



Northern Integrated Family Violence Services

# Regional Integration Committee

## Strategic Plan 2019-2023

### Acknowledgement of the Traditional Custodians

The NIFVS Regional Integration Committee acknowledges Victorian Aboriginal people as the Traditional Owners of the land on which we provide our services. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present and recognise the ongoing living culture of all Aboriginal people. We express commitment to Aboriginal self-determination and our hope for reconciliation and justice.

## Acronyms

ACCO – Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations  
CALD – Culturally and Linguistically Diverse  
CASA – Centre Against Sexual Assault  
CIS – Child Information Sharing Scheme  
CLC – Community Legal Centre  
CoP - Communities of Practice  
DHHS – Department of Health and Human Services  
DVRCV - Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria  
DVPic – Domestic Violence Victoria  
FSV – Family Safety Victoria  
FVISS – Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme  
FVRIC - Family Violence Regional Integration Committee  
FV – Family Violence  
GP – General Practitioners  
IFV – Identifying Family Violence  
LGA – Local Government Area  
MARAM – Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework  
MBCP – Men’s Behaviour Change Programs  
NIFVS – Northern Integrated Family Violence Services  
NMR – Northern Metropolitan Region  
PCP – Primary Care Partnership  
PSA – Principal Strategic Advisor  
PVAW – Preventing Violence Against Women  
RAMP – Risk Assessment and Management Panels  
RCFV - Royal Commission into Family Violence

## Background

Family Violence Regional Integration Committees (FVRIC) are local governance structures that were established in 2006 to improve the integration of services that respond to family violence. The first task of regional integration was to break down significant silos that existed across the service system.

Victoria's 13 FVRICs set out to achieve this by 'identifying and prioritising local regional issues within the Statewide reform framework and developing an agreed Strategic Plan and Action Plan focusing on greater integration of family violence services' (Guiding Integrated Family Violence Service Reform 2006-2009).

In 2016, the Royal Commission into Family Violence (RCFV) acknowledged the inherent value of regional integration. Recommendation 193 recognised that FVRICs should be part of the governance structure 'for implementing the Commission's recommendations and overseeing systemic improvements in family violence policy' (RCFV Summary, 2016, p.97).

Today FVRICs play a strategic leadership role, building on the foundations of the strong relationships and a more integrated system to drive effective responses to family violence, whilst supporting Victoria's family violence reforms.

FVRICs bring together agencies and sectors that respond to family violence - the major players in the current family violence reform agenda of *Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change*. They are the only local governance structures that exist across the State with a focus on: local systems, a family violence lens and capacity building across all workforces.

The core functions of FVRICs are to maintain a strong focus on the local system; to understand what is needed at a system level so that a positive difference can be made to the experiences of service users entering and exiting the system at any point; and to inform decision makers of local system perspectives and thereby influence the direction of centrally-driven reform initiatives.

FVRICs strive to ensure mutually beneficial linkages with other local structures relevant to their system-focused function, including (but not limited to) Dhelk Dja Indigenous Regional Action Groups, Child and Family Services Alliances, Homelessness Networks, and primary prevention partnerships.

Principal Strategic Advisors (PSAs) across the State provide leadership and oversight of the work of FVRICs, providing advice to Committees, government and local services; coordinating capacity building initiatives and maintaining strategic relationships with key stakeholders.

## NIFVS Regional Integration Committee

The Northern Integrated Family Violence Services (NIFVS) Regional Integration Committee provides family violence system leadership across the northern metropolitan region (NMR) of Melbourne. This includes the two Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) areas of Hume Moreland and North East Melbourne encompassing the seven Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Banyule, Darebin, Hume, Moreland, Nillumbik, Whittlesea and Yarra.

The Committee includes senior managers and CEOs from all specialist family violence services (working with victim survivors and perpetrators and including The Orange Door) as well as representatives from Child and Family Services, Courts, Victoria Police, Dhelk Dja Indigenous Regional Action Group, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse services, hospitals, alcohol and other drug services, homelessness services, sexual assault services, community legal services and women's health leading the Prevention of Violence Against Women (PVAW) strategy for the NMR.

The Committee also includes representatives from relevant government departments including the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (Local areas and Child Protection) and the Department of Justice and Community Safety.

More than 400 services across the NMR are engaged in the work of NIFVS Partnership. Because of the large number of services responding to family violence across the NMR, apart from family violence services, there is one representative from each intersecting service type or sector.

