

# Family and Domestic Violence Crisis Protection Framework

Southern Metropolitan Region  
Regional Implementation Plan

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January 2004

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## Foreword

In February 2002, the Victorian Government released its Family and Domestic Violence Crisis Protection Framework (CPF). The CPF provides direction for the delivery of comprehensive and flexible crisis protection responses to women and women with children who experience family and domestic violence.

The CPF was the product of consultation with stakeholders and provided a shared statement of purpose necessary to rethink existing models and to develop new approaches to family and domestic violence.

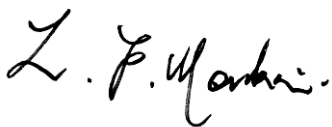
A focus of the CPF was a shift to service responses predominately based on geographic communities. The CPF also recognised the importance of consultation and collaboration with stakeholders at the local level in order to provide the best possible opportunity to develop and implement service arrangements with the capacity to respond to the individual needs of women and children escaping domestic violence.

In Southern Metropolitan Region (SMR) a CPF regional steering committee was established to provide a forum for information sharing amongst the stakeholders and for the various parties to actively contribute to the development of a CPF regional implementation plan. This document is the product of this collaboration.

The SMR CPF Regional Implementation Plan provides a clear direction for the development of family and domestic violence service responses in the region.

The collaborative effort amongst stakeholders has ensured that significant service improvements have already been achieved over the past 18 months. Many challenges remain and the plan provides a strategic framework for addressing these challenges.

I commend the plan to you.



Laurie Harkin  
Regional Director  
Southern Metropolitan Region

## Acknowledgements

The contributions of the following people and organisations are appreciated and acknowledged:

- Members of the Southern Metropolitan CPF Regional Steering Committee chaired by Helen Russell. Manager, Housing, Primary and Complex Care, Department of Human Services, Southern Region for their guidance and insights.
- Members of the Outer South, Peninsula, Middle South, Inner South and sub-regional workings groups, chaired by Janice Peterson, Sally Alsop, Helen Chetcuti and Catherine Plunkett respectively, for their contribution to the development of local service arrangements.
- All family and domestic violence service providers and other key stakeholders, including Victoria Police and local government representatives for their co-operation and assistance.
- Alison Fraser and Tony Newman of Office of Housing Community Programs Group for their advice and input.
- Tracie Martin, Team Leader, Homelessness Services, Department of Human Services Southern for her authorship of the SMR CPF Regional Implementation Plan and her skill in translating the directions of the Steering Committee into a cogent written form.

## Introduction

This document provides an account of the Southern Metropolitan Region's (SMR) response to the Family and Domestic Violence Crisis Protection Framework (the CPF).

This document includes:

- an overview of the processes undertaken in developing the SMR CPF Regional Implementation Plan
- a review of relevant family and domestic violence data
- an overview of the existing regional family and domestic violence service system and its capacity to meet the aims of the CPF
- a description of the preferred revised service system response
- implementation management arrangements and associated timelines
- a communication strategy
- an evaluation strategy
- an action plan
- a strategic directions framework.

The SMR CPF Regional Implementation Plan was developed over two years. In that time, family and domestic violence services in the region contributed a significant amount of time and a great deal of expertise to the process, to ensure that the final plan reflects the diversity of issues facing women and children experiencing family violence and is comprehensive in its response to those issues.

The plan, as detailed in this document, incorporates both a short-medium term plan for the delivery of domestic violence services in SMR during the 2003-04 and 2004-05 financial years and a longer term strategic directions component that highlights future priorities in relation to the delivery of domestic violence services in SMR.

As noted in the Victorian Homelessness Strategy (VHS), *Directions for Change* report:

[this approach recognises that immediate improvement can be made to the design and delivery of services, \[whilst acknowledging that\] a pragmatic approach that recognises systemic change to the way the service system operates must be incremental and provide opportunities for ongoing review and consultation.](#)

## Background information

### Women's Safety Strategy

As a part of the Victorian Government's Growing Victoria Together Strategy, a number of key initiatives have been developed.

The Minister for Women's Affairs launched one of these, the Women's Safety Strategy, in October 2002.<sup>1</sup> The five-year Women's Safety Strategy is the first comprehensive strategy to address violence against women by any Victorian Government for 17 years. It brings Ministers and government departments together to work within a single framework to improve women's safety, wellbeing and capacity to fully participate in Victorian life, by reducing the level and fear of violence against women. It has been developed by the Office of Women's Policy over two years and is the result of extensive consultation. The Women's Safety Strategy proposes to focus change in four key areas:

- protection and justice
- options for women
- prevention of violence
- community action and coordination.

Each of these areas incorporates a number of key directions and some projects have already begun to support these directions.

For instance, as a part of the protection and justice area, the Chief Commissioner of Police has established a project to improve police responses to violence against women; the Victorian Law Reform Commission is reviewing the defenses and partial excuses to homicide; and the Victorian Government is intending to review the Crimes (*Family Violence*) Act 1987.

The prevention of violence initiatives include the *Crime and Violence Prevention Strategy; a Code of practice for the prevention of bullying and violence in the workplace*; and the Department of Infrastructure's continuing improvement of safety on public transport.

Community action and coordination initiatives include Victoria Police local safety committees and an Indigenous family violence strategy that is being developed in partnership with Indigenous communities across Victoria.

### Crisis Protection Framework

One element of the options for women component of the Women's Safety Strategy is the Family and Domestic Violence Crisis Protection Framework (CPF).

The CPF aims to ensure a comprehensive, coordinated and flexible response to women and children affected by family violence. The CPF was first released in February 2002,<sup>2</sup> having been endorsed by the Minister for Community Services and the Minister for Housing and Senior Victorians. It provides a framework for the future development of family violence crisis support and accommodation services in Victoria. The release of the CPF followed 18 months of consultation with community agencies involved in providing services to women and children experiencing family and domestic violence.

The CPF identified a number of key themes central to the development of a service system that has the capacity to provide long-term sustainable outcomes for people escaping family and domestic violence. These themes include:

- providing a local area based service system that has the capacity to provide an individualised response to clients
- maximising client and worker safety through a range of security measures appropriate to the client's situation
- recognising and responding to client diversity
- providing a continuum of care incorporating extended hour accessibility through clear entry points, well targeted services, comprehensive information provision and safe exit options
- providing specialist assessment and referral through visible and accessible entry points that incorporate a comprehensive risk assessment
- maintaining or establishing client connectedness to informal and formal networks of support
- a service system environment that supports strong service networking and collaboration.<sup>3</sup>

A key outcome of the CPF is a requirement that all regions in Victoria develop a CPF regional implementation plan.

## Victorian Homelessness Strategy

Concurrent with the Women's Safety Strategy, the Victorian Government developed the VHS.

The final report of the VHS, *Directions for Change*, proposes an integrated and holistic response to tackling homelessness.<sup>4</sup> It outlines an action plan that identifies some immediate initiatives to improve the accessibility and responsiveness of the homelessness service system and a strategic plan that identifies some longer-term changes to the way homelessness is addressed in Victoria. Amongst the VHS initiatives that intersect with the domestic violence service system in SMR are:

- the Homelessness Service System Development (HSSD) project
- the Housing Establishment Fund (HEF) Review
- the Housing information and integration Program(HiiP)
- interim bed vacancy register
- integrated data collection
- common assessment and referral tool development

The HSSD project is designed to facilitate changes to the homelessness service system to improve accessibility and responsiveness to clients through greater collaboration, local area planning and integration of homelessness services. This project is being undertaken in the Outer South and Frankston/Peninsula subregions of SMR. The HSSD project will incorporate each of the domestic violence services in the project catchment area and will include the implementation of an interim bed vacancy register, an integrated data collection and a common assessment and referral tool.

In addition to these activities, two key family-focused initiatives, Best Start and Vulnerable Families, are being implemented in the Frankston area. The Best Start initiative focuses on families with children aged between 0-8 years of age. It aims to improve the health, development, learning and wellbeing of all children across Victoria from pregnancy through transition to school. It will achieve this aim through supporting communities, parents, families and service providers to improve universal local early years service systems.

The Vulnerable Families initiative aims to develop new service approaches to better support families with complex needs, to alleviate family distress and breakdown and minimise the risk of child abuse or neglect. It also aims to minimise progression of families known to statutory services into the child protection system.

Each of the projects discussed above will interface with the domestic violence service system in SMR and will, therefore, be addressed in this document.

## Regional processes

As a first stage in the development of the SMR CPF Regional Implementation Plan, Department of Human Services SMR established a representative group of providers and other stakeholders to participate in a regional CPF steering group.<sup>5</sup>

Key outcomes of the steering group included:

- development of a proposed service system configuration that can be adapted to the needs of each subregion in SMR
- development of four subregional working groups to review the proposed service system configuration and adapt it to the needs of their local area<sup>6</sup>
- ongoing input and review of the subregional working groups' proposed service system configurations
- feedback on the draft CPF regional implementation plan.

The subregional working groups, in consultation with stakeholders in their local areas, developed service system model proposals for submission to the regional steering group.<sup>7</sup> The four subregions were:

- Inner South - including the Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Port Phillip and Stonington
- Middle South - including the LGAs of Glen Eira, Bayside and Kingston
- Outer South - including the LGAs of Greater Dandenong, Casey and Cardinia
- Frankston/Peninsula, including Frankston and Mornington Peninsula LGAs.

The proposed models provided a foundation for the development of this regional implementation plan document.

A draft regional implementation plan was released for comment in April 2003. A final round of consultation was then undertaken with the major providers of family and domestic violence services in SMR. Feedback from this process was tabled at the final SMR CPF steering group meeting held in June 2003.

To ensure a continued focus on the progression of the CPF in SMR, the steering group endorsed the establishment of two implementation groups: one supporting Inner and Middle South, the other supporting Outer/Peninsula. The work of these groups began before this plan was finalised and will continue throughout the implementation and evaluation phases of the plan. Further consultation processes are planned in the coming 12 months. These are detailed in the Communication Strategy.

## Regional data

In addition to the subregional working groups' proposed models, the following indicators have also been central to the development of the SMR CPF Regional Implementation Plan:

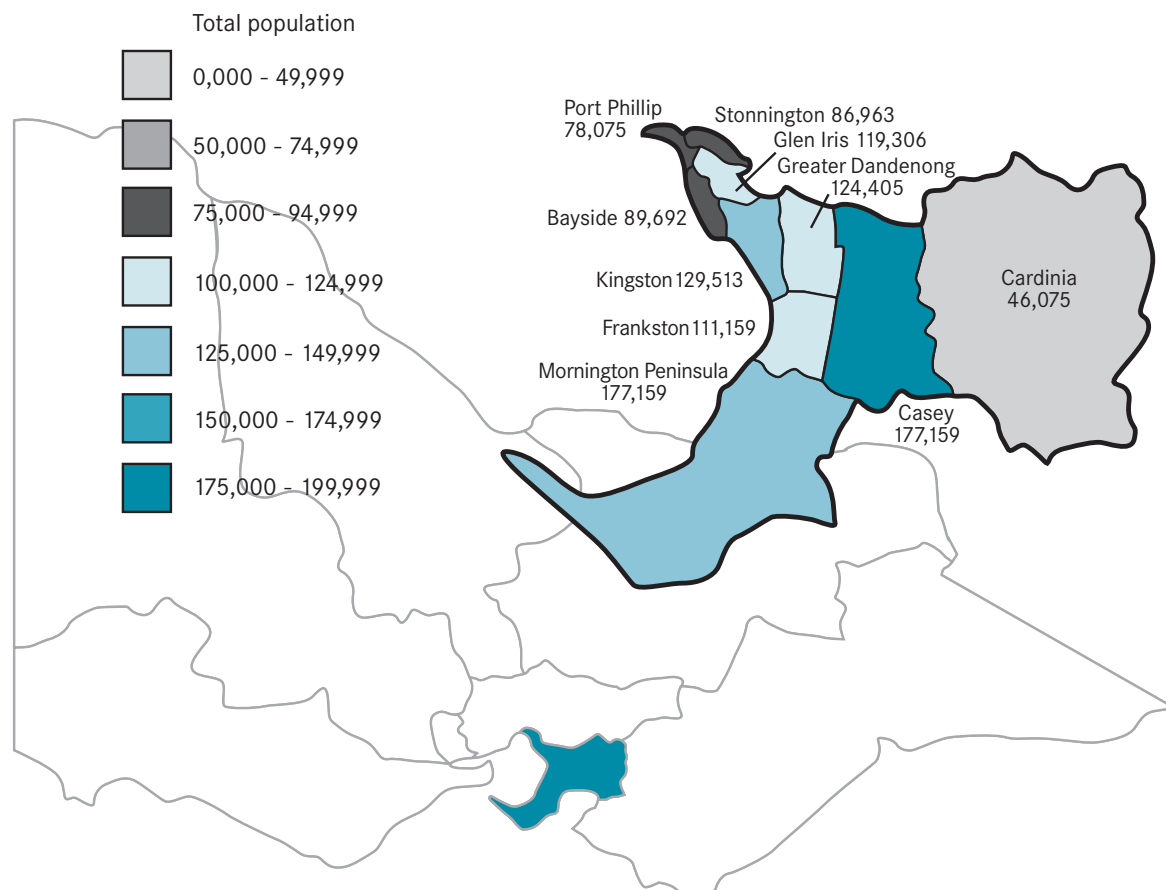
- SMR geographic and demographic information
- existing SMR service provider information
- SMR police response information.

### Geographic and demographic information

#### SMR is comprised of 10 LGAs:

The cities of Port Phillip, Stonnington, Glen Eira, Kingston, Bayside, Greater Dandenong, Casey and Frankston and the shires of Cardinia and Mornington Peninsula. Together these LGAs incorporate 23.6 per cent of Victoria's population, approximately 1.1 million people.<sup>8</sup>

Map 1 SMR population distribution 2001



As can be seen, across the whole of the region the LGAs of Casey (15.6 per cent), Mornington Peninsula (15.6 per cent), Kingston (11.4 per cent) and Greater Dandenong (11 per cent) have the highest populations. Cardinia (4.1 per cent) and Port Phillip (6.9 per cent) have the smallest populations.

For planning and service delivery purposes, the 10 LGAs are divided into the same subregions used by the CPF subregional working groups.

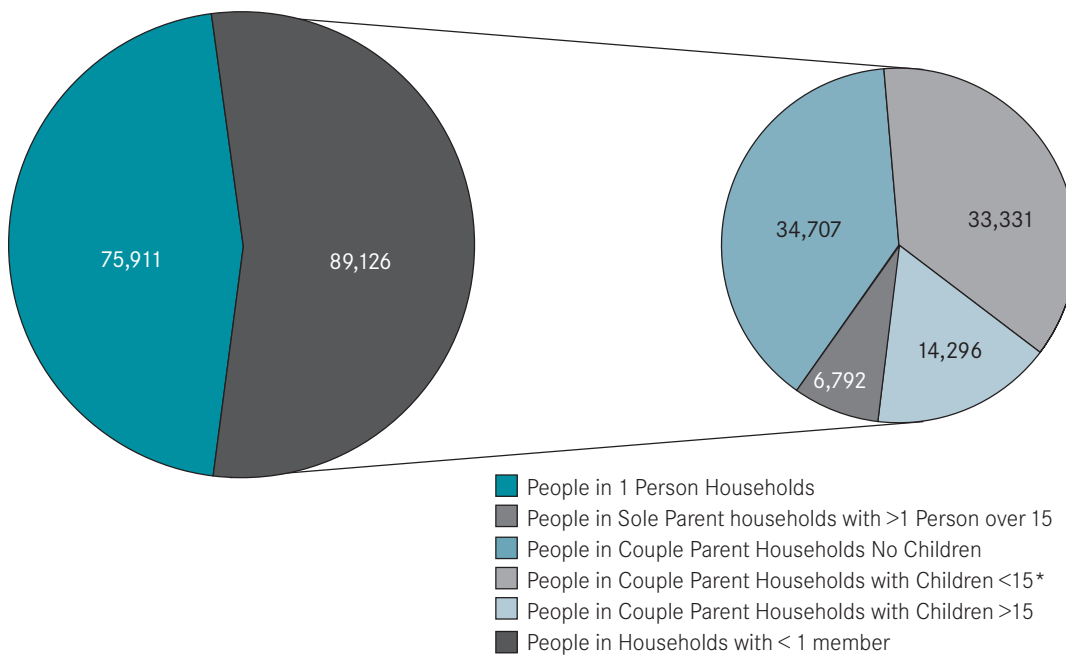
### Inner South

The Inner South subregion is the smallest in SMR with a population of 165,037 people.

Of this number, there are 89,126 people living in households with more than one member. The vast majority of family and domestic violence clients are likely to form a part of this subgroup.

Of the people living in households with more than one member, 6,792 are part of sole parent families with children over the age of 15, 47,627 live in two parent households and 34,707 live in couple with no children households.

**Figure 1 Inner South (population 165,037)**



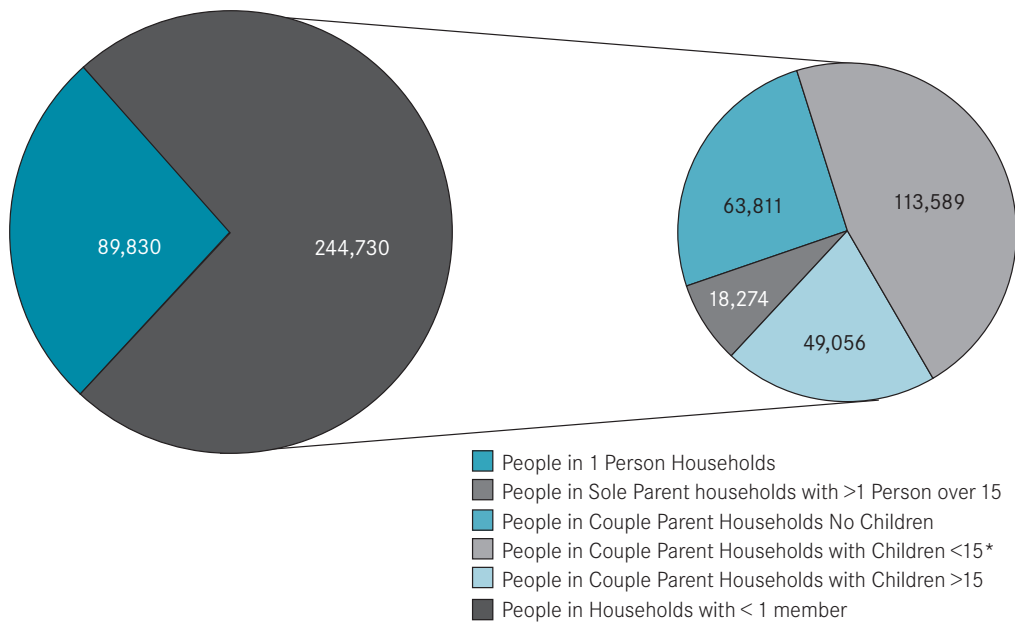
### Middle South

The Middle South subregion has a population of 334,560 people.

Of this number, there are 244,730 people living in households with more than one member.

Of the people living in households with more than one member, 18,274 are part of sole parent families with children over the age of 15; 162,645 live in two parent households and 63,811 live in couple with no children households.

