

Family violence: Victorian Government releases 10-year plan

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[Photo: Premier Andrews says women should not be forced to choose between safety and the streets. \(ABC News\)](#)

The Victorian Government has released a 10-year plan in response to the state's Royal Commission into Family Violence, which will include law reforms to prioritise the safety of victims over the privacy of perpetrators.

KEY POINTS:

- Plan includes new family violence centre and digital system for police referrals
- Attorney-General says 'significant milestone' in tackling the problem of family violence
- Move comes after royal commission handed down 227 recommendations

In March this year, after more than a year of hearings, [the royal commission handed down 227 recommendations](#), saying all parts of the domestic violence system were overwhelmed.

[The Government vowed to honour all of those recommendations](#), including introducing a 10-year-plan.

Premier Daniel Andrews said the changes would mean women were not forced to choose between safety and the streets.

"That takes our total investment in providing the secure housing that women and children fleeing family violence require and need to more than \$600 million," he said.

"The privacy of the perpetrator will never again trump the safety of the victim."

Family violence campaigner and former Australian of the Year Rosie Batty said all Victorians had a responsibility to put an end to abuse.

"To women and children who may be living in fear, know that you are courageous, strong and you are not responsible for the violence committed against you and you have a right to feel safe," she said.

"To all Victorians, we all need to speak out, all need to be responsible for ending family violence."

The plan will include:

- A statewide information point to assist with risk assessment and management for medium to high-risk families
- A network of at least 17 support and safety hubs across Victoria, where victims can access support
- A Victoria Police family violence centre to "increase police capability to deal with the complexity and volume of family violence cases they respond to"
- A new digital system for police referrals to family violence services to replace the current fax based system
- Law reform to remove a perpetrator's right to consent to their information being shared
- Creating a "trust zone" of organisations who can share information
- Changing the bail act to require decision makers to take into account family violence risk
- Making family violence intervention orders more victim friendly, by including children of applicants giving courts stronger powers to make interim orders and strike out appeals
- Placing specialist family violence workers in mental health and alcohol and drug services

It comes seven months after [the Government announced \\$572 million as a "first step" to deliver on 65 royal commission's recommendations.](#)

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTORIA PRAISES 10-YEAR PLAN

Chief executive of Victoria's peak body for domestic violence services for women and children, Fiona McCormack, said she had seen the plan and believed it would significantly strengthen the system.



[Photo: Fiona McCormack called for bipartisan support for the Government's plan. \(ABC News: Stephanie Anderson\)](#)

"The support and safety hubs are going to allow for information to be shared with relevant agencies at a time when women and children are assessed as at risk and this is going to mean that we're able to intervene," she said.

"Specialist courts are significant, this has been also something that's been missing because women will report that they go through the court system completely at a loss about what's happening, and what will happen.

"There's not the support in place, there's certainly not the risk assessment that's carried through across the system to the courts."

Ms McCormack also praised the Government for adopting interim and long-term targets for the community to judge their progress on.

"It's introducing measures to which it can hold itself to account, which is significant. It says this is a government really serious about tackling the issue of family violence, it's an extraordinary thing," she said.

ADVOCATES CALL FOR BIPARTISAN APPROACH TO FAMILY VIOLENCE

She called on the Opposition to support the Government's plan, despite the costs that would be involved in reforming the system.

"It will be expensive ... but we've got to keep in mind what this costs us now, it doesn't make economic sense to keep throwing money at it the way in which it has in the past," she said.

So far today police in Australia would have dealt with on average 399 **domestic violence matters**

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"That's why we need bipartisan support because if there's a change of government in the middle of these reforms it means that all this effort, all this work will be a waste, so we're calling on other political parties to support the ten-year plan."

Opposition spokeswoman Georgie Crozier said the Liberals and Nationals would work "constructively with all political parties" to reduce family violence.

"I think every single member of Parliament is completely committed to this important outcome," she said.

"The Royal Commission into Family Violence recommendations have been out for seven months but Daniel Andrews has still not provided the costings to implement them."

Ms McCormack also called on the [Federal Government to deliver on recommendations from the Victorian royal commission.](#)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-11-24/victorian-government-release-10-year-family-violence-plan/8051712>