getting help as these other forms of violence are often not recognised or understood. A design principle for the Hubs specifically emphasises that Hubs will respond to, and link effectively with services that respond to, family violence in all its forms.

References in this concept document to support for women, children and young people experiencing or at risk of family violence should be understood (unless otherwise specified) to relate also to victims of all forms of family violence. For clarity, specific issues relating to family violence that do not occur in a male-female intimate partner relationship are noted throughout the concept document.

The Hubs are for families in need of support

The Hubs will be central to Victoria's approach to addressing both family violence and child vulnerability (which may or may not be related to family violence) and form a critical part of the broader service system response. The design of the Hubs recognises that both family violence and child vulnerability are major social challenges for Victoria and core priorities for the Hubs. Throughout this concept document, reference is made to 'women, children and young people experiencing family violence, and families in need of support with the care, wellbeing and development of children and young people'. In these references, the ordering of different cohorts of people is for simplicity and convenience in a written document only, and does not imply a priority or emphasis on either group.

A detailed glossary of terms used in this concept document is at Appendix A.

The Role of Family Safety Victoria

The Hubs require a new combination of specialist service delivery expertise from different workforces (maintained by discrete service sectors) and the capability for system planning, management and oversight (a core role of government). Government has therefore arrived at a hybrid model for the Hubs to support their transition as a new feature in the service system.

Family Safety Victoria, the new coordination agency established on 1 July 2017, will establish and initially manage the Hubs to ensure strong statewide quality in the model, support the development of consistent integrated practice, and utilise government levers to ensure that the Hubs and justice, health, social and community services work together effectively.

Workers performing functions in the Hubs Team such as intake, risk and needs assessment, and planning will be drawn from specialist workforces in family violence services, family services, men's/perpetrator services. Workers could be initially brought into the Hubs Team through secondments or contractual arrangements.

The establishment of the Hubs is the start of a journey and these arrangements may evolve. Over time, government will reflect on governance arrangements, and who takes the lead for what aspects of the work, taking into account emerging capabilities and effectiveness. This approach to get the Hubs up and running is not intended to lock in or out potential future arrangements.

The detail of the delivery model will be worked out through further consultation and will be guided by the objectives below, to:

- harness the strengths of both government and non-government agencies to deliver Hub function
- draw on the ability of government to support the significant system reform outlined in this Concept document
- utilise the experienced and specialist workforces of local community sector organisations to deliver Hub functions including initial contact and advice, triaging, crisis responses, risk assessment and safety planning, needs assessment and service planning and allocation, as well as expert advice and capacity building
- deliver an integrated service model and effectively manage the practice and cultural change required
- ensure Hubs are supported by local and collective partnerships – both across government and non-government agencies and within and across different service sectors
- have a delivery model that gives government and non-government agencies a stake in the success of the Hubs, supporting collaboration, shared responsibility and mutual accountability
- have clear accountabilities, including a clear process for resolving issues, and
- ensure that the transition to the new role of the hubs in the system is supported and appropriately phased.



Executive Summary

The Hub model: An overview

The Hubs will be a new way for women, children, and young people experiencing family violence and families in need of support with the care, wellbeing and development of children and young people, to access coordinated support from justice, health and social services. They will be accessible, safe and welcoming to people, providing quick and simple access to the support and safety they need.

The Hubs will also focus on perpetrators of family violence, to keep them in view and play a role in holding them accountable for their actions and changing their behaviour. The Hubs will help tilt the focus of the whole service system towards tackling the source of the violence: the perpetrator.

The Hubs will bring together access points for family violence services, family services and perpetrator/men's services. The Hubs will replace existing referral points for victims and perpetrators of family violence (including police L17 referral points) and children and families in need of support (Child FIRST) (see page 18 on children and families). The Hubs will work in partnership with Aboriginal communities and services to support Aboriginal self-determination and ensure that culturally safe responses are available for Aboriginal people across the state.

1. Who the Hubs are for

The Hubs are for (see page 18):

- women, children, young people and older people experiencing family violence
- families in need of support with the care, wellbeing and development of children and young people, and
- perpetrators of family violence (see box on page 20 – Keeping perpetrators in view).

Police referrals (L17 forms) for male victims experiencing family violence will continue to go to the Victims Support Agency (see page 54).

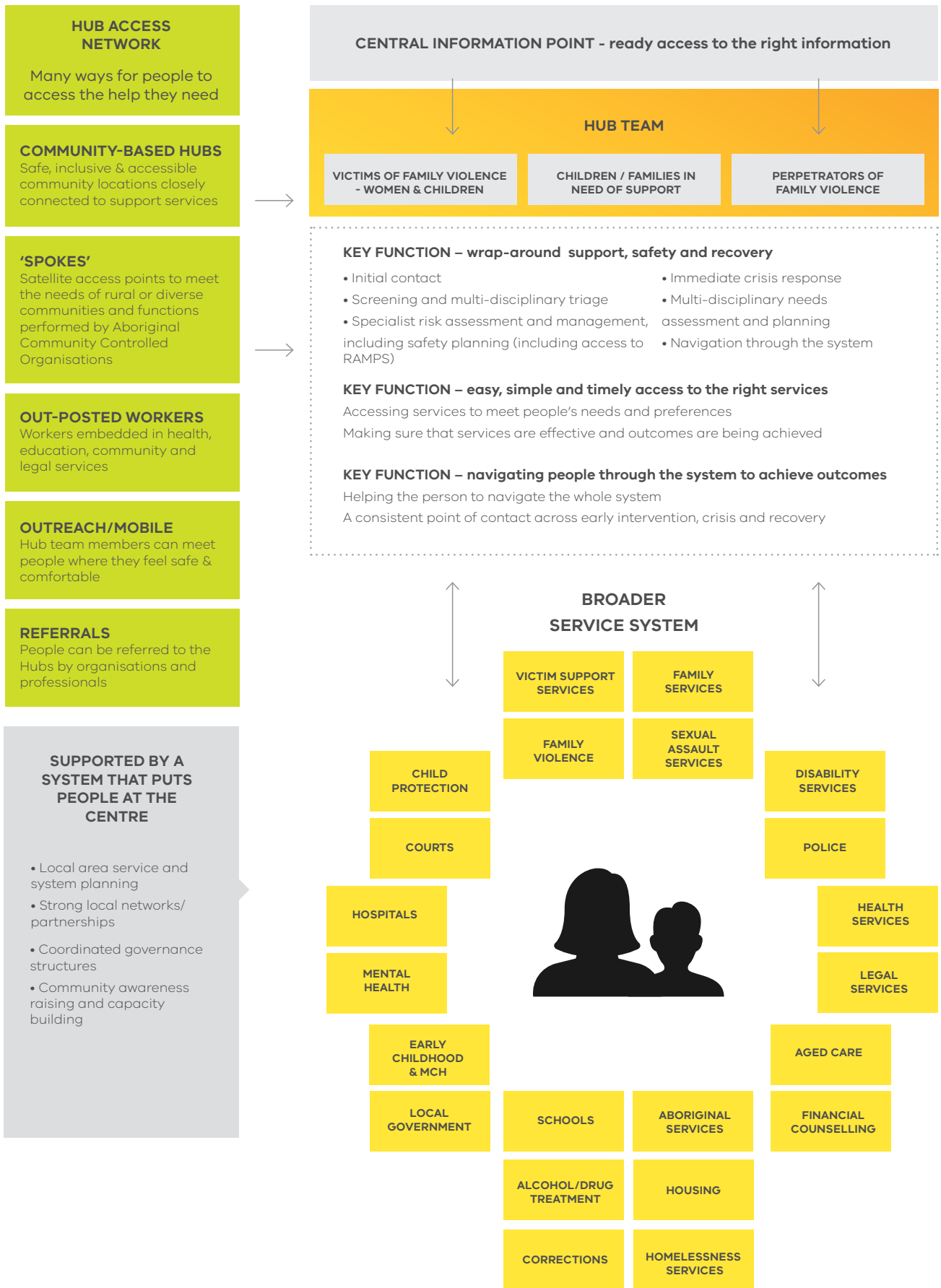
2. How people will access the Hubs

People will be able to access the Hubs in ways that are safe, accessible and convenient for them.

The Hubs will be accessible through an access network across each Local Area that includes (see page 24):

- telephone and online access options, supported by local face-to-face after-hours responses where required
- a primary physical community-based Hub – which may include extended hours on weekdays and some availability on weekends – and, over time, spokes providing alternative locations
- out-posted Hub workers based or hosted in other services, such as courts, health services or local government services
- outreach or mobile Hub workers, who can engage with people where they feel comfortable, and
- referrals from other professionals and community organisations, including police referrals (L17s).

The exact nature of the access network will be informed by the local co-design process in each of the Local Areas.



Option for service co-location with Hubs to be considered in local co-design

Figure 2. The Hub Model

3. What the Hubs will do

The Hubs will provide (see page 30):

An initial contact point: People will know how to get in touch with the Hubs, and the Hubs will be approachable and safe. The Hubs will provide information and advice to people and families, community members, universal services (such as doctors and schools), community services, and professionals.

The Hubs will not be the only contact point. People will be able to connect to the Hubs or continue to directly access services that they feel comfortable approaching and working with.

Screening and multi-disciplinary triage: When a person first gets in touch or is referred to the Hubs they will work to quickly identify key issues and safety risks, and the priority and urgency of their risk and needs. This will occur whether it is the first time or after many times a person is in contact with the Hubs or other services. The Hubs will recognise and support the existing relationships and roles that services and professionals may already have with people.

Immediate crisis response: Hubs will have capacity to meet people's immediate physical, health, emotional and social needs when they are in crisis, including through immediate referrals to specialist services, access to medical treatment and care, practical assistance, accommodation, and coordination and advocacy with protective services (such as Victoria Police).

Specialist multi-disciplinary risk assessment and management (including safety planning): Hubs will develop a deep and clear understanding of risk based on the best information and drawing on a range of specialist expertise. The Hubs will take a whole of family approach, including awareness and understanding of risks to children. The Hubs, supported by the Central Information Point, will have the critical information about the perpetrator that they need to inform risk assessment and management and to keep the perpetrator 'in view'.

Multi-disciplinary needs assessment and planning: Hubs will work with people to identify their needs and goals. They will provide accurate information and support to enable people to make informed choices about their own needs and priorities. The Hubs will also ensure that there is a whole of family perspective, including focus on each family member (including any children) in their own right. The Hubs will have the capability to identify the range of supports people need to be safe and recover. This assessment will mean that, as much as possible, people get the help they need the first time and stop cycling through the system.

Accessing services to meet people's needs and preferences: Hubs will connect people with supports and services in an easy, simple and timely way. The Hubs will have access to flexible support packages which allow supports and services to be put in place around the individual needs of people and families. The Hubs will be able to directly allocate people into key services, including family violence, family services, perpetrator/men's services and crisis accommodation. Hubs will also have close and formal partnerships with other local justice, health and social services.

Navigating through the system to achieve outcomes: Hubs will help people to navigate the broad range of services and systems that they may need to engage with, as well as provide a consistent point of contact if people need to come back for more support. In some circumstances, the Hubs will help people to reconnect with universal services to meet their ongoing needs and avoid the need for more intensive support. The Hubs may also check-in with people at agreed points down the track. In many cases ongoing support will be provided by specialist services, but the Hubs will have the flexibility to provide this support when needed (such as where a person does not want to be connected to a specialist service).

Contributing to effective services and making sure outcomes are achieved: The Hubs will have a role in ensuring that services delivered are effective and that people are supported to be safe and well. The vision is for the Hubs to monitor people's engagement and outcomes with services, to increase accountability of

the system for individual cases. Through this perspective, the Hubs will also see circumstances where people cycle through the system and improve the system's ability to intervene effectively. The Hubs will provide a feedback loop on systemic issues to Family Safety Victoria because of the unique perspective they will have on community needs, and service capacity, capability and responsiveness.

4. Features of the Hub Team to deliver on core functions

The Hubs will develop and maintain the expert workforce they need to deliver consistent, evidence-informed practice across the state. Across the Hub Team, there will be different specialist expertise contributing to the multi-disciplinary practice in the Hubs.

To deliver this expertise, the specialist intake functions of the Hubs – including initial contact and advice, triaging, crisis responses, risk assessment and safety planning, needs assessment and service planning and allocation – as well as expert advice and capacity building, will continue to be delivered by workers with specialist skills and expertise in family violence, family services and perpetrator services.

The integration of the multi-disciplinary Hub Team will occur through the development and implementation of a consistent practice framework, training and development (consistent with the Industry Plan), team meetings and case conferencing, the use of practice tools and guides, supervision, day-to-day consultation across areas of expertise, and ongoing opportunities for reflective practice and peer-to-peer learning and development (see page 48).

5. Coordination with key statutory agencies and institutions

The Hubs will have clear working relationships with key statutory agencies and institutions, in particular Child Protection, Victoria Police, the courts, and the Victims Support Agency:

- The Hubs will connect families in need of support with the care, wellbeing and development of children and young people to services. Child Protection and the wider community and professionals in universal and specialist services will refer to the Hubs where they currently refer to Child FIRST, that is, where they do not identify a significant risk of harm, but identify a family in need of support. People and organisations, including the Hubs and police, will continue to make reports to Child Protection where they have formed a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection from significant risk of harm (see page 51).
- The Hubs will be the central place for most Victoria Police family violence referrals and where they identify families in need of support with the care, wellbeing and development of children and young people. Police expertise and experience in assessing and addressing the risk posed by perpetrators will provide essential input to the work of the Hubs (see page 53).
- The Hubs will work with the courts and connected support services to ensure there is wrap-around support for women, children and young people at court who do not have existing supports in place. The effectiveness of the working relationship between the Hubs and the courts will be underpinned by dynamic information sharing (see page 54).
- The Victims Support Agency (VSA) will continue to receive police referrals (L17s) in relation to male victims of family violence. This is in recognition of the different experience men may have of family violence, and of the need to harness existing specialist skills in working with male victims.

The Hubs and the VSA will have clear protocols and information sharing to ensure that no one falls through the cracks, that the Hubs and the VSA do not duplicate follow-up, and that there is comprehensive risk assessment and management based on the best information available across the system (see page 55)

6. Next steps in establishing the Hubs

Family Safety Victoria will initially focus on establishing and developing the statewide operating and practice frameworks, including the delivery and oversight mechanisms, as well as critical systems to support consistency across all areas. They will also bring together local Hub establishment groups to help to set up the Hubs in each area, and build the foundations for initial cooperative arrangements between the Hubs, the local service system and communities (see page 57). Family Safety Victoria will provide coordination and oversight across the network of Hubs statewide.