**Figure 2 Middle South (population 334,560)**



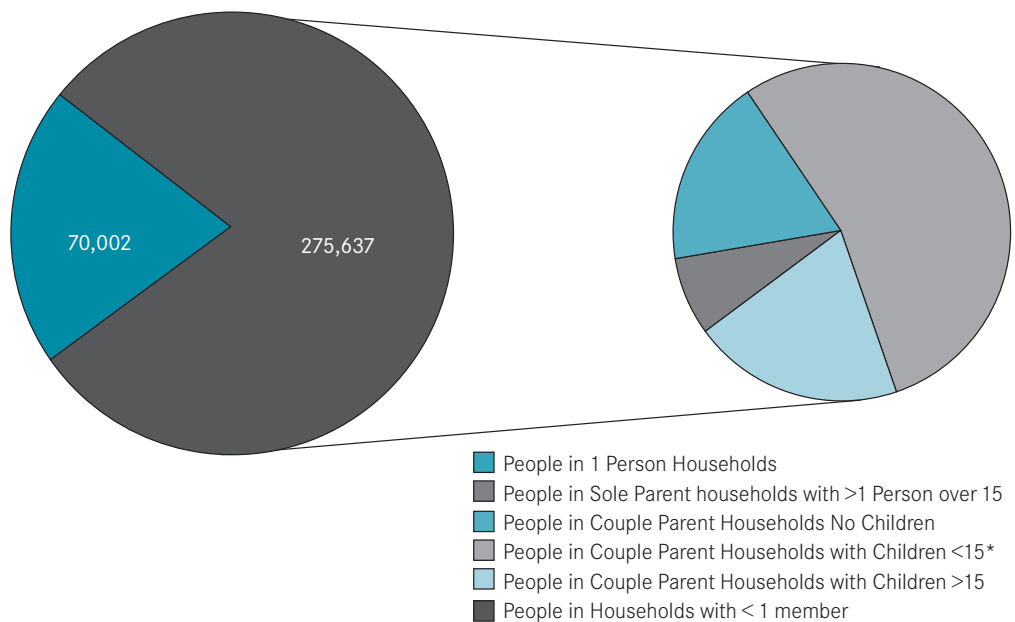
### Outer South

The Outer South subregion has a population of 347,639 people.

Of this number, there are 275,637 people living in households with more than one member.

Of the people living in households with more than one member, 19,950 are part of sole parent families with children over the age of 15; 204,337 live in two parent households and 51,350 live in couple with no children households.

**Figure 3 Outer South (population 347,639)**



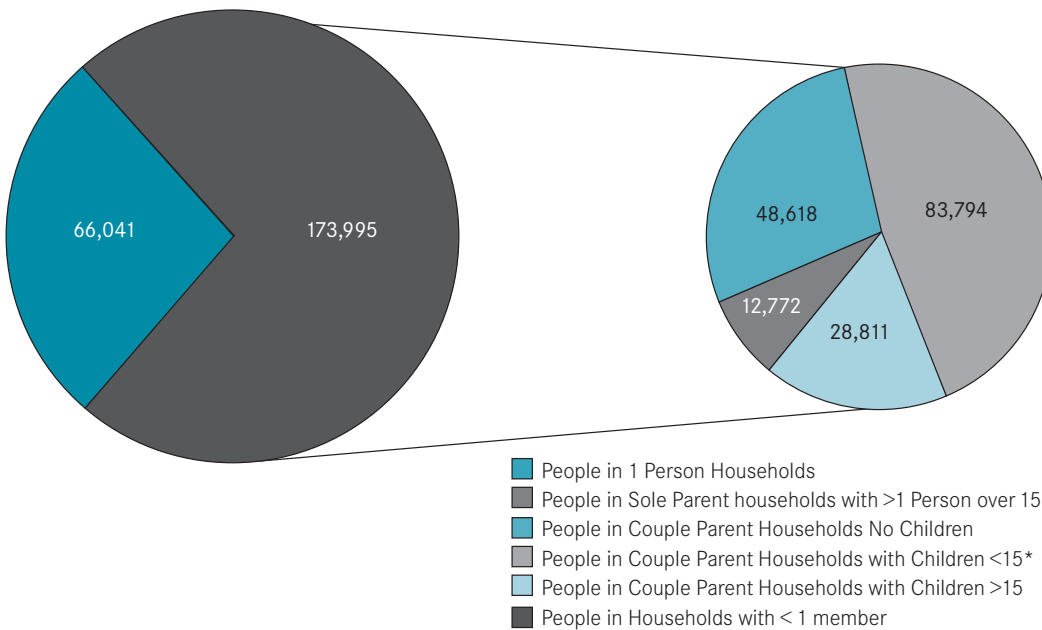
### Frankston/Peninsula

The Frankston/Peninsula subregion has a population of 288,311 people.

Of this number, there are 173,995 people living in households with more than one member.

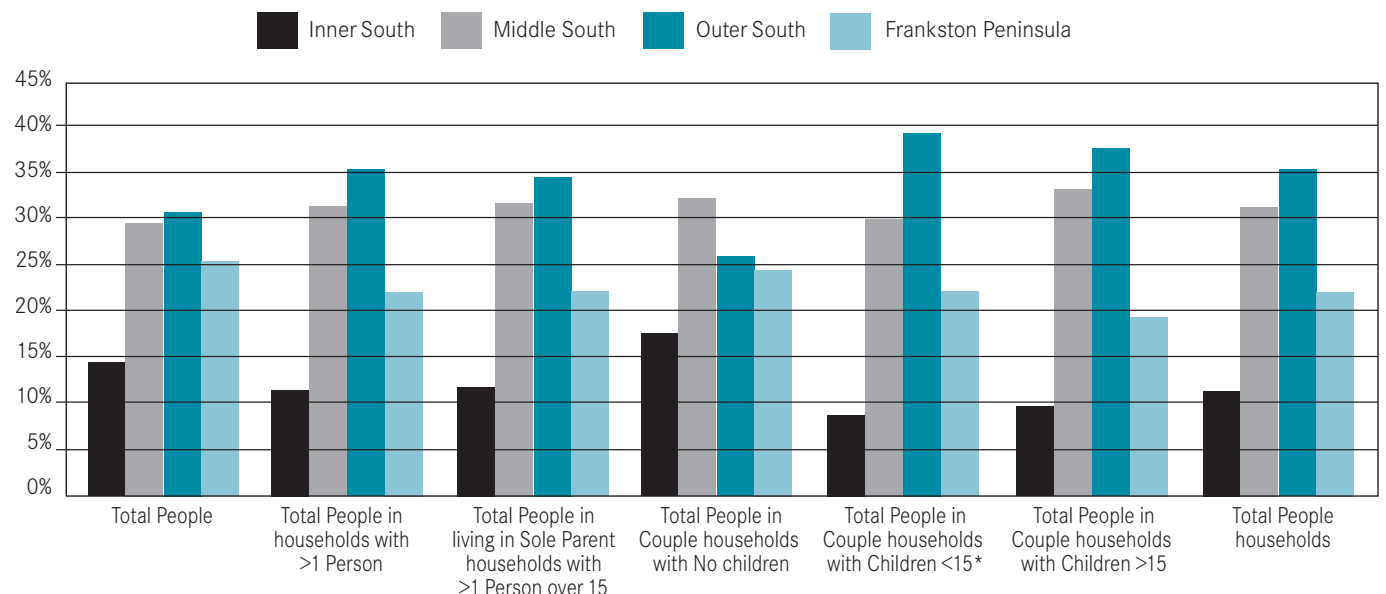
Of the people living in households with more than one member, 12,772 are part of sole parent families with children over the age of 15; 112,605 live in two parent households and 48,618 live in couple with no children households.

**Figure 4 Frankston/Peninsula (population 288,311)**



The number of people living in households comprised of couples with children younger than 15 years of age is particularly high in Outer South. This is a reflection of the large number of young families in the growth corridor LGAs of Casey and Cardinia. The number of people living in households comprised of couples with no children is notably higher in Inner South than any other group. These two factors are of particular significance in terms of children’s support resources in the domestic violence sector.

**Figure 5 SMR population by LGA and family type 2001**

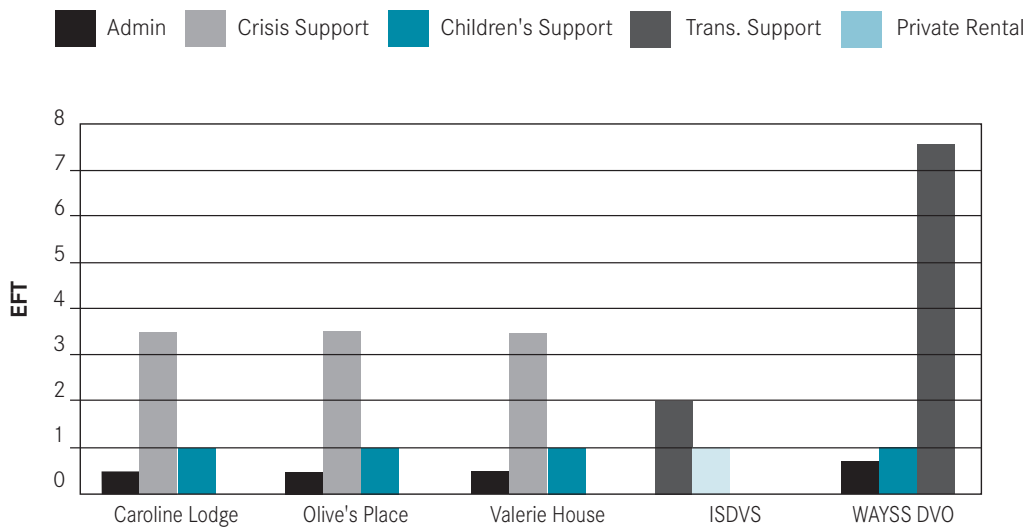


### Existing provider information<sup>9</sup>

Prior to the SMR CPF planning process, there were three women’s refuges and two domestic violence outreach services operating in SMR.

In total, these services incorporated 12.5 equivalent full-time (EFT) crisis support positions, 1.5 EFT crisis administration positions, three EFT crisis children’s support positions, 9.5 EFT transitional support positions, one EFT private rental brokerage, 0.75 EFT transitional administration position and one EFT transitional children’s support position.

**Figure 6 SMR domestic violence targeted positions 2001-02 by agency**



### Women’s refuges

The three women’s refuges in SMR are funded to provide crisis accommodation and support to women and children escaping domestic violence, for an average duration of support of six weeks.

The following discussion reflects the service system as it was prior to the SMR CPF planning process.

Each of the refuges has 3.5 EFT support staff, 0.5 EFT administration staff and one EFT children’s support staff. The women’s refuges operate with a statewide catchment, with referrals primarily through the statewide crisis referral line, the Women’s Domestic Violence Crisis Service (WDVCS) and no direct access in the local area. Each of the refuges operates within a referral exclusion zone, which designates a number of suburbs surrounding the refuge as ‘unsafe’. No referrals are accepted from those suburbs.

Within the refuges there is a wealth of expertise and experience. One of the refuges, for instance, is very well linked into some of the many culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities in the region. Together, staff members speak five community languages and have a high level of understanding of the particular needs of those communities. This service currently provides 73 per cent of its episodes of care to CALD women in general and 43 per cent to Vietnamese women (including many from SMR) in particular. This service operates from a well-established, secure communal living property and also supports six Transitional Housing Management (THM) and Crisis Accommodation Program (CAP) properties.<sup>10</sup>

Another of the refuges in SMR operates out of a large and well-maintained property situated within easy walking distance of public transport. It is well connected and supported by the local community. In addition to its on site accommodation, this refuge provides outreach support to 13 THM and CAP properties.

The other refuge in SMR is well situated in terms of management infrastructure and service linkages, as it is auspiced by a large, high profile generalist support provider in an isolated section of SMR. This refuge does not currently have a suitable main refuge property however, and consideration needs to be given to where this service could optimally be located within a redeveloped service system. In addition to its on site refuge accommodation, this refuge provides support to six THM and CAP properties.

In the 2001-02 financial year, the three refuges provided a total 366 episodes of support to women and children escaping domestic violence at an average duration of support (DOS) of seven weeks. Projected performance for 2002-03 suggests that the

three refuges are unlikely to meet their combined targets. This is due to a number of factors that are largely outside the control of the respective agencies.

These factors include difficulty in obtaining safe, secure and affordable housing for their clients within the six-week timeframe and the lack of vacancies in the transitional domestic violence services in the region to refer clients requiring longer support or accommodation. SMR refuges also report a significant number of clients who have no residency status and therefore no income, who often reside at the service for long periods of time, as no exit options are available for them until they have an income stream.

### Domestic violence outreach services

The two domestic violence outreach services in SMR are funded to provide transitional accommodation or support to women and children escaping domestic violence, with an agreed average duration of support of 13 weeks.

The following discussion reflects the service system as it was prior to the SMR CPF planning process.

The Inner South Domestic Violence Service (ISDVS) has two EFT support positions and one EFT attached to a VHS pilot private rental brokerage position. ISDVS has a catchment area of Port Phillip and Stonington and is co-located with the St Kilda Crisis Contact Centre (CCC). As such, a high proportion of its clients tend to be local residents with complex needs. ISDVS has an annual target of 96 episodes of support.

Although ISDVS is a transitional support service, there is no domestic violence crisis service located in its catchment area and this factor, combined with ISDVS's co-location with a 24-hour generalist crisis service, results in their providing support to significant numbers of women and children needing domestic violence crisis accommodation and support.

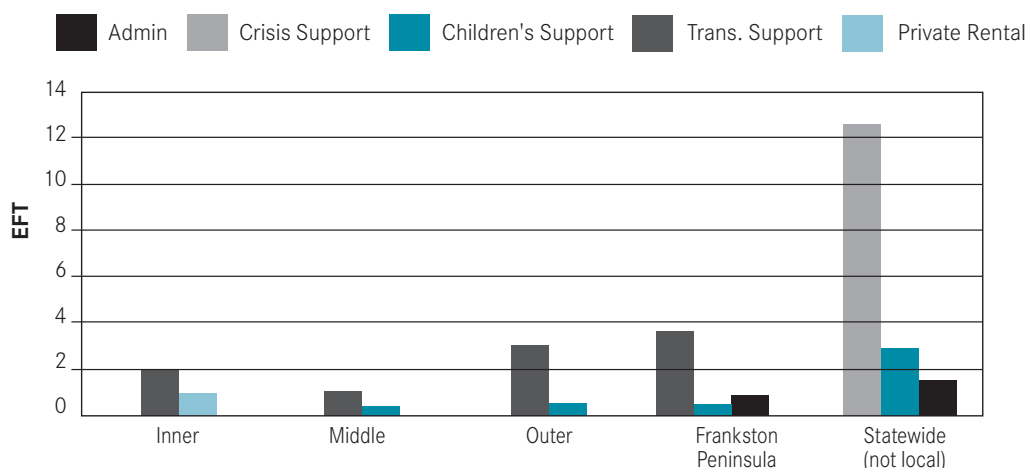
This fact is reflected in the performance of ISDVS, which highlights the significant pressures facing this service. In 2001-02, ISDVS provided 182 episodes of support, with an average duration of support of six weeks: this was more than double their agreed annual target, but with an average duration of support half that targeted.

The private rental brokerage pilot at ISDVS will have access to approximately \$50,000 brokerage funds. These funds are targeted to women in ISDVS's catchment area whose predominant issue is accommodation. This initiative should provide ISDVS with capacity to provide long-term stable outcomes for a group of women subject to domestic violence, who could not previously be assisted.

WAYSS Domestic Violence Outreach Service (WAYSS DVO) provides transitional accommodation or support to the balance of SMR. It has one EFT support located in Middle South, three EFT located in Outer South and three EFT located in Frankston/Peninsula. WAYSS DVO also has one EFT children's support position, funded by the Family Violence Prevention and Support Program, which is located in Frankston/Peninsula but is intended to service transitional domestic violence clients across the region. The size of WAYSS DVO's catchment area has resulted in staff being widely dispersed and having difficulty in responding to the needs of women and children escaping domestic violence in Middle South.

WAYSS DVO has an annual target of 226 episodes of support and an agreed duration of support of 13 weeks. The high demands placed on this service are reflected in the 467 episodes of support provided in 2001-02: with an average duration of support of 16 weeks.

**Figure 7 SMR Domestic violence targeted positions 2001-02 by subregion**



The current distribution of domestic violence support positions is of particular concern in subregions where there is:

- a significant level of statewide crisis support, but no local area crisis support
- a significant level of statewide crisis children’s support, but very little transitional children’s support available to clients from local communities
- a low level of transitional support in most catchments
- a lack of management infrastructure in some subregions.

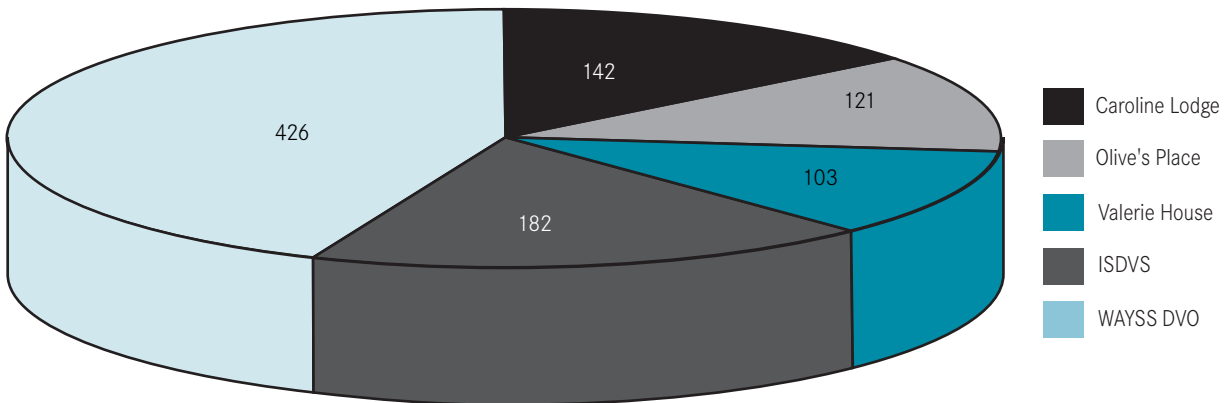
**Demand for accommodation services**

**Episodes of support**

In 2001-02, domestic violence accommodation and support services in SMR provided a total of 1,028 episodes of support to women and children escaping domestic violence.

Of these services, 62.4 per cent were provided by outreach and 37.6 per cent by refuge services.

**Figure 8 Completed episodes of support by agency 2001- 02**

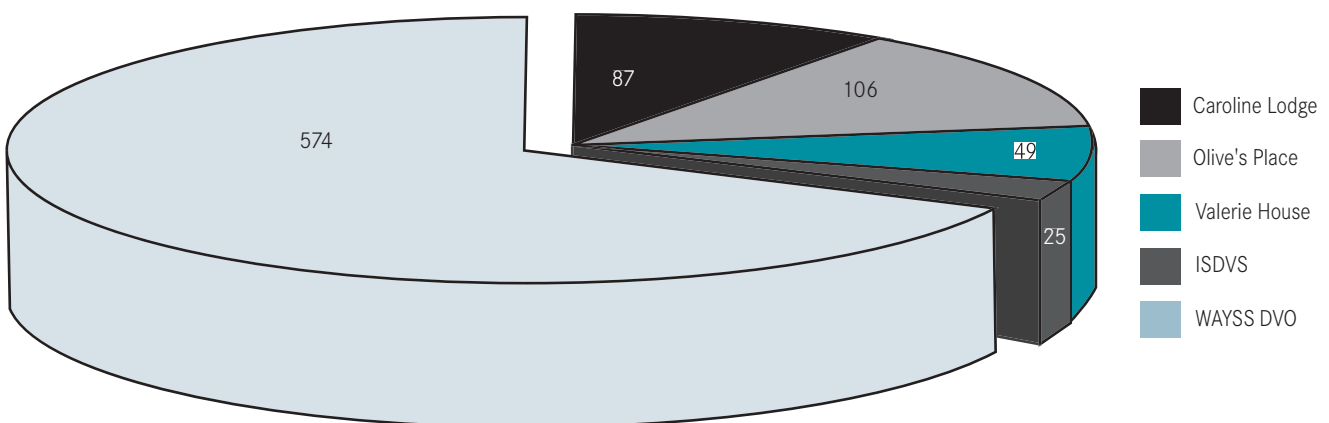


**Accompanying children**

In addition to the women assisted during 2001-02, approximately 840 children were also supported.<sup>11</sup>

Around 70 per cent of these children were assisted by the outreach services (67 per cent at WAYSS DVO and 3 per cent at ISDVS). This compares with approximately 62 per cent of all episodes of support being provided by outreach services. The higher number of support periods provided by the DVOs, together with the higher proportion of children included in these support periods, suggests that there may be a higher demand for children’s support services in outreach services than in crisis services.

