

# Creating a Victoria free from violence

## Significant initiatives

- **Supporting Victoria's response to family violence**

\$27.3m in 2025-26 (\$79.8m/4 yrs) to maintain service capacity in family and gendered violence prevention and response by:

- Extending Victoria's primary prevention leadership through Respect Victoria.
- Delivering prevention and early intervention work within multicultural and faith communities.
- Sustaining frontline family violence specialist support programs including specialist case management, Adolescent Family Violence in the Home, flexible support packages, family violence crisis brokerage for the statewide 24/7 crisis service and specialist support for children in refuges.
- Continuing intensive high-risk perpetrator interventions.

- **Family violence risk assessment and information sharing schemes**

\$8.5m in 2025-26 (\$16.9m/2 yrs) to enable departments and agencies to support prescribed organisations to meet obligations under the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM) framework and Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes.

- **Supporting Victoria's response to sexual violence**

\$13.1m in 2025-26 (\$26.5m/2 yrs) to support frontline sexual assault support services to adults, children and young people who have experienced sexual abuse. This includes flexible funding for victim survivors of sexual assault and the statewide Sexual Assault Crisis Line with after-hours counselling line; and delivering Sexually Abusive Behaviour Treatment services for children and young people demonstrating harmful sexual behaviour.

- **Court security at Specialist Family Violence Courts**

\$3.1m in 2025-26 (\$15.4m/4 yrs) for security officers at dedicated Specialist Family Violence Courts.

- **Remote Hearing Support Service**

\$1.6m in 2025-26 (\$3.2m/2 yrs) to continue the operation of the Remote Hearing Support Service. This will deliver resources for specialised trauma-informed support for affected

family members (AFMs) seeking a family violence intervention order through a remote court hearing, that would otherwise only be available for AFMs who attend court.

- **Improving women's health**

\$1.7m in 2025-26 (\$5.6m/4 yrs) to improve access for women and girls to reproductive and sexual healthcare.

- **Gender responsive budgeting**

\$0.5m in 2025-26 (\$2.0m/2 yrs) is provided to continue the work undertaken by the Gender Responsive Budgeting unit within the Department of Treasury and Finance to ensure that outcomes for women are measured and considered as part of the resource allocation and decision-making process.

## What's good

- VCOSS welcomes the commitment of two years of funding for several critical family and sexual violence initiatives, which allows organisations to maintain current levels of service. However, we remain concerned that funding for this vital work continues to be short-term and insecure and doesn't sufficiently address increasing demand and pressure on services.
- Almost half of Victorians were born overseas or to migrant parents. It's vital that this is reflected in our policies, programs and services, including the family violence system. This Budget makes a positive investment in prevention and early intervention work in multicultural and faith communities. Migrant and refugee women often face intersecting issues related to visa insecurity, language-based discrimination, and limited access to culturally responsive services. Investment in specialist family violence services that provide holistic, wraparound support tailored to the needs of migrant and refugee communities is vital.
- In the prevention space, the Government continues to deliver funding for Victoria's primary prevention leadership through Respect Victoria. In a tight fiscal environment, this investment is welcome. However, future budgets should ramp up the total spend on primary prevention activities and deliver strong ongoing funding to Respect Victoria to support evidence-informed primary prevention work. This is absolutely crucial to stop all forms of family violence before it starts, by changing the norms, practices and structures that allow it to happen.
- [Recent research published by Our Watch](#) found 40 per cent of 16- to 17-year-olds had experienced sexual harassment in a place of study. VCOSS welcomes new investment of

\$7.4m from the Department of Education to partner with Sexual Assault Services Victoria and its members to assist schools to respond to peer-to-peer sexual violence, help support victim-survivors and respond to harmful sexual behaviour.

- VCOSS understands that funding for 1800 My Options continues, a vital information service about sexual and reproductive health.

## What's missing

- Family and sexual violence is a significant contributor to homelessness. The Victorian Government has missed an opportunity to better support families experiencing family violence through the housing system. VCOSS continues to call for the Victorian Government to build 80,000 new social homes in the next decade, to meet demand from victim-survivors and other priority cohorts.
- Family violence refuge capacity is too low to meet demand. Many victim-survivors escaping violence – including women with children – are placed in motels and other unsuitable accommodation. The 2025-26 Budget does not address this problem. Crucially, it has missed the opportunity to leverage Commonwealth investment in Safe Steps' Sanctuary Model, a leading alternative to motels. The Commonwealth has provided funding to build 28 new crisis accommodation apartments to support the delivery of the Sanctuary Model. An additional \$3.9m is needed to make these apartments operational.
- There is no new investment to tackle the scourge of elder abuse. VCOSS' pre-Budget submission highlighted increased unmet demand from the community. More resources are needed to support elder abuse prevention, awareness and tailored response services.