Today

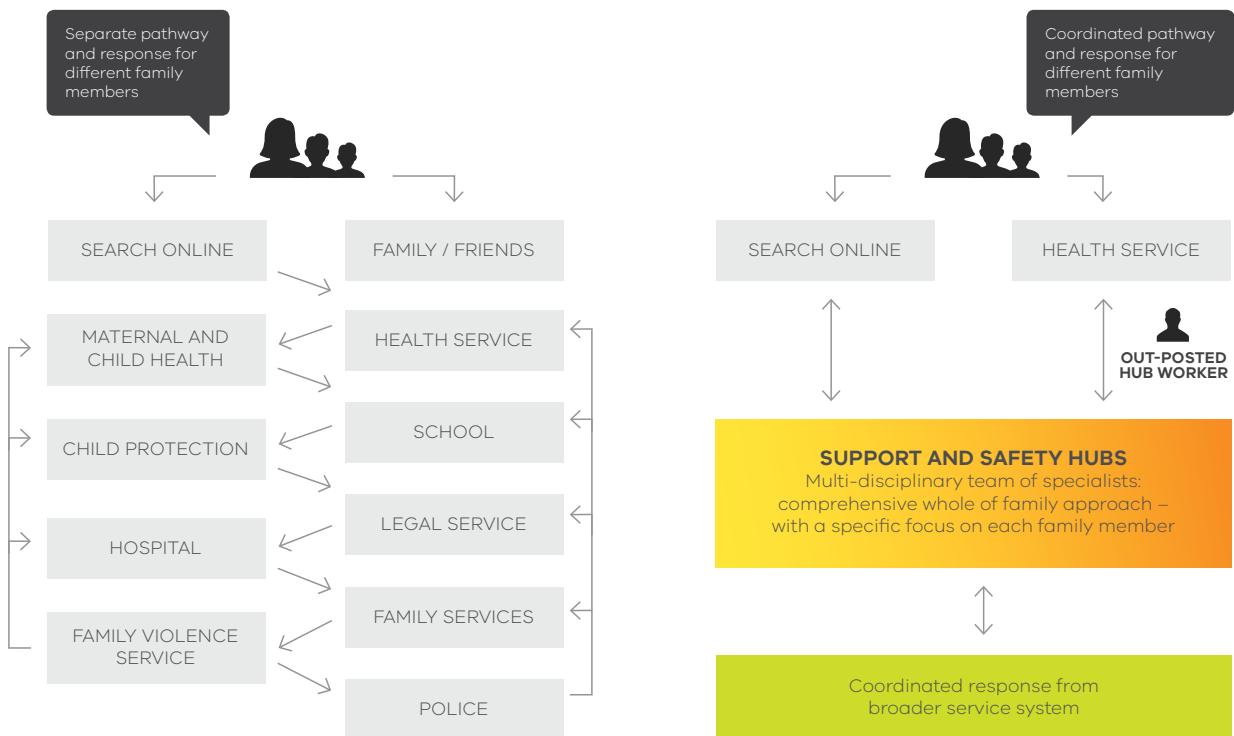
A PERSON'S EXPERIENCE

People can seek support from a range of places. Often universal services don't know how to identify signs of risk or how to respond. When services don't respond well, it makes people less likely to seek support. Opportunities to intervene early are missed, and issues can escalate. Often people only get access to the service they need after a crisis has occurred.

Future with the Hubs

A BETTER WAY

Information on how to get support is readily accessible online, over the phone and through universal services. Universal services know how to identify and respond to family violence and to children's well being and development. Support and Safety Hubs provide easy and safe ways to get support. The Hubs connect people with the support they need. They empower people to get the assistance that's right for them.



OUTCOME

Opportunities to intervene early are missed and issues escalate, increasing risk to women and children. Families require more intensive crisis responses. People are discouraged from seeking help. They 'bounce' from service to service, some of which do not provide them the support they need. The violence or risk is addressed only after significant harm has already occurred. Perpetrators are invisible and the risk they pose is not adequately addressed.

OUTCOME

People get access to support earlier and before issues escalate. Hubs are able to work on people's presenting issues or concerns, as well as take a holistic and whole-of-family view of risk and need. People are able to get the specialist support they need, in a manner and order that works for them. Getting support is simpler and empowering. Perpetrators are in view and the system works together to hold them accountable and address risk.

Figure 3. A Family's Experience



Key Design Elements

1. Who the Hubs are for

This section describes in more detail who the Hubs are for.

- **Women and children experiencing family violence:** Women, children and young people will be able to access the Hubs face-to-face, via the telephone, or online. The Hubs will receive police referrals (L17s) and other professional referrals from services in the community relating to women, children and young people experiencing or at risk of family violence. The Hubs will replace the formal L17 referral points from police and family violence services. This access might be at any stage – in response to recognising early signs of risk, following a crisis or incident and when seeking help for the first time or after many times. Police referrals (L17 forms) for male victims experiencing family violence will continue to go to the Victims Support Agency.
- **Children and families:** People and professionals in services will be able to seek advice and support or make a referral to the Hubs when they have concerns for a child or young person's wellbeing and development, or when they believe a child/family is in need of support. This includes concerns relating to unborn children.

The Hubs will be the central intake point for vulnerable children and families and will strengthen the coordination and integration of services for families in need of support. The Hubs will deliver the functions currently performed by Child FIRST - both in assessing

and planning responses for children and families, and in allocating and coordinating the services that work with families in each Local Area. All referrals that would have been made to Child FIRST will be made to the Hubs. Child and family services expertise will be part of the broader multi-disciplinary approach of the Hubs and will enable the Hubs to take a whole of family approach to working with women, children and young people, men/perpetrators and families. It will also bring family services together with specialist family violence and men's/perpetrator services, to improve coordination of responses for women, children and families across the Hubs' catchment areas.

The Hubs will offer families a pathway to addressing child vulnerability before an intervention by Child Protection is required. Community-based child protection practitioners will be in the Hubs to provide expert advice regarding the safety and wellbeing of children, secondary consultations and access to any history of assessment and intervention by Child Protection.

Where it is believed that a child is in need of protection from significant risk of harm, a report will continue to be made to Child Protection.

- **Aboriginal people:** The Hubs will support the choice and self-determination of Aboriginal people. They will recognise the specific needs of Aboriginal people and will work closely with ACCOs, to ensure all Aboriginal people can choose to receive services from an ACCO. ACCOs' role as part of the Hubs access network will be developed through local co-design processes, including the possibility of dedicated Hub access points ('spokes') provided by ACCOs. For further discussion regarding accessibility of the Hubs for Aboriginal people on see boxed text on page 22.

- **Victoria's diverse community:** The Hubs will be safe and inclusive and be designed to meet the diverse needs of the community. Specific requirements for the Hubs accessibility will be to:
 - ... actively tailor their services to the needs of CALD communities in their Local Area – including through the use of interpreting services, safe meeting places, having workers in the Hubs from CALD communities and embedding appropriate cultural practices, and
 - ... have the capability to recognise and meet the specific needs of people with disabilities, LGBTI people, older people experiencing violence, and adolescents who use violence in the home.
- **Perpetrators of family violence:** The Hubs will receive police referrals (L17 forms) about perpetrators, replacing the current formal referral process between the police and the enhanced intake services for men's behaviour change programs. Perpetrators will also be able to self-refer or be referred by other professionals and services. The Hubs will work to connect and engage effectively with perpetrators through other services, such as at courts, or health services and will work with all perpetrators, including adolescents who use violence in the home. The Hubs will have an important role as part of the broader system in tilting the system to ensure that the focus is clearly on perpetrators and their accountability. Tilting the whole of the system towards addressing the source of violence – perpetrators – is a significant shift and underpins the family violence reforms.

Keeping perpetrators in view

The Hubs will be one of the main entry points to services for perpetrators of family violence, including receiving Victoria Police referrals (L17s), other professional referrals and self-referrals for these services. The Hubs will work with other parts of the service system (including police, courts, justice services, housing, homelessness services and community organisations) to plan interventions and responses that hold perpetrators to account, address the risks they pose and challenge their violence and abusive behaviour. Bringing expertise and service responses informed by a deep understanding of perpetrator patterns of behaviour into the Hubs is a key component to improve how the system assesses and manages the risk perpetrators pose. Further detail about how the Hubs will work with perpetrators is described on page 41.

Police will make referrals to the Hubs and the Hubs will initiate contact with the perpetrator. This contact in response to police referrals is likely to be initially by phone. Perpetrators will be able to contact the Hubs online or via the telephone as well as being contacted by the Hubs in response to other professional referrals. The Hubs will also work directly with perpetrators through outreach or out-posted workers – for example, at a men’s behaviour change service or at a court. Part of the initial functions of the Hubs will be to assess risk posed by perpetrators and determining the best way for the system to engage with them – including identifying the location where face-to-face contact will be safest for workers, victims and other community members.

Other men accessing the physical community-based Hubs

Ensuring that the Hubs are safe and welcoming places for women, children and young people, and families in need of support is a critical service objective. However, some men – for example, fathers in need of support with the care, wellbeing and development of children – may access services from the Hubs through their physical access points. By providing access to these types of services, the Hubs can keep families in view, providing an ongoing

risk assessment and management role. If family violence is identified through men’s engagement in these services, risk assessment and management plans can be updated, and appropriate responses for victims and perpetrators can be put in place. The Hubs provide opportunities to engage with men on their behaviour and attitudes, prioritising the safety and wellbeing of women and children in doing so.

Keeping victim survivors safe

The safety of women and children seeking help will be central to the design and operations of the Hubs, particularly the physical (community-based Hubs and ‘spokes’) and face-to-face access methods. Strong safety measures – in both the design and operations of the Hubs – and careful operational planning and scheduling will ensure the risks posed by working with perpetrators in this way are managed. Hubs will employ screening and assessment processes that will prevent the service being used vexatiously by perpetrators to influence their victims’ ability to disclose family violence and receive support. The design of the Hubs will also require effective safety measures that are carefully calibrated to avoid creating environments which are intimidating or unwelcoming to women and children. These measures will be developed further through the Hubs statewide practice framework and local design. The Hub practice will draw on the experience of many services who already work with both perpetrators and victims.

The access network described in this Concept document for the Hubs includes multiple options which can be targeted and tailored to engaging victims and perpetrators safely and effectively. Telephone and online access, deliberate use of satellite access points (spokes), out-posted and outreach workers will mean that victims and perpetrators do not need to access a physical location at the same time. The consideration of perpetrator access to Hubs will be progressed in the context of broader advice to Government from the Expert Advisory Committee on Perpetrator Interventions (see page 67 for more information on the Expert Advisory Committee on Perpetrator Interventions).



Our commitment to Aboriginal people

Hubs will provide Aboriginal people with accessible and culturally safe support

The Victorian Government is committed to Aboriginal self-determination. To reflect this commitment, the design and implementation of the Hubs will be informed at all stages by the Aboriginal communities in each area, including active participation from local Aboriginal services and community members in all of the local Hub establishment groups.

The Hubs will build an enduring partnership with local Aboriginal communities and ACCOs to ensure that cultural safety is embedded in all aspects of Hubs' design – from a welcoming physical space, to service delivery, processes and systems, and governance. Minimum cultural safety requirements will be mandated within the Hubs practice framework. These requirements will need further work with and advice from ACCOs and Aboriginal communities. Compliance with these requirements will be monitored and audited to ensure that Hubs consistently offer welcoming, culturally safe, high quality and culturally appropriate services.

The Hubs Team will include Aboriginal workers who will be supported with learning, development, mentoring and supervision. The Government recognises the need to create sustainable employment opportunities for Aboriginal people. Aboriginal workers will be involved from the beginning, helping to shape the design and implementation of the Hubs from the start, and to build its relationships with community organisations. The Government will aim to increase the number of Aboriginal people working in the Hubs over time. The Hubs will work in partnership with ACCOs to provide expert advice in delivering culturally safe and appropriate triage, assessment and support response.

The capability of the Hub Team will include specialist expertise in working with Aboriginal families, children and young

people. Local Aboriginal communities or ACCOs will be supported to work with Hubs to ensure that all workers receive appropriate training. This training will build workforce knowledge about the inherent strength and expertise of Aboriginal people, as well as the accumulation of trauma across the generations associated with the impact of white settlement, colonisation and the violent dispossession of land, culture and children.

Aboriginal people and families will be able to choose to seek support from an ACCO

Our aim is for Aboriginal people to have the choice to access a service provided by a Hub or an ACCO. This approach recognises that many ACCOs already deliver many Hub functions for Aboriginal women, men, children and young people, and families, and that other ACCOs can be supported to perform these functions over time. ACCOs will be supported to build workforce capabilities, opportunities and career pathways, including training in the Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework (currently being redeveloped).

A partnership approach between the Hubs and ACCOs will enable them to work together to support Aboriginal people and families. This means that workers in the Hubs and ACCOs will be able to contact each other to share information, provide advice, and coordinate their responses. A partnership approach also recognises that a whole of family approach (working with women, children and men) is the longstanding attribute of ACCO services that Hubs will learn from.

Pathways for referrals relating to Aboriginal people will be informed by further statewide and local co-design. The Hubs and their supporting partner agencies will continue to build on the policies and guidelines that have been developed with the Aboriginal community, including Victoria Police's Koori Family Violence Police Protocols.



2. How people will access the Hubs

People will be able to access the Hubs in ways that are safe, accessible and convenient for them and provide them with timely support. The Hubs will be accessible through:

- an area-based access network for the Hubs, that includes multiple access options and a community-based Hub and may include extended operating hours on weekdays and some weekend operation, and
- telephone and online access options, supported by local capacity for face-to-face after-hours responses.

The Victorian Government will work with local communities, and local and statewide service providers, to establish the right mix and location of access points for each area and across the state. However they access the Hubs, individuals and families will receive the same expert response.

The Hubs will not be the only access point for services. People will be able to connect to the Hubs or directly to services through relevant organisations that they feel comfortable approaching and working with.

Area-based access

Hubs will be established in Local Areas, commencing with the five launch site areas – Bayside Peninsula, Barwon, Inner Gippsland, Mallee and North East Melbourne (see map on page. 25). In their Local Area, the Hubs will establish an access network that provides options for people to get support in a way that works for them. This network will be developed over time, informed by local co-design, community need, and learning from the initial Hubs in the launch sites.