**Figure 9 Accompanying children by agency 2001-02**



## Unmet demand

Alongside the recorded episodes of support, there is a high level of unmet domestic violence accommodation and support demand in SMR.

WAYSS DVO recorded 42 unmet demand clients during the two-week collection period in 2001-02.<sup>12</sup> (59 per cent of these requests were for accommodation and 41 per cent were for support only). In simple terms this could be extrapolated to approximately 1,090 unmet demand clients during 2001-02, with around 640 requiring accommodation and 450 requiring support only. However, the accuracy of this figure is problematic, as it fails to account for peak demand periods such as Christmas and school holidays, as well as periods of possible lower demand throughout the year.

The Inner South Domestic Violence Outreach service recorded no unmet need during the collection. However, this is likely due to their co-location with the St Kilda CCC and their subsequent referral capacity, rather than there being no unmet demand for domestic violence services in their catchment area. A possible indication of this is the number of clients assisted by CCC whose primary cause for seeking assistance was domestic violence. During 2001-02, the CCC assisted 691 clients whose primary cause for seeking assistance was domestic violence. Of these, 136 were local Inner South residents.

The refuges in SMR also recorded no unmet demand data. However, this is a reflection of the referral pathways to the refuges rather than a lack of demand, as WDVCS contact refuges statewide to determine bed vacancies prior to referring clients to them. It should be noted though, that WDVCS recorded 9000 calls from women in SMR during 2000-01, which represented 24 per cent of the total calls responded to by WDVCS in that year. This proportion is very similar to the proportion of Victoria's population that resides in SMR (23.6 per cent).

It is important to acknowledge that the above data cannot predict an accurate level of local demand for domestic violence accommodation and support services for two reasons. Firstly, the majority of clients accessing the refuge-based services do so via the statewide crisis telephone line (WDVCS) and, therefore, do not come from the local area. Secondly, as all services currently operate at or beyond optimal capacity, the total number of clients assisted is more likely to reflect the level of service supply rather than demand for services.

What is clear, however, is that while there is a spread of crisis and transitional domestic violence support positions across SMR (Figure 7), the distribution of those resources by subregion does not provide adequate coverage to meet demand.

## Family Violence Prevention and Support Program

In addition to the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) funded domestic violence accommodation and support services there are a range of family violence funded services in SMR.

The Family Violence Prevention and Support Program funds two main service types or activities at a statewide and regional level: direct support and service support.

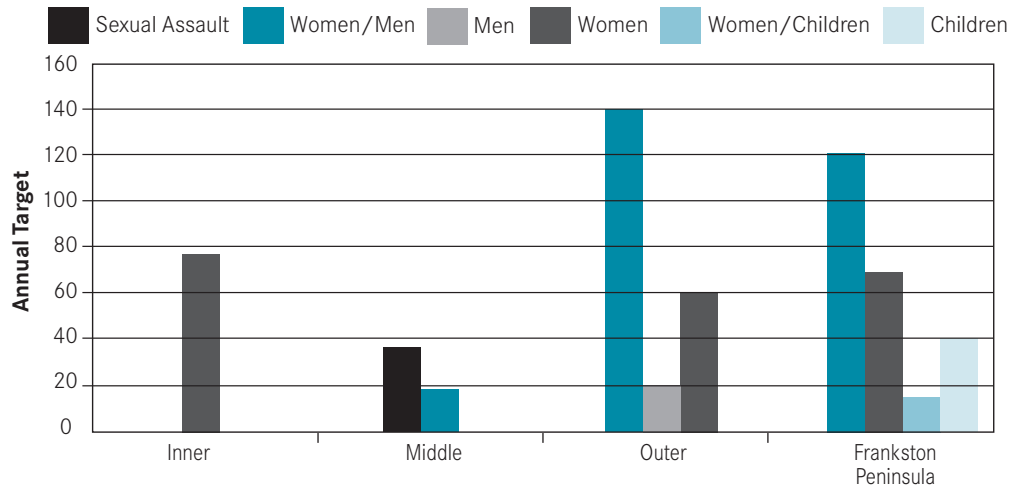
In SMR there are currently 12 direct support family violence services funded. These services provide support groups for women, children and young people, as well as male behaviour change groups. Services are provided with the aim of:

- enhancing the safety, confidence, life skills and independence of women experiencing family violence
- improving the coping skills, non-violent strategies and self-esteem of children affected by family violence
- assisting men to learn non-abusive behaviours and to develop new relationship and parenting skills.

Inner South has two family violence services both targeted at women. Middle South has two services, one targeted jointly at women and men, the other provides an after hours family violence response service through the South East Centre Against Sexual Assault (SECASA). Outer South has three programs, one targeting women and men jointly, one targeting women only and one targeting men.

Frankston/Peninsula appears to be the best serviced subregion in respect to family violence prevention and support services with five programs operating. Two of these programs target women and men jointly, one targets children, one targets women and the other targets women and children jointly.

**Figure 10 SMR family violence prevention and support services by target group**



As shown in Figure 10, these services are not large and their annual targets are not high. The distribution of services across the region may also create a number of gaps in service provision as the majority of services are located in the outer parts of the region. SMR has one family violence prevention and support service that provides service support to family violence focused programs. The Family Violence Network aims to provide a range of supports to service providers in the region through:

- improved consultation
- professional development and training
- planning, policy development, program and service linkages and coordination
- community information and awareness.

**Family support services**

Family support services provide a range of services for families, young people and individuals, which may include outreach, case management, casework, counselling, in-home support, group work, brokerage and other support and information activities.

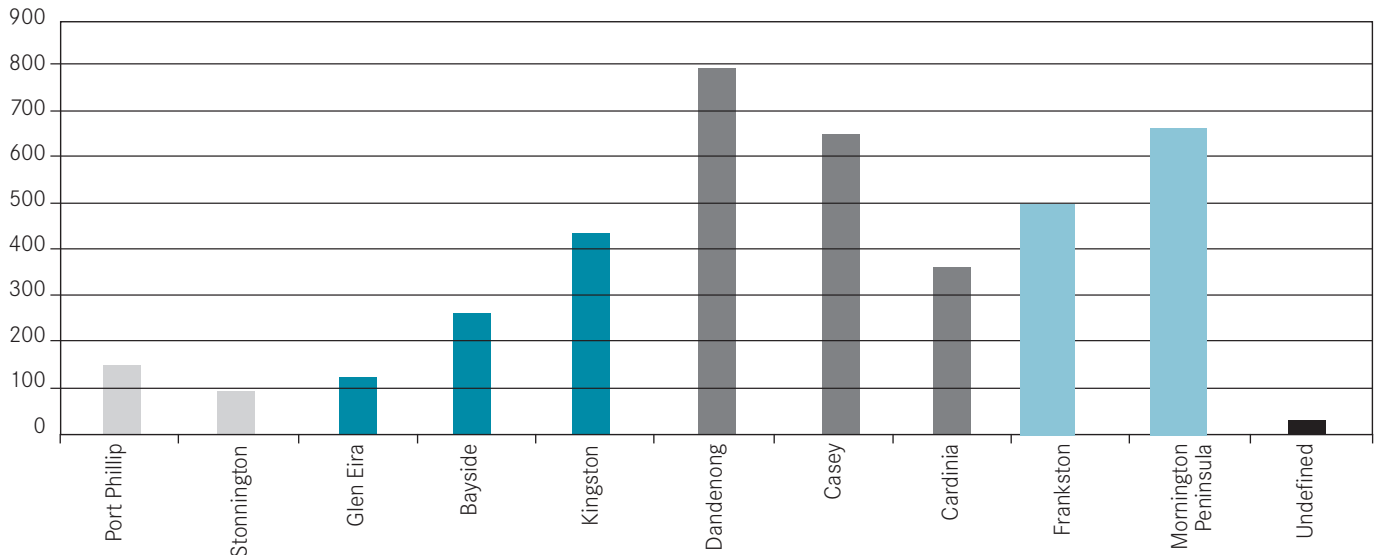
The target group for these services is families with children aged 0 to 18 years who require assistance to provide a safe, nurturing and stable environment for their children. Priority access is given to families where risk indicators are present. Risk indicators may include the presence of mental illness, disability, substance abuse, family and domestic violence, social and economic disadvantage, involvement with child protection or the justice system, risk of family breakdown or teenage parents. All family support services consulted during the preparation of this plan indicated a high level of family and domestic violence reported by their client group.

In SMR there are 20 funded family support services operating across 28 sites, with some agencies offering additional services from outposts. The three services in Inner South, are Uniting Care Victoria, Jewish Care and the City of Port Phillip. Seven are located in Middle South, including the Australian Turkish Association, Bayside Support and Information Service, Bentleigh Bayside Community Health Centre, Oz Child, Dingley Village Community Advice Bureau Inc, Kingston City Council and Southern Family Life.

There are seven family support services located in Outer South, including Wesley Youth Services, Uniting Care Connections, Windermere, Hampton Park Care Group, Dandenong and District Aborigines Cooperative, City of Greater Dandenong and Centacare. In Frankston/Peninsula the four family support services are Anglicare, Frankston City Council, Good Shepherd Youth and Family Services and Peninsula Youth and Family Services.

In total, these agencies provide services to around 4,060 clients per year. In response to community needs, a number of these services operate across the subregional boundaries, particularly in Inner and Middle South.

**Figure 11 Family support service targets in SMR by LGA**



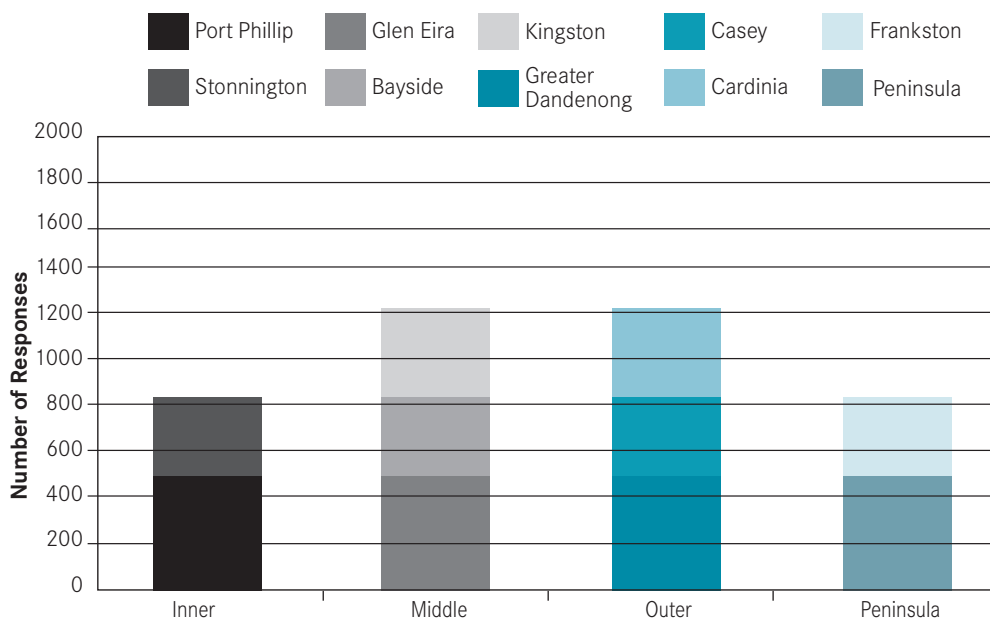
### Police response information

SMR police responded to a total 5,435 family violence incidents in 2000-01, as shown in Figure 12.<sup>13</sup>

Most of these were in the Outer South (34.7 per cent) and Middle South (26.3 per cent).

Inner South recorded the fewest responses with 15.1 per cent of all SMR responses in the period. At an LGA level, the number of aggrieved family members was significantly higher in Casey (895), Kingston (770), Greater Dandenong (760) and Frankston (765) than in any other LGAs in SMR.<sup>14</sup>

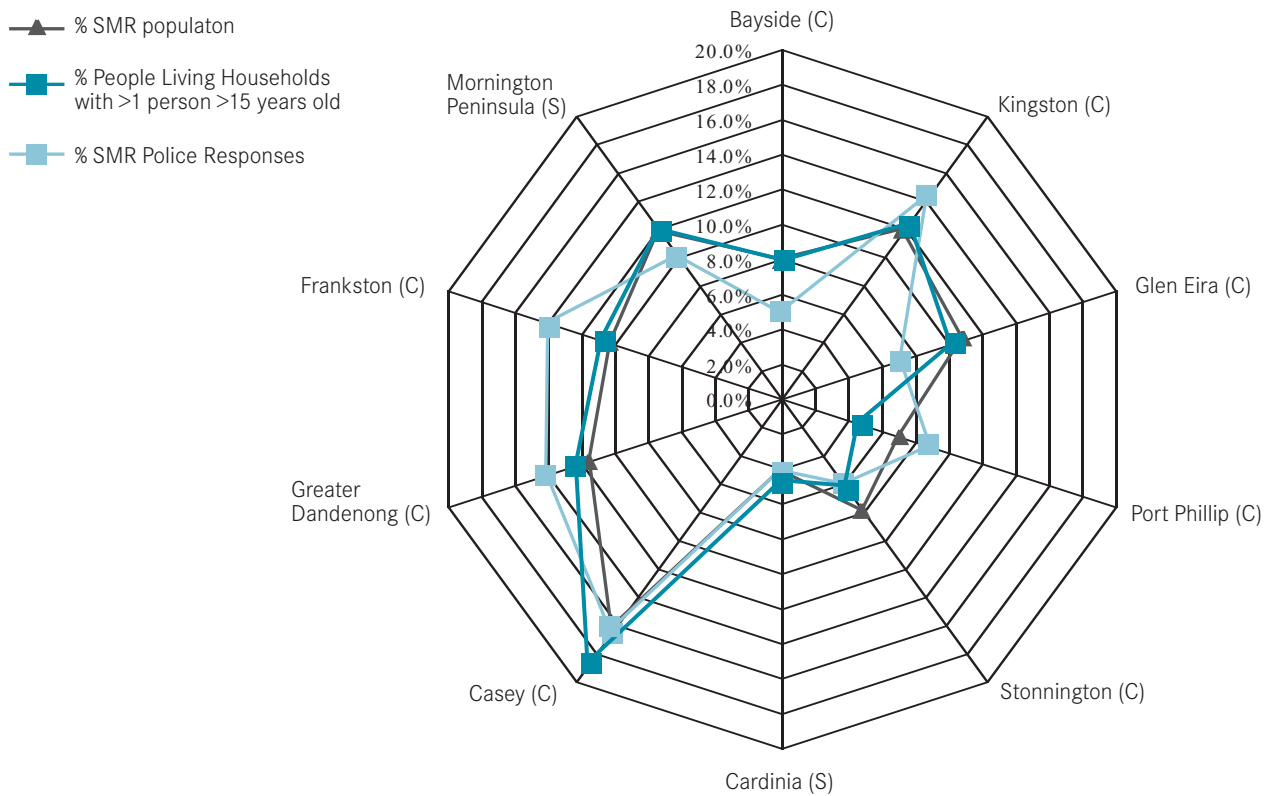
**Figure 12 SMR police family violence responses 2000-01**



Consequently, the outer part of the SMR (including Outer South and Frankston/Peninsula subregions) recorded a total 58 per cent of all police domestic violence related responses in the 2000-01 financial year, with the inner part of SMR (incorporating Inner South and Middle South) recording 42 per cent. This figure tallies very closely with the distribution of people living in households with more than one person over 15 years of age, in which 57.4 per cent live in the outer SMR and 42.6 per cent live in the inner part of SMR.

When the spread of reported family violence incidents is compared with regional population data at an LGA level (Tables 1-5), it seems likely that there is a relationship between the number of reported family violence incidents and the number of people living in households with more than one person over the age of 15. There is a less than 4 per cent difference in the distribution across the region between police family violence incidents and this population.

**Figure 13 Correlation of police family violence incident reports and population 2001**



The Middle South LGAs of Bayside and Glen Eira recorded relatively large deviations (greater than 2 per cent) with lower proportions of the region’s police responses to family violence than their proportion of the region’s population. The LGAs of Frankston, Greater Dandenong and Port Phillip, on the other hand, recorded relatively large deviations (greater than 2 per cent) with higher proportions of the region’s police responses to family violence than their proportion of the region’s population.

The spread of family violence incidents that are responded to by police across the region is of significance in planning where services are most urgently required, particularly given police requests to consider the development of easily accessible entry points in their local area.

With the close relationship between police responses and population it may be possible that future demand for domestic violence services can be predicted on this basis. However, given the current lack of accurate data on demand for accommodation and support services at a local level, further evaluation of this issue will be required as the service system becomes more accessible to local area clients. At a minimum, the likely relationship between police responses and family violence and population points to the need to provide a minimum level of domestic violence infrastructure in all SMR LGAs.

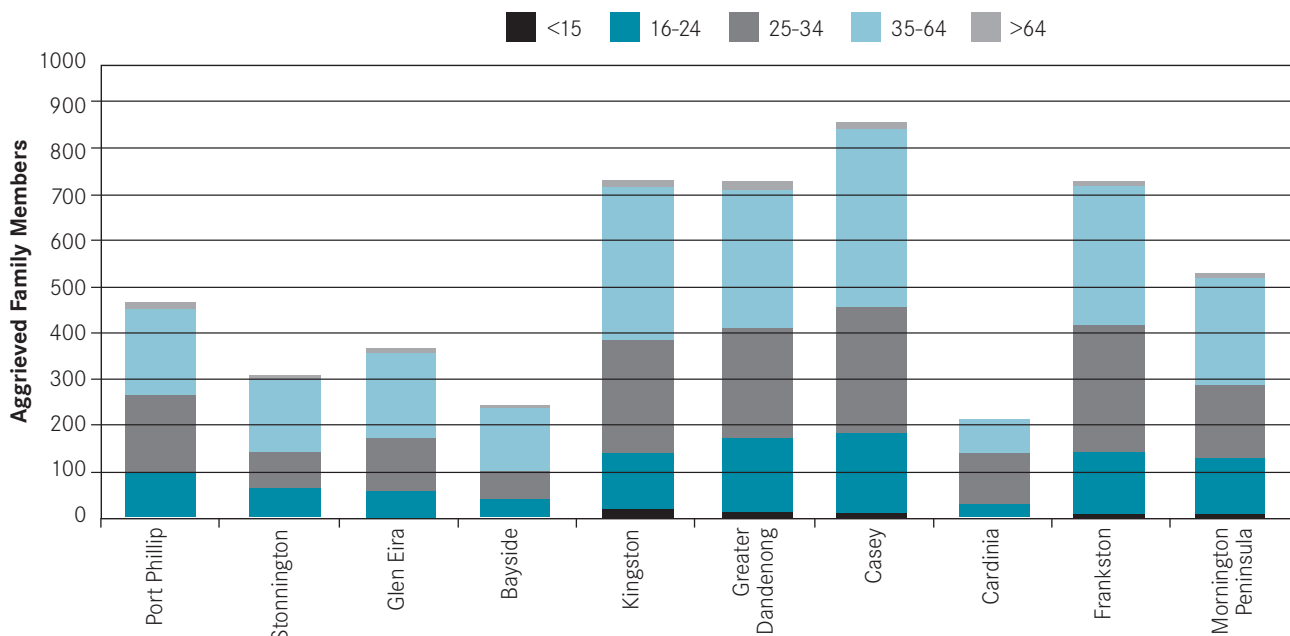
## Youth as aggrieved party

Across the SMR in 2000-01, the majority of aggrieved family members in police domestic violence related responses were aged between 35 and 64 years.