These representatives are selected based on recommendations from existing networks and are responsible for communicating with their respective sectors on developments occurring within the Committee.

In the NMR the Committee is supported by the NIFVS team, comprising the Principal Strategic Advisor, a Senior Workforce Development Officer and a Regional Integration Resource Worker.

## Our Vision

A future where all people are safe and free from family violence.

## Our Mission

Provide regional leadership that increases the safety of victim survivors, the accountability of perpetrators and strengthens Victoria's family violence reforms.

## Our Approach

**Gendered:** We recognise that family violence is a deeply gendered issue rooted in the structural inequalities and the imbalance of power between men and women. Family violence is overwhelmingly perpetrated by men against women and children.

**Intersectional:** We use an inclusive lense that recognises that characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion or age, can interact to create intersecting forms of discrimination. We acknowledge that diverse groups frequently contend with intersectional risks that can increase the prevalence and/or severity of family violence.

**Victim Survivor Centred:** Victim survivor experiences are front and centre of our system response. We work together to increase the safety of victim survivors, including children, providing opportunities for them to rebuild their lives and thrive.

**Perpetrator Focused:** We work to keep perpetrators in view in order to prioritise the safety of victim survivors. Our strategies aim to increase perpetrator accountability and ensure they are appropriately engaged and connected across the service system.

**Regional:** We are informed by local context. Our strategies are tailored to the NMR and its distinctive population, geography and service system. We work across all workforces that respond to family violence utilising the expertise of professionals across the NMR.

## Policy Context

This plan was developed at a time of unprecedented advances in policy and planning for family violence response, especially at a State level.

The Victorian Government has made notable investments, with the Royal Commission into Family Violence in 2015, followed by *Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change* (2016), which commits to implementing all 227 recommendations from the Royal Commission. Major reforms are also underway in sectors that intersect with family violence response work including family services.

The laws, policies and strategies in the diagram below provide the context for work of the Committee.

