



## Safety and Accountability in Families: Evidence and Research

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### Project Background

The project began in early 2008 and is an Australian Research Council Linkages project on the Victorian family violence reforms. University of Melbourne and Monash university researchers are conducting the 5 year research project in partnership with the Victorian government departments of Planning and Community Development, Human Services, Justice and Victoria Police.

### Safe @ Home

Background: The women's supported questionnaire (women who have experience violence) will seek answers to questions about women's feelings about safety for themselves and for their children. A reference group of family violence service clients (outreach and refuge) in the eastern region provided consultation on the questionnaire.

Where we are now : The questionnaire is currently in field within the Eastern and Gippsland regions. We're hoping for around 200 responses from women who have experienced violence. Responses are starting to come in from the refuge sector; outreach has been a bit slower to come back.

Feedback from clients and workers participating has been that the process of working through the questions has been *very* helpful. The returns are filled with rich and detailed information.

In order to ensure we have sufficient numbers of returns the SAFER team is considering a roll-out of the questionnaire to additional regions. We are seeking suggestions and ways of ensuring we achieve the good number of responses which have been indicated.

### MWUV

Analysis of the first questionnaire and focus group results are being written up into articles and research summaries.

Planning for a comparative second round questionnaire has started with discussions and engagement of services through NTV. The second round questionnaire is planned for early 2011.

### Governance and Pathways

Planning is underway for the statewide survey of IFV service sector workers about the implementation of the reforms and governance issues relating to the development of an integrated service system, including a focus on relationships between state, regional and local levels. There will be two parts to the survey. **Part 1** is a short questionnaire that will be structured around the 8 regions of the Department of Human Services. The project will utilise an on-line questionnaire data collection method to be completed by workers at their own agency. Hard copies will be available by request. The questionnaire will consist mostly of closed questions, some of which will include rating scales and a couple of open-ended questions. Questions will aim to determine the respondent's views on the development and level of integration across the family violence service system. We will aim for several hundred participants, government and non-government, from all service sectors of the IFV system. **Part 2** will be conducted in two case sites. It will involve an organizational network analysis and a series of semi-structured qualitative questions. These will enable in-depth understanding of the relationships between different actors in the regional service networks and the impact that these have on the development of an integrated service system.

Members of the SAFER team will have the chance to gather feedback from agency workers at the six *Measuring Family Violence in Victoria* workshops hosted by DV Vic, Council to Homeless Persons and Victorian Government. Feedback from the November forum that the SAFER team facilitated has also provided us with helpful

directions, as will discussions with the SAFER Industry Partners and Reference Group members.

The SAFER team continues our writing for academic journal publication. At present, a journal article on the whole of government approach to the Victorian family violence reform is being finalized.

### Ethics requirements

The Safe at Home questionnaire has been approved by the ethics committees of the University of Melbourne, Department of Justice and Monash University and West Gippsland Healthcare Group.

We will need to apply to The University of Melbourne's, DoJ's and VicPol's ethics committees for permission to conduct the Governance Survey.

### Parity Publication

Crinall, K. & Hurley, J. (2009) 'Responding to family violence and preventing homelessness: What is required for effective implementation of "Safe at home" programs?' *Parity* Nov 2009.

### CONFERENCES AND OTHER PRESENTATIONS

"*Creating Safe Healing Spaces*" was presented by Karen Crinall and Chris Laming at the Gendering Violence Conference, Uppsala, in December 2009 reporting on the evaluation on the East Gippsland CommUNITY Walk Against Family Violence. Karen also presented a paper co-authored with Jenny Hurley titled "*What does it take for women and children to realise their right to live safely and securely in their own home: Policy and practice reform, cultural change or social restructure?*" The paper was based on the literature review on Safe at home programs in the Safe at Home stream of the research. An extended version of the paper will be submitted for publication in the book arising from the conference.

Chris Laming presented "*Challenging Men: The system matters but the mates matter more*" at the Gendering Violence Conference. This conference was an opportunity to showcase the SAFER project and other initiatives being undertaken as part of the Victorian Integrated Family Violence Reform agenda, and to network with delegates from other countries that are working to address violence against women through researched-informed practice.

**Upcoming:** Prof. Cathy Humphreys will be a key speaker, with others to be confirmed, at the launch of the Frankston-Mornington Peninsula Family Violence Network's women's and men's help cards and the local launch of Good Shepherd's Youth and Family Service's research publication called *Researching the Gaps: The needs of women who have experienced long-term domestic violence* on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2010. This will be followed by a forum discussion about Frankston-Mornington Peninsula's integrated FV service system for practitioners and service workers.

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### Website of the Month

This month we direct you to the Northern Integrated Family Violence Services new website, found at: <http://www.nifvs.org.au/>



Further information... [www.familyviolence.vic.gov.au](http://www.familyviolence.vic.gov.au).

Earlier SAFER UPDATES and related research at: <http://research.cwav.asn.au/AFRP/FamilyViolence/SAFER/default.aspx>

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