Significantly however, nearly 20 per cent (985) of aggrieved family members were aged between 16 and 24 (the age range likely to access SAAP funded youth services in the region).

The numbers of youth recorded here, in combination with the high numbers of clients accessing SAAP youth services in the region for whom domestic violence was a contributory factor to their seeking assistance (over 400 in 2001-02), suggest a need to involve the regional youth services in planning for a more complete response to domestic violence in SMR.

**Figure 14 Age of aggrieved family members at family violence incidents by LGA 2001**



## Children as aggrieved party

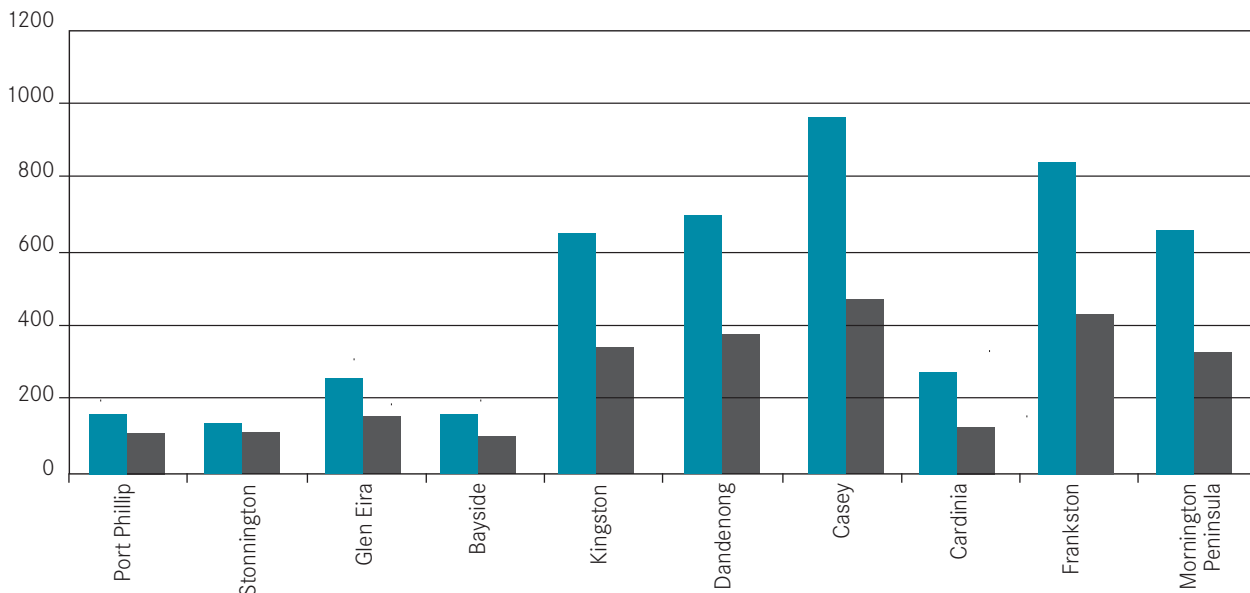
There were also 85 cases across the region (1.6 per cent of all police responses in that year) in which the aggrieved family member was 15 years of age or less.

This last group is particularly likely to become involved with child protection services in the region and is of significance in the development of linkages between police, domestic violence services and child protection.<sup>15</sup>

## Children present at incident

Across the region, around 44 per cent (2,375) of the family violence incidents attended by police had children present at the time of the incident.

In the outer SMR LGAs this percentage was particularly high, with over 50 per cent of incidents in Casey and Cardinia having children present. As seen earlier, the Casey population includes particularly high numbers of couples with children under 15 (11 per cent higher than any other LGA in the region) and as such it is not surprising that high numbers of children are present at domestic violence incidents responded to by police.

**Figure 15 Children present at family violence incidents attended by police 2001 by LGA**

A similar distribution of household groups is evident in Cardinia, which is the other growth corridor LGA in SMR.

In total there were 4,530 children present at the 2,375 family violence incidents involving children in SMR during 2000-01. The LGA of Casey recorded nearly 1,000 of these children, with the highest proportion of the children being aged 0-4 years. Kingston, Greater Dandenong, Frankston and the Mornington Peninsula all recorded total children present at incidents of family violence responded to by police at over 500. In all cases, the largest proportion of these children was 0-4 years of age.

Both the number of incidents in which children are present and the number of children involved in each incident are of great significance to the provision of children's support workers across the region and to the importance of strong linkages between SAAP funded domestic violence services and child protection services.

The data presented here suggests that there is a need to focus on the delivery of children's support services in the growth corridor and more generally to ensure adequate provision of support services to children affected by domestic violence.

### Police access to service system

In addition to the quantitative data provided above, discussions with regional police officers have identified a number of other issues that need to be considered in the redevelopment of the regional domestic violence service system.

Anecdotal evidence supplied by police officers in SMR suggest that perhaps the most urgent need in terms of assisting police in their response to domestic violence is the development of visible and accessible local entry points to the domestic violence service system.

Both the police and accommodation and support services report that the highest demand for services is between 6 pm and 12 am each night and that this demand increases significantly on Friday and Saturday nights. The need to ensure access to services for women and children during these times has been stressed several times during the development of this plan. In the more rural areas of SMR, where police stations and support services are widely dispersed, it is also important that transport is available for women and children who require emergency accommodation after hours.

### Perpetrator access to services

Another issue consistently identified by police across the region is the need for an accessible contact point for perpetrators of family and domestic violence, particularly as it relates to counselling and support services, but also in terms of emergency accommodation.

While this does not fall strictly within the boundaries of the CPF, a shortage of such services can potentially affect the outcome of many police attendances at family violence incidents and should be strongly considered during any redevelopment or expansion of men's services.

## Men's programs

A review of men's programs has recently been completed.<sup>16</sup>

The resultant framework, Taking Responsibility, identifies the necessary elements and steps in developing a flexible and coordinated response to the provision of programs for men, which forms part of efforts to reduce and prevent family violence in Victoria. It identifies best practice service delivery components that are necessary to develop a comprehensive service system response for men who use violence. These components include:

- a comprehensive assessment conducted over a number of sessions
- development and implementation of an intensive response program for directed clients
- men's behaviour change groups
- ongoing change groups
- individual counselling
- an Indigenous strategy
- integration of men's and women's programs.

Concerns were raised during the development of Taking Responsibility that reflect concerns that arose during the development of the SMR CPF Regional Implementation Plan. These include the possibility that programs for men could be used as an alternative to criminal sanctions and that funds currently allocated to women's services may be diverted to men's services. It is important that these concerns are acknowledged and responded to in any future development of men's programs in SMR.

While the CPF is not directly concerned with the development of men's programs (as these fall under the umbrella of prevention and support programs that are being addressed through a separate component of the Women's Safety Strategy), it is important to recognise the need to connect any future development of men's family violence programs in SMR with the domestic violence service providers in the region.

No To Violence (NTV), a major provider of men's support services in Victoria, has commented on this issue. It notes that liaison and integration between men's and women's programs is necessary if men's programs are not to be offered in isolation from other agencies and workers in the field.<sup>17</sup> It argues that ongoing liaison across the two program areas enables:

- dialogue with other workers
- discussion and consultation about local issues
- appropriate referrals for women partners and family members of the attendees at men's programs
- appropriate referrals for men with specific needs, such as language and cultural needs, abuse issues and disabilities
- exchange of information about services and approaches, including information for workers in agencies assisting men with other issues such as substance abuse
- continuing input from other workers in the field into the nature and effectiveness of the men's programs.

## Preliminary findings

A review of the geographic and demographic information for SMR, as well as the current service system and police responses, highlights a number of factors central to shaping this regional implementation plan.

1. The SMR includes 23.6 per cent of Victoria's population; 1,135,547 people as at August 2001. Of these, 69 per cent live in households of more than one person.
2. Of those who live in households of more than one person, 11.9 per cent live in Inner South, 31.3 per cent live in Middle South, 35.4 per cent live in Outer South and 22.2 per cent live in Frankston/Peninsula. This distribution may provide a basis for the distribution of domestic violence services across the region.
3. The statewide domestic violence crisis referral line (WDVCS) receives approximately 24 per cent of all its calls from SMR, which is a reflection of the proportion of the state's population in SMR. This may provide support for the use of population data as a primary indicator of the need for domestic violence services. However, there are significant local variations in the number of

children present at family violence incidents attended by police and this factor should be taken into account in assessing need and developing local area service responses.

4. A relatively high proportion of Inner South's and Frankston/Peninsula's population live in couple with no children households, while Outer South has a particularly high proportion of households with children under 15 years of age. This distribution provides one indication of the type of service response required in each part of the region, particularly in relation to children affected by domestic violence.
5. Police responded to nearly 5,400 family violence incidents in SMR in 2000-01. The distribution of these incidents across the region was very similar to the distribution of people living in households with more than one person: 15 per cent were in Inner South, 26.3 per cent were in Middle South, 34.7 per cent were in Outer South and 23.9 per cent were in Frankston/Peninsula. Again, this suggests that population is a primary indicator of the level of domestic violence service response required across the region.
6. Around 20 per cent of all family violence incidents in the region attended by police recorded young people (aged between 16-24 years) as the aggrieved party. It is possible that there is a relationship between these incidents and the number of young people accessing generalist homelessness services in the region due to domestic violence. This suggests that a more comprehensive domestic violence service system can be developed if the youth services in the region are involved in the implementation of the CPF Regional Implementation Plan.
7. Around 50 per cent of domestic violence incidents responded to by police in 2000-01 had children present (2,375 cases). Around 4,530 children were present at these incidents. In the LGAs of Casey and Cardinia over 50 per cent of all domestic violence incidents attended by the police had children present. This provides evidence of the need for significant children's domestic violence support services in these areas.
8. Around 39 per cent of children recorded as being present at domestic violence incidents were aged between 0-4 years; around 29 per cent were aged between 5-9 years; and around 31 per cent were aged between 10-16 years. This suggests that a range of different children's supports is needed to address the varying requirements of these young people.
9. Existing SAAP data from domestic violence services is not sufficient to predict demand across the region. More comprehensive local area based information will be required to accurately predict future demand following the implementation of the CPF. However, given the other indicators discussed above, it is likely that the level of demand for services is much higher than current supply.

## Existing service system comparison with CPF

As noted above, the CPF requires some specific outcomes.

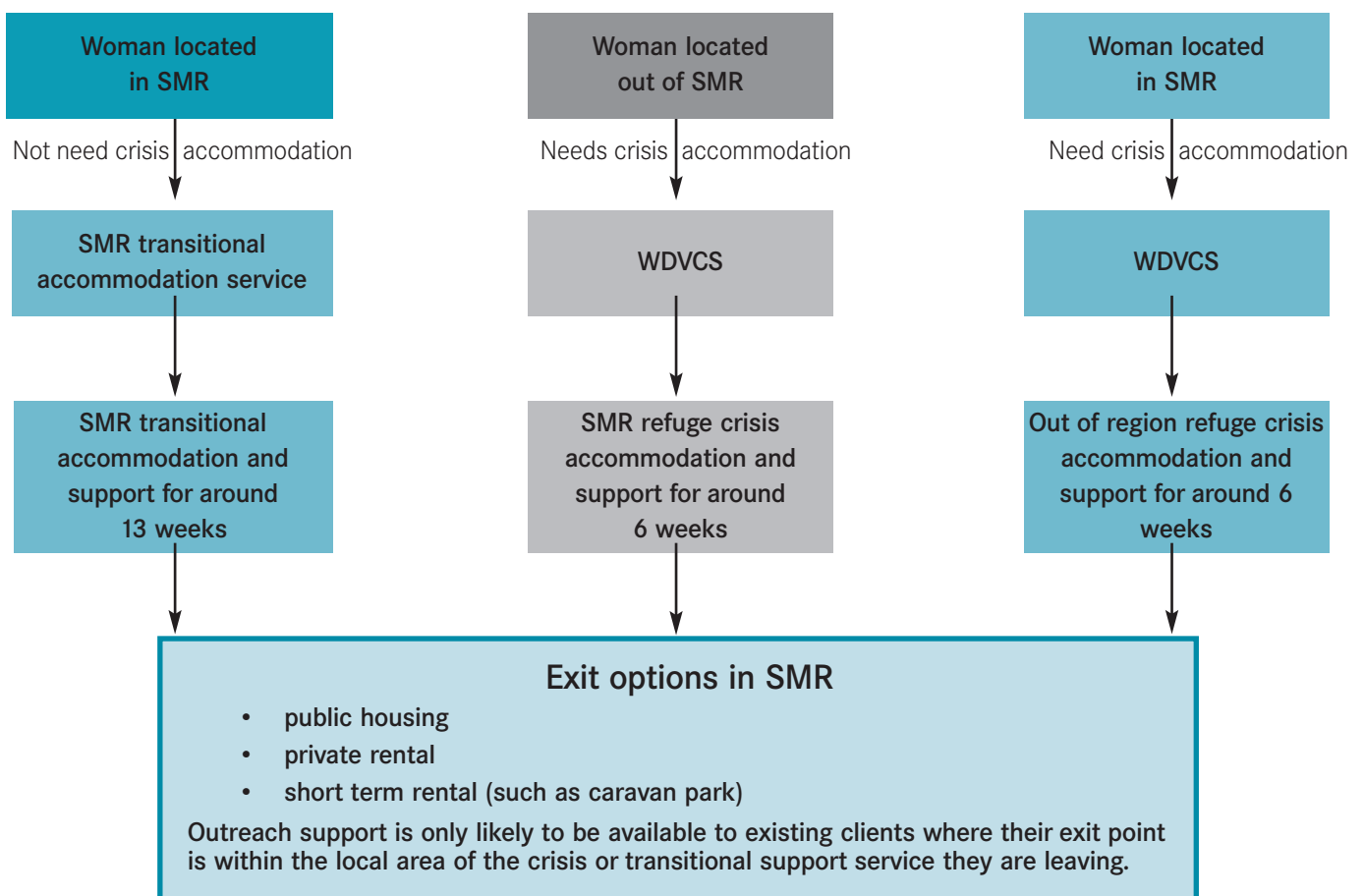
A review of the current domestic violence service system in SMR, prior to any work being undertaken as a part of the SMR CPF planning process, shows that these aims will not be achieved without significant change at a local area level.

### Local area based service system with the capacity to provide individualised response to clients

The service system, as it was prior to the CPF planning process in SMR, did not provide a comprehensive local area based service system and had little capacity to respond to the individual needs of clients at a local level, other than through the transitional accommodation and support services.

For women and children escaping domestic violence in SMR, there is currently no consistent pathway into and through the domestic violence service system. The following diagram shows the various pathways a woman can take through the domestic violence accommodation and support service system in SMR at present (in this and the following diagrams dark grey is used to denote statewide clients and services, blue is used to denote local and regional clients and services and light blue outlined box is used to denote services that support both statewide and local area clients).

Figure 16 Pathways through current SMR domestic violence service system



As can be seen, there is currently little interaction between the various accommodation and support pathways available to women and children escaping domestic violence in SMR. There is little movement between crisis and transitional support services and women attempting to enter the service system often have no choice as to the type of service they enter if they wish to escape the domestic violence in their home. This is a result of both the lack of vacancies across all service types and, in some cases, the entry criteria into those services.

### Service gaps

There are several obvious gaps in the current system.

Women who need crisis accommodation but who are not in immediate danger of violence, must either attempt to access the transitional services, in which accommodation is rarely available immediately, or they must access the generalist crisis homelessness service system. Should they attempt the latter, they are likely to receive accommodation and support in one of the large inner city services or be provided with 2-3 nights accommodation in a local motel or caravan park.

Women who are located in SMR who are in immediate danger of further violence but who do not want to be dislocated from their local support networks must currently attempt to gain access through the same pathways. Women who are in crisis but who do not wish to, or are unable to live in a communal living service, also faced very limited options. This occurred for a number of reasons. For example, a woman may have had a previous negative experience in a communal living situation, she may have complex needs, or she may have teenage male children. The exclusion of families from crisis services because teenage male children accompany the woman seeking crisis accommodation is of particular concern in this context. While it is important to note that individual women's refuges respond differently to this issue, its use by any domestic violence service places significant barriers for women seeking to escape domestic violence.

### Access to services

Primary response services, such as the police, report similar difficulties in attempting to gain access to the service system following a family violence incident.

Police in SMR have consistently reported throughout the development of this document that they urgently need a clear, accessible entry point in their local area, through which a client can be assisted according to their need.

Despite the problematic nature of the dual pathways currently existing in the domestic violence service system in SMR, it is important to remember that there are both positive and negative aspects to both types of accommodation and support.

### Communal living model

A communal living model can provide a form of natural community for women escaping domestic violence, following a violent and forced exit from their established networks of support.

This is often particularly so for CALD women who have experienced isolation on a number of fronts due to immigration, resettlement and language difficulties, in addition to their experience of family violence. For women who are fearful of living alone, short-term communal living can provide intensive emotional and practical support in an environment that provides a validation of their experiences through the presence of other women facing similar crises.

Significant drawbacks to the communal living model include the lack of space and privacy for families and the difficulties associated with housing clients with complex needs or older male children with other families. And, while a client may initially be comforted by the close proximity of her children and others in similar situations, a continuation of this experience can be very stressful. Group house dynamics are often accentuated due to the complex needs of some clients and can be extremely difficult for staff to deal with. Such dynamics have at times resulted in clients commenting that the partner's violence is at least a known quantity, compared to the behaviours of some co-residents.

### Outreach service model

Sole occupancy models (such as outreach-based THM properties) have immediate benefits in overcoming these difficulties, in addition to the enhanced security offered by the flexible designation of properties.

THM and CAP accommodation is particularly well suited to clients from the local area as it minimises disruption to their lives. It also allows the client to define her own level of security through the development of a safety plan in conjunction with support staff. This model provides women and children with privacy, autonomy and adequate space for their needs.

However, there are also drawbacks to this type of accommodation. It is known that women ending a violent relationship may face intense feelings of loneliness, isolation and fear. These feelings may then be compounded by a placement in transitional housing away from the informal networks of support provided by communal living models and have reportedly resulted in women returning to their partner in an attempt to overcome these feelings.

With all of the abovementioned benefits and drawbacks, it is apparent that the redeveloped SMR service system must, first and foremost, have the capacity to empower women to make their own decisions: not just in terms of where they are to live, but also the type of living arrangements they feel are best suited to their own and their children's needs. The ability to provide this within the existing service system is extremely limited due to the capacity and eligibility criteria of many services. However, with diversification of existing services and expansion of available resources, it is an achievable goal.

## **A range of security measures appropriate to client need**

[There is a significant emphasis placed on client and staff safety in the current service system.](#)

However, in line with the need to develop a service system that empowers clients, there is a need to consider the effect that a highly controlled environment focused on secrecy and surveillance can have. At present, clients in refuge properties live within a highly controlled environment that ties security of clients to secrecy. While this arrangement may be necessary and effective in some instances, there may be times when a focus on secrecy is experienced by women as punitive, disempowering, or even reminiscent of aspects of their previous relationship.

## **Recognition and responsiveness to client diversity**

[There are a number of examples in the current service system of agencies' capacity to recognise and respond to client diversity.](#)

For instance, one of the women's refuges has a very good relationship with some of the CALD communities in SMR and has a sound record in responding to the differing needs of CALD women and children. There is also a level of flexibility built into the use of THM and CAP properties across the region that creates room to cater to the individual needs of clients. However, as already discussed, there is also a great deal of inflexibility in the current service system and clients have little room to move across the various parts of the service system according to their needs. This is a result of both the demands placed on each of the services and of the criteria for entry into those services.

## **Well targeted services, a continuum of care and safe exit options**

[In the current service system there are two streams of service that women and children escaping domestic violence can enter: crisis and transitional accommodation or support.](#)

Each of these streams can provide accommodation, support and a limited amount of support if the client exits the service system into the local community. There is little room for movement between these two service streams however.