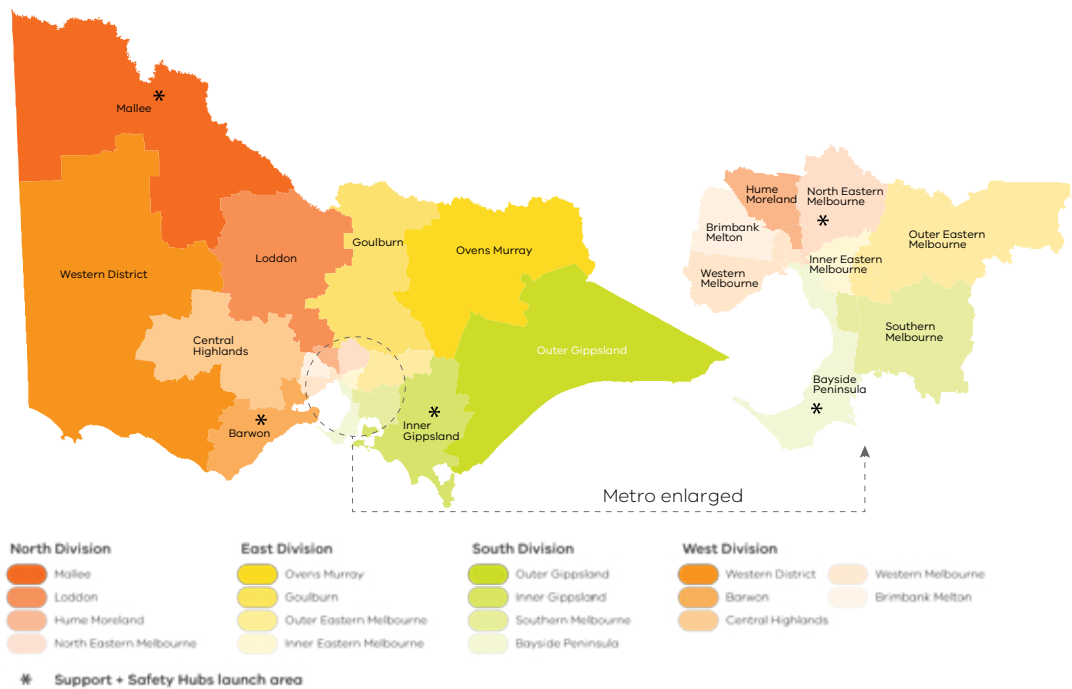


Figure 4. Map of Victoria showing the local areas for the hubs

Community-based Hubs and “spokes”

Community-based Hubs will be the primary physical location in the access network in each Local Area. These access points will be safe, inclusive and accessible community locations closely connected to support services. Their design and location will reflect the needs of Local Areas and will build on existing resources.

The safety and accessibility of the physical Hubs will be paramount to their design and operation. This will take into account factors such as the specific safety requirements for women and children, cultural safety and accessibility for people with disabilities.

In addition, over time, the Hubs will work to establish satellite access points (“spokes”) that could provide alternative physical locations where people can access support offered by the Hubs. These may be spokes may be targeted to meeting specific access needs – such as for Aboriginal people, people in rural and remote areas, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, older people, or perpetrators.

As they are established, spokes will deliver a core set of the Hub functions including multi-disciplinary screening and triage, provision of crisis responses, needs assessment and support planning. Spokes will perform initial risk assessment and safety planning, however, this will be supplemented by the additional expert skills and knowledge of the community-based Hubs where necessary – such as when useful to draw on specialist expertise and secondary consultations.

Local Area planning will identify the need for potential spokes. A statewide process will be developed to determine criteria for eligibility. Spokes would be clearly identifiable as connected to the Hub network.

Out-posted Hub workers

Individual Hub workers (workers who are part of the Hub Team) could also be based/ hosted within other services (on a full-time, part-time or temporary basis).

Relevant services could include health services (for example, community health centres, women's or children's health clinics, antenatal services), early childhood centres, community legal or citizens advice services, housing and homelessness services, courts, local government facilities, or community centres (such as neighbourhood houses, men's sheds, disability, LGBTI, cultural or faith based organisations). These locations will be determined through Local Area planning and implemented over time.

These out-posted workers will support the early identification of family violence risk and concerns for child wellbeing, as well as providing safe alternative access points for the Hubs. They will help to improve the capability of these services to be able to identify and respond to family violence and concerns about the safety and wellbeing of children and families. Local co-design will consider how these workers complement the existing local arrangements.

Specifically, over time, Hub workers will be out-posted at headquarter courts and other specialist family violence courts (as they are rolled out), to work with services at courts and connect with people attending court who may require access to services through the Hubs.

Outreach/mobile Hub workers

Outreach or mobile Hub workers will also engage with people in places where they feel comfortable. This could include visiting people at home, or meeting them in the community or in other service settings, making it easier for people to access and engage with services. Mobile workers will give the Hubs greater capacity for 'assertive engagement' - engaging people through active follow-up, and having the flexibility to work with people in an environment that is safe and accessible for them.

Where necessary, such outreach could be carried out in partnership with Victoria Police, Child Protection or other relevant services. All Hubs will work with a set of standard practices and guidelines in place to maintain worker safety.

Professional and other referrals to the Hubs

Hubs will make it easier for other professionals and community organisations to know where to refer people, and will work with other services to develop timely and effective referral pathways and protocols for information sharing.

"My doctor gave me this big long list of phone numbers and it was overwhelming."

Referrals from the Hubs to services, and the potential for co-location between Hubs and other services, is addressed in Section 3 – What the Hubs will do.



"You carry the burden of expenses when you're at rock bottom, and you have to travel to services."

Operating hours

Operating hours for the Hubs will vary across the different parts of the Hubs access network, with the intention to ensure that the principles of accessibility, statewide coverage and consistency of quality and access is maintained.

Operating hours will be different for each of the access methods: community-based Hubs, spokes, telephone and online access, out-posted and outreach/mobile workers. Possible operating hours for implementation statewide are described below for further consideration through local co-design.

It is intended that Hub operating hours will be responsive to local demand, and the preferences and convenience of people who access services, recognising that in some parts of Victoria this will require dedicated effort to grow the relevant workforces.

Operating hours for telephone access will be 24 hours, with local Hubs contactable within their core operating hours and a statewide telephone service operating outside of those hours.

The local after-hours response will prioritise immediate crisis responses, risk assessment and safety planning, with other non-urgent responses provided during core operating hours of the local Hubs.

After-hours responses will not replace existing emergency service provision (000) and will not be activated in lieu of a required emergency service. The Child Protection after-hours service will continue to be the contact point after-hours where a person believes a child is in need of protection from significant risk of harm.

ACCESS MODE	POSSIBLE OPERATING HOURS FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION THROUGH LOCAL CO-DESIGN
Community based hubs	Extended hours weekdays
Telephone	24 hours (statewide after hours)
Online	24 hours
Out-posted workers	Determined locally
Outreach/mobile	Extended hours weekdays Weekends After hours (crisis face-to-face response only)

Telephone and online

People will also be able to access the Hubs by a single toll-free telephone line.

A statewide online platform will be developed to provide people with information about Hubs. Information will include:

- where and how to get help, for early intervention, crisis and recovery
- the types of support that Hubs can offer and who Hubs are for
- information and guidance about how professionals can access immediate advice and secondary consultation
- tools and guidance to support self-assessment (for example, identification of family violence risk and support and safety planning), and
- links to further information and other support services, for example, online applications for FVIOs.

There will be scope for the online platform to include dedicated channels that are accessible and relevant for women, children and young people, and men. A digital engagement strategy will inform the development of the platform, recognising that the ways people want to access services is changing.

Increased use of technology will support people to access the Hubs 'remotely' or from other locations, such as their home or other service settings. This could include the use of video-call/conferencing facilities.

The online content will meet Victorian Government requirements for website accessibility, with further consultation to take place to develop enhanced website accessibility and inclusiveness specifically for people with disabilities, older people, and Aboriginal and CALD communities. Design of the online platform will also take into account the need to ensure safety and prevent technology facilitated abuse.

The Hubs will work together statewide

Hubs will predominantly provide services for the population based in its area of the state (a Hub's catchment). However, area boundaries will not be a barrier to people receiving services that meet their needs.

Building on existing good practice, people who wish to access services via a Hub outside of their area will be able to do so. The development of statewide operating and practice frameworks will support the Hubs to deliver a consistent response.

Hubs will have strong relationships across area boundaries, sharing information and communicating about shared clients or families. This is particularly important:

- for women and children experiencing family violence who may need to relocate for safety or support reasons
- for people who, because of privacy concerns, wish to access services outside of their local community
- where accessibility is easier across area boundaries (for example, where transport connections make it easier to go to a neighbouring area Hub, such as from regional cities to metropolitan Melbourne), and
- to ensure that perpetrators remain 'in view'.

The Hubs will use common client information tools and systems to ensure that information is 'portable' and accessible across the state. For some areas which include state boundaries, network relationships will include relevant interstate services.

3. What the Hubs will do

Key roles and functions

Initial Contact: providing a well known, accessible contact point

The Hubs will be accessible contact points in the community. People and professionals in services and the community will know how to get in touch with the Hubs.

As an initial contact point for people, the Hubs will be sources of information and advice. They will respond to enquiries from the public and other professionals. The Hubs will help people to recognise early warning signs of family violence and concerns about the safety and wellbeing of children, to help address issues before they escalate or become entrenched. In doing so, the Hubs will support workers and the system to intervene earlier to prevent harm in the future.

The Hubs will make the most of the opportunity when people first contact them. This includes being attuned to the psychological barriers of fear, shame and guilt that people often have to overcome before seeking help.

The Hubs will recognise that many of the people who contact them, or are referred to them, will have experienced, or be experiencing, a crisis or trauma. The initial interactions people have with the Hubs will be critical for building trust and rapport.

“The first time I call is the hardest. It has taken so much courage and I need to know I made the right decision.”

The initial contact will also be instrumental for demonstrating that family violence, gender inequality and other forms of discrimination will not be tolerated, particularly when engaging with perpetrators of family violence. Initial

contact will require the use of language and interpreting services, including techniques to improve communication accessibility.

For some perpetrators, initial contact can begin a process of gaining insight and awareness about their conduct and the impact it is having on their families, particularly their children, which may help them to change their behaviour.

The Hub Team will identify enquiries from people that need support to access other services (for example, homelessness services, the National Disability Insurance Scheme, and mental health services). As a visible ‘support’ Hub in the community it is expected that some enquiries will be directed to the Hubs that do not fall within their mandate. If there is no family violence present or the family is not in need of support with the care, wellbeing and development of children and young people, the Hubs will ensure that people are connected with the right service to help them.

The Hubs will be a contact point for professionals across community, justice and social services. The Hub Team will recognise and support the existing relationships and roles that services and professionals - across universal services (for example, maternal and child health, primary health and education) or specialist services (for example, family violence, sexual assault or family services) - may already have with the people who access the Hub. This may include making efforts to identify what services are already working with a person or family. The Hubs will provide expert advice and information for these professionals to help them to:

- identify family violence and child wellbeing concerns
- respond and support people and families who do not wish to engage with specialised services
- enhance their own service delivery to intervene more effectively, and
- identify when people should be referred to the Hubs.

Importantly, in addition to responding when people reach out to them, the Hubs will initiate contact with people in response to referrals from other professionals (including police), outreach through other services, and participation in community activities

that raise awareness about family violence and child wellbeing. The Hub Team will take steps to actively engage people using strong interpersonal skills, active follow-up and will have the flexibility to engage with people in an environment that is safe and accessible for them or with the assistance of police or other services (sometimes referred to as 'assertive outreach').

Screening and Multi-Disciplinary Triage: Initial identification and prioritisation of people's needs

When a person first contacts or is referred to the Hubs, the Hub Team will quickly work out whether:

- the enquiry is about something the Hubs can help with (initial screening), and
- there are immediate safety issues or risks that need to be addressed, and the priority or urgency of the action required (triage).

The Hubs will use a consistent process to do this work, whether people have made contact with the Hubs themselves by telephone, online, or face-to-face, or have been referred.

The Hub Team will be skilled to ask questions and have the tools that help to identify family violence and child wellbeing issues, even if these issues are not immediately apparent or disclosed.

The Hubs will have the expertise to identify the predominant aggressor or offender – for example, in the context where there are mutual applications for FVIOs.

The initial views reached by the Hubs (the screening process) will be informed by the information provided by the person, and able to be gathered about the person or family (in accordance with information sharing and other laws) from other professionals and services, including the Central Information Point. Many times information will already be held by the Hub from previous contacts. The formulation of these initial views will also be enhanced by the multi-disciplinary expertise within the Hub Team. Priority response will be guided by the level or severity of risk and need identified, but the Hubs will work with people at all levels of risk.

CENTRAL INFORMATION POINT

In the Central Information Point (CIP) a team of representatives from key government agencies will work together to gather and share critical perpetrator information so that victims of family violence are safe. As it develops, the capability and efficiency of the Central Information Point will improve to provide a greater depth of information.

Upon receiving an L17 or other referrals including self-referrals, a Hub will be able to make a request to the CIP for information necessary to assess or manage a risk of family violence. The information from the CIP will be primarily about the perpetrator. Information in agency databases that the CIP will be authorised to access may include information about a perpetrator's criminal history, community correction orders, parole, Child Protection, mental health, drug and alcohol and other health services. The CIP would consolidate relevant information from each agency's database into one report and provide it to the Hub.

The CIP will be able to provide updated information in relation to a perpetrator who has already been subject of a request. This could include, for example, being asked to provide information to the Hub when a perpetrator is subject to an L17 referral with respect to a different victim, having the capacity to flag important dates such as expiry of family violence intervention orders and prison sentences, running searches on individuals who have been previously the subject of a request for information, and being in a position to share this information where it is necessary to manage risk to safety. The Hubs will develop protocols for information sharing to ensure that the sensitive information that they have access to is managed carefully.

In this way, the CIP and information sharing reforms make perpetrators more visible in our system. This will facilitate more effective tracking and ongoing monitoring of the perpetrator's risk to others, and will allow services and the Hubs to ensure appropriate measures are put in place to effectively manage this.

Immediate Crisis Response: Providing supports to ensure safety in crisis situations

The Hubs will make sure that support is provided to meet people's immediate safety and wellbeing needs in crisis situations. These immediate responses will often include practical support and accommodation, as well as medical care and information about legal advice and options, in recognition of the complex impacts of family violence and abuse. In some instances, this support will be provided to people by the Hub Team directly, otherwise the Hubs will engage with other services or professionals who will coordinate and deliver these responses. These responses will be coordinated with immediate safety actions undertaken by police and through the courts. Hubs will not replace existing emergency services or Child Protection.

Immediate supports

The Hubs will connect people to the practical help needed in the short-term to address immediate safety and wellbeing issues. Examples of this could include: making repairs and improving security so that victims of family violence can remain safe in their homes; facilitating transport and communication (including mobile phones); accessing legal advice and immediate legal protection (such as applications for FVIOs); assistance with essential caring responsibilities (for children, other family members or pets); disability support; health care; or providing essential personal items, consumables, medical supplies. This work of the Hubs will be supported by access to flexible support packages (discussed under: Accessing services to meet people's needs and preferences).

