

# Royal Commission into Family Violence

31 March 2016

## VAADA summary for the AOD sector

The final report of the Royal Commission into Family Violence ‘The Report’ was tabled in Parliament on 30 March 2016. The seven volume report contains 227 recommendations which the Victorian Government has committed to implementing.

The breadth and depth of the report is unprecedented and comprehensively considers:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The nature, dynamics and effects of family violence</li> <li>• Risk assessment and management</li> <li>• Information sharing</li> <li>• Specialist family violence services &amp; systems</li> <li>• A safe home</li> <li>• Children and young people’s experiences of family violence</li> <li>• Family Violence and the child protection system</li> <li>• Sexual assault and family violence</li> <li>• Pathways to services</li> <li>• Police: front-line operation and workforce as well as leadership, resourcing and organisational systems</li> <li>• Court-based responses to family violence</li> <li>• Offences and sentencing</li> <li>• Perpetrators</li> <li>• The role of the health system (including alcohol services)</li> <li>• Recovery: health and wellbeing</li> <li>• Financial security</li> <li>• Restorative justice for victims</li> <li>• Adolescents who use family violence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family violence and the family law system</li> <li>• Review of family violence-related deaths</li> <li>• Family violence and diversity</li> <li>• Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples</li> <li>• Older People</li> <li>• Culturally and linguistically diverse communities</li> <li>• Faith communities</li> <li>• Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex communities</li> <li>• People with disabilities</li> <li>• Male victims</li> <li>• Rural, regional and remote communities</li> <li>• Women in prison</li> <li>• Women working in the sex industry</li> <li>• Prevention</li> <li>• The workplace</li> <li>• Sustainable and certain governance</li> <li>• Data, research and evaluation</li> <li>• Industry planning</li> <li>• Investment</li> </ul>
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VAADA has prepared this initial summary of the findings and recommendations that will have a direct impact on Victorian alcohol and other drug (AOD) services. A copy of the Report and recommendations is available at: <http://www.rcfv.com.au/Report-Recommendations>

## Key recommendations relevant to AOD services

The Commission's findings clearly emphasise the need to address 'silos' in service provision and the need for enhanced cross-sector collaboration between AOD, mental health, family violence and men's behaviour change programs.

Below are some of the key recommendations pertaining to the work of the AOD sector, listed under the domains as they appeared in the Report.

### Risk Assessment and management

Risk assessment and management is considered in detail in Volume I of the Report, including exploration of current practices in Victoria and gaps in relation to assessing and managing family violence risk. The Commission recommends a number of changes to enhance the Family Violence Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework (known as Common Risk Assessment Framework, or the CRAF). The Commission identifies the need for a workforce development and training and a Family Violence Industry Plan. Recommendations of particular relevance to AOD include:

#### Recommendation 3

*The Victorian Government implement the revised Family Violence Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework and develop a sustained workforce development and training strategy as part of the recommended family violence industry plan [from 1 January 2018]. The framework should provide for:*

- *minimum standards and core competencies to guide identifying, risk assessment and risk management practice in family violence specialist services, mainstream services and universal services*
- ***whole-of-workforce training for priority sectors—including general practitioners and hospital, mental health, drug and alcohol, child protection, aged care and disability workers—that takes into account and aligns with their roles and standards of practice (emphasis added).***

#### Recommendation 9

The Victorian Government examine options for the development of a single case management data system to enable relevant agencies to view and share risk information in real time [within 12 months].

### Perpetrators

Perpetrators of family violence are the focus of Chapter 18 in Volume III of the Report (although issues relating to perpetrators are discussed throughout the report). The Royal Commission examined the individual risk factors for perpetrators of family violence, the available data and challenges and opportunities in responding to perpetrators. Some of the particular recommendations of relevance to AOD services in this area include:

#### Recommendation 86

The Victorian Government convene a committee of experts on perpetrator interventions and

behaviour change programs [within 12 months] to advise the government on the spectrum of programs, services and initiatives that should be available in Victoria—in the justice system and in the community—to respond to all perpetrators across varying forms and risk levels of family violence. The committee should consider men’s behaviour change programs, clinical models such as cognitive behaviour therapy, strengths-based programs and fathering-specific models, online programs, and services for perpetrators from diverse communities. The expert advisory committee should consist of members with expertise in a variety of disciplines and practice approaches and with experience in working directly with perpetrators and victims of family violence, including those from diverse communities.