Currently, extended hour accessibility is available through WDVCS should a woman require crisis accommodation and support out of the region. After hours access is also available through SECASA should women require crisis support within SMR. In this case, however, the client will likely be offered motel accommodation overnight before being referred to a generalist crisis service the next day. From here the client is likely to be referred on to WDVCS if appropriate or to a local domestic violence transitional service if there is a vacancy. There is no access to domestic violence specific crisis services within the client's community at present within or out of business hours.

There are a variety of exit options available for women in the SMR domestic violence service system including public housing, private rental and caravan parks. In some cases women and children may also return to their home if that is a safe exit option.

## **Specialist assessment and referral that incorporates a comprehensive risk assessment**

[All domestic violence services in SMR presently provide a specialist assessment process and a comprehensive risk assessment.](#)

However, there is little coordination between these assessments, with each service providing their own service specific assessment. As noted above, clients may also experience difficulties accessing the service system as the entry criteria for each service can vary according to the type of assistance they provide.

There is currently no common entry point to domestic violence services at a local or regional level. Consequently, clients attempting to gain access to a service with a vacancy or a service that is appropriate to their needs can face multiple assessments.

## Capacity to maintain or establish client connectedness to informal and formal networks of support

The need for women and children to establish or maintain their formal and informal networks of support is a pivotal factor in long-term stable outcomes for clients of domestic violence services.

However, there are a number of barriers to the development of these networks within the present SMR service system.

### Unsafe areas

Currently between 26 and 35 suburbs in SMR have been classified by SMR women's refuges as unsafe areas.

The effect of this classification is that women in these suburbs cannot gain access to a crisis service in SMR that is located within close proximity to their local community. For women and children escaping domestic violence this means that they have had to move from their local communities where family, friends, schools, health services and other support networks may have been established. Currently 76 per cent of clients of SMR women's refuges come from out of the region because of these restrictions.

This practice also places significant demands on the services due to the onerous nature of work and travel created by clients originating or wishing to return to distant suburbs or regions. Significant resource benefits can be achieved by agencies implementing other safety measures through discussion and case management with the client and relaxing the unsafe area buffer around their service. The experience of one Eastern Metropolitan Region refuge has borne this out when they successfully managed a reduction in their declared unsafe areas from 26 suburbs to the four suburbs immediately surrounding their main refuge facility, with no corresponding decrease in overall client safety.

### Supports following exit

On exiting the refuge the client can either return to her previous community or establish a new support network.

Should the client return to her old community she would have access once again to her existing support networks. However, if she moves far from SMR she will likely lose any supports that she has developed during her time in the refuge. If the client chooses to remain in SMR, she will be able to maintain any new support networks that have been established but will likely lose those that she had in her previous community.

There are clearly cases in which women and children escaping domestic violence need to cut off any connection to their old community if they are to remain safe. However, there are also many instances in which women and children would be safe to remain in their community once a safety plan is developed and accommodation or support services are in place. Ideally, the transitional support services in SMR would be able to assist in the provision of medium term supports to women and children relocating to SMR. However, due to the pressure on these services from existing SMR clients, this is not currently a viable option.

## Service system environment that supports strong service networking and collaboration

The Regional Domestic Violence Network was formally established some time ago to provide regional domestic violence services with an opportunity to network and collaborate in regional planning.

The Family Violence Network provides further opportunity for domestic violence services in SMR to network. Each of these networks encompasses both crisis and transitional accommodation and support services. The Family Violence Network also includes family support and family violence support services. Despite these networks there is a level of conflict between the existing crisis and transitional services in SMR, with both service types experiencing frustration in attempting to gain access to other services for their clients.

In the current environment, in which crisis and transitional accommodation and support services operate separate streams of service delivery and in which both streams are constantly operating at full capacity, this is perhaps inevitable. The development of a streamlined service delivery system, in which clients can move easily across the various services according to need, is required to overcome this issue.

## Revised service system response

It is clear that there are a number of issues that need to be addressed if the SMR domestic violence service system is to operate within the boundaries of the CPF.

In addressing these issues and recommending changes to the existing service system, the primary driver is the need to improve the service system response for clients: making it easier to navigate, easier to access and easier to get assistance.

In developing a client focused domestic violence service system in SMR, emphasis will be placed on being highly responsive to the needs of women who have exited a violent and disempowering relationship. One of the primary goals of the redevelopment will therefore be to provide a continual focus on the empowerment of women who have been subject to domestic violence.

The resultant domestic violence service system in SMR will include:

- local area based services with the capacity to provide an individualised response to clients
- a range of security measures appropriate to the client's situation
- recognition of and responsiveness to client diversity
- clear entry points with extended hour accessibility and comprehensive information provision
- specialist assessment and referral that incorporates a comprehensive risk assessment
- capacity to maintain or establish client connectedness to informal and formal networks of support
- well-targeted services, a continuum of care and safe exit options.

It will be developed in a service system environment that supports strong service networking and collaboration.

### Clear entry points, extended hour accessibility, comprehensive information provision

It is proposed that the current SMR domestic violence service system be enhanced through the development of two visible and accessible front door entry points.

One would be located in the outer subregions to service Outer South and Frankston/Peninsula; the other located in the inner subregions to service Inner and Middle South.

The entry points are proposed as 24-hour contact points that have the capacity to provide direct links to statewide, regional and local area based domestic violence services, as well as providing a comprehensive information service to people seeking assistance. To support these entry points, a referral card and formal referral protocols across the region are also proposed.

#### Referral card

Police across the region have consistently raised the concept of a referral card for perpetrators and women who are subject to domestic violence.

It has been suggested that such a card be available across the region and that it be small enough to pass unobtrusively to women should that be necessary.

It is proposed that two cards be developed, one for the Inner/Middle subregions, the other for the Outer/Peninsula subregions. These cards should be the size of a business card and include, at a minimum, the contact details of the subregional domestic violence entry points, WDVCS, IWDVS, SECASA and the police.

These cards will be available for distribution by police and other services when discussing options with women experiencing domestic violence and for general distribution in the region.

#### Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service (WDVCS)

WDVCS is pivotal to the effective operation of the domestic violence crisis response across Victoria. Under the proposal presented here, this role will not change.

WDVCS is currently the primary access point to out-of-region crisis accommodation for clients requiring relocation to ensure their safety. Within the confines of the current system, however, in which women's refuges in SMR do not accept referrals from within their local area, WDVCS is unable to provide assistance to women and children who wish to stay in their local community. With around 25 per cent of all WDVCS contacts coming from SMR each year it is therefore likely that a significant number of women experiencing domestic violence cannot be provided with assistance when they request it.<sup>18</sup>

It is essential, therefore, that in addition to their continuing role as the primary provider of out-of-region referrals, WDVCS be formally linked to the two proposed SMR front door entry points to facilitate optimal responses to women requiring assistance who wish to remain in their local community as well as to those who require relocation for safety reasons. As a part of this link, clear agreement will need to be sought on the roles of each agency, particularly when they are a client's first contact point. For instance, with women's and children's safety as the paramount concern, it is imperative that agreed risk assessment processes are in place to ensure clients' needs are determined at the first point of contact. Clear agreement on which agency will cover any immediate client expenses such as transport, emergency accommodation, food and medical supplies is also required.

Under the proposed service system changes, as is currently the case, WDVCS will also continue to provide short-term crisis accommodation for women and children who cannot be referred to the appropriate support agency immediately.

In addition to these ongoing functions, WDVCS, as the primary existing entry point to the Victorian domestic violence service system, has considerable expertise in assessment and referral practices. It is recommended that this expertise be drawn on during the development of any common assessment and referral tools and protocols that are required in SMR to support the implementation of this Plan.

### **Immigrant Women's Domestic Violence Service (IWDVS)**

*IWDVS is currently the statewide specialist provider of domestic violence services to CALD women and children.*

IWDVS has considerable expertise in culturally appropriate service delivery and migration issues. As a part of the proposed SMR service system redevelopment, this role will be strengthened.

Within the current service system IWDVS is often contacted by domestic violence services when issues arise in providing services to CALD women and children. However, IWDVS is not always contacted as a matter of course when CALD women and children enter domestic violence services.

It is proposed that protocols be established between IWDVS and SMR domestic violence services, including the two front door entry points, to formalise the referral process. These protocols could support the provision of information regarding IWDVS to all CALD women entering SMR domestic violence services. With client consent, the protocols could support sharing of client information to IWDVS to enable culturally specific support to be provided throughout the client's support period.

With all women's refuges in SMR reporting considerable pressure to respond to the needs of CALD clients with no residency status, the capacity to link into the migration expertise of IWDVS early in the support process may significantly decrease the long-term demands faced by SMR women's refuges. Early engagement of IWDVS is also likely to alleviate some of the demands placed on services responding to CALD clients with complex needs. In addition, a consistent referral practice between regional domestic violence services and IWDVS will provide a significant amount of information about the level of met and unmet demand for culturally specific domestic violence services. It is important to note that while the continuing presence of IWDVS as a resource for domestic violence services across the state is a key component of the CPF, its exact role and relationship with regional domestic violence services cannot be identified before the statewide and other regional CPF implementation plans are finalised. Further consultation on this issue will, therefore, occur in SMR when appropriate.

### **South East Centre Against Sexual Assault (SECASA)**

*In addition to its primary role as a specialist provider of sexual assault services, SECASA is currently funded to provide an after hours response to domestic violence clients across the region.*

In the longer term, this function may be provided across the region by the two front door entry points, in conjunction with WDVCS at a statewide level.

However, as discussed below (see 'Subregional entry points'), only one of the planned entry points will be operational in the short term. Consequently, it is proposed that during this period, in addition to providing an after hours response to domestic violence clients accessing the accident and emergency department or sexual assault service, SECASA will continue to act as an after hours domestic violence contact point for clients originating in the Inner and Middle subregions.

In the longer term, given its location at a major hospital in the region, SECASA may have the capacity to provide a specialist response to after hours domestic violence clients accessing the accident and emergency department and sexual assault service.

Final agreement on the after hours access point for the Inner and Middle South subregions has not been reached and further negotiation on is required.

## Generalist homelessness services

All homelessness agencies in SMR report significant numbers of clients accessing their service due to domestic violence related issues.

To ensure that staff of these services are equipped to respond to the needs of these clients, it is proposed that links between the generalist homelessness services and domestic violence specific agencies be strengthened and domestic violence training be made available to generalist homelessness services.

When developed, the two SMR domestic violence entry points will include links with other generalist crisis accommodation and support services in their areas. These links will serve several purposes including providing formal referral processes between the domestic violence service sector and SMR homelessness services, such as youth refuges and women's services which currently support significant numbers of clients facing domestic violence. It will also create a pathway for consultation with specialist domestic violence practitioners should advice on identifying or responding to domestic violence related issues be required.

Additionally, these links will provide one means of addressing police concerns regarding the provision of a referral point for perpetrators if police remove them from the home. While resources are not currently available to provide a specialist response to perpetrators, the development of links between the entry point and services such as Hanover South East Crisis Accommodation and Support (SECAS), Hanover Southbank and the Salvation Army CCC will provide a connection point for police attempting to arrange for women and children subject to domestic violence to stay in their own home. Further consideration will be given to how these services can best be provided within the context of the HEF review.

## Subregional entry points

In line with the subregional working group plans, it is proposed that 'one-stop domestic violence entry points' be established in the region.

Although the working groups identified a need for one of these in each of the four subregions of SMR, resource limitations mean that only two will be developed in the first instance. In order to integrate these entry points as fully as possible with existing services, it is proposed that one entry point will service the Inner and Middle South subregions and one will service the Outer and Frankston/Peninsula subregions.

Dividing the catchment areas on this basis will create an environment in which the local area domestic violence service systems are fully aligned with Victoria Police and THM program boundaries. The development of links, referral protocols and inter-service collaboration will then be a much smoother process than would be the case otherwise.

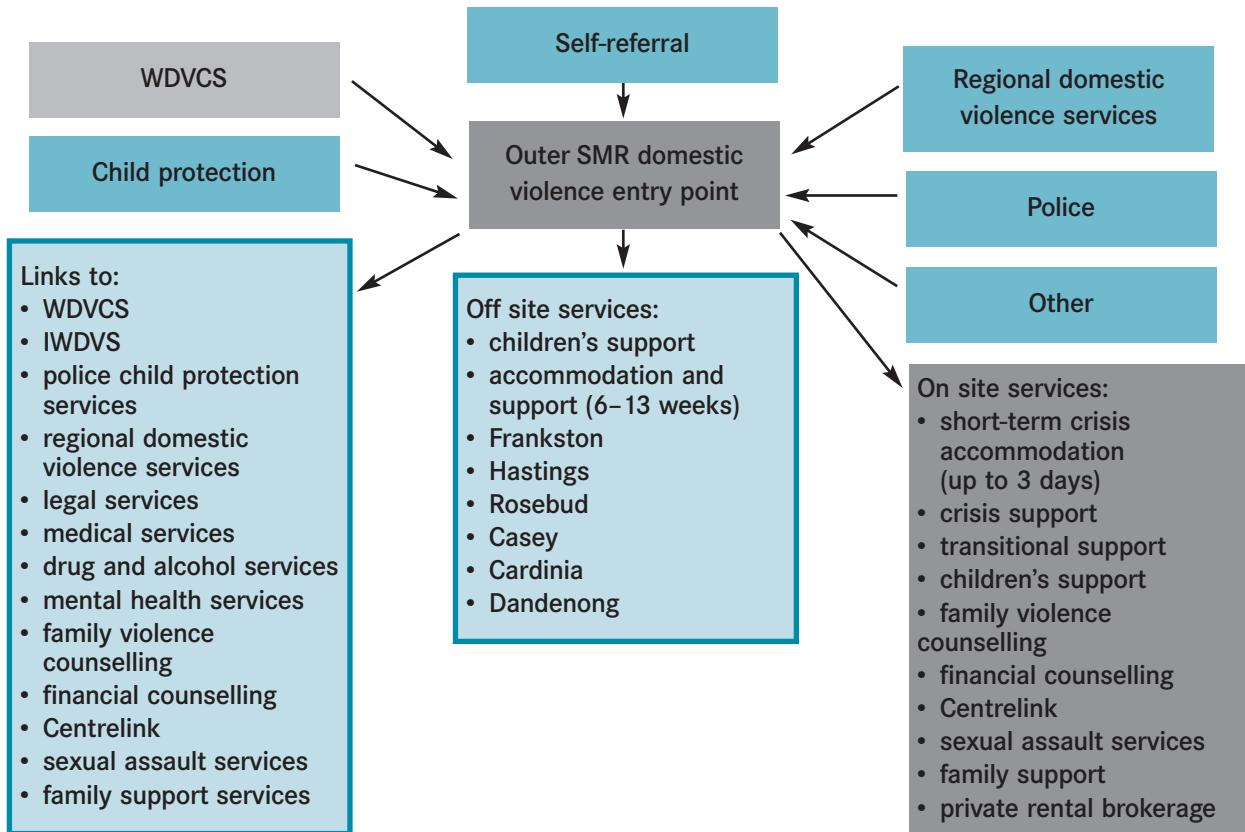
## Outer South entry point

It is proposed that a full pilot of the model be developed in the outer part of the region to cover the Outer South and Frankston/Peninsula subregions and that a second, smaller scale initiative be developed to support the Inner and Middle South subregions during the first stage of implementation.

Situating the full pilot in Outer South will serve several purposes simultaneously. It will:

- provide a local area based domestic violence crisis response in the outer part of the region where demand is highest
- provide an increased service response to the communities reporting the highest level of domestic violence incidents
- provide a model of service that will increase the accessibility of the domestic violence service system in the highest growth areas of the region through an extended hour local area access point with links to services across the region
- increase coordination between domestic violence services in SMR
- provide a means by which a new service delivery model can be fully evaluated and its effectiveness measured before significant changes are made in other parts of the region.

Figure 17 Proposed Outer SMR domestic violence entry point pathways



The entry point will provide a response primarily to the LGAs of Greater Dandenong, Casey, Cardinia, Frankston and Mornington Peninsula. It will also be linked to WDVCS and domestic violence services in other parts of SMR should clients need to relocate within SMR, from outer SMR to another region or from another region to outer SMR.

It is expected that over time the entry point will become the primary contact point for women experiencing domestic violence in the local area and that most women seeking local area based crisis assistance will access the service system in this way. To support this role it is proposed that the entry point’s main telephone number be a freecall 1800 number to maximise accessibility for women seeking assistance.

WDVCS will also be able to refer local women seeking crisis assistance to the entry point. Formal links between the entry point and other primary response services, such as the police and child protection, are also proposed to further support this role.

The entry point will be accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with an emphasis on providing intake services in the peak demand periods between 6 pm and 12 am weekdays and between 6 pm and 2 am on weekends.

The entry point will provide a mixture of crisis support, transitional support, private rental brokerage and children’s support on site, along with short-term crisis accommodation based on a cluster living model.

The service provider responsible for managing the entry point will be required to negotiate with existing services in the area, such as financial counselling, family violence counselling, medical and sexual assault services and Centrelink to provide on site support during business hours where possible.

Clients accessing the entry point will thus have access to a variety of services on site for immediate assistance. Each of these services will also be able to provide referrals through to community agencies in their field of expertise for ongoing assistance when required. Clients supported by the service system at any point (crisis, transitional or outreach) will also have access to these services.

The entry point will be fully networked with other domestic violence services in the region in order to provide seamless service delivery to clients across all of their needs. This networking would need to occur not just in terms of referral protocols between

services, but also encompassing common assessment and referral tools and processes and integrated data collection (See below for further discussion of these tools).<sup>19</sup>

Implementation of this model will occur in two distinct phases. Initially an office-based service will be developed with limited on site access to other services. Access hours during this phase will be extended beyond business hours but will not be 24 hours a day 7 days a week. Following the development of an accommodation facility the fully operational model, as discussed, will be developed. At this time 24/7 access will be available.

### **Inner and Middle South entry point**

It is proposed that during the development, piloting and initial evaluation of the outer SMR entry point, a smaller scale redevelopment of domestic violence resources be undertaken in Inner and Middle South. This will immediately increase the availability of support services to women and children subject to domestic violence in those subregions.

An entry point can be provided in this area as a joint venture across current domestic violence services in the subregions including the two women's refuges, ISDVS and SECASA. It is proposed that rather than develop a 'one stop' entry point to the domestic violence service system across the Inner and Middle South subregions, that during the initial stages of redevelopment, protocols be established between services to enable an enhanced domestic violence transitional service to operate points of contact in strategic localities in the area.

To support the domestic violence service system in Inner and Middle South it is proposed that a domestic violence outreach response be located in St Kilda and Moorabbin and that these services provide the primary access points to the Inner/Middle South domestic violence service system during business hours.