Accommodation

Crisis responses for people experiencing family violence often include the need for alternative accommodation – for women and children to ensure their safety; but also for perpetrators when they are prevented from entering the home (for example, through FVSNs and FVIOs). Providing accommodation to perpetrators can help

to keep women and children safe in their home. Providing practical support like temporary accommodation options for perpetrators at this crisis stage is critical to achieve our priority of enabling women and children to stay safely in their homes wherever that is their choice and it is safe to do so.

Crisis accommodation for women and children includes dedicated family violence refuges and accommodation, temporary or emergency accommodation as part of the homelessness service system, and other options including privately provided accommodation (such as through private rental brokerage). For some women and children, moving to another area is essential to maintain safety, either temporarily or permanently.

To ensure people can access crisis accommodation effectively, the Hubs will have up-to-date access to current vacancies statewide across family violence specific crisis accommodation options (supported by the development of the Family Violence accommodation register). Our aim is that there will be a standard tool to work out when people are eligible and standard criteria for prioritising needs to ensure that available resources are, as far as possible, matched to people's needs. This standard tool will enable the Hubs to be able to book people directly into these dedicated family violence refuge and accommodation services.

Refuge and accommodation services will be supported to partner with the Hubs to ensure that the assessment about eligibility and priority that happens in the Hubs is not repeated when people are booked in to a service.

The Hubs will work with providers to develop local protocols and procedures for accessing other accommodation, including agreements with private providers as necessary. This work will include a range of housing options to try to identify stable and longer-term options as a first response where possible and/or for people with specific needs (for example,

young people and people with disabilities). These arrangements will be developed with the same intent: that only one housing needs assessment needs to be completed for an individual or family.

As part of its role in ensuring the safety of women and children, the Hub Team will also have an understanding of accommodation options for perpetrators in the area, and what accommodation is accessed by perpetrators. This knowledge can support effective risk management and safety planning for women and children.

Specialist Multi-disciplinary Risk Assessment and Management: Developing a deep and clear understanding of risk

The Hubs will work with people to develop a deep and clear understanding of:

- child wellbeing concerns (including where family violence is not present, and with the support of Child Protection expert advice and consultation where needed)
- family violence risk for all family members - this risk assessment will apply to family violence in all its forms, including intimate partner violence in heterosexual and same sex relationships, family violence in parent-child relationships, elder abuse, and the use of violence by adolescents in the home,
- the risk posed by the perpetrator.

Hub Teams will use consistent processes and tools to support their assessment and management of risk, both of family violence and child vulnerability. This will be supported by:

- access to better information through improved information sharing and the Central Information Point, and
- the roll-out of the redeveloped Family Violence Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework, and
- the existing Best Interests framework for children and young people.

The Framework will provide a range of tools and guidance for the application of specialist family violence risk assessment and management for women, children and young people, and men. It will also set out the roles and responsibilities across the Hubs and other services, so that family violence risk assessment and management in the Hubs will be a multi-agency approach.

Multi-disciplinary risk assessment will contribute to a whole of family approach and bring greater visibility to the perpetrator. The Hub Team will have a deep knowledge about factors that impact on the likelihood and severity of family violence, given the complexity and dynamic nature of risk. This includes factors such as recent separation, sexual assault, threats, and coercive and controlling behaviours. Importantly, the Hub team will have expertise in engaging and working with perpetrators to support improved risk assessment and management.

Risk assessment in the Hubs will also focus on families where there are concerns about the safety and wellbeing of children, which may or may not be related to family violence, and will specifically assess the risks to children. This risk assessment will support the Hubs to work with children and families to address and manage these risks. The community-based Child Protection practitioners will support the Hubs in this work to enable families to be supported to manage these risks.

The Hubs will start working with the person (including children and young people), and where relevant the whole family, and any services or professionals already involved, including universal services in their continued role with the person or family, to assess and manage risk in order to increase safety and wellbeing. This initial process will support risk assessment and risk management to continue as an ongoing process as people are connected to the services they need.



*"My risk became tangible,
it confirmed and validated
the risk I felt."*

RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT PANELS (RAMPS)

Where women and children are assessed as being at serious and imminent threat of harm from family violence, Hubs will be able to make a referral to the Risk Assessment and Management Panel (RAMP) in the Local Area.

Where cases meet the eligibility criteria outlined in the RAMP Operational Guidelines, the Hubs will follow the same process as for referrals made by local specialist family violence agencies in each area (RAMP auspice agencies). Referrals will be made using the RAMP Referral Portal following a comprehensive risk assessment.

As RAMPs are not a sole and first response to serious and imminent threat, it is essential that Hubs take immediate action to keep women and children safe and avert the threats posed by perpetrators.

RAMPs bring together individuals from a range of key organisations with the expertise to assess dynamic risk and coordinate actions to address that risk. Each RAMP is jointly chaired by a senior member of Victoria Police and a senior manager from a specialist family violence agency. Panels include representation from family violence services, Victoria Police, Corrections, mental health services, alcohol and other drugs services, Child Protection, housing and homelessness services.

RAMPs complement and strengthen the existing service system for women and children experiencing family violence by developing a coordinated, multi-agency action plan to directly reduce serious and imminent threat. RAMPS are not designed to undertake longer term, day to day case management. That role is undertaken by specialist family violence case managers.

The Hubs will support the RAMP coordinators in developing and supporting collaborative approaches and strong partnerships between organisations in the Local Area to strengthen risk assessment and management. While subject to local arrangements, the RAMP coordinators may work in the Hubs.

Alongside referral to a RAMP, the Hubs will continue to undertake their usual functions to provide immediate crisis responses, risk assessment and management (including safety planning), and needs assessment and planning for women, children and young people, and men.

Where cases are referred to a RAMP, but then assessed as ineligible, the Hubs will be able to ensure that ongoing risk assessment and management occurs, and that support services are put in place as required.

Multi-Disciplinary Needs Assessment and Planning: Working with people to identify and prioritise their needs

The Hubs will also work with people to identify and prioritise their support needs – both in relation to the person’s or family’s risk and safety, but also considering their ongoing wellbeing or recovery.

The core purpose of this function will be to match people to a service response that is likely to be the most effective as quickly and seamlessly as possible. Assessment will consider the opportunity, ability, capacity and strengths of each person and family to choose, engage and manage their supports and services with the aim to facilitate self-direction and control. For perpetrators of family violence this assessment and planning will help to identify the services and systems who need to collaborate to promote accountability and manage risk.

The Hubs are not intended to replace or duplicate the specialist and longer-term roles of services. The Hubs do not replace the need for specialist assessment and planning as an ongoing part of service delivery.

Risk and needs assessment is an ongoing process as risk is dynamic and people’s needs change over time. Assessment and review will be built on pre-existing information from the person and other services and professionals where available, and then continue throughout the process of delivering the service responses.

The Hubs will have consistent and common approaches that allow them to respond to the needs of different individuals or families. For example, the Hubs could:

- connect people to services immediately (be ‘fast-tracked’), where their needs are relatively discrete, immediately apparent, where there is an effective pre-existing relationship with a service or professional (to maximise the opportunity for the services to connect and engage with the person) or where it is the person’s choice (for example, to receive services from an ACCO), or
- provide more extensive assessment and planning, (and navigation support, see boxed text at page 43), for people or families with more complex or unclear needs, or where people want time to make decisions about next steps.

“In the last three years we have passed through the criminal justice system, legal services, housing, Centrelink, community health, mental health and counselling services, DHHS (child protection) and each time feeling more and more disempowered.”

The Hubs will recognise people as active participants in planning their own support. They will work to give people the information and assistance they need to make decisions about:

- the outcomes they want to achieve
- the services they want to help them achieve those outcomes, and
- how they will access and engage with those services.

For women experiencing family violence, this approach in the Hubs will support their agency, recognising the impact of trauma and power imbalance (overwhelmingly exercised by men against women) on women’s sense of agency and empowerment. For children, this will recognise the best interests of the child, protection of their rights, safety and the need to promote their development appropriate to their age and stage.

It is acknowledged that, in some instances, individual choice and control may not be fully realised – for example, people subject to or requiring statutory interventions (such as the involvement of Child Protection, Victoria Police or the courts), where there are risks to safety. Wherever possible, the Hubs will endeavour to work in partnership with people and families to exercise choice and control over the services they receive. This will be supported by the development of a consistent statewide practice framework for the Hubs (see Section 4 – Features of the Hub Team).

The coordinated and streamlined intake and multi-disciplinary risk and needs assessment that will take place in relation to perpetrators through the Hubs will help to close existing gaps in our approach. It will support systemic change from an approach that often involves episodic interaction of perpetrators with services, to engagement that is more consistent and constructive. This will provide a critical opportunity to engage perpetrators more effectively and hold them accountable.

The work of the Hubs will happen at a point in time, and will be designed to produce information that can be transferred with the person or family when they access other services. This will inform the next stage of service provision and ensure that the work of the Hubs can be built on and not duplicated. It will also recognise that people's experiences are dynamic and their pathway from the Hubs to services may not be a linear, one-way journey. People may choose or need to come back to the Hubs in the future.

IDENTIFYING AND ASSESSING SPECIFIC NEEDS

Holistic assessment of needs will include identification of the full range of needs people have, to help them to be safe and support lasting wellbeing. It will include an assessment of the areas noted below.

"If I go in here I should be able to be linked to everything I need rather than going here, going there - I tell my story once, and it's here."

Legal needs

People who might use the Hubs identified support navigating the justice system and legal matters as one of their biggest service needs. Part of the holistic assessment of needs will include identification of potential legal needs.

Legal issues can be a contributing factor in the experience and impact of family violence as part of the coercive behaviour exhibited by perpetrators (for example, in relation to debt, visa/migration status, access to children). Legal issues can be particularly significant at crisis points for women, children and young people experiencing family violence (for example, in relation to intervention orders, access to children, finances and housing). Legal issues relating to debt, infringements, criminal proceedings, child custody and family law can also be important to address in the medium to longer-term.

Hub Teams will have the ability to identify or 'spot' potential legal issues which will help them to connect people to legal help when they need it. This initial issue spotting will not be a detailed legal triage and will not be legal advice. However, depending on local design, there may be capacity for lawyers to be co-located with the Hubs.

The Hubs will connect people to legal triage to be undertaken by a lawyer. This triage will help individuals and families to better identify legal needs and understand legal avenues to improve their safety and wellbeing. It will also assist perpetrators to understand the legal obligations they may have, to improve their compliance and support the effectiveness of those measures in keeping family members safe. Legal triage will help people to identify and prioritise their legal needs.

By connecting people to legal triage, the Hubs will help people to get access to legal services with the capability to address the legal needs of different family members (women, children and men) and people with diverse needs in the community. These legal services will include community legal centres, Aboriginal legal services, Victoria Legal Aid and private lawyers.

Housing needs

Access to housing is a crucial foundation for safety, recovery from trauma, stable family functioning and children's development and wellbeing. Whilst crisis and temporary accommodation support can ensure

immediate safety, secure long-term housing is an important basis without which people and families can find it difficult to address other issues.

The Hubs will have a comprehensive understanding of the housing assistance options available and will help people identify the best option for them. This includes helping women, children and young people stay in their homes wherever it is the woman's choice and it is safe to do so. Where this is not possible or desirable, the Hubs will work closely with social housing and homelessness service providers, the private sector and relevant support services to help people secure sustainable alternative housing as quickly as possible.

Hubs will work with homelessness and social housing providers to develop clear processes and protocols, as well as agreements with private providers, so that only one housing needs assessment needs to be completed for an individual or family. The Hubs may also have direct access to private rental brokerage for people who need it. These processes will be developed in conjunction with the housing and homelessness reforms (see page 68).

Sexual assault-related needs

Recognition of the high level of co-occurrence of sexual violence and other forms of family violence will be a core element of the practice and expertise within the Hub Teams. Like other forms of family violence, sexual assault has countless harmful effects: psychological, physical, social and financial. The Hubs will recognise that sexual assault in the context of family violence includes intimate partner sexual violence; sexual violence by other family members; intra-familial child sexual abuse, and sexual abuse of people in residential care settings (by co-residents and carers where a family-like relationship has formed).

The Family Violence Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework recognises intra-familial sexual assault as being an identified risk factor for future serious violence. Despite this, when women seek assistance for family violence, justice, health and other workers often fail to ask about

sexual assault. Many women also may not recognise that what is happening to them is rape or sexual assault.

The Hub Team providing services to family violence victims will be trained to identify sexual assault and make referrals for specialist assessment and support. The team will operate within the statewide crisis care guidelines that detail the rights and choices of victim survivors following a recent sexual assault, such as immediate access to forensic medical care. This role and training in identifying sexual assault is particularly important in relation to children, who may have been groomed not to speak up about sexual abuse.

The Hubs will work closely with the Centres Against Sexual Assault (CASAs) and the Sexual Assault Crisis Line, to help victim survivors of intra-familial sexual violence receive the right support that is based on their needs and wishes. In areas where Multi-Disciplinary Centres are established the Hubs will work closely to develop effective and coordinated responses for victims.

The Hubs will facilitate referrals to CASAs where sexual assault is identified within family violence and the CASA service is appropriate. CASAs will continue to receive their own referrals for sexual assault outside the family violence context, and will work with their local Hubs when they identify that services are required from family violence services, family services and perpetrator programs.

Mental health needs

There is a complex interaction between mental health and family violence and child vulnerability. The Hubs will need to identify potential needs and connect people to mental health services for assessment, treatment and support. This work will be in relation to women, children, young people and men. Hubs will develop strong connections with local mental health services so that they can facilitate more streamlined pathways to support.

Alcohol and other drugs treatment needs

The interplay between alcohol and other drug use, and family violence and child vulnerability, is an additional complexity

that is frequently identified and will require the Hubs to work closely with the existing entry point for alcohol and other drugs services. Hubs will identify potential needs and facilitate engagement with support services, as well as providing access to information and support for families impacted by alcohol and drug problems. There may be some opportunity for this expertise to be provided through or co-located with the Hubs where it is identified as a priority through local co-design.

Financial counselling and support needs

Financial security and independence are significant factors in victims gaining freedom from violent relationships and also in their recovery. The Hubs will connect people to financial counsellors who are skilled at addressing the financial implications of family violence (as a consequence of economic abuse and other forms of violence that affect victim survivors' financial wellbeing).

Accessing Services to Meet People's Needs and Preferences

Connecting people to supports and services

The Hubs will connect people quickly and seamlessly to the supports and services they need.

The Hubs will identify the most appropriate service/s to meet the needs of individuals and families, and give advice on the best timing or ordering of different services, taking into account the services available. They will provide information and advice to people about the services available to help them, enabling them to choose the support that will work best for them. Hubs will actively assist people to connect with those services, with effective transfers of information to support a smooth transition.