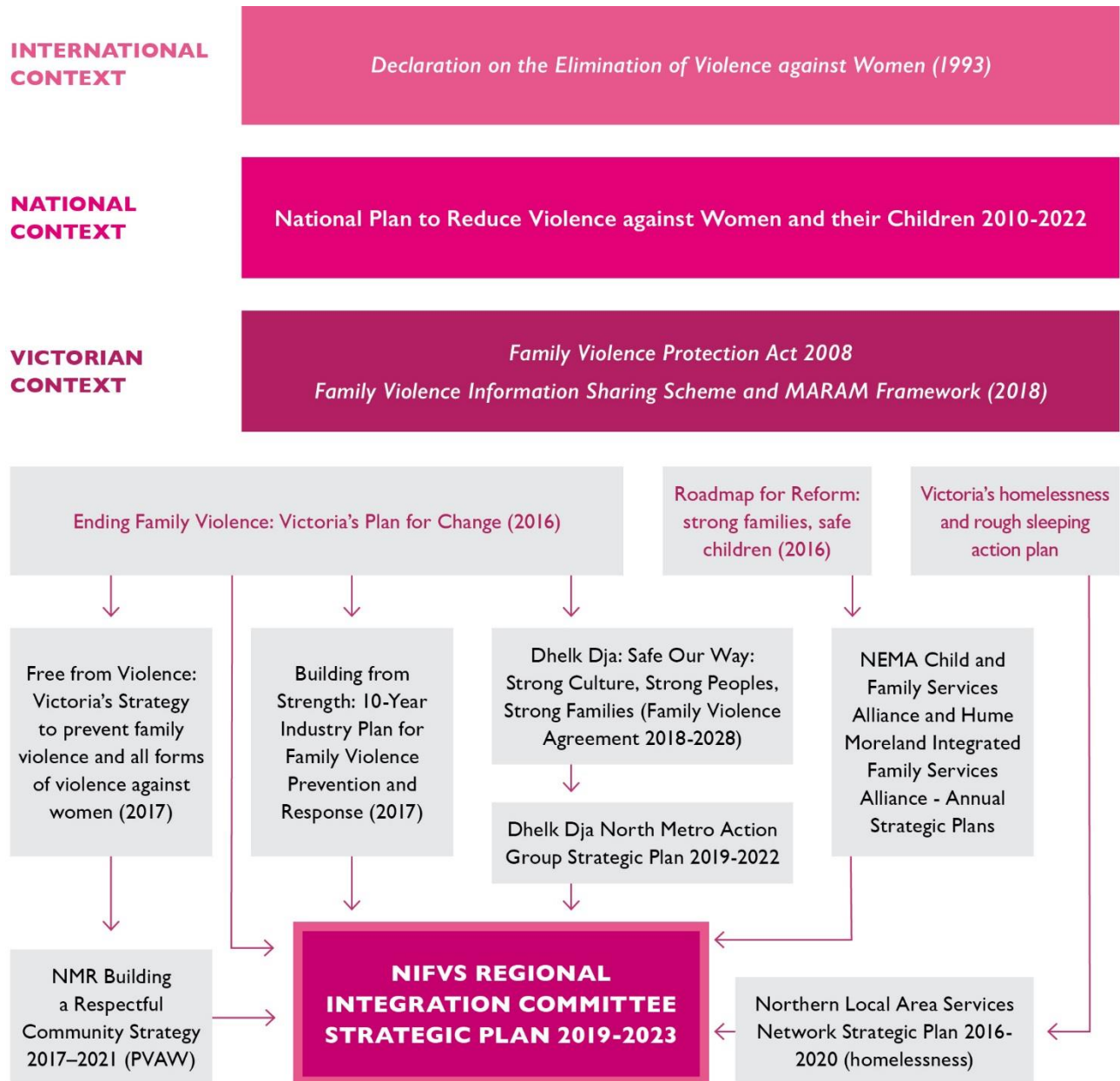


Figure 1: Policy and legislative context for NIFVS Regional Integration Committee Strategic Plan 2019-2023

## Plan Scope

The focus of the NIFVS Regional Integration Committee, and this plan, is on the early intervention, response and recovery end of the prevention continuum. Primary prevention work is led through the *Building a Respectful Community Strategy 2017-2021* and is supported by the Northern Metropolitan Region Prevention of Violence Against Women Committee, also convened by Women's Health In the North.



Based on *Our Watch*, ANROWS and VicHealth (2015) *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia*, *Our Watch*, Melbourne, Australia.

Figure 2: Scope of Strategic Plan against the continuum of prevention

## Planning process

Development of the *NIFVS Regional Integration Committee Strategic Plan 2019-2023* took place over a six month period, beginning with a special meeting of the Committee in October 2018. This meeting included discussion on the recently released *Strengthening the Future of Regional Integration Report* which recommended that four high-level priorities serve as a consistent platform for Regional Integration Committees across Victoria including: governance and system leadership; integration of reform initiatives; workforce development; and service data collation and local area profiling.

Committee members considered the report recommendations, discussed current context (including family violence reforms) and agreed on high-level strategic priorities.

Action planning and consensus building on proposed actions took place in December 2018. The Principal Strategic Advisor and her team subsequently drafted a strategic plan which was presented at the February 2019 meeting. Following broad endorsement and feedback by Committee members, stakeholders across the NMR had the opportunity to provide feedback via an online survey.

The Committee endorsed the final *NIFVS Regional Integration Committee Strategic Plan 2019-2023* at the April 2019 meeting and endorsed an update to the action plan in April 2021.

## Strategic priorities and timeframe

The *NIFVS Regional Integration Committee Strategic Plan 2019-2023* has four strategies to provide regional leadership over the next four years. The strategic priority areas are:

- Leadership
- Workforce
- Knowledge
- Governance



*Figure 3: Priority areas for NIFVS Regional Integration Committee 2019-2023 Strategic Plan*

The strategic priorities are explained below and an Annual Action Plan for 2021/2022 can be found in the next section.

## Leadership

The Committee plays a critical role in improving responses to family violence across the NMR, including the direction of the family violence reforms sought by *Ending Family Violence*.

As a respected and established cross-sector partnership, the Committee works to ensure responses to family violence are relevant and meaningful to the NMR, fostering an environment for innovation and collaboration, as well as monitoring and supporting the reforms.

The Committee and the NIFVS Team provide a central point for communicating family violence response and reform messages consistently and regularly to professionals across the region.

## Workforce

Workforce is a long standing priority area of the Committee, which is committed to responding to regional workforce issues and opportunities. The Committee maintains a system level approach to workforce development and capacity building that goes beyond individuals or organisations.

Training, forums and communities of practice build the capability of new and experienced professionals across the *Building from Strength 10-Year Industry Plan* workforce Tiers 1 – Tier 4 workforces<sup>1</sup>.