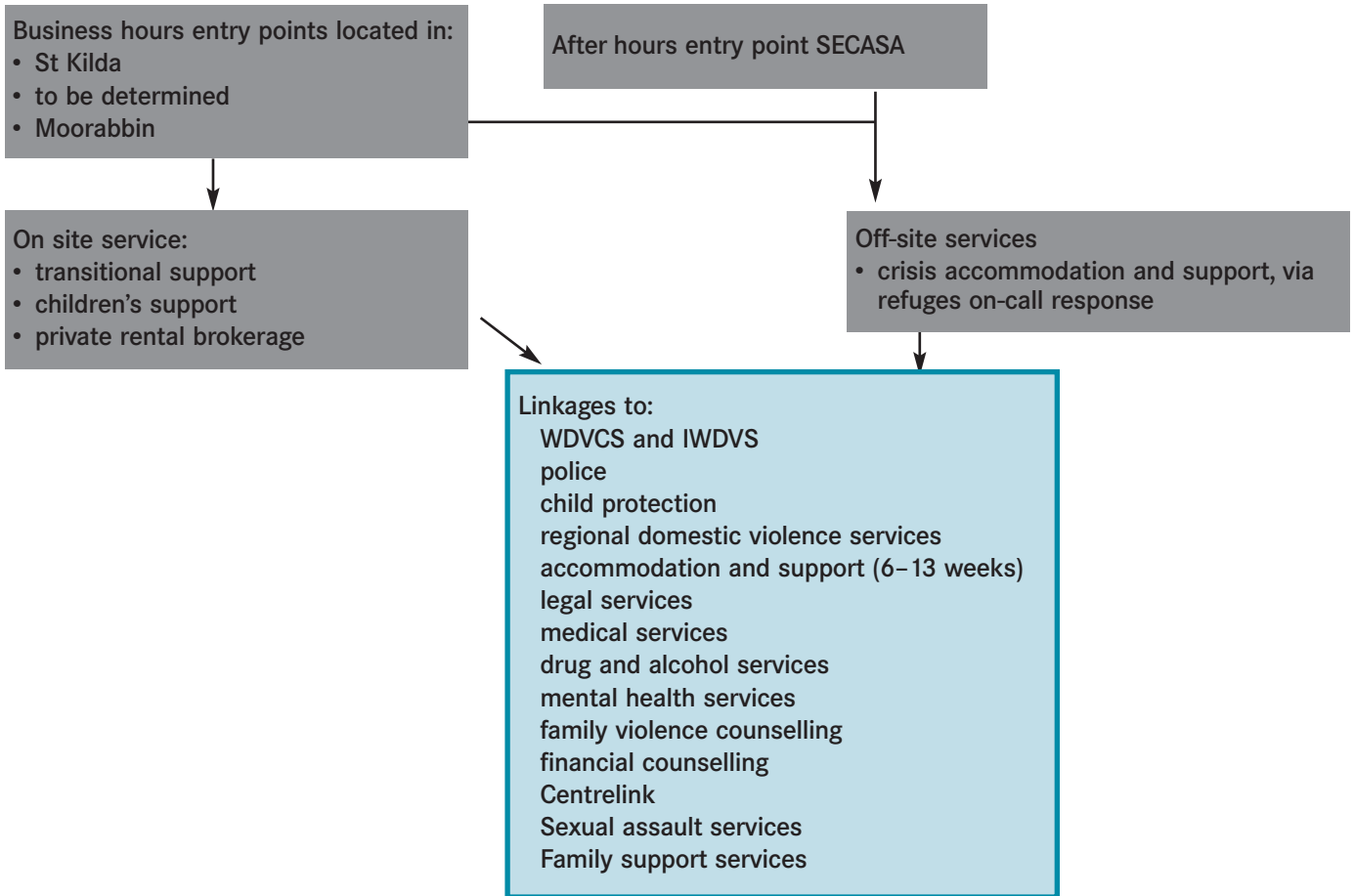
Clear formal links will be required between the outreach service and the women's refuges in the area to ensure that local area access to crisis accommodation and support is available. To provide this service to clients from the local area, the women's refuges will need to allocate a number of their crisis beds specifically to this client group. It is recommended that 3-4 beds within the refuge be dedicated to local area or intra-regional clients.

Continued after hours access to the Inner and Middle South domestic violence service system through SECASA is proposed in the short to medium term. To support this arrangement, protocols will need to be developed between SECASA and the local area crisis services to ensure smooth and timely referrals and that local domestic violence accommodation and support providers pick clients up the next business day.

This arrangement will significantly improve the accessibility of domestic violence services in the inner parts of SMR. However, it will require that all domestic violence services in the area work together to develop a functional network with the capacity to provide streamlined service delivery from the first point of contact.

During the development, piloting and evaluation of the pilot model in Outer South, the proposed Inner/Middle South service system configuration can be employed to increase capacity and streamline service delivery to domestic violence clients in the area. However, it is important to note that this proposal is not intended to replace the eventual implementation of a 'one-stop' domestic violence service across the Inner and Middle South catchment areas.

**Figure 18 Proposed Inner SMR entry point pathways**



The limited availability of resources in the Inner and Middle South at the present time prevents the immediate development of the one stop 24/7 service. However, when resources do become available, it is proposed that an entry point similar to that being developed in Outer South be developed in or around the Middle South area.

**Specialist assessment and referral that incorporates a comprehensive risk assessment**

The models proposed here depend on solid interagency working relationships, consistent practices across the service system and a collaborative approach to assessment and referral.

From the clients’ perspectives, inconsistent practices across the domestic violence sector result in unpredictability in the level of assistance provided, as well as an unnecessary repetition of assessment processes. To overcome these issues, it is proposed that all domestic violence accommodation and support services in SMR operate a common needs assessment and safety evaluation and integrated data collection that is accessible to all services providing support to the client.

**Tools**

As a part of the VHS implementation, a statewide practitioners group (SPG) was established by Community Programs Group to support the development of coordinating tools for the homelessness and domestic violence service systems.

These tools include an integrated data collection and assessment and referral tools. In the long term, the products of the SPG will have a direct impact on the domestic violence service system in SMR as they become standard tools across the domestic violence and homelessness service systems.

## Data definitions

Underpinning each of these tools is a proposed data dictionary. The purpose of the dictionary is to ensure that all homelessness services, including domestic violence services, are operating with a set of common understandings.

The dictionary is currently being developed by Community Programs Group and is likely to be finalised in 2004.

## Common assessment and referral

The development of a common assessment and referral tool for homelessness and domestic violence services will require consistency in approach and application across all service types.

A service system flows model that identifies how clients do, and should, flow through the service system to achieve long-term sustainable outcomes will also underpin the assessment and referral tool. This model is being developed by a working group of the SPG and is expected to be completed by the end of the 2003-04 financial year.

With a clearer understanding of the processes that underlie clients' movement through the service system, work will then begin on the development of the common assessment and referral tool. No timeline has yet been set for its completion.

With this in mind, it is proposed that existing domestic violence services in SMR work together in the short term to create an agreed assessment process that prevents the clients retelling their story to each service in order to gain access to accommodation or support.

## Risk assessment

In the longer term, it is expected that an additional risk assessment module will be developed as a part of the common assessment and referral tools discussed above.

Any such module would clearly be cognisant of the need for security of client data, particularly within the context of domestic violence services. In the short term, however, it is essential that there is consistency of risk assessment for clients entering the domestic violence service system across SMR and statewide domestic violence services. It is recommended that the expertise of WDVCS be used during this process.

## Integrated data collection

At present, the data collections of domestic violence services, generalist homelessness services and THMs are discrete systems.

The data collected under each of these systems cannot be match or compared as there is no way to measure client movement through the service system.

It is necessary to overcome this issue if effective data is to be compiled that can accurately reflect the demand for accommodation and support services across Victoria. Work is currently being undertaken by a working group of the SPG to develop a pilot integrated data collection. Trialing of this pilot tool is proposed in April/May 2004. It is expected that a full rollout of this tool would not occur until at least 18 months after the completion of the pilot.

## Information technology

With domestic violence services included in the HSSD projects in their local areas, few additional new resources will need to be allocated to the region to provide all SMR domestic violence services with the IT necessary to participate in common assessment and referral.

The domestic violence outreach service currently operating in Inner South is within the catchment of the Inner City Homelessness Redevelopment Project and could therefore be resourced with the IT to participate in common assessment and integrated data collection as a part of that project. The Outer South domestic violence outreach provider is located within the catchment area of the SMR HSSD project, as is one of the refuges. Consequently, both of these services could be provided with the required IT as a part of that project.

Services located in Middle South will require additional resources to participate in common assessment and integrated data collection across the whole of the SMR domestic violence sector.

## Local area based services with the capacity to provide individualised response to clients

### Crisis and transitional bed capacity

In the current domestic violence service system there are approximately 128 crisis beds available statewide. Around 15 of these are located in SMR.

As the region moves towards a local area based crisis response, in which at least 50 per cent of all support periods are provided to local clients, SMR's crisis bed capacity needs to be increased to ensure out-of-region clients accessing SMR services are not disadvantaged.

Given that 25 per cent of all calls to WDVCS seeking crisis assistance originate in SMR, it is suggested that around 25 per cent of the state's crisis beds be located in SMR: that is a total of 30 beds. With around 44 per cent of the region's population living in the Inner and Middle subregions and 56 per cent living in Outer South and Frankston/Peninsula subregions, it is proposed that approximately:

- thirteen crisis beds be situated in the Inner/Middle subregions
- seventeen crisis beds be located in the Outer/Peninsula subregions.

These beds include existing refuge beds, existing CAP beds and additional allocated THM crisis stock.

In addition to the crisis beds there are a significant number of transitional properties allocated to domestic violence across the region. The number of these varies as access to non-nominated stock in the region fluctuates. However, as a guide, the following stock is available to domestic violence services in SMR at the current time:

- Inner South (Port Phillip and Stonington): seven transitional properties, all of these are nominated stock with nomination rights held by ISDVS.
- Middle South (Glen Eira, Bayside and Kingston): 15 transitional properties, all are nominated stock with nomination rights held by Caroline Lodge and Olive's Place women's refuges.
- Outer South/Peninsula: approximately 15 transitional properties, with nomination rights held by WAYSS DVO across the LGAs of Casey, Cardinia, Greater Dandenong and Frankston; approximately 3-5 transitional properties across the Mornington Peninsula with nomination rights held by Good Shepherd (an increase in the number of nominated properties held is planned throughout the 2003-04 financial year).

### Service diversity

The domestic violence service system configurations proposed above will markedly increase the capacity of the service system to provide individualised responses to clients at a local and regional level.

Such an enhanced service system will be considerably strengthened by the willingness of existing services to adapt their service delivery models to participate in new and innovative ways of responding to client need. In this vein, SMR domestic violence services recognise the difficulties currently faced by clients trying to access a disjointed service system and have all given a commitment to work towards achieving the best outcomes for their clients.

By implementing the proposed changes to the SMR service system configuration, the following forms of assistance will be available to clients subject to domestic violence in all parts of SMR:

- out-of-region crisis accommodation and support
- intra-region crisis accommodation and support
- local area crisis accommodation and support
- local area transitional accommodation and support
- intra-region transitional accommodation and support
- private rental access assistance
- children's support across all forms of domestic violence supported accommodation
- after hours access to domestic violence services across SMR.

## Outer South service system

In addition to the development of a front door entry point in outer SMR, the establishment of a number of outposts, with close links to the entry point, across the catchment is proposed.

These will be located in key communities across the catchment area, including Rosebud, Hastings, Dandenong, Cranbourne and Frankston. The outposts will enhance local area service delivery, in terms of accessing the service system and providing ongoing support. Full implementation of the proposed model will require the following staff resources.

**Table 1 Staff resources required to fully implement Outer South service system proposal**

Service/Location	Staffing required to fully resource
Outer South entry point (24/7 access)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 EFT intake and support</li> <li>• 1 EFT management</li> <li>• 1 EFT children's support</li> <li>• 2 EFT outreach support</li> <li>• 1 EFT private rental access program</li> </ul>
Casey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 EFT outreach support</li> </ul>
Cardinia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 EFT outreach support</li> </ul>
Dandenong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 EFT outreach support</li> </ul>
Frankston	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 EFT intake and outreach support</li> <li>• 2 EFT crisis support</li> <li>• 1 EFT children's support</li> <li>• 1 EFT management</li> </ul>
Mornington	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.5 EFT intake and support</li> <li>• 0.5 EFT children's support</li> </ul>
Hastings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.5 EFT intake and support</li> <li>• 0.5 EFT children's support</li> </ul>
Rosebud	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 EFT support</li> </ul>
<b>Total</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>29 EFT</b></li> </ul>

Since the beginning of the CPF planning process in SMR, effective full-time positions have increased by 3.25 EFT (one EFT of which was reallocated from another catchment). These positions have all been provided to strengthen the existing transitional and outreach response available to local clients.

**Table 2 Current staff resources in Outer South**

Current staff location	Number of staff
Casey/Cardinia/Greater Dandenong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 EFT crisis support</li> <li>• 1 EFT management (supporting these LGAs and the City of Frankston)</li> <li>• 0.5 EFT children's support</li> <li>• 5 EFT intake and outreach support</li> <li>• 1 EFT private rental access program</li> </ul>
Frankston	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 EFT intake and outreach support</li> <li>• 1 EFT crisis support</li> <li>• 0.5 EFT children's support</li> <li>• 0.5 private rental access program</li> </ul>
Mornington	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.5 EFT intake and support</li> <li>• 0.5 EFT children's support</li> </ul>
Hastings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.5 EFT intake and support</li> <li>• 0.5 EFT children's support</li> </ul>
Rosebud	Supported through outreach from other locations
<b>Total</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>21.5 EFT</b></li> </ul>

When comparing the required staff resources (Table 1) and the actual resources available at the current time (Table 2), a further 7.5 EFT is required to fully resource the proposed model. Of this, one EFT is required to support children, one is required to increase management infrastructure and 5.5 are required to provide a full accommodation and support service to clients across the catchment.

Nevertheless, despite the discrepancy between required and actual resources, the innovative models of service delivery that have so far been developed in the catchment will provide a

more comprehensive service response to women and children experiencing domestic violence than has previously been unattainable. As a result, by the end of the 2003-04 financial year, the Outer South domestic violence service system will be configured as follows:

**Table 3 Outer South service system configuration by end 2003-04**

Location	Services provided	Operating hours	Out of hours access	Co-located services
1. Dandenong WAYSS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intake and assessment</li> <li>Crisis and transitional accom and support</li> <li>Outreach support</li> <li>Private rental brokerage</li> <li>Children's support (part-time, not located on site)</li> <li>Supported referral to statewide and regional services if required.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crisis accom and support 8 am to 5 pm Mon, 8 am to 10 pm Tues/Fri</li> <li>Children's support by arrangement</li> <li>All other 9am to 5 pm Mon/Fri</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weeknight access is through contact with WDVCS and pick up by service next business day if appropriate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dandenong Area Manager</li> <li>Women's outreach</li> <li>Youth outreach</li> <li>HIR</li> <li>THM</li> <li>Children's Support Network</li> <li>Regional Housing and Support Services Network</li> <li>Drug Court</li> <li>Youth refuge</li> </ul>
2. Narre Warren	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intake and assessment</li> <li>Transitional accom and support</li> <li>Outreach support</li> <li>After hours crisis accommodation and support</li> <li>Supported referral to statewide and regional services if required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crisis response (located at Narre Warren Police Station) Saturday 5 pm to 6 am Sun, 10 am Sun to 6 am Mon</li> <li>All other 9 am to 5 pm Mon/Fri</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weekend access is via a co-located WAYSS/ police response</li> <li>Weekday after hours as above</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women's outreach</li> <li>Youth outreach</li> <li>HIR</li> <li>Area based manager (also covers Cranbourne site)</li> </ul>
3. Cranbourne WAYSS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intake and assessment</li> <li>Transitional accom and support</li> <li>Outreach support</li> <li>Supported referral to statewide and regional services if required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9 am to 5 pm Mon/Fri</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weekend access is via the crisis service co-located at Narre Warren Police Station</li> <li>Weekday after hours access is as above</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community health services</li> <li>Youth outreach</li> <li>HIR</li> </ul>
4. Frankston WAYSS and Valerie House	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intake and assessment</li> <li>Transitional accom and support</li> <li>Outreach support</li> <li>Supported referral to statewide and regional services if required</li> <li>Crisis accom and support for high security statewide clients (accessed through Valerie House in Mornington)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9 am to 5 pm Mon/Fri</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weekend access is via the crisis service co-located at the Narre Warren Police Station</li> <li>Weekday after hours access is as above.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women's outreach</li> <li>HIR</li> <li>Area based manager</li> </ul>
5. Mornington Valerie House	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intake and assessment</li> <li>Crisis and transitional accom and support</li> <li>Outreach support</li> <li>Supported referral to statewide and regional services if required</li> <li>Children's support (supporting all Valerie House sites)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9 am to 5 pm Mon/Fri</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weekday after hours access is as above</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family support services</li> <li>Financial counselling</li> <li>Family counselling</li> </ul>

6. Hastings Valerie House	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intake and assessment</li> <li>• Crisis and transitional accom and support</li> <li>• Outreach support</li> <li>• Supported referral to statewide and regional services if required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 am to 5 pm Mon/Fri</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weekday after hours access is as above</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family support services</li> <li>• Financial counselling</li> <li>• Family counselling</li> <li>• No interest loan scheme</li> <li>• Community development</li> <li>• Community advocacy</li> </ul>
Properties in catchment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are three CAP properties in the catchment (including the existing high security refuge property) all of which are to be targeted towards statewide high security clients.</li> <li>• A minimum 14 THM crisis properties are allocated to domestic violence in the catchment</li> <li>• Approximately 15 transitional THM properties are allocated to domestic violence in the catchment, with additional THM properties to be identified across the Mornington Peninsula</li> <li>• Property swap protocols are being developed between crisis and transitional support services to provide ongoing tenancies as the client moves through the service system</li> </ul>			

Ongoing development of close ties with other services providers, such as family support agencies, family violence prevention and support programs, the Victims Assistance Program, Best Start and the Vulnerable Families initiative, will continue to solidify the level of service available to clients of the domestic violence service system in the Outer South.

However, additional activities required in the medium to long term to fully implement the proposed service system include:

- identifying the site and developing a crisis facility providing short stay crisis accommodation
- identifying funding source for additional children's support
- identifying funding source for additional support positions
- identifying funding source for additional management infrastructure
- identifying alternative funding source for the private rental brokerage program that is currently time limited funding sourced through the Community Support Fund.

Additionally, the development and implementation of an evaluation strategy for the new service delivery model is required in the medium to long term.

### Inner South service system

The level of existing resources is lower in the Inner/Middle part of SMR and the current distribution across service types is quite different to that in outer SMR, with the vast majority of resources currently targeted to non-regional clients.

Prior to the beginning the SMR CPF planning process, there were 14 EFT in Inner and Middle South; seven of these were located in the refuge system and provide crisis support, two EFT were children's support positions in the refuges, one was refuge administration, three were transitional support positions and one was a private rental brokerage position.

This level of resources does not provide room for a full redevelopment of the Inner/Middle SMR domestic violence service system. However, as is the case in outer SMR, greater collaboration across services and a move towards combined statewide/regional access and an increase in resources, will significantly increase the effectiveness and accessibility of the service system.

At this point in time resources will not support an extended hour access point in the Inner/Middle through existing crisis services in the area. Further discussions are required to ensure an after hours response is available. It is proposed that services develop referral protocols with SECASA, as the regional extended hours access point.

Located in Clayton, SECASA is well positioned to provide an after hours contact point for police in Middle South who are seeking accommodation for women and children escaping domestic violence. Reflecting current referral practices between SECASA and other domestic violence service providers, protocols will be necessary to support this arrangement and ensure that all women provided with emergency accommodation overnight are contacted the next business day by one of the crisis services in the Inner/Middle South.

As discussed above, the service system configuration proposed here is not intended to provide a final solution to issues facing the Inner/Middle South domestic violence service system. It is an interim solution designed to increase the service system's capacity to provide a local area based service and meet the needs of individual clients.

To resource the proposed configuration a minimum 21 EFT will be required. With the collaboration of existing services, a streamlined, accessible and equitable service system is achievable in the immediate future. The distribution of these staff is proposed as follows:

**Table 4 Staff resources required to implement interim Inner/Middle South service system proposal**

<b>Service/location</b>	<b>Staffing required to fully resource</b>
Moorabbin co-located entry point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 EFT intake and outreach support</li> <li>• 2 EFT crisis support</li> <li>• 0.5 EFT private rental access program</li> <li>• 1.0 EFT children's support</li> </ul>
Middle South crisis services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 EFT crisis support</li> <li>• 2 x 0.5 EFT crisis management</li> <li>• 2 x 1.0 EFT children's support</li> </ul>
On site with St Kilda CCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 EFT outreach support</li> <li>• 0.5 EFT private rental access position</li> <li>• 0.5 EFT children's support</li> </ul>
To be determined	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 EFT outreach support</li> <li>• 0.5 EFT children's support</li> </ul>
Total	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 21 EFT</li> </ul>
<b>Total</b>	<b>• 21 EFT</b>

Since the beginning of the CPF planning process in SMR, EFT positions have increased by two in the Inner/Middle catchment. These positions have been provided to strengthen the existing transitional and outreach response available to local clients. Considerable collaboration has also been undertaken between the existing outreach and one of the crisis providers to develop a joint entry point in Kingston.

As detailed below, this entry point has a number of services provided on site to ensure a diversity of responses is available to local clients seeking assistance.

**Table 5 Current staff resources in Inner/Middle South**

<b>Current staff location</b>	<b>Number of staff</b>
Moorabbin co-located entry point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 EFT intake and outreach support</li> <li>• 1 EFT crisis support</li> <li>• 0.5 EFT private rental access program</li> </ul>
Middle south crisis services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 EFT crisis support</li> <li>• 2 x 0.5 EFT crisis management</li> <li>• 2 x 1.0 EFT children's support</li> </ul>
On site with St Kilda CCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 EFT outreach support</li> <li>• 0.5 EFT private rental access position</li> </ul>
<b>Total</b>	<b>• 17 EFT</b>

A comparison of tables 4 and 5 shows that a further four EFT positions are required to fully resource the proposed model. Of this, two are required to support children and two to provide an accommodation and support service to clients at a location to be determined in the Middle South. Further consultation is also required with one of the existing crisis services in the area to ensure that the needs of local women and children accessing the main entry point who require crisis accommodation and support are responded to.

Despite the discrepancy between required and actual resources, the innovative models of service delivery and collaborative service planning that has been undertaken in the catchment to date has significantly improved the response to local women and children. As a result, by the end of 2003-04 the Inner/Middle South domestic violence service system will be configured as follows:

**Table 6 Inner/Middle South service system configuration by end 2003-04**

Location	Services provided	Operating hours	Out of hours access	Co-located services
1. Moorabbin Women's Services Alliance (The Salvation Army and Caroline Lodge)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intake and assessment</li> <li>• Crisis accom and support (part time)</li> <li>• Transitional outreach support</li> <li>• Private rental brokerage</li> <li>• Children's support (accessible but not on site)</li> <li>• Supported referral to statewide and regional services if required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 am to 5 pm Mon/Fri</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protocols to be developed with SECASA as the extended hours domestic violence service in the catchment to provide emergency accommodation and pick up by service next business day</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VERVE, a young women's transitional and outreach accommodation and support service</li> </ul>
2. High Security Refuges (x2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crisis accommodation and support</li> <li>• Children's Support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 am to 5 pm Mon/Fri (accessed through WDVCS)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After hours access to refuge system is through contact with WDVCS. Locally, proto-cols are to be developed with SECASA as above.</li> </ul>	
3. St Kilda The Salvation Army	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intake and assessment</li> <li>• Transitional accom and support</li> <li>• Outreach support</li> <li>• Private rental brokerage</li> <li>• Supported referral to statewide and regional services if required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 am to 5 pm Mon/Fri</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After hours and weekend access is through contact with WDVCS or via The Salvation Army Crisis Contact Centre that operates a 24/7 generalist crisis response.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• St Kilda CCC</li> <li>• Health Information Exchange</li> </ul>
Properties in catchment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are two main refuge properties in the catchment, both are targeted towards statewide high security clients (together these properties provide eight crisis beds).</li> <li>• Between the two women's refuges in the catchment there are 12 THM and CAP properties supported in addition to the main refuge properties. Of these, five will be targeted crisis properties for local area clients in the initial stages of the redevelopment. Should demand require it, additional crisis beds will be made available locally as they become available.</li> <li>• In total there will therefore be 13 crisis beds available in the Inner/Middle South catchment area.</li> <li>• The Salvation Army domestic violence service has access to seven transitional THM properties in the Inner South and access to non-nominated transitional THM stock in the Middle South.</li> </ul>			

It is anticipated that there will be a continuing focus on the development of close ties with other services providers in the catchment, such as family support agencies, family violence prevention and support programs and the Victims Assistance Program, to enhance the level of service available to clients of the domestic violence service system in the Inner/Middle South.

However, significant additional activities are required in the medium to long term to fully implement the proposed service system, including:

- further consultation to finalise the local area access points for the crisis service not co-located at the Moorabbin entry point
- identifying a funding source for additional children's support
- identifying a funding source for additional support positions to enhance response to the Middle South
- identifying alternative funding source for the private rental brokerage program that is currently time limited funding sourced through the Community Support Fund.

In the longer term, the development of an extended hours access point, similar to that developed in the Outer South, is proposed. The lack of a local area crisis response in Inner South will also stay on the agenda for future development, should resources become available.

### Local refuge access

For each of the proposed service system configurations to function effectively, it is necessary that SMR women's refuges review their categorisation of unsafe areas.

In support of the proposed models, each of the regional refuges will move from a 100 per cent statewide service delivery model that excludes specific suburbs from their catchment to a combined statewide/local area response. Each refuge will therefore need to determine whether this move can be achieved most effectively through the allocation of specific properties to local area based clients or through a review of their safety practices resulting in broader client access to all of their properties.

### Private rental brokerage

The service system configurations above will result in an extended domestic violence service in all parts of SMR.

To further enhance the service system it is proposed that the existing VHS pilot ISDVS private rental brokerage position be developed to provide a service to both Inner and Middle South and that the Outer SMR private rental brokerage position support both the Outer South and Frankston/Peninsula subregions.

These positions can provide invaluable assistance to clients whose primary need is accommodation and who require little, if any, ongoing support once accommodation has been established. Rather than have these clients either not able to access assistance or residing in supported accommodation better targeted to clients with more complex needs, immediate assistance to access the long-term private rental market can be provided.

The continuation of these VHS pilot positions is dependent on their evaluation as effective and efficient services for domestic violence clients. Their spread across the whole of SMR will provide important information on which type of areas can benefit most from this service delivery model.

## A range of security measures appropriate to the client's situation

### Client self-determination

*The refuge services currently operate largely on a model that ties safety to secrecy.*

A move towards client choice, in which clients determine their own safety plan in conjunction with staff, according to their individual needs, will require a fundamental attitudinal shift by both clients and staff of the domestic violence sector. This shift will require refocusing from client compliance with service rules to the client's vested interest in maintaining her own safety. Such an environment will foster autonomy and self-determination for clients and may also increase the efficiency of ongoing case management, given that women, as the overt primary determinants of the service they receive, may be more comfortable in discussing their changing needs with support staff.

### Client/worker safety

*Related to the safety requirements of women and children escaping domestic violence is the issue of security.*

'High' and 'low' security are much used terms in the domestic violence sector and are most often associated with building types rather than practices. It is suggested that the emphasis in the redevelopment of the SMR domestic violence service system be on client and staff 'safety' rather than 'security', as 'safety' encompasses building security and leaves room for consideration of other safety measures such as collaboration with police, schools and the local community.

It is important to note that while there are obvious limits to differing security arrangements within a communal living model, many other measures besides secrecy exist to ensure client safety: for instance, locks, fences, alarms, duress buttons, cameras, fast links to police or security services and regular patrols by security guards can all be appropriate safety initiatives in the right situation.

As a part of the reconfiguration of services within SMR, it is expected that, where appropriate, a range of safety measures are adopted that provide, to as great a degree as possible, for the client in conjunction with the support worker to determine their own safety needs.

## Recognition and responsiveness to client diversity

*As noted above, the proposed service system will have the capacity to provide an individualised response to clients dependent upon their needs.*

Specific provision has been made within the proposed configuration for clients who need to relocate out-of-region, who need to move within the region and who wish to stay within their local area.

There is a capacity within the proposed service system for women and children with a range of safety needs: from those who have very high safety concerns that require them to move out of SMR, to those that have minimal safety concerns other than assistance in finding safe, affordable accommodation in their local area. The provision of a range of accommodation options in the local area will also ensure that women who are unable, for one reason or another, to reside in communal living accommodation, will have the option of dispersed accommodation available to them.

The needs of CALD women and children are responded to through the participation of IWDVS in developing the SMR CPF Regional Implementation Plan and the key role they will play in the reconfigured service system. The work currently done by one of the refuges in the region with local CALD communities is also recognised. It is proposed that this work continues.

The range of clients' complexity of needs will also be addressed during implementation of the proposed model through the continuance of relationships with drug and alcohol services and mental health services across the region. The development of new relationships, links and protocols with these services will also form a part of the regional reconfiguration and implementation process.

The need to provide services to Indigenous clients is central to a capacity to recognise and respond to client diversity. To that end, work will continue at a local and regional level on the development of relationships with Indigenous support providers. Advice will be sought from the regional Indigenous Family Violence Project worker and the outcomes of the Indigenous Family Violence Strategy on how best to further this end.

To support the development of linkages between regional domestic violence services and CALD and Indigenous communities it is important to provide training and education opportunities where required. Regional consultations about the Indigenous Family Violence Strategy highlighted the need for Indigenous communities to be better informed of the activities of the domestic violence sector and the services available in the local area. Consultation also identified a desire amongst members of the Indigenous community to better inform domestic violence services of the particular needs and cultural practices that may have an impact on services to individuals from those communities.

## **Capacity to maintain or establish client connectedness to informal and formal networks of support**

*With the move towards local area based domestic violence services, the capacity for clients to maintain their existing support networks will markedly increase.*

Remaining within their local community whenever possible, will allow children to stay at school and see their friends and it will allow women to continue with their existing medical, legal and other networks and to retain links to family and friends in the area. This can reduce the level of isolation experienced by these clients.

In addition to the changes regarding local area access, this plan proposes strong network development between the domestic violence accommodation and support services and the various other support agencies in the community, such as family support, family violence groups and counselling programs. The development of strong links between these programs will further enhance the establishment of new networks of support for women and children who have had to relocate for safety reasons.

## **Well targeted services, a continuum of care and safe exit options**

As noted above, there are a number of changes proposed in SMR that are intended to improve the continuity of service provided to clients and to better target services to those who need assistance.

Despite this, it is acknowledged that there will be times when vacancies in the service system do not exist and other options will need to be provided to clients. The use of HEF will assist at these times.

### **Housing Establishment Fund**

*It is proposed that as a part of the HEF review outcome, a direct allocation of HEF funds be made to the regional domestic violence sector rather than to each individual agency.*

At present there is an uneven distribution of HEF funds across the sector with crisis services receiving more than \$7,000 per annum and outreach services receiving none. The current allocations appear to be based on historical contingencies rather than a needs based approach from a centralised domestic violence pool would be more appropriate to a well coordinated domestic violence service system in SMR.

HEF may also assist in the removal of perpetrators from the home by police. Gippsland Region has put in place a HEF voucher system that locates available funds and referral mechanisms with the local police station 24 hours a day. This system has proved extremely successful in creating a sea-change in the way domestic violence is responded to in the region and has had flow on effects to the possibilities of working with women and children who are able to remain in the family home in the first instance.

A similar model in SMR could potentially increase the number of women able to remain in their home in the region. This would have the dual effect of decreasing the demand on regional domestic violence services for accommodation and decreasing the demands made by police on generalist homelessness services in the region as they seek accommodation for perpetrators removed from the family home.

## Exit options

Of continual concern to domestic violence service providers in SMR and elsewhere, is the difficulty in obtaining exit options for clients who are residing in crisis and THM accommodation.

In some parts of the region the capacity to access the private rental market will be significantly enhanced by the provision of private rental brokerage for domestic violence clients. In other areas, however, there is very little affordable accommodation available and this option will only assist those who have an income higher than statutory payments provide or who are willing to move away from their local area.

In the longer term, growth in rooming house accommodation and other social housing programs will result in greater numbers of affordable properties being available in the higher priced inner city areas. The nexus between the CPF and other state government initiatives such as the review of domestic violence police and judicial responses will, also in the longer term, provide women with greater opportunities to remain in, or return to the family home following incidents of domestic violence.

Likewise, improvements in the assessment and entry of clients into appropriate support services as a result of the common assessment and referral process will see benefits to clients exiting services in the longer term, with a potential reduction in the number of clients continually re-accessing the service system.

In the immediate future, greater collaboration between services, more streamlined access to a variety of service types and an emphasis on the development of one coordinated domestic violence service system rather than two separate and, for the most part, disparate streams of assistance will give women an opportunity to move through the service system from short, to medium, to long term accommodation that is not possible at present.

The provision of private rental support workers will likely improve relationships between service providers and local real estate agents and the ongoing development of relationships between Office of Housing staff and service providers will enhance clients' capacity to access and maintain public housing when appropriate.

## Police/Court liaison and the Victim's Assistance Program

All SMR subregional working groups noted in their proposed subregional CPF plans that to provide a holistic service to women and children who have been subject to domestic violence; supports are needed for some clients who are involved with the judicial system.

While Department of Human Services is not in a position to provide police/court liaison positions across the region, it is proposed that discussions around this issue continue and that the outcomes of those discussions be provided to the Statewide Steering Committee to Reduce Family Violence. In addition, it is recommended that any initiatives coming out of that steering committee be implemented in SMR as appropriate.

Frankston Police Station has trialed a court support position at the Frankston Magistrates Court. The position is located at the court every day and the officer's role is to support all victims appearing for intervention orders, domestic violence cases and similar. The position has received strong support from services in the local area and police are currently reviewing the position to establish whether a full-time presence at the court is required, given the location of the police station next to the court and the times of day that clients generally appear before the courts. The outcome of the position evaluation will provide a direction on its continuation.

A related service that operates across the region is the Victims Assistance Program (VAP). The VAP is a funded service available to all victims of crimes against a person, including crimes related to family violence. The VAP provides personal support to eligible clients and can organise counselling sessions not otherwise available freely to clients. The SMR VAP is keen to establish relationships with all service providers in the region.

## Service system environment that supports strong service networking and collaboration

As noted earlier, the development of an enhanced domestic violence service system in SMR is in part dependent on the level of collaboration and networking amongst service providers.

It is expected that a greater understanding of the issues facing each service will come from working alongside each other in the provision of a coordinated service response and that networking and collaboration will become key features of the reconfigured service system.

In addition to this, however, it is proposed that a number of specific initiatives be undertaken to enhance the collaborative nature of the domestic violence service system statewide and regionally.

### Statewide Steering Committee to Reduce Family Violence (SSCDFV)

Supporting the implementation of the Women's Safety Strategy is the Statewide Steering Committee to Reduce Family Violence (SSCDFV).

This committee was established in August 2002 to coordinate stakeholder responses to family violence issues. Representatives on the committee include police, the Office of Women's Policy, government department and non-government representatives, including rural, Indigenous and multicultural groups. The ongoing work of the committee and the accessibility of its members provide a key opportunity for domestic violence stakeholders, in SMR, including Department of Human Services, to feedback concerns that arise during the implementation of the CPF at a local level.

### SMR CPF implementation groups

To ensure a high level of coordination and participation in the ongoing activities associated with the CPF in SMR, two implementation groups have been developed.

These groups are chaired by representatives from domestic violence service providers in the region and have representatives of all key stakeholders, including THMs, police, Department of Human Services, family violence prevention services and family support agencies. These groups have been formed to oversee the implementation of the CPF at a local level and to ensure that Department of Human Services and other funding bodies are made aware of any issues that become apparent in local areas throughout the process.

To further enhance the implementation process, each of the implementation groups has a six-month project officer attached to it, auspiced by one of the key providers in the catchment. The role of the project officers will be to facilitate service development and links within the sector and across associated initiatives such as the HSSD project in Outer SMR.

### SMR Domestic Violence Network

The existing network amongst SMR domestic violence services could potentially provide a focal point for the development of links amongst the agencies across the region.

This network is currently chaired by the Southern Housing and Support Services Network and includes representatives from each of the domestic violence providers in the region. In addition to the everyday activities of this group, it is proposed that the group takes a lead in developing coordinated access pathways across the service system in SMR and linkages between services across the region.

### SMR Family Violence Network

Another significant resource in the SMR that is devoted to family and domestic violence is the Family Violence Network.

This network supports family violence prevention and support services and has a major role in the developmental work undertaken during the CPF implementation process in SMR. This function could include ensuring sector awareness of impending changes to the domestic violence service system and driving a community awareness campaign to ensure potential clients and referrers are aware of the options and access points available to them.

Following the redevelopment, it is proposed that the Family Violence Network remain as a pivotal coordinating point for the service system.

## **Victorian Women's Refuges and Associated Domestic Violence Services**

Victorian Women's Refuges and Associated Domestic Violence Services (VWRADVS), now known as Vic DV, is the peak body for domestic violence services in Victoria, including women's refuges and family violence outreach services.

Vic DV is a key player in the Statewide Steering Committee to Reduce Family Violence and had a key role in developing the CPF. A part of its role is to assist and facilitate change in the domestic violence service system and to act as a coordinating point for issues facing the domestic violence sector. Vic DV aims include reducing family violence across the board and increasing integration amongst services responding to domestic violence through ongoing communication and coordination activities.

Vic DV has a key leadership role within the sector and can contribute to effective change management by providing a forum for consultation, debate and exchange of knowledge and best practice across the state as the CPF is progressively implemented.

## **Homelessness Service System Development (HSSD) project**

A key initiative to be undertaken in the Outer South of SMR is the HSSD project. This project aims to improve the accessibility, coordination and responsiveness of the homelessness service system across the project catchment area.

Domestic violence services are pivotal to a comprehensive homelessness service system to ensure clients are well linked to relevant support networks and services. As noted earlier, all homelessness services consistently report significant numbers of clients facing issues related to domestic violence.

It is, therefore, essential that the HSSD and CPF development and implementation processes be fully integrated. To assist this integration, the project manager of the HSSD project as well as key agency and Department of Human Services representatives will participate in both projects. This will ensure that the activities of each are coordinated and links are developed across the service systems.

## Implementation management arrangements

Implementation of this plan cannot occur without the support of the sector and the adequate resourcing and management of key activities to support the development of an improved service response.

This section deals with the latter issue.

The plan outlines a number of key activities to be considered in ensuring effective implementation of the proposed redevelopment. These include:

- development and implementation of an ongoing communication strategy
- development and implementation of referral card
- linkage and protocol development
- development and implementation of Outer SMR reconfiguration
- development and implementation of Inner SMR reconfiguration  
common assessment and referral
- improved method for distributing HEF
- development and implementation of the Evaluation Strategy.

It is expected that full implementation of the proposed revised service system will take approximately two years. Additional activities and issues affecting the provision of the domestic violence service system in SMR have also been highlighted in this document. These issues form the basis of the Strategic Directions Framework. The aim of the Strategic Directions Framework is to provide a template for future initiatives in SMR affecting domestic violence service provision, which can build on the redevelopment process currently underway.

It is proposed that the existing SMR CPF implementation groups oversee the redevelopment process and provide advice to the Department of Human Services regional office on matters affecting the scope, timing and management of the redevelopment as outlined in this document.

The department will retain overall responsibility for coordinating the implementation arrangements, including the allocation of resources and the implementation of the communication and evaluation strategies.

### One-off resourcing

There are a number of service redevelopment tasks identified within the plan that required resourcing by Department of Human Services on a once-off basis in the short term.

To support the implementation of the plan, a project position has been funded in each of the regional catchments for a period of six months. These positions will focus on implementation of the area based service systems. Each position will undertake an agreed work plan that focuses on the changes required to effectively implement the revised arrangements during the 2003-04 financial year. Total funding for these positions has been provided to the auspicing bodies.

As there will be some non-recurrent costs associated with the development and initial distribution costs for the SMR domestic violence referral cards, funds for this purpose have been provided to the service sector. A funding source for ongoing reprinting of these cards is still being sought.