### **Recommendation 87**

The Victorian Government, subject to advice from the recommended expert advisory committee and relevant ANROWS (Australia’s National Organisation for Women’s Safety) research, trial and evaluate interventions for perpetrators [within three years] that:

- provide individual case management where required
- deliver programs to perpetrators from diverse communities and to those with complex needs
- focus on helping perpetrators understand the effects of violence on their children and to become better fathers
- adopt practice models that build coordinated interventions, including cross-sector workforce development between the men’s behaviour change, mental health, drug and alcohol and forensic sectors

### **Recommendation 89**

The Secretary of the Department of Justice and Regulation approve a broader range of service providers to provide counselling services to perpetrators who are subject to a counselling order issued by the Magistrates’ Court of Victoria under section 130 of the Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic). Such service providers should have expertise in the interplay between family violence and drug and alcohol misuse or mental illness, provided the purpose of the counselling remains within the scope of the statutory objectives of Part 5 of the Act [within three years]

### **Recommendation 93**

The Victorian Government ensure that the terms of reference of the current review of the Liquor Control Reform Act 1998 (Vic) consider family violence and alcohol-related harms. The review should involve consultation with people who have expertise in the inter-relationship between family violence and alcohol use

## **The role of health system**

The role of the health system in identifying and responding to family violence is explored in Chapter 19 of Volume IV of the Report. It considers the role of mental health and alcohol and drug services in identifying and responding to family violence, noting that common screening and assessment tools in AOD take into account a range of factors contributing to a person’s circumstances, including relevant questions about family violence. The Commission considered particular barriers for AOD services in responding to family violence and the need for improved coordination between various health services. Specific recommendations pertaining to AOD services include:

### **Recommendation 98**

The Victorian Government fund the establishment of specialist family violence advisor positions to be located in major mental health and drug and alcohol services. The advisor's expertise should be available to practitioners in these sectors across Victoria [within 12 months].

### **Recommendation 99**

The Victorian Government encourage and facilitate mental health, drug and alcohol and family violence services to collaborate [within 12 months] by:

- resourcing and promoting shared casework models
- ensuring that mental health and drug and alcohol services are represented on Risk Assessment and Management Panels and other multi-agency risk management models at the local level.

### **Recommendation 100**

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists and psychologist and drug and alcohol service peak bodies collaborate to develop a database of psychiatrists, psychologists, drug and alcohol practitioners and any other professionals with expertise in family violence to help general practitioners when making referrals [within 12 months]

## **Rural, regional and remote communities**

The particular needs of rural, regional and remote communities are considered in Chapter 33 of Volume V of the Report. The Commission recognised the growing commitment to preventing and responding to family violence in these communities and the particular challenges posed by family violence across rural, regional and remote communities.

### **Recommendation 182**

The Victorian Government and other relevant parties, in designing the recommended Statewide Family Violence Action Plan and implementing the Commission's other recommendations:

- give priority to reducing family violence in rural, regional and remote communities
- improve access to services by victims and perpetrators of family violence in such communities
- investigate and fund the use of technological solutions to provide access to service providers— among them those with experience in safety planning and counselling
- when contracting for and funding services in these communities, recognise:
  - the importance of building the capacity of universal services to deliver family violence services in order to facilitate an effective, locally based response
  - the need for flexibility in contracting and funding arrangements in order to facilitate collaboration between different services and providers.

This initial summary is intended to provide the AOD sector with an outline of the recommendations immediately related to the AOD service system. VAADA notes a significant number of additional recommendations<sup>1</sup> have the potential to impact on the work of AOD services including more general recommendations pertaining to:

- data systems and information sharing;
- the establishment of Support and Safety Hubs in local communities throughout Victoria
- increasing access to group-based or individual counselling for people who have been affected by family violence;
- Industry Planning

VAADA will continue to assess the recommendations contained within the Commission's report and monitor the implementation of recommendations. VAADA will seek opportunities to support AOD services to implement the changes associated with the work of the Royal Commission.

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<sup>1</sup> The various recommendations that may have relevance to AOD services in addition to those detailed above include: **risk Assessment and management:** recommendations 1,2 and 4; **Information Sharing:** recommendation 5; **A Safe Home:** recommendation 17; **Children and young people's experience of family violence:** recommendation 24; **Sexual assault and family violence:** recommendation 34; **Pathways to services:** recommendation 38; **Perpetrators:** recommendation 86; **Recovery: health and wellbeing:** recommendations 104; **Family Violence and the family law system:** recommendation 134, **Family violence and diversity:** recommendation 139, **Rural, regional and remote communities:** recommendation 182, **Sustainable and certain governance:** recommendations 197-198; **Data, research and evaluation:** recommendations 203-206; **Industry Planning:** recommendation 212; **Investment:** recommendations 218, 219, 223 ,224 and 227.