## Knowledge

The Committee's strategies and actions are informed by current evidence, research, consultation and evaluation to build knowledge and achieve continuous system improvement. The region specific data we collect will be utilised to improve responses to family violence and to provide Statewide feedback.

## Governance

Ensuring the ongoing effectiveness and relevance of the Committee as the partnership for family violence response across two DHHS areas in the NMR, this priority area supports the work of the Committee on its own internal processes. It also ensures critical linkages to both regional and Statewide governance structures relevant to family violence.

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<sup>1</sup> *Building from Strength: 10-Year Industry Plan for Family Violence Prevention and Response*, identifies four tiers of the workforce:

- 1) Specialist family violence workers (sole or major focus on family violence and sexual assault).
- 2) Workers in core support and intervention agencies (Mandated agencies, including Victoria Police, courts, legal agencies and court services, Corrections Victoria and Child Protection. Other agencies including Child FIRST and Integrated Family Services and family violence counselling services).
- 3) Workers in mainstream services including the health-care system (GPs, community health, hospitals), therapeutic services (psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, counsellors, family therapists) and agencies that support financial security, such as Centrelink.
- 4) Workers in universal services (including schools, childcare centres and faith-based institutions).



## Action Plan 2021/2022

Priority 1 – Leadership			
Objectives			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide system leadership and advice to drive effective responses across services that respond to family violence.</li> <li>• Act as the regional point of strategic contribution, coordination and communication for the planning and implementation of system level reforms of <i>Ending Family Violence</i>.</li> </ul>			
Strategies	Timelines	Responsibilities	Indicators of Achievement
1.1 Identify and prioritise regional family violence system issues leading solutions to improve responses to family violence.	Continuously	Committee members and PSA	System issues are effectively identified and prioritised and problem solving occurs.
1.2 Develop strategies to keep perpetrators in view, identifying opportunities to improve responses to perpetrators across the system.	June 2022	Perpetrator Intervention Programs	Secondary consultation and collaborative risk management with perpetration intervention services is strengthened.
1.3 Maintain effective communications with organisations across the NMR via the NIFVS website, e newsletters and Facebook.	Ongoing	NIFVS Team	A range of Tier 1 - 4 professionals have access to timely information that will improve responses to family violence.
1.4 Monitor the regional implementation of key system level reforms (incl. The Orange Door, information sharing schemes and the MARAM) to support both regional implementation and Statewide reporting/ advocacy.	Continuously	Committee members and NIFVS Team	System reform implementation issues are identified via a range of mechanisms and reported to the Committee.  Bi-monthly updates provided by members at Committee meetings.
1.5 Drive the effective implementation of key system level reforms in the NMR (incl. The Orange Door, information sharing schemes and the MARAM).	Ongoing	Committee members and NIFVS Team	Opportunities to support effective reform implementation are identified, promoted and implemented.
1.6 Influence government decision making, providing timely feedback to Family Safety Victoria (FSV) and other Victorian Government departments on the regional implementation of reforms.	As identified	PSA and Committee members	PSA promotes the work of the NMR, and advocates on key issues facing the NMR at a Statewide level.  PSA feeds into statewide briefings and position papers by the Statewide Family Violence Integration Advisory Committee.

Priority 2 – Workforce			
Objectives			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guide, implement and report on workforce development and capacity building at the regional level in line with <i>Building from Strength: 10-Year Industry Plan</i>.</li> <li>• Continue to enhance workforce capability to effectively respond to family violence across Tier 1 to Tier 4 workforces.</li> <li>• Support/ promote the development of a diverse workforce.</li> <li>• Build capabilities of emerging leaders and strengthen practice of existing leaders.</li> </ul>			
Strategies	Timelines	Responsibilities	Indicators of Achievement
2.1 Support the regional implementation of the first rolling action plan for Building from Strength	June 2022	Workforce Development Working Group and NIFVS Team	Opportunities to support Building from Strength are identified.
2.2 Support the implementation of key practice reforms including information sharing and MARAM.	Immediate and ongoing	NIFVS Team	Advice is provided to organisations in the implementation of the reforms.  Regional activity compliments Statewide capacity building and training.
2.3 Support the implementation of family violence capacity building initiatives in the NMR.	Immediate and ongoing	NIFVS Team	Family Violence Capacity Building Community of Practice convened quarterly.  PSA and team provides support and regional linkages to initiatives as they emerge.
2.4 Partner with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) to strengthen cultural safety in family violence services.	Completed. Funded project ceased Dec 2020	Family violence services in partnership with ACCOs	ACCO Cultural Safety Officers find family violence services to be more culturally safe.
2.5 Pursue a partnership with a university to deliver a graduate program for Tier 1 workers, whilst prioritising diversity.	June 2022	NIFVS Team	Partnership is established with a university.
2.6 Provide a suite of training to professionals including: MARAM Collaborative Practice, Resisting Collusion with Male Perpetrators and Identifying Family Violence.	Immediate and ongoing	NIFVS Team	Identifying Family Violence sessions provided as requested.  Eight Resisting Collusion with Male Perpetrators sessions per year  MARAM Collaborative Practice provided fortnightly

2.7 Continue to coordinate and deliver topic-based forums and regional induction sessions.	Immediate and ongoing	NIFVS Team	Three forums per year Two regional inductions per year
2.8 Continue to facilitate a range of communities of practice (CoP) to respond to emerging practice issues and opportunities across the service system.	Immediate and ongoing	NIFVS Team	<p>Quarterly CoPs provided for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counselling and Support Alliance</li> <li>• Resisting Collusion with Male Perpetrators</li> <li>• Family Violence Capacity Building</li> <li>• Safe &amp; Together</li> <li>• Peer Support for Senior Managers.</li> </ul> <p>Learnings from CoPs are shared with those unable to attend.</p>

### Priority 3 – Knowledge

#### Objectives

- Establish an evidence base to inform the work of the Committee.
- Purposefully collect, collate and share regional data.
- Share evidence based research and resources with professionals across the NMR.

Strategies	Timelines	Responsibilities	Indicators of Achievement
3.1 Develop a Family Violence Regional Integration Committee Research and Evaluation Framework in partnership with other FVRICs.	Completed July 2020	PSA with other FVRICs	Research and Evaluation Framework established and implemented.
3.2 Develop and implement a data strategy that supports the strategic systems focus of the Committee.	June 2022	Committee members and NIFVS Team	Data strategy developed and implementation commenced.  Data enables Committee to be proactive rather than reactive.
3.3 Understand victim survivor and perpetrator journeys through the service system using both new and existing journey mappings.	June 2022	NIFVS Team	Existing service user mappings are identified and utilised.  Client journeys are mapped utilising the expertise of those with lived experience.
3.4 Develop practical resources that respond to regional priorities and support best practice by utilising the knowledge of regional experts.	Annually	NIFVS Team	Practice resources are developed and made available on the NIFVS website.
3.5 Promote evidence-based research and resources through the NIFVS eNews, website and practice forums.	Ongoing	NIFVS Team	Relevant State and national research and resources are promoted across NIFVS communications platforms.

## Priority 4 – Governance

### Objectives

- Enhance linkages with regional and Statewide governance structures that are relevant to family violence response.
- Ensure membership and participation by Committee members represents key parts of the service system and enhances the work of the Committee.
- Strengthen internal processes and structures to ensure the Committee and its working groups remain collaborative, relevant and effective.

Strategies	Timelines	Responsibilities	Indicators of Achievement
4.1 Enhance the position of the Committee as the leading partnership for family violence system reform across the NMR.	Ongoing	PSA and Chair	State and regional government departments utilise the Committee to inform effective family violence responses in the NMR, including the implementation of systems reforms.  The Committee has a clear role and relationship with The Orange Door.
4.2 Strengthen collaboration with regional governance structures relevant to family violence.	Immediate and ongoing	Committee members and PSA	Collaborative activities with various governance groups and associated sectors.  Active involvement of PSA, Chair and/ or Committee members on related regional governance structures.
4.3. Ensure ongoing linkages between the Committee and Statewide governance structures, Victorian Government departments and peak bodies to strengthen 'vertical integration'.	Immediate and ongoing	Chair and PSA	Clear mechanisms are established to connect the Committee with statewide influencers and decision makers.
4.4 Regularly monitor efficacy of the Committee, including roles and responsibilities, processes and functioning.	Annually	Chair, Deputy Chair and PSA	Partnership review results demonstrate efficacy of Committee.  Committee members are actively engaged and carry out their roles as per the Committee Terms of Reference.
4.5 Ensure the Committee can effectively respond to the two DHHS areas and other sector catchment areas across its region.	Ongoing	PSA and Chair	Committee activities consider, and effectively respond to, all LGAs across the NMR.