There are also non-recurrent costs associated with the establishment of the new support positions in the region. Funds for this purpose have been provided to each of the agencies that have received growth funding.

Significant resources will also be required for the development of the outer SMR front door entry point in the medium to long term, involving both capital costs and service establishment costs. These costs will be met by Department of Human Services in consultation with the service provider.

### Recurrent growth

In addition to the non-recurrent costs, recurrent growth of \$255,000 plus private rental brokerage funds and associated EFT funding was made available in 2002-03 to support the implementation of the plan.

### **Outer/Peninsula**

To resource the proposed reconfiguration in Outer SMR, a minimum level of infrastructure and resources is required. To achieve this, the following resource allocations will be required:

- two EFT outreach support positions (from 2002-03 growth funds)
- one EFT private rental support position and associated brokerage funds have been provided for three years (until the end of 2004-05)
- 0.25 EFT management infrastructure has been provided to the service operating the Outer South entry point
- previously unallocated crisis resources totalling 6 EFT have been provided to the service operating the Outer South entry point.

Should additional resources become available in the future, it is proposed that further growth in support positions and children's support be allocated to the Outer/Peninsula catchment area in line with the priorities identified above.

### **Inner/Middle South**

The proposed reconfiguration of Inner SMR has likewise required some additional resources to achieve a minimum level of infrastructure and resources:

- two EFT support positions (from 2002-03 growth funds) have been allocated to the Middle South
- redeployment of existing one EFT Young Women's Program position to ISDVS has been undertaken
- redeployment of existing one EFT WAYSS DVO position to ISDVS has been undertaken
- private rental brokerage funds have been provided for three years (until the end of 2004-05).

The allocation of these positions and repositioning of existing resources as discussed above has provided a more comprehensive domestic violence service system across the Inner and Middle South catchment areas. However, it will not resolve the longer term need for a focal entry point as identified by the subregional CPF working groups.

Future growth in domestic violence resources is required to increase the overall level of resources available to meet this need, to the point at which an extended hour entry point similar to that proposed in Outer SMR can be implemented.

## Action Plan

The following actions reflect the proposals made in the plan. Short to medium term actions that are planned to occur within the next 12-18 months (prior to the end of the 2004-05 financial year) are detailed in the Action Plan.

Longer-term strategies that will focus on consolidation of short-term actions are detailed in the Strategic Directions Framework. The timeline for the longer-term strategies is not fixed, but reflects the priorities of the region in relation to the provision of family and domestic violence services.

The actions highlighted in the Action Plan focus on the key aims of the plan, that is:

- the provision of a local area based service system that has the capacity to provide an individualised response to clients
- maximisation of client and worker safety through a range of security measures appropriate to the client's situation
- recognition and responsiveness to client diversity
- a continuum of care incorporating extended hour accessibility through clear entry points, well targeted services, comprehensive information provision and safe exit options
- specialist assessment and referral through visible and accessible entry points that incorporates a comprehensive risk assessment
- maintenance or establishment of client connectedness to informal and formal networks of support
- a service system environment that supports strong service networking and collaboration

As is the case with any multifaceted plan, the actions planned to achieve one aim will often overlap with actions required to achieve other aims. Such actions have not been repeated in each subsequent section.

### Action 1

[Develop local area based services that have the capacity to provide an individualised response to clients.](#)

As highlighted throughout this implementation plan, the provision of local area based services that can respond to a diverse range of clients and needs is a key focus of the CPF. In addition to actions already being undertaken in the domestic violence sector in SMR, the following activities support the achievement of this aim.

Timeline	Action	Responsibility	Outcome/performance measure
Jul 03-Feb 04	Identify and allocate additional crisis properties across region	DHS and THM	Total 30 crisis beds available to domestic violence sector in SMR
Jul 03-Dec 03	Develop an office-based crisis service in Outer South	DHS and WAYSS	Operation of crisis service in Outer South
Jul 03-Dec 03	Develop an office-based entry point in Inner/Middle South	DHS, The Salvation Army, Caroline Lodge and Olive's Place	Operation of entry point in Middle South
Nov 03-Jun 04	Review unsafe areas for each refuge	Caroline Lodge, Olive's Place, Valerie House	Identification of potential reduction in unsafe areas and associated redevelopment of intake practice
Nov 03-Feb 04	Develop appropriate risk assessment where required	Service providers as required	Operation of agreed risk assessment process by all tools domestic violence services
Nov 03-Feb 04	Identify property allocations in Inner/Middle South for local area and intra-regional crisis clients	Caroline Lodge, Olive's Place, The Salvation Army, Hanover Southern	Clear identification of beds available to local and intra-regional clients and associated redevelopment of practice
Nov 03 - Mar 04	Continue to negotiate for after hours access to the Inner/Middle service system	DHS, SECASA, Caroline Lodge, Olive's Place, The Salvation Army	Clear identification and operation of after hours access protocols for local clients in Inner and Middle South
Nov 03-Dec 03	Develop after hours access on Mornington Peninsula	DHS, Valerie House	Clear identification and operation of after hours access protocols for local clients on Mornington Peninsula
Jan 04-Jun 04	Develop domestic violence interagency referral protocols across region	Caroline Lodge, Olive's Place, The Salvation Army, Valerie House, WAYSS, CPF implementation project officers	Agreed operation of protocols regarding client referral between domestic violence services in region

Jan 04-Jun 04	Develop referral protocols with police in Inner/Middle South once after hours access process is finalised	DHS, SECASA, Police, The Salvation Army, CPF implementation project officers, other	Clear identification and operation of after hours referral protocols for clients removed from home by police after hours
Jan 04-Jun 04	Develop links with other services providers, such as family support agencies, family violence prevention and support programs, the Victims Assistance Program, Best Start, the Vulnerable Families initiative, drug and alcohol providers and mental health providers	CPF implementation project officers	Agreed operation of protocols regarding client referral between domestic violence services and other providers in region in response to needs identified by CPF implementation working groups
Jan 04-Jun 05	Source funds for growth in children's support services across the region	DHS and service providers as appropriate	Identification of funds source to support growth in children's support
Jan 04-Jun 05	Source funds for growth in support positions across the region	DHS and service providers as appropriate	Identification of funds source to support growth in client support
Jan 04-Jun 05	Identify alternative funding source for the private rental brokerage program	DHS and service providers as appropriate	Identification of funds source to support ongoing private rental brokerage services

## Action 2

Maximise client and worker safety through a range of security measures appropriate to the client's situation.

As services move to new models of service delivery that provide clients with an opportunity to remain in their own communities, it is imperative that a continued focus is placed on the need for client and staff safety. For instance, it has been noted by some services in the region that the implementation of local area service delivery will require a reevaluation of current safety practices and that training in this area would be beneficial. The following activities support the achievement of this aim.

Timeline	Action	Responsibility	Outcome/performance measure
Nov 03-Dec 03	Continue discussions regarding the use of mutually agreed safety strategies for local clients	Caroline Lodge, Olive's Place, The Salvation Army, Valerie House, WAYSS and CPF implementation project officers	Clear identification and operation of risk assessment and safety strategy development processes across the region
Nov 03-Feb 04	Negotiate and implement referral protocols between service providers and local police on Mornington Peninsula	Valerie House and Police	Clear identification and operation of after hours referral protocols for clients removed from home by police after hours
Jan 04-Jun 04	Undertake discussions with CPG and DVIRC re training options for staff and client safety models	DHS	Identification and implementation of training opportunities regarding staff across the region
Jan 04-Jun 05	Continue discussions with DHS program areas and police in regard to the accommodation of perpetrators removed from the family home	DHS	Identification and implementation of perpetrator referral protocols across the region

## Action 3

Recognise and respond to client diversity.

As services move to new models of service delivery, the inclusion of service delivery options that respond effectively to a diverse range of clients, including women with older male children, clients with complex needs, CALD communities and Indigenous communities, is essential. The following activities support the achievement of this aim.

Timeline	Action	Responsibility	Outcome/performance measure
Nov 03-Jun 04	Continue discussions regarding IWDVS's role in the region	DHS SMR and OoH Community Programs Group	Implementation of recommendations relating to IWDVS activities
Nov 03-Jun 04	Continue to develop relationships, links and protocols with drug and alcohol services and mental health services across the region	Caroline Lodge, Olive's Place, The Salvation Army, Valerie House, WAYSS and CPF implementation project officers	Clear identification and operation of referral protocols between domestic violence, drug and alcohol and mental health services
Nov 03-Jun 04	Continue to liaise with regional Indigenous Family Violence Project Worker	DHS	Identification of Indigenous community need in region in relation to domestic violence and strategies to respond to those needs
Jan 04-Dec 04	Develop local links with Indigenous communities through Indigenous Local Area Action Groups and identified local contact points	DHS and CPF implementation project officers	Effective working relationships between domestic violence services and Indigenous services or communities
Jan 04-Dec 04 and ongoing	Implement communication strategy activities focusing on CALD and Indigenous communities	DHS, Caroline Lodge, Olive's Place, The Salvation Army, Valerie House, WAYSS and CPF implementation project officers	Increased knowledge of domestic violence services within CALD and Indigenous communities
Jul 04 - Jun 05	Implement recommendations of Indigenous Family Violence Strategy as appropriate	DHS and other as appropriate	Improved responses to Indigenous family violence across the region

## Action 4

Develop a continuum of care incorporating extended hour accessibility through clear entry points, well targeted services, comprehensive information provision and safe exit options.

The development of local area based service responses brings with it a need to ensure services are accessible and responsive to client need. The following activities support the achievement of this aim.

Timeline	Action	Responsibility	Outcome/performance measure
Jul 03-Dec 03	Develop and distribute referral cards in each part of the region	The Salvation Army and WAYSS	Distribution of referral cards in each part of the region
Jul 03-Feb 04	Develop protocols between WDVCS and the crisis services in each part of the region	DHS, Caroline Lodge, Olive's Place, The Salvation Army, Valerie House, WAYSS, WDVCS and CPF implementation project officers	Clear identification and operation of referral protocols between domestic violence services and WDVCS
Jul 03-Jul 04	Continue advocacy for parity of funding for children's support positions across the region	DHS SMR	Parity of funding for children's support across the region
Nov 03-Mar 04	Continue discussions with SECASA regarding their role as an after hours access point for the Inner or Middle South subregions	DHS, Caroline Lodge, Olive's Place and The Salvation Army	Clear identification and operation of referral protocols between domestic violence crisis services and SECASA in the Inner/Middle South catchment area
Jan 04-Jun 04	Source funds for continuing support of referral card activities	DHS, The Salvation Army and WAYSS	Provision of funds for continuation of referral card activities
Jan 04-Dec 04	Develop links between regional youth services and domestic violence service providers	DHS, Caroline Lodge, Olive's Place, The Salvation Army, Valerie House, WAYSS and CPF implementation project officers	Identification and implementation of referral and consultation protocols between domestic violence services and homelessness services across the region
Jan 04-Jul 04	Evaluate HEF allocations to domestic violence service sector in the region	DHS	Reallocation of HEF to domestic violence services as appropriate

## Action 5

Provide specialist assessment and referral that incorporates a comprehensive risk assessment.

All domestic violence services in SMR currently operate specialist assessment and referral protocols and risk assessment procedures. However, in many cases these processes differ between agencies. The following activities are aimed at streamlining these activities and providing a more accessible service system to clients as a consequence.

Timeline	Action	Responsibility	Outcome/performance measure
Jan 04-Jun 04	Engage regional implementation groups with SPG activities	DHS and CPF implementation project officers	Knowledge of and participation in each part of the region as appropriate in SPG activities
Jan 04-Dec 04	Develop interim common risk assessment tool and protocols	DHS, Caroline Lodge, Olive's Place, The Salvation Army, Valerie House, WAYSS and CPF implementation project officers	Operation of common risk assessment tool and protocols across the region
Jan 04-Jun 05	Engage Outer/Peninsula Implementation Group with HSSD project activities	DHS, HSSD and CPF implementation project officers	Knowledge of and participation in the HSSD project in each part of the region as appropriate

## Action 6

Maintain or establish client connectedness to informal and formal networks of support.

The benefits to women and children in maintaining their support networks while accessing domestic violence services are clear. The following activities support this aim.

Timeline	Action	Responsibility	Outcome/performance measure
Jan 04-Jul 05	Develop strong networks between the domestic violence accommodation and support services and the various other support agencies in the community, such as family support, family violence groups and counselling programs	DHS, Caroline Lodge, Olive's Place, The Salvation Army, Valerie House, WAYSS and CPF implementation project officers	Identification and implementation of referral and consultation protocols between domestic violence services and other support services across the region

## Action 7

Develop a service system environment that supports strong service networking and collaboration.

Underpinning all of the SMR CPF Implementation Plan objectives is the need for a coordinated and collaborative service system. The following activities support this aim.

Timeline	Action	Responsibility	Outcome/performance measure
Jul 03-Aug 03	Establish two SMR CPF implementation groups	Regional CPF Steering Group and working groups	Implementation groups established
Oct 03-Jun 04	Develop links between SMR Victims Assistance Program and service providers in the region	DHS, Caroline Lodge, Olive's Place, The Salvation Army, Valerie House, WAYSS and CPF implementation project officers	Identification and implementation of referral and consultation protocols between domestic violence services and VAP
Nov 03-Jan 04	Review role of Regional Domestic Violence Network in implementation of CPF	Southern Housing and Support Services Network, DHS, Caroline Lodge, Olive's Place, The Salvation Army, Valerie House and WAYSS	Clear identification and operation of DVN role in CPF implementation
Jan 04-Jun 04	Involve regional youth services in CPF planning and implementation process	DHS, Caroline Lodge, Olive's Place, The Salvation Army, Valerie House, WAYSS, CPF implementation project officer and youth services	Identification and implementation of referral and consultation protocols between domestic violence services and youth services
Jan 04-Jun 04	Develop links between generalist homelessness services and domestic violence specific agencies	DHS, Caroline Lodge, Olive's Place, The Salvation Army, Valerie House, WAYSS, CPF implementation project officer and homelessness services	Identification and implementation of referral and consultation protocols between domestic violence services and homelessness services
Jan 04-Jun 04	Undertake discussions with the Family Violence Network and Community Care to establish its role in the CPF implementation process in SMR	DHS and Family Violence Network	Clear identification and operation of FVN role in CPF implementation
Jul 04-Dec 04	Develop linkages between men's support services and domestic violence services	DHS, Caroline Lodge, Olive's Place, The Salvation Army, Valerie House, WAYSS, CPF implementation project officer and men's support services	Identification and implementation of referral and consultation protocols between domestic violence services and men's services

## Evaluation

An important element in the introduction of significant changes to any service system responding to a vulnerable client group is the development of a thorough evaluation strategy.

Implementation of the CPF in SMR is occurring within a complex environment that includes the simultaneous development and implementation of related projects at both a statewide and regional level. Each of these projects is likely to have an impact on either the demand for, or delivery of, domestic violence services across the region. For this reason a final evaluation strategy cannot be determined for the CPF in isolation from the evaluation strategies of these other projects.

The SMR CPF implementation evaluation will, therefore, be an iterative process that has the capacity to respond to, and coordinate with, related activities. Nevertheless, there are a number of key evaluation issues and activities that can be detailed at this time.

The overall aims of the evaluation will be to:

- monitor program and service system performance
- identify issues that will have an impact on final service system configuration, capacity or effectiveness
- identify areas in which fine-tuning of the proposed service system could increase its effectiveness in responding to the needs of clients
- assess which components of the reconfigured service system have a positive/negative impact on service delivery and provide an opportunity to respond to any issues identified
- improve understanding of demand for domestic violence services in SMR and the factors that have an impact on that demand.

To achieve these aims, the evaluation strategy will be designed to answer a number of specific questions:

- Was the plan implemented as intended?
- What were the specific activities that were implemented?
- Did these activities lead to the attainment of their specific objectives?
- Were the plan's overall goals achieved?
- To what extent were any successes or failures a result of factors other than the strategy?

A two-stage approach is required to answer these questions fully: an evaluation of the process and an evaluation of the impact.

### SMR CPF process evaluation

The SMR CPF process evaluation will review the actual implementation of the plan, looking at whether the strategies were implemented as planned and whether the expected results were produced.

The process evaluation should include the following:

1. A description of the service system prior to the CPF implementation process, including description of:
  - services operating in the catchment areas and their targets
  - service linkages in place prior to the CPF implementation process
  - numbers of clients supported in each catchment area
  - unmet demand in each catchment area, where possible
  - accessibility of long-term affordable housing for clients (particularly as it relates to the use of the private rental brokerage system implemented as a part of this plan)
  - the number of hours police spend accessing services for victims of domestic violence services who are removed from their home

This information will later provide baseline data for comparison.

2. A description of the changes made to the existing service system in each catchment and the processes undertaken to achieve these changes. Information of use at this point includes identification of:

- any training opportunities for staff
- the consultation processes used to garner support from agencies involved in the changes
- any gross changes to the operating environment such as closures of major accommodation services, caravan parks or similar that could potentially increase demand significantly.

Should expected outcomes not be achieved, this information may provide some insight into why this happened.

3. A description of the plan's implementation process, including a review of:

- any problems that were encountered during implementation and how these were resolved
- any planned activities that have not been undertaken and whether activities that were implemented were on schedule
- any revised or additional objectives, plans or timetables and why this was necessary
- costs incurred throughout the implementation process
- the communication process, such as whether there were breakdowns in communication between stakeholders, or tense relationships that made smooth progression difficult
- the level of collaboration amongst agencies and any factors that may have impeded this
- the level of support for the changes in each catchment area and any information on the impact this may have had on the process.

The information gathered in this section may provide useful information for the implementation of any similar process across the region or in another region.

4. Identification and description of any intervening events that may have affected the implementation process and outcomes. Included in this section are factors such as:

- any significant changes in agency/program leadership that may have had an impact on the change processes
- increased demand as a result of greater visibility of services
- the length of time taken to establish sound referral practices in each catchment
- changes in the policy environment

Information gathered in this section can help explain any failures or unexpected achievements that occur during the implementation process.

Some of the information required for this step of the Evaluation Strategy is contained within this report, particularly that required for point one, above. Other information will need to be collected as the implementation proceeds. As there is no evaluator attached to the SMR CPF implementation process, the regular meetings of the implementation groups and the work undertaken by the project officers could provide sources of information.

### SMR CPF impact evaluation

The SMR CPF impact evaluation will examine the effects of the CPF implementation process and the extent to which its goals were attained.

The impact evaluation will use the information collected as a part of the process evaluation to provide comparative data. Additional information will also need to be collected throughout the implementation process to ensure a full evaluation can be completed.

Questions to be asked during the impact evaluation include whether the implementation of the CPF in SMR has resulted in:

1. Increased service system accessibility

- Has the level of resources available to women and children escaping domestic violence services increased?
- Has the domestic violence service system accessibility increased in SMR?

- Has there been an increase in the number of women and children escaping domestic violence who receive accommodation or support from domestic violence services?
  - Has there been a decrease in the number of hours police use finding accommodation for victims of domestic violence?
2. Client and worker safety
- Have a variety of staff and client safety practices been introduced in SMR domestic violence services?
  - Has there been an increase in risk to clients or staff of domestic violence service clients?
3. Client diversity
- Has there been an increase in the alternative responses available to women and children escaping domestic violence?
  - Has there been an increase in the number of women and children from CALD or Indigenous backgrounds who access the domestic violence service system?
4. Continuum of care
- Has there been an increase in the number of co-located services?
  - Has there been a decrease in the number of women and children escaping domestic violence who return to their partner?
  - Has there been an increase in the proportion of domestic violence service clients accessing long-term affordable housing?
5. Assessment and referral
- Have common assessment and referral processes been implemented in SMR?
  - Has there been a decrease in the amount of time it takes for clients to access assistance from the domestic violence service system?
6. Client support networks
- Has there been an increase in the number of women and children remaining in their local area after escaping domestic violence?
  - