



Victorian Election 2026

A safer Victoria starts with ending family violence



Fear shouldn't live here: A safer Victoria starts with ending family violence

Too many Victorians are living in fear because too little is being done, too late, to stop family violence. Police and courts should be the last resort but have become the first system response for victim-survivors and often only after years of enduring violent and controlling behaviour. Acting earlier is key to giving everyone impacted by a man's use of family violence a real chance at recovery and healing.

Without earlier responses, Victoria enables the cycle to repeat. Instead, public money flows to late interventions - police, courts and prisons. Last year 80% of family violence incidents responded to by Victoria Police involved people with a history of perpetrating violence and 82,029 incidents were assessed as likely to continue or escalate.^{i ii} Approximately 1.1 million Victorian men, 35% of the male population, will use violence over their lifetime.ⁱⁱⁱ Yet only 2% of men using violence receive a meaningful behaviour change response and increasingly only after levels of violence have severely escalated.^{iv}

Responding earlier is not only good social policy. It is good economic policy. No area of government is untouched by the impacts of men's use of family violence – health, legal, police, child protection and even transport systems are responding to the impacts of family violence. New modelling estimates **\$8 billion per year nationally** could be saved by intervening earlier.^v The alternative is continuing to invest in late-stage responses to the same men over and over rather than investing in breaking cycles of violence before they become entrenched or worsen.⁹

Stop the funding shortfall to genuinely centre child and adult victim-survivor agency and safety

Victoria is denying victim-survivors a crucial source of support. 91% of Australians agree support should be available to victim-survivors whether they choose to remain in a relationship with someone using violence or not.^{vi} Instead, we ask victim-survivors to seek help to leave violence without appropriate mitigations to prevent escalating violence. Victim-survivors know what is right for them and they deserve meaningful service pathways that suit their needs.

Interventions focused on men using violence, with in-built support for victim-survivors, are one of the few pathways available for victim-survivors who are not ready to leave the relationship or do not want to leave, including when they feel staying is the safest option.^{vii} For many victim-survivors, this may be the first dedicated support they receive.^{viii} However, the current government funding model for Men's Behaviour Change Programs (MBCPs) does not value victim-survivor safety and agency because it does not fund a model to support it.

Family Safety contact and advocacy workers support partners and ex-partners, children, parents and other family members impacted by family violence. It provides a baseline measure of accountability and change, critical to the success of interventions with men and the safety of victim-survivors.

Without the perspectives of the victim-survivors impacted, their safety *and* practitioners' work towards lasting behavioural change with men using violence is jeopardised. Risk-related information may be missing and unable to be sourced elsewhere, delaying opportunities to act sooner to intervene before family violence escalates and robbing victim-survivors of an advocate in their corner to support them.^{ix x}

Invest earlier to break the cycle: Stop Victorians living in fear

Allocate dedicated funding for family safety contact work within MBCPs for all victim-survivors affected by men's violence

1. Elevate the role of Family Safety Contact workers by providing dedicated funding to allow for individual advocacy for each family member impacted by family violence as a key part of all program funding for work with men using family violence.^{xi}
2. Measure the impact of family violence by counting each family member needing support from a Family Safety Advocate and including risk-related information across the full suite of Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management tools and Risk Assessment and Management panels.

Victoria can provide victim-survivors with the dedicated advocacy and support they deserve, starting with a funding model for family safety contact and advocacy that makes sense. MBCP funding models must reflect this but currently do not.^{xii} New Minimum Standards will be released soon and are expected to again centre victim-survivor safety as the most crucial element of program design. This best practice program element cannot be achieved without commensurate funding.

- Family Safety Contact work must be expanded, measured and funded in line with demand to allow for critical individual advocacy.
- Dedicated funding must include associated targets for Family Safety Contact work, including enough allocation to support Family Safety workers to act as victim-survivors' advocates.
- Pricing models must account for victim-survivor safety and support, extended to all family members, partners and ex-partners affected by men's violence.

ⁱ Crime Statistics Agency (2025) [Justice System Data Tables, 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2025: Table 33. Number of family violence incidents with risk factors recorded on L17 Risk Assessment and Risk Management Report, 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2025.](#)

ⁱⁱ Crime Statistics Agency (2025) [Justice System Data Tables, 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2025: Table 31. Number of family violence incidents by total risk assessment score and likelihood of future violence, 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2025.](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ [Ten to Men \(Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2025\)](#) found 1 in 3 men in their study self-reported using violence and estimate 120,000 men start using violence every year. The [most recent Australian Bureau of Statistics census \(2021\)](#) recorded 3,200,963 males in Victoria. Assuming 35% of Victorian males use violence in their lifetime, 1,120,337 men at 2021 population levels could be expected to use violence in Victoria at some point in their life.

^{iv} 22,574 unique clients received perpetrator interventions since record collecting began between 2020 and 2025 according to Crime Statistics Agency (2025) [Service Sector Data Tables.](#)

^v New draft modelling commissioned by No to Violence, currently in preparation for publication, estimates the value of preventing first-time DFV offences alone at \$2.05-\$2.66 billion per year over the next decade. Including the cascading effect of avoided re-offending, the

combined value rises to approximately \$83.0 billion over the decade - around \$8.3 billion per year. These estimates exclude prosecution, legal aid, courts administration and corrections costs, meaning they likely understate the true value of earlier intervention.

^{vi} Coumarelos et al. (2023) [Attitudes Matter: The 2021 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey \(NCAS\), Findings for Australia](#).

^{vii} [Exploring the interface between Family Safety Advocates and Victim Survivor Practitioners: Discussion Paper \(2025\) Safe and Equal and No to Violence](#).

^{viii} No to Violence (2026) [From Fragmentation to Framework: Building an Ecosystem of Responses to End Men's Use of Domestic and Family Violence](#).

^{ix} See increasing advocacy for independent representation for victim-survivors as an example of public support for more advocacy-style supports With You We Can (2020) [What No One Told Us](#).

^x See Chung et al. (2020) [Prioritising Women's Safety in Australian Perpetrator Interventions: The purpose and practices of partner contact](#) and The Backbone Collective (2026) [Just Ticking the Box: Victim-survivor insights into the uses and abuses of stopping-violence programmes in Aotearoa New Zealand](#) for discussion on risks of failing to meaningfully involve victim-survivors.

^{xi} Family Safety contact workers collate and share critical risk-related information while Family Safety advocates are victim-survivors' voice in rooms not safe for them.

^{xii} Family Safety Contact work was emphasised in the current Victorian Minimum Standards for Men's Behaviour Change Programs (2018). Almost a decade later, this critical component has *still* not been elevated in funding models. See Family Safety Victoria (2018) [Men's Behaviour Change Minimum Standards](#). See also No to Violence (2021) [Family Safety Advocate Practice Guidance: MARAM alignment for discussion of role expectations](#).



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Live Here” and demand different
from the next government.