The connections of the Hubs to the parts of the broader service system will vary, however, these connections will be timely and efficient, reduce complexity and duplication of effort, and ensure that the person's experience of the process is positive and safe. Where people are not able to be provided with a service response straight away, their risk and needs will be actively monitored – by the Hubs in some cases, or by specialist services. This will be based on statewide guidance that the Hubs will apply and then work collaboratively with the local services to adopt creative solutions to manage demand across the system. This collaborative approach will form part of the Hubs 'system management' functions (see page 44).

SUPPORTING THE BROADER SYSTEM BEHIND THE DOOR OF THE HUBS

The Victorian Government recognises that the ability of the Hubs to access services that meet people's needs will depend on there being available and effective services to connect people to. This recognition was acted upon immediately following the release of the Royal Commission's report in 2016 with a record \$572 million funding package to enable immediate work to begin on urgent improvements to address and prevent family violence.

The Statewide Concept for the Hubs is backed up by a \$1.91 billion commitment in the 2017–18 Budget for the embedding of these system reforms to drive change across the wider service system to achieve the goals set out in *Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change*.

Flexible support

The Hubs will help people to access the services or practical supports they need to be safe and address underlying challenges to their recovery, stability and wellbeing.

The Hubs will have access to flexible support packages so that supports can be arranged to meet the needs of individuals and families, rather than people being allocated to a pre-determined service mix.

Flexible support packages can be used to arrange the specific support required, both for crisis and longer-term responses, that people need for their unique strengths, needs and circumstances including:

- housing and accommodation, such as private rental assistance, relocation costs and furniture needs
- safety and security supports, such as lighting, alarms, CCTV and mobile phones
- health and wellbeing supports, such as counselling and medical costs
- child development and safety requirements, including age-appropriate toys and education items, school uniforms or books, therapeutic supports, and
- independence support, such as education and training courses, care for dependents (including pets) and outings, financial planning and legal advice.

Allocating people directly to specialist services

Family services, family violence services and perpetrator/men's services (including men's behaviour change services) are often the core ongoing support services for women, children and young people experiencing family violence, perpetrators, and families in need of support with the care, wellbeing and development of children and young people. The Hubs will work closely with

these services to ensure that the transition between the Hub and these services is as seamless as possible for people. These are core services for the Hubs to work with.

As the central entry-point for these core services, the Hubs will be able to:

- identify the appropriate service and agree this with the person
- confirm that the person is eligible for the service and their access priority
- check the current capacity and availability of the service, and
- directly allocate the person into the service, for example, making and confirming an appointment with a worker, 'reserving' a place in a group session, or booking accommodation.

The Hub Team will be able to allocate perpetrators to programs such as a Men's Behaviour Change Program or other services that may support them to reduce their risk of using violence such as accommodation or drug and alcohol supports. The Hubs will monitor and facilitate appropriate responses across the government and non-government sector to the ongoing risk perpetrators pose.

The capacity of the Hubs to work seamlessly with these services will be facilitated through:

- statewide oversight
- strong local partnerships between the Hubs and service providers
- real-time sharing of information about the capacity of services
- improved capacity in services, and
- shared processes for the allocation and prioritisation of individuals and families, which are embedded in the program requirements of the services.

Ensuring people get the right services at the right time will be a shared responsibility between the Hubs and the service system. The option to broaden the Hubs' ability to allocate people directly into a wider range of services will be explored over time.

DEVELOPING THE PERPETRATOR INTERVENTIONS SYSTEM AND A 'WEB OF ACCOUNTABILITY'

The Royal Commission highlighted that there is currently insufficient breadth and diversity of perpetrator interventions in Victoria. Shifting the focus of the system to the perpetrator - keeping them in view and addressing the risk they pose to the safety of women and children - is a central goal of the future service system and the Hubs.

The Hubs will be the central point of intake for these services and responses, as part of a whole of family approach to keeping women and children safe. They will include expert capability for working with and responding to men who perpetrate violence, and planning and coordinating justice, health and social services responses that address violence.

Work is underway to develop a broader suite of effective interventions to hold perpetrators to account and address the behaviour of perpetrators of family violence. This work is being led by the Expert Advisory Committee on Perpetrator Interventions and will consider the current gaps and opportunities to build on existing best practice, as well as trialling new and innovative approaches.

The Committee has already commenced its work. As a first step, the Committee has agreed the principles that should inform all perpetrator interventions. It has also considered work that has been commissioned from the Centre for Innovative Justice to begin to map the roles and responsibilities of all agencies that have contact with perpetrators. This was recommended by the Royal Commission, and is directed to making sure that all programs, services and initiatives required

to respond to perpetrators are informed by a common set of principles to build the collective responsibility across the entire service system to hold perpetrators to account. The Hub Team will also apply these principles in the work they undertake with perpetrators, and will play a critical role in the context of this broader system wide approach.

We have the capability and specialist expertise in our workforce currently to work effectively with men to reduce their use of violence and assist them to change their behaviour. However, we need to build and grow on this capability. A broader workforce development strategy is taking place through the creation of an Industry Plan through the Industry Taskforce.

The Hubs will also support broader efforts to build the capability of the system to work with perpetrators - particularly universal platforms such as health and education services - through reform of the family violence risk assessment and management framework, and the Industry Plan. Ultimately, we need to create clear and commonly understood goals and roles and responsibilities for each part of the service system to create a web of accountability in relation to perpetrators.

The functions and capabilities the Hubs require will need to develop over time to take account of the future perpetrator interventions system as it develops and the work being undertaken through the Expert Advisory Committee on Perpetrator Interventions.

Supporting people to connect with other services

The Hubs will also help people to navigate and connect with the broader range of services that may be required to meet the person's needs. The Hubs will make warm referrals, that is, referrals that support the person to connect to services. Warm referrals can include phoning the service for the person, explaining the situation (and passing on information to the service with the person's consent), and in some cases where people need more support, helping them to navigate the service system. This support could include meeting with the person and the service/s together.

The Hubs will have clear pathways and arrangements with key services at both statewide and local area levels, such as:

- early childhood, including maternal and child health services
- Aboriginal community controlled organisations
- courts and tribunals
- legal services
- financial counselling
- homelessness and housing services
- youth services
- health services, including mental health, and drug and alcohol services, forensic services, hospitals
- Centres Against Sexual Assault
- victim support services
- schools
- training and employment services
- Centrelink
- Consumer Affairs Victoria
- services for older people
- multicultural services
- disability services, and
- Corrections.

The Hubs will build on existing relationships and pathways between services. Further work will be undertaken to strengthen these arrangements with a focus on:

- ensuring that information gathered by the Hubs about the person or family is transferred to the service directly, accurately and in a timely fashion (with consent where appropriate) to avoid the person having the 're-tell their story'
- before a referral is made, the Hubs have confirmed, to the extent possible, that the service is available and suitable for the person, and
- where possible, Hubs undertake, or support the person to undertake, any eligibility or assessment process required (for example, the initial screen for alcohol and other drug problems, the online housing options finder and application for the Victorian housing register, or an application for grants of legal assistance).

These broader services will also participate in the local Hub establishment groups setting up the Hubs (outlined in Section 6 – Next steps in establishing the Hubs).

SERVICE NAVIGATION

Further design work on service navigation is being considered by an Industry Taskforce Sub-group. This work recognises that the Hubs are not the only place that service navigation can and does take place and that these functions are performed across the service system. The Industry Taskforce will make recommendations to the Government.

The functions outlined below are a summary of the Hub functions described elsewhere in this Concept that we know will contribute to service navigation.

The Hubs will have the skills and capacity to help people to navigate the service system. The range of functions called on will be flexible, depending on a person's level of risk, need, and preferences. Hub functions that assist with service navigation will include:

- giving people a clear and accessible central place to go for help
- working with a person to help them understand their risk, needs, and to identify their own goals
- providing information about support and service options, and assisting a person to make choices and prioritise their own needs
- assessing eligibility for services in one place before referrals are made

- supporting people while they are thinking about what next steps to take
- being able to directly book people into key specialist services for which the Hubs are the main access point – family violence services, family services and perpetrator/men's services – people will know when they can access a service
- ensuring initial services are coordinated or, where required, supporting the person to connect to a navigator to undertake this coordination role for a longer period of time
- supporting people to access services through warm referrals, this could include phoning the service for the person, explaining the situation (and passing on information to the service with the person's consent), or meeting with the person and the service/s together where people need more support, and
- providing a contact point that people can come back to in the future if a service is not working for them, they disengage with a service or a new issue arises down the track.

In performing these service navigation roles, the Hub Team will also be a critical part of the feedback loop – they will have deep insight about community need, demand and service capacity.

Co-located service delivery

Co-location of other services with the community-based Hubs will be determined by each Local Area and reflect the assessed needs of that area. When determining a suitable location for the community-based Hubs, the opportunity for co-location of other services will be considered as a desirable, but not essential, criterion. Co-location of other services could include universal and community services, such as community health, maternal child and health as well as specialist services such as family violence, family services, legal assistance or housing and homelessness services.

Community-based Hubs will also have:

- sufficient physical space and facilities on site to accommodate face-to-face client interviews and meetings with external professionals (that is, non-Hub workers), and
- over time, video conferencing facilities, available for use by clients to connect with external services, which meets the required specifications of a remote witness facility for courts (Magistrates' Court of Victoria and other relevant courts), but can also be used to connect people with professionals outside of the Hubs, particularly in rural areas.

Contributing to effective services and ensuring that outcomes are achieved

Helping to ensure that services are effective

Finally, the Hubs will also have a role in helping to ensure that services are effective, helpful to the person, and that positive outcomes for people are maximised.

The Hubs will have systems and functions that go beyond being merely a 'front-door' to a continually siloed service system. In partnership with other justice, health, social and community services, the Hubs will be a catalyst for more integrated and effective services throughout a person or family's experience.

The Hubs will do this through strong and well resourced 'system management' functions.

Increasing the information and understanding available about all family members (especially perpetrators)

The Hubs will record client information that provides Hub Teams easy access to case records and history. This will improve the timeliness and accuracy of upfront assessments and the effectiveness of service allocations (especially for people or families entering the system multiple times). It will also provide simpler ways for people to re-connect with services when things change.

Connectivity of information systems will enable easy and secure transfer of case information (with robust information security systems in place) between Hubs and parts of the broader service system, to support streamlined referral and transitions and more efficient information sharing practices.

"Information should be all in one system, in one file."

Information will be shared in accordance with information sharing and privacy laws. The Hubs will develop protocols for information sharing to ensure that the sensitive information that they have access to is managed carefully.

Providing a ‘feedback loop’ about people’s engagement with services in and beyond the Hubs

The Hubs will collect information about where a person has been referred to and the status of that service or intervention. Over time, it will build the system’s understanding of what works and will inform improvements across the Hubs and specialist service providers.

This information will also identify emerging gaps or shortcomings in the service system, to support Family Safety Victoria and other governance structures in local service, catchment and statewide system planning

Bringing services together

Working with local services and agencies, the Hubs will create an approach to allocating and delivering services that bring together historically siloed service sectors. The work of the Hubs will mean women, children and young people, and families exercise greater agency and autonomy over the supports they receive and provide clearer, more collaborative responsibilities for the different specialist services working with an individual or family.

In bringing services together, the Hubs will build on learnings from existing models including Child FIRST, Multi-Disciplinary Centres, health-justice partnerships, and a range of multi-agency intake and triage models in Victoria and other jurisdictions.

Hubs will be the primary intake point for family violence services (including accommodation and support services), family services, and perpetrator/men’s services. Further work in partnership with these sectors will enable Hubs to directly book people into these services and have new, collaborative mechanisms to allocate and prioritise resources.

This will include issues such as:

- which services contact, engage, lead and/or deliver ongoing support to individuals and families
- how additional services and/or specialist advice supports are allocated, and

- how flexible packages of support are used across the system, including at the point of intake or crisis, and in the delivery of specialist services.

Driving outcomes for individuals and families

A comprehensive evaluation framework will be developed for the Hubs with clear measures and targets to track progress. This approach will be framed within the consistent evaluation guidelines being developed to improve evaluation standards across the family violence system. It will be used to monitor the effectiveness of the Hubs in delivering their core purposes and contributing towards the Victorian Government’s Family Violence Outcomes Framework. This approach will also inform the consistent, evidence-based practice to identify what works, and what does not, to enable continuous improvement.

In particular, the Hubs will bring and maintain a focus on:

- each individual within a family unit – especially, improving the visibility and attention to perpetrators, adolescents who use violence, and children who are victims of family violence in their own right
- people and communities with diverse needs – including different forms of family violence and the specific needs of diverse communities
- people at the interfaces between different systems or specialist responses, and
- complex or hard to engage people or families.

These functions are closely linked to the delivery model for the Hubs and dependent on the complementary investment and reforms in justice, social and community services sectors.



Figure 5. The role of The Hubs in the broader system

4. Features of the Hub Team to deliver on core functions

To support the functions outlined in Section 3, the Hubs will develop and maintain the expert workforce they need to deliver consistent, evidence-informed practice across the state.

To deliver this expertise, the specialist intake functions of the Hubs – including initial contact and advice, triaging, crisis responses, risk assessment and management (including safety planning), needs assessment and service planning and allocation – as well as expert advice and capacity building, will continue to be delivered by workers with the specialist knowledge and skills in family violence, family services and perpetrator services.

The Hub Team will have expertise in engaging and working with the following cohorts (including working with people with different levels of risk):

- women experiencing family violence
- parents and families in need of support with the care, wellbeing and development of children and young people
- children where there are concerns about their safety, development and wellbeing
- vulnerable and at risk young people
- children and young people experiencing family violence
- perpetrators of family violence, and
- people and families from Aboriginal communities.

This means that across the Hub Team there will be multi-disciplinary skills and specialist expertise contributed from different team members – not every member of the team will have each of these skills.

The Hubs Team will include Aboriginal workers who will be supported with learning, development, mentoring and supervision.

The Hub Team will be supported to develop additional discrete or specific skills and knowledge such as that required to identify legal issues, identification of criminality, work with older people, specific CALD communities or adolescents who use violence. Specialists in other services, such as mental health, sexual assault, supporting people with disabilities, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people from LGBTIQ communities will be supported to develop strong connections with the Hub Teams. There will also be strong connections with the family violence principal practitioners established within DHHS, DET and DJR.

In addition, advanced practitioners will work in the Hubs and with partner agencies across justice, health and social services to build capacity through providing secondary consultation, expert advice and guidance, provision of learning, development, mentoring, supervision and opportunities for reflective practice.

Consistent, Evidence-Informed Practice Approach

The Hubs will draw from other experiences in using multi-disciplinary models, to bring together previously separate services to provide integrated and seamless support for people.

The integration of the multi-disciplinary Hub Team will be developed through a consistent practice framework, training and development (consistent with the Industry Plan), team meetings and case conferencing, supervision, the use of practice tools and guides, day-to-day consultation across areas of expertise, and ongoing opportunities for reflective practice and peer-to-peer learning and development.

The Hubs will adopt a common practice framework to ensure consistent, evidence-based and integrated services across the state. This framework will bring together the practice expertise of the core service sectors – family services, family violence services, and perpetrator/men's services.

Developing this framework will be a key piece of work to support the implementation of the Hubs.

The Hub practice framework will be developed based on the core features of existing frameworks (such as the revised Family Violence Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework, the Best Interests Case Practice Framework for vulnerable children and youth, the Code of Practice for specialist family violence services, Child Safe Standards, and the standards for men's behaviour change services). It will also build on leading evidence and emerging best practice across multiple sectors.

Existing frameworks, and the emerging research, have already identified key elements of specialist practice for the Hubs, including:

- putting people at the centre of their work
- having a paramount focus on the safety and wellbeing of women and children, including through their work with men
- applying a gendered understanding of family violence
- promoting the safety, stability, wellbeing and development of children and young people
- promoting connections of Aboriginal children to their cultural and spiritual identity by building or maintaining connections to their Aboriginal family and community
- empowering women, children and families, supporting their agency, and respecting their needs and decisions
- being non-judgemental about people, their experiences and decisions
- working to strengthen the capacity of parents, carers and families
- being non-colluding with perpetrators, holding them to account for their use of violence and supporting them to stop their violence and change their behaviour
- taking a whole of family approach, coupled with a specific focus on each family member, including children in their own right
- responding to all forms of family violence including intimate partner violence in same sex relationships, elder abuse and adolescents who use violence
- supporting self-determination for Aboriginal people and the need to provide culturally safe and appropriate services to meet their needs and respect their right to choose, recognising the additional risks and discrimination faced by Aboriginal people
- providing safe, accessible and appropriate services to meet the diverse needs of the community, including people from CALD backgrounds, LGBTI people, people with disabilities, older people and young people
- applying trauma-informed practice approach, respectful of what can be deeply painful and personal and inter-generational experiences of trauma and cumulative harm for people
- utilising the benefits of multi-disciplinary, collaborative work in partnerships
- supporting a culture of information sharing and shared responsibility across services
- ensuring that work is informed by evidence of community needs and what works to address those needs
- supporting ongoing practice learning and improvement, and
- prioritising and leveraging the shared resources of the system to maximise safety and wellbeing outcomes for women, children and young people, and families.



Culture and Values

Hubs will be an exemplar of a values driven organisation that models respectful, inclusive, non-discriminatory, gender equitable and culturally safe behaviours and practices. This will be reflected through the policies, procedures and practices of the Hubs, in recognition that effecting these changes will require sustained effort at all levels of the organisation.

The Hubs will draw from the deep expertise of Aboriginal organisations and people in building culturally safe places that are understood, valued and respected by the broader community. Organisations with strong expertise in preventing violence against women, such as family violence, women's health and local government will also be key partners with the Hubs in its efforts to promote gender equity and the prevention of violence against women.

The Hub Team will focus on building up practice and expertise to meet the diverse needs of the people they serve, including the needs of young people, older people, people with disabilities, people from CALD backgrounds, and people from LGBTI communities.

All members of the Hub Team will have a role in building and sustaining the culture, however, the role of the leadership team within the Hubs will be essential. The culture and values of the Hubs will be embedded in strategic and business planning, and will be the responsibility of the highest levels of leadership.

The leadership of the Hubs will encourage, model and create cultures that promote respectful relationships, in their roles both inside and outside of the Hubs, and can build this culture through all of their work. Coming from this basis will be essential in building and forming strong and enduring partnerships that will be needed with other community organisations and local communities.

5. Coordination with key statutory agencies and institutions

The Hubs will be closely connected to the other entry points for justice, health, social and community services and institutions statewide and in their Local Area. This section of the Concept addresses the relationship between the Hubs and key statutory agencies and institutions. In particular:

- Child Protection - which receives reports where a person believes a child is in need of protection from significant risk of harm
- Victoria Police - which has key responsibilities for community safety and responding to crime
- Courts - which are responsible for determining outcomes in individual cases in the justice system, and
- Victims Support Agency - which helps people in Victoria to manage the effects of violent crime, including family violence.

The relationship between the Hubs and these four agencies and institutions are detailed below.

The Hubs and Child Protection will have distinct roles in supporting families and preventing harm to children

The safety and protection of children is a shared responsibility between parents/families, the community, universal services and where extra support is needed, secondary and statutory services, working in partnership.

Child Protection is the statutory service within DHHS responsible for intervening when parents/families, and universal and secondary services, are unable to ensure the safety and wellbeing of a child.

The reform directions for the child and family services system, as presented in the Roadmap for Reform, seek to enhance community-based services (including the Hubs) and engage families earlier and more effectively, reducing the need for reports and re-reports to Child Protection over time.

The Hubs will support this reform by providing a coordinated intake for a range of child and family services as well as close connections to the other justice, health and social services that support better outcomes for children and families at risk. By the Hubs providing a trusted and effective alternative to Child Protection, referrers can feel confident appropriate action will be taken outside the statutory system so that child safety and wellbeing concerns can be addressed at an earlier stage. This will allow the statutory system to focus on areas of greatest risk and ensure it is exercised only to the extent necessary to keep children safe.

Community-based child protection practitioners will be in the Hubs to provide expert advice regarding the safety and wellbeing of children, and provide access to information about current or previous assessments and interventions by Child Protection. Through this connection, improved opportunities exist to provide families and children at risk with wrap around supports to address concerns, including being able to consider the wider suite of interventions, such as those mediated through police, or men's behaviour change, which can have an impact on women and children's safety. The Hubs will also be networked with ACCOs to ensure that the needs, preferences, cultural and community context of Aboriginal children is taken into account.

Child Protection will refer to the Hubs where it currently refers to Child FIRST, that is, where it does not identify a significant risk of harm, but it identifies a family in need of support with the care, wellbeing and development of children and young people.

People and organisations, including the Hubs and police, will continue to make reports to Child Protection where they have formed a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection from significant risk of harm.



"Child Protection can't be the only service response for kids."

Where Child Protection receives a report, it will maintain a high attention to family violence indicators in all child protection risk assessment and safety planning, including where it is determined that the statutory threshold for intervention is not met. Where family violence is identified, Child Protection will assess perpetrator risk, identifying the risk of harm to women and children, and will coordinate with the Hub on risk and needs assessment, planning and connecting the family to services. Specialist Family Violence workers co-located with DHHS will also support Child Protection with these functions.

Child Protection Practitioners will also provide Hub workers with specialist advice, where needed. They will play a key liaison and monitoring role where families are engaged with family services and other support services through the Hubs as part of the case plan for a child and family subject to Child Protection intervention.

Child Protection will continue to participate in the RAMPs.

The Hubs and Victoria Police will work together to keep the community safe

Victoria Police has a role as a first and crisis responder to crime. Its focus is both victim and community safety, and perpetrator accountability. Police identify and investigate crime and provide a key response to criminal conduct.

The Hubs will be the central place for most police referrals about family violence and where they identify families in need of support with the care, wellbeing and development of children and young people.

“If we’re going to promise a Safety Hub then we have to deliver it, and that requires the police.”

The Hubs will provide a trusted and reliable response to police referrals and build their confidence in community-based responses.

There will be feedback loops to and from police so that when:

- police make a referral, they know if and how the Hubs or a service has responded to it, and
- the Hubs undertake risk management and safety planning that relies on police action, the Hub or relevant support services can respond if the plans change (for example, if the plan was based on a perpetrator being remanded, but he is released on bail).

Police Family Violence Units will have a key relationship with the Hubs and will lead the liaison with Hub workers.

Police expertise and experience in assessing and addressing the risk posed by perpetrators will provide essential input to the work of the Hubs. Police will liaise with, and inform ongoing risk assessment and case coordination where required. This will see the contributions that police make to RAMPs expanded to a broader range of cases – building on existing coordination between police and specialist services. The exact nature of police’s ongoing role will be informed by the redevelopment of the Family Violence Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework (described at Appendix C).

The Hubs will build on the strong networks and relationships that exist between the police and family services, family violence services, and perpetrator/men’s services to further enhance skills and capability across the system; with the police bringing expertise in community safety and criminal accountability, and Hub workers bringing expertise in risk assessment and management, family violence and family services. This work will be supported through the information provided by the Central Information Point.

The courts will help people connect to the Hubs

The courts can be a place where women, children and young people experiencing family violence, or perpetrators, connect with services for the first time. For example, a woman could initiate an application for an intervention order, or a perpetrator could be brought before the court charged with a criminal offence, without having been in contact with any other services.

Victims of family violence frequently state that they find the court process traumatic and confusing. Hubs will provide a critical support for victims to get appropriate access to the range of legal protections, assistance and certainty that they need and want more seamlessly and quickly (for example, Family Violence Intervention Orders, Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal, and tenancy matters).

The Hubs will work with the courts and connected support services to ensure there is wrap-around support for women, children and young people at court who do not have existing supports in place. The ultimate aim of the reform agenda across courts and Hubs is that the experience of accessing the justice system will be as seamless as possible for the court user.

In time, out-posted Hub workers will be available at the headquarter courts of the Magistrates' Court of Victoria (including the specialist family violence courts as they are rolled out), to work with services at the courts and connect with people attending court who may require access to services through the Hubs. In courts with less comprehensive supports available on site, the Hubs will be a useful contact point to refer people to for support and services.

As mentioned on page 44, over time the Hubs will also help victims to access the courts through video conferencing facilities at the Hubs.

Hubs and courts will work together to seek to ensure that people get a consistent response whether they first make contact with a court or a Hub. Hubs will inform people about court processes so they know what to expect when they attend court, and connect them to legal services. Additionally, over time video conferencing facilities at the Hubs will connect with courts to improve victim survivor safety.

The courts are also an important accountability and engagement point for perpetrators because of the authority and consequences experienced at court. The Hubs will provide a voluntary intake pathway for perpetrators, and will complement work that takes place through the court and corrections-based referrals and mandatory interventions. This will be organised to minimise the transition points between services and agencies which often form opportunities for perpetrators to disengage from the system. The courts will be particular outreach point for Hub workers to engage with perpetrators face-to-face.

The effectiveness of the working relationship between the Hubs and the courts will be underpinned by dynamic information sharing. This will support the safety of women, children and young people, perpetrator accountability, and risk assessment and management. For example, it is intended that the Hubs will be able to provide the court registry with information about the perpetrator to inform safety planning for court appearances and the Hubs will be able to provide Magistrates with information about risk assessment to assist them in making appropriate orders (in accordance with information sharing and other laws).

The Hubs (and other relevant services) will also be able to access information about the outcomes of court proceedings (such as whether a perpetrator has been remanded, sentenced, or released) to inform risk assessment and management. This sharing of information will be developed through the design of improved case record information systems, and using the Central Information Point.

It will be important that Hubs and support services and staff at the court work closely together, to draw on each other's expertise, roles and responsibilities. Considerations around how to best create enduring partnerships particularly between the Hubs and courts will be a focus in further design of the Hubs and the roll out of the specialist court model. Relevant Victorian courts (such as specialist family violence courts within the Magistrates' Court of Victoria and the Children's Court of Victoria) may choose to have a nominated liaison point for the Hubs to ensure that communication is coordinated.

The Hubs will also work with the federal courts to build these connections within the family law system. The courts, federal and state, are working together to ensure that specialisation in family violence is a key part of the court's business particularly in family law matters.

Hubs will be able to further build on the need to link these legal systems together by connecting people into appropriate services to help them navigate the legal system.

The forthcoming Family Violence Contact Centre within the courts will help to modernise service delivery at the courts (for example, telephone and online channels to provide immediate assistance for family violence victims such as information about the court process, and initiating matters). This Contact Centre is particularly important for improving access to those in rural and regional areas. The establishment of the Centre will build on the work being done to roll out online applications for intervention orders to provide greater choice and safe options for victims as to how they initiate proceedings.

The Contact Centre will prioritise family violence matters, create links to further supports (in certain cases through the Hubs) and function as the point of contact for other agencies to obtain and share information with the courts. There are critical links between this new Centre and the way Hubs will assist and provide information to victims and perpetrators. This will be a focus of work going forward to ensure these are integrated and focused on promoting the safety and choices of family violence victims.

The Victims Support Agency and Hubs will work together to support victims of crime

The Victims Support Agency (VSA) within the Department of Justice and Regulation helps people in Victoria to manage the effects of violent crime, including family violence.


The VSA operates the Victims of Crime Helpline which provides advice and information seven days a week. In addition to the Helpline, the VSA runs a Victims Assistance Program which provides a case management service and uses brokerage funding to provide practical support or therapeutic interventions for victims of violent crime. The Program also supports people through the justice system.

The VSA receives police referrals (L17s) in relation to male victims of family violence. This is in recognition of the different experience men may have of family violence, and the need to utilise specialist skills in working with male victims.

The Hubs and VSA will undertake further work on how the interface between them will work in practice to effectively support male victims and their families, and to ensure that perpetrators are engaged.

The Hubs will have a close working relationship with the VSA. Part of this further work will be for the Hubs and the VSA to develop protocols to support referrals, information sharing and, where appropriate, joint-agency risk assessment, needs assessment and planning, particularly for instances where the 'primary aggressor' is incorrectly identified.

The VSA will bring expertise in supporting male victims of family violence, including in the identification of the 'primary aggressor' and, more generally, supporting victims of violent crime in the justice system. The Hubs will bring expertise in working with women, children and young people experiencing family violence, perpetrators of family violence, and families in need of support for the care, wellbeing and development of children and young people.



There will be many situations where engagement between the Hubs and VSA is required.

For example:

- some male victims may contact the Hubs directly, as the Hubs will be a well-known and accessible entry-point in the community (police referrals are not the only intake pathway to services for victims of family violence)
- male primary aggressors can be initially incorrectly identified as male victims and referred to the VSA – the VSA may seek support from the Hubs in responding to perpetrators
- some female victims of family violence will require support services from the VSA (such as victim support in a criminal proceeding or crime scene clean-up), and
- other family members of male victims may choose to be supported by the Hubs (for example, the children of male victims, or an adult woman in cases of elder abuse, or an adolescent using violence against parents or family violence occurring in kinship or extended family networks).

Clear protocols and information sharing will ensure that no one falls through the cracks, that the Hubs and the VSA do not duplicate follow-up, and that there is comprehensive risk assessment and management based on the best information available across the system.

6. Next steps in establishing the Hubs

The establishment of the Hubs will be phased, focusing initially on the five launch sites in 2017–18, with roll-out of the Hubs across the 17 Local Areas by 2021. This phasing will include the scaling up of functionality over time in each area, with an initial focus on a subset of core functions, and full delivery as described in this Concept document being provided statewide in the future.

Initial statewide focus areas

Building on the work currently being undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC), Family Safety Victoria will initially focus on:

- finalising the delivery model for the Hubs, including governance and management structures
- configuration of Hub teams
- developing the Hub practice framework, in consultation with service providers, and leading service integration
- developing the operational framework, to provide statewide consistency to the operations, delivery and implementation of the Hubs across all areas
- establishing accountability mechanisms and systems to support statewide oversight and coordination of the Hubs
- establishing infrastructure, including an effective client record system that operates across Hubs statewide
- transition and implementation planning for the rollout across the first five, and further 12 areas
- developing an evaluation framework and procedures for monitoring system demand, services and outcomes, and undertaking catchment and service/system planning and improvement informed by the data and local intelligence of the Hubs, which will

feed into government decision-making and planning (the way that the Hubs contribute to the outcomes framework is outlined at Appendix D), and

- establishing shared ways of working between the Hubs and services, including developing and documenting local arrangements and protocols, and ensuring that there are systems in place to share practice learnings.

Collaborative relationships between the Hubs and specialist services will be built to ensure that there are consistent and agreed standards statewide for:

- allocating people to family violence services, family services, and perpetrator/men's services
- collaborating across providers – such as shared casework, lead worker responsibility, case conferencing and the provision of specialist advice/secondary consultation across a team working with a person or family
- developing and embedding integrated practice and service delivery, and
- prioritising the shared resources of the system to manage demand, and maximising the safety and wellbeing outcomes of women, children and young people, and families.

These next steps in establishing the Hubs are complex and will require collaborative effort across government and the broader service system and sectors. Continued statewide co-design involving key stakeholders including victim survivors, workers from across the service system, community members, and existing advisory committees and groups, will help to ensure that the Hubs are developed and informed by the expertise, practice and experience across all Areas. While work towards the establishment of the Hubs continues at the statewide level, Family Safety Victoria will also commence local co-design. Local co-design will enable the Hubs to be implemented and informed by local context, delivering services relevant to local needs.

Local Hub establishment groups – supporting Family Safety Victoria to set up the Hubs

In launch site areas, Family Safety Victoria will also facilitate the formation of local Hub establishment groups to help set up the Hubs in Local Areas. These groups will help to ensure that the Hubs are tailored to work effectively in the local service system and that they improve outcomes for local people and communities.

Family Safety Victoria will bring together, oversee, and ensure coordination between the local Hub establishment groups and supporting arrangements such as a local charter – comprising government, non-government and community representation – to help to set up the Hubs and build the foundations for initial cooperative arrangements between the Hubs, the broader service system and local communities.

These local Hub establishment groups will bring together the breadth of sectors and organisations that play a role in addressing family violence and child/family vulnerability in Local Areas. The groups will include government departments, local government and non-government agencies from across justice, health, social and community services that the Hubs will need to work closely with, as well as people with experience using services and community representatives, including those from diverse communities.

Importantly, Aboriginal communities and/or services will be part of the Hub's supporting and governance structures from the beginning, ensuring that Aboriginal community perspectives inform governance as well as service delivery. Aboriginal partners will contribute knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal culture and communities to the design and operation of the Hubs. The Hubs will also benefit from the important insights, innovation and integrated ways of working demonstrated in Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.

The local Hub establishment groups will be tailored to Local Areas, but will deliver on a core set of minimum expectations, including:

- implementing referral pathways between Hubs and the broader range of local services
- creating a shared responsibility amongst local agencies for the outcomes of local people, families and communities and the success of the new service system
- working with Family Safety Victoria to monitor, plan and continuously improve local services and respond to local conditions, and
- inform statewide approaches to service and system planning, and the further design and roll out of Hubs across the state.

Maintaining and enhancing local cooperative arrangements with a wide range of services will be critical to the success of the Hubs.

The role and functions of local Hub establishment groups will have a close connection (including cross-representation), and will overlap, with the structures that currently work to improve the effectiveness and integration of local systems across justice, health, and social services.

These other structures include the family violence Regional Integration Committees, the Child and Family Services Alliances, Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Groups, Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committees, Local Aboriginal Justice Action Committees, Justice Health Partnerships, Children and Youth Area Partnerships (where present), and the local Prevention Alliances (announced in November 2016).

The roles and relationships of some of the networks will need to develop and be refined in the context of the overarching system reforms, including the establishment of the Hubs, to avoid duplication and uncertainty in roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities.

The ongoing local coordination structure to support the Hubs will be developed in close consultation with existing regional and local governance bodies and services across the justice, health, and human services sectors, to build upon what already works at a local level and ensure these structures are an effective part of the local service infrastructure. This work will be undertaken in parallel to the establishment of the Hubs.

Appendix A: Glossary

Aboriginal

In this Concept document the term Aboriginal is inclusive of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in Victoria.

Aboriginal self-determination

The Victorian Government is working towards self-determination for Aboriginal people. Aboriginal self-determination means Aboriginal people making decisions about matters that affect their lives and communities. It means that Aboriginal Victorians need to be at the centre of decision-making and be supported to make informed choices. For the Hubs, this means Aboriginal people being able to determine (with all the information they need, and knowing and valuing who they are), what they want and how to go about getting it. The role of the Hubs, as an entry point to the service system, is to facilitate that process. Aboriginal services and communities will be part of the co-design process for the Hubs, helping to ensure that all aspects of the Hubs respect the needs of Aboriginal Victorians.

Access network

Hubs will form an access network across its Local Area. This network reflects the fact that access to the Hubs may be through a variety of modes – telephone, online, face-to-face.

ACCOS - Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.

ACCOS are controlled by the Community and shape service delivery to meet the needs of the local Community they serve.

There are many Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOS) that are providing services in a range of areas throughout Victoria. Some are set up to provide a single service type, such as legal advice or housing services. Others provide a broad range of services, such as health services or child and family services, to their local Aboriginal community.

CALD

Culturally and linguistically diverse or CALD is used to reflect the fact that the Victorian population is ethnically diverse. The Victorian Government is committed to delivering services that meet the diverse needs of people from multicultural communities, including people with refugee or asylum seeking backgrounds.

CASAs

Centres Against Sexual Assault. There are 15 CASAs across Victoria. CASAs offer free, confidential 24 hour emergency or crisis care for victim/survivors of sexual assault. This includes crisis counselling support, access to medical care and legal services as well as counselling support for adults who were abused in their childhood. The Victorian Sexual Assault Crisis Line provides the after-hours service.

All CASAs have access to at least one Crisis Care Unit, which may be located in a Multi-Disciplinary Centre (MDC), hospital or a community based agency.

Central Information Point (CIP)

The Central Information Point will initially be a team of representatives from key government agencies who will work together to gather and share critical information about a perpetrator so that victims of family violence are safe. As it develops, the capability and efficiency of the Central Information Point will improve to provide a greater depth of information.

Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005

The *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic) outlines 'principles for children' to guide the development and provision of services for children. These include an expectation that service providers 'acknowledge and be respectful of the child's individual identity, circumstances and cultural identity and be responsive to the particular needs of the child'. The Act has a number of purposes, including

establishing the Victorian Children's Council; establishing the Children's Services Co-ordination Board; and to provide for the Child Safety Commissioner. Victorian organisations that provide services to children are required under the Act to ensure that they implement compulsory child safe standards to protect children from harm.

Child FIRST

Child and Family Information Referral and Support Teams. Child FIRST provides a central referral point to a range of community-based family services within sub-regional catchments. Child FIRST organisations have statutory obligations under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic).

Children, Youth and Families Act 2005

The Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) guides the actions of community services and the state in the best interests of vulnerable children. The Act promotes:

- children's 'best interests' driving all planning, decisions and service delivery
 - earlier intervention and prevention and greater targeting of secondary services to families most in need
 - improved planning, coordination and delivery of services to families by increased emphasis on partnership and collaboration across and within the service systems
 - a stronger focus on children's cultural identity and cultural competence in all service delivery, and
 - a commitment to maintaining Aboriginal children's cultural connectedness.
-

DET

The Victorian Department of Education and Training.

DHHS

The Victorian Department of Health and Human Services.

Early Intervention

Identification of the early warning signs of family violence, or families in need of support with the care, wellbeing and development of children and young people and intervening appropriately, with the aim of preventing harm, reducing reoccurrence or reducing longer-term harm.

Family Safety Victoria (FSV)

Family Safety Victoria is an Administrative Office attached to DHHS, with dedicated responsibility for delivery of key Family Violence reforms, including the Hubs. It will ensure continued focus on delivery on these reforms separate from the day-to-day service delivery operations of DHHS.

The key Family Violence reforms the FSV will be responsible for include:

- leading the establishment of the Hubs
 - facilitating the coordination of family violence information sharing reforms
 - establishing and operating the new Central Information Point (CIP)
 - leading the redevelopment of the Family Violence Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework
 - delivering the Industry Plan
 - continuing systemic reform to improve the way that Government responds to Family Violence.
-

Family Violence Protection Act 2008

The Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic) has three primary purposes:

- to maximise safety for children and adults who have experienced family violence
- to prevent and reduce family violence to the greatest extent possible, and
- to promote the accountability of perpetrators of family violence for their actions.

The Act defines 'family violence' as behaviour that is physically or sexually abusive, emotionally or psychologically abusive, threatening or coercive, or in any other way controls or dominates the family member and causes that family member to fear for his or her safety or wellbeing or for

the safety or wellbeing of another person. The Act also defines 'family member' to include: a current or former spouse or domestic partner; a person who has, or has had, an intimate personal relationship with the relevant person; a current or former relative; a child who normally lives or has lived with the relevant person; and a child of a person who has, or has had, an intimate personal relationship with the perpetrator of violence.

Family Violence Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework ('the Framework')

Family Violence Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework (also referred to as the common risk assessment framework or 'CRAF'), being redeveloped in 2017.

Flexible Support Package

An allocation of funding which can be used flexibly to access the supports and services required by an individual or family.

FVIO & FVSN

Family Violence Intervention Order and Family Violence Safety Notice.

Hub design principles

The 11 Hub design principles set out in the Victorian Government's - *Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change (2016)*. These are set out at Appendix B.

Hub Team

The Hub Team is the workforce delivering the Hub functions – recognising that a collaborative team approach is needed to deliver Hub functions. Performing these functions draws on the skills and expertise held across the team (not just that held by an individual worker).

Intersectionality

Describes how characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion or age, can interact on multiple levels to create overlapping forms of discrimination and power imbalances which compounds the risk of experiencing family violence.

L17(s)

Police family violence referrals are made via an L17 form.

LGBTI

This acronym represents people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, and/or intersex. The Victorian Government recognises that these parts of our community have traditionally been aligned because of shared or similar experiences of discrimination relating to sexuality, gender identity and physical sex characteristics. However, government also recognises that these identities and characteristics are fundamentally different from each other. People in these communities should not be treated as though they form a homogenous group who all have the same experiences or needs. The Victorian Government is committed to delivering services that meet the diverse needs of LGBTI communities.

Local Area

Hubs will be established for a particular Area – based on the current administrative areas for DHHS and DET. These Areas will form the 'catchment' which the Hubs will predominantly service, that is, the communities and geographic areas each Hub will support and the basis on which the Hub access network is organised and coordinated.

Local co-design

This term is used to describe the process where the Victorian Government will work actively with the community and services in the relevant Local Areas to ensure that the design of the Hubs meets their needs. Co-design has started at the statewide level and in 2017 will commence initially in the five launch site areas.

Male victims

This term is used to describe men who experience family violence. This applies to men who experience any forms of family violence defined in the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic)* which includes intimate partner relationships, parent-child relationships, sibling relationships, and carer relationships.

Multi-disciplinary Centres (MDCs)

Multi-Disciplinary Centres (MDCs) co-locate police, child protection practitioners and sexual assault counselling services at one site, to provide integrated support for adults and children who have experienced sexual assault. Some MDCs include family violence services.

There are currently six MDCs operating across Victoria: in Mildura, Seaford, Geelong, Dandenong, Bendigo and Morwell.

Perpetrator

This is the term used in state and national policy to describe people who use violence. The aim in using this term is to ensure safety, accountability, and end the individual's use of violence. This term is not limited to people who have been accused or convicted of criminal offences. This term is not meant to define the perpetrator for life: the aim is to end the individual's use of violence. The term can include women who are primary aggressors, but for the purposes of this Concept document, gendered language is used (that is, referring to a perpetrator as 'he' or 'him'), recognising that most perpetrators of family violence are men. It is noted that practitioners will use other terms that are personally or organisationally more appropriate, for example, 'men who use violence' is used by No To Violence in its minimum standards guidance.

Perpetrator accountability

The concept of perpetrator accountability is broad and includes:

- Understanding and responding to the needs and experiences of victims, and their views about the outcomes they are seeking to achieve.
 - Prioritising women and children's safety through effective and ongoing risk assessment and management mechanisms.
 - Promoting the taking of responsibility by perpetrators for their actions, including the impact on their children.
 - Providing a suite of options to assist perpetrators gain insight and awareness of their actions, and to change their behaviour, with such options tailored to the risk profile of the perpetrator.
 - Having a strong set of laws, legal and justice processes that incorporate clear consequences for abusive and violent behaviour and failure to comply with court orders and sanctions.
 - Fostering collective responsibility and mutually reinforcing action among government and non-government agencies, the community and individuals for denouncing perpetrators' use of violence.
-

Perpetrator interventions

This incorporates a broad range of responses for perpetrators, whether ordered by a court or other programs that provide opportunities for perpetrators to be accountable for changing their own behaviour, such as men's behaviour change programs.

RAMPs

Risk Assessment and Management Panels.

Royal Commission

Royal Commission into Family Violence.

Spoke

A spoke to a Hub is used to refer to a separate or satellite access point which over time may supplement the primary community-based Hub. In the future, spokes may be established as clearly identified and visible entry-points to the Hubs within existing services and facilities. These access points would help the Hubs to meet the needs of regional/remote communities or specific community groups, such as Aboriginal communities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, or perpetrators. Criteria would be developed to guide the establishment of 'spokes'.

Statewide Concept

This Concept document which sets out the intent, scope, key functions and roles of the Support and Safety Hubs. The statewide Concept will guide further statewide and local operational planning and co-design.

Statewide practice framework

Documentation to be developed in 2017 which sets out practice principles and operational guidance at a statewide level.

Detailed requirements, specifications, policies and procedures for the Support and Safety Hubs to be developed in 2017 to support implementation and delivery.

Support and Safety Hubs (Hubs)

Support and Safety Hubs were recommended by the Royal Commission into Family Violence to provide consolidated and comprehensive intake, and risk and needs assessment, and safety planning for women and children experiencing family violence, perpetrators, and children and families in need of support with the care, wellbeing and development of children and young people (Recommendation 37). The Victorian Government has agreed to

establish Support and Safety Hubs across Victoria.

Victim survivors

This is the term used to describe people who have experienced family violence, including children. It is used as it is consistent with the naming of the Victorian Government's Victim Survivors' Advisory Council. For some people the term 'victim' is problematic because it can suggest that people who have experienced family violence are helpless or lack the capacity to make rational choices about how to respond to violence. This Concept document recognises that experience of family violence should not define victim survivors and their futures.

Appendix B: Hub Design Principles

Extract from *Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change*

The following key principles will underpin the Hubs' design.

1. Put people at the centre

From the very first contact, the Hubs will support women, children and families to decide what they need to be safe and to recover. The Hubs will work at the pace of the victim survivor to ensure choice and control.

2. Be safe and accessible to all

The Hubs will be welcoming and safe places, free of stigma or judgement, and designed for the diversity of people and communities that access their services. Local communities will help to inform how the Hubs are accessible and welcoming, including how we can make sure that every Hub is culturally safe for Aboriginal and diverse communities.

3. Address the needs of children and families

The Hubs will take a whole-of-family approach.

While Hubs will give individual and specific attention to all victim survivors, and perpetrators, they may deliver services to these groups in different ways (for example, to ensure safety). Integrating Child FIRST within the Hubs will enable the needs of children to be further reflected in planning and decision-making. Families will be supported and referred to the right part of the service system. This will make sure that children and families receive the tailored support they need.

4. A paramount focus on safety

The safety of victim survivors and children will be the Hubs' first priority so that the

onus is no longer on victim survivors to keep themselves and their children safe. A person-centred approach to safety planning will take into account the needs, preferences, cultural and community context for victim survivors. The Hubs will be able to prioritise safety through a new information sharing regime, the redevelopment of the Family Violence Risk Assessment and Management Framework and access to the Central Information Point and Risk Management and Assessment Panels. This will mean that the Hubs will have complete information about the perpetrator, enabling them to better assess and manage risk.

5. Working closely with the justice system

The Hubs will work closely with police, courts and other justice agencies to hold perpetrators to account and keep women and children safe. Hubs and justice agencies will share information to keep the perpetrator in view, coordinate efforts and make every response count—especially when risk escalates. Victim survivors will be able to connect with the Hubs at court, and vice versa, to get the support they need to be safe.

6. Diversity

The Hubs will meet the needs of the diverse people and communities who need access to their services, respond effectively to violence in all its forms, and offer culturally safe responses.

7. Focus on early intervention

The Hubs will work to engage women and families early, be well connected to universal services and the community, and will work to prevent family violence at every opportunity. The Hubs will also intervene early for children and families displaying other signs of vulnerability (such as parenting issues) which often co-occur with family violence.

8. Harnessing multi-disciplinary, specialist support

The Hubs will bring together experts who can work with the whole family and create clear pathways for the full support they need. The Hubs will then work with the health, justice and community service systems to coordinate support around individuals and families, keeping people safe and supporting them to recover and thrive.

9. Statewide coverage and consistent quality and access to services

No matter where people live, they will have access to the Hubs—via a physical Hub, online and telephone access, or an outreach worker. The network of Hub services will be underpinned by an information sharing platform and a consistent statewide approach to service delivery.

10. Work in partnership with local communities

The Hubs will be developed in conjunction with local communities. Local leadership will be vital to the success of the Hubs and will inform the understanding of community need and the kind of services that work best to address that need. This will build on local resources, networks and current infrastructure.

11. Whole-of-system response

The Hubs will recognise and support all parts of the service system to play their role in an integrated system that works to keep people safe and well. Hubs will complement other reforms underpinning an effective whole-of-system response, including building workforce capacity and capability, a new system to prevent family violence, a new approach to funding services and more effective perpetrator interventions.

Appendix C: Related reforms

The Hubs are a part of broader system change to ensure that people get the help they need.

The Hubs are a significant part of family violence and child and family services system reforms. But they are also reliant on broader reforms to support and equip them to do their work.

The range of services people need at different times, including at points of crisis and beyond, will be better resourced, coordinated and tailored to people's needs. These reforms will provide a system that is:

- more personalised and coordinated – spanning the specialist, program and system boundaries that have frustrated people and the workers that support them
- easier to navigate and better at getting people the services they need the first time and every time the person or family seeks help, and
- more responsive to the choices and goals of women, children and young people, and families, as well as the evidence of what works to meet people's needs.

Key enablers for Hubs in the family violence reforms

Key enablers for the Hubs include the:

Redevelopment of the Family Violence Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework

The revised framework (also referred to as the Common Risk Assessment Framework or 'CRAF') will set minimum standards and roles and responsibilities for screening, risk assessment, risk management, information sharing and referral. The revised Framework will strengthen practice in relation to perpetrators and children, and will address the needs of diverse victim survivors and perpetrators, among them: older people; people with disabilities; Aboriginal people;

culturally and linguistically diverse people; and lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, and intersex people. The implementation of the new Framework will be supported by legislation, and workforce training practice development and change management.

Information sharing


The Victorian Government will introduce laws to facilitate information sharing. The Hubs will have access to comprehensive information, including more complete information about the perpetrator, than ever before, enabling them to better assess and manage risk.

Industry planning

The Victorian Government will be delivering a plan for family violence prevention and response in Victoria to ensure that immediate and future demand for specialist services can be met, that family violence specialisation is embedded across the system as required, and that the family violence and primary prevention workforce comprises highly skilled, well-trained and well-supported people, that reflect the diversity of Victoria. The Industry Taskforce has been established to lead the development of the Industry Plan and provide advice in relation to the cross-cutting elements of workforce and sector reform across all workforces included in the current social services and justice reforms, with a particular focus on those that play a role in preventing, identifying and responding to family violence – from specialist workforces through to the universal services.

Funding reform

The Victorian Government is changing the way it delivers funding to services so they are more coordinated and flexible. The funding reforms will address issues created by short-term funding, narrowly defined program funding, and complicated funding combinations. There will be a sustained investment in prevention. The new funding system will be underpinned by a thorough understanding of the cost of family violence to society; an accurate picture of current and future demand; and knowledge about



what it costs to deliver quality services. The new approach will provide simpler and more flexible funding for organisations so that they can focus on spending where it's most needed and has the greatest impact.

Improved perpetrator accountability

The Victorian Government is working to deliver effective perpetrator interventions. To support this work, the Government has established an Expert Advisory Committee to advise on the suite of perpetrator interventions that should be in place in Victoria. The work of the Committee will be critical to developing a more integrated approach to perpetrators that fosters collective responsibility among government and non-government agencies, the community and individuals for denouncing perpetrators' use of violence and expecting and helping them to cease being violent. This requires all agencies and service providers that have contact with perpetrators to work towards common objectives and principles to reinforce each other's roles and responsibilities in keeping victims safe. The Hubs will play an important part in this whole of government/system approach to ensure perpetrators take responsibility for their actions. The work of this Committee is ongoing during 2017 and 2018.

Development of service navigation functions

People will not have to navigate the complex legal and community service systems by themselves. Highly skilled specialist workers will have the flexibility and capacity at different points in the system to support people. The level of support may vary with the complexity of needs and level of risk. This support will ensure that services are timely and coordinated, and meet the person's needs. An Industry Taskforce Sub-Group on service navigation is currently meeting to provide the Industry Taskforce with advice on: barriers to integrated and coordinated service delivery; the design of specialist navigation functions; and the skills, core competencies and associated training requirements for specialist navigation functions. The Sub-Group will report to the Industry Taskforce.

Specialist family violence courts

The Victorian Government has committed to expanding specialist family violence courts across the state to improve access to legal protection and help hold perpetrators to account. Courts will be upgraded to provide greater safety and security for victim survivors.

Related statewide policy

The Hubs are identified as a key platform in the statewide policy for family services reform.

Roadmap for Reform: strong families, safe children

The Victorian Government is committed to reform that protects families and sets a child up for life, leaving them more likely to be healthy, to form positive relationships, to learn and grow, and to get a job. The Roadmap for Reform focuses on prevention, early intervention, and creating services that are coordinated and work together to meet the needs of vulnerable families and children. The policy notes that at-risk children and families often find Victoria's system complex, fragmented and difficult to navigate. The Hubs will enable greater coordination of responses to violence and other safety risks, as well as early interventions for families in need of support with the care, wellbeing and development of children and young people.

Better equipping the Child Protection workforce to engage and intervene with perpetrators of family violence through the development of practice guidelines, policies and procedures also forms part of the work being undertaken by DHHS in response to recommendations 25, 26 and 27 of the Royal Commission.

Out of home care reform is also ensuring that there are supports for families that are unable to repair following experiences of violence. These reforms are working to ensure that children who have experienced violence receive treatment focused/trauma informed care and are able to develop positive relationships.

Supporting system reforms

Homelessness and social housing reforms

The Victorian Government is committed to introducing new approaches to how homelessness services and social housing are delivered. Three reform launch sites are testing new ways of working, bringing the housing and homelessness sectors closer together so that people are supported and housed quicker and more effectively. A Rough Sleepers Taskforce and a Family Violence Housing Assistance Implementation Taskforce have been established to guide reform in homelessness, social and affordable housing. The Government has also released Homes for Victorians: Affordability, access and choice which provides a coordinated approach to addressing housing affordability issues across government and across Victoria.

Victoria Police reforms

The role of police is being transformed so family violence is a core part of their business. A new Victoria Police Family Violence Centre of Learning will train police officers, and the strengthening of specialist units and new technology will modernise the distribution of Victoria Police reports will improve family violence-related capability.

Access to Justice Review

The Access to Justice Review conducted by the Department of Justice and Regulation made recommendations to Government about a range of issues, including the accessibility and availability of legal assistance services, and support for self-represented litigants. Access to legal assistance and navigating the justice system is one of the pressing service needs raised by women who have experienced family violence.

Attachment D: Achieving outcomes

The Hubs will contribute to the outcomes for preventing and responding to family violence outlined in Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change.

Key measures of success		
Domain	Relevant outcome	Contribution of the Hubs
Family violence and gender inequality are not tolerated	Victorians do not tolerate family violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Hubs will promote healthy relationships, and reject behaviours seeking to control others through physical, emotional or financial abuse. The Hubs will be part of a system that tilts towards the perpetrator, holding him accountable for his actions.
	Women and men, and girls and boys are equal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Hubs will be informed by specialist expertise in working with women, children and families, and men.
Victim survivors, vulnerable children and families, are safe and supported to recover and thrive	Early intervention prevents escalation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The integration of specialist expertise in the Hubs, and their close connections to the community, universal services and specialist services, will allow the early warning signs of family violence and child vulnerability to be recognised and addressed. Other professionals will be able to seek support from the expertise in the Hubs when considering early warning signs. They will also have a clear place to refer people to. The role of the Hubs in community engagement and education/awareness raising will be part of a feedback loop to inform prevention work.
	<p>Families are safe and strong</p> <p>Victim survivors are safe</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Hubs will be accessible and meet the needs of diverse community members. The Hubs will be a safe and supportive place where women, children, and concerned families and friends can access information and support. The Hubs will actively follow-up on L17 referrals from the police. The Hubs will have capacity to address immediate needs in a crisis. The Hubs will undertake comprehensive, multi-disciplinary risk assessment and risk management informed by specialist expertise. The Hubs will undertake safety planning. The Hubs will undertake needs assessment and arrange to connect people to the supports they need.

Key measures of success		
Domain	Relevant outcome	Contribution of the Hubs
Victim survivors, vulnerable children and families, are safe and supported to recover and thrive	Victim survivors are heard and in control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Hubs will give people access to information to make informed choices, including helping people to understand their risk, prioritise needs, and understand options for support. The Hubs will give people affected by family violence a choice of services across a range of settings including health, community services and justice settings. The Hubs will work with women, children and families to provide access to supports that meet their diverse and changing needs.
	Victim survivors rebuild their lives and thrive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Hubs will connect people to support services to meet short and long-term needs that are essential for safety and wellbeing.
Perpetrators are held to account, engaged and connected	Early intervention prevents escalation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The integration of specialist expertise in the Hubs, and their close connections to the community, universal services and specialist services, will allow the early warning signs of family violence and child vulnerability to be recognised and addressed. Other professionals will be able to seek support from the expertise in the Hubs when considering early warning signs. They will also have a clear place to refer people to. The role of the Hubs in community engagement and education/awareness raising will be part of a feedback loop to inform prevention work. The Hubs will contribute to a fundamental principle that perpetrators should face a range of timely system responses for using family violence. The Hubs will also make the most of engagement opportunities by connecting perpetrators to services quickly.
	Perpetrators are accountable for their behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Hubs will connect perpetrators with effective and timely interventions. Perpetrators who engage with the Hubs will be supported to recognise factors contributing to violent behaviours and connected with tools and strategies to act differently, including through access to a broader range of effective interventions developed by departments and informed by the Expert Advisory Committee on Perpetrator Interventions.

Key measures of success		
Domain	Relevant outcome	Contribution of the Hubs
Perpetrators are held to account, engaged and connected	Perpetrators are held to account	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The response by Hubs to referrals relating to perpetrators will be timely and informed by specialist expertise. The Hubs will form part of a service system that collectively acts to hold perpetrators accountable.
	Perpetrators are in view	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Hubs will keep perpetrators in view by bringing police referrals (L17 forms) in to one place and consolidating intake processes for women children and men. The Hubs will use and share information about perpetrators to inform risk assessment and risk management.
Preventing and responding to family violence is systemic and enduring	Initiatives to respond to family violence are accessible and available in the right place at the right time. Prevention activities are coordinated and universal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Hubs will be a well-known network and an accessible contact point. The Hubs will undertake comprehensive risk assessment and will work with people to understand their needs, priorities and goals. This will help the Hubs connect people to the right supports and services at the right time. The Hubs will ensure initial services responses are planned and coordinated.
	The system is united, integrated and joined up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through integrated intake, assessment and referral, the Hubs will help services work together to provide a coordinated response to women, children and men. The Hubs will have successful collaborative working partnerships underpinned by statewide and local co-design and ongoing coordination structures.
	Initiatives to respond to family violence are person-centred	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Hubs will have specialist expertise that informs the rest of the service system. The Hubs will be accessible to people and meet their diverse needs. The Hubs will use their information and perspective on services, engagement and effectiveness to identify and report to government about systemic issues concerning quality. The Hubs will have high quality data collection which allows for the measurement of outcomes, driving decision making and continuous improvement.

Key measures of success		
Domain	Relevant outcome	Contribution of the Hubs
Preventing and responding to family violence is systemic and enduring	The workforce is properly recognised and effectively responds, understands risk and need and is skilled to prevent family violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Hubs will support coordinated and integrated practice so that the workforce draws on multi-disciplinary expertise to effectively identify and respond to family violence risk. The Hubs workforce will be trained in the redeveloped Family Violence Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework. The Hubs will inform government and service planning and decision-making by providing information about community needs, and service capability and capacity. This information will help to support workforce planning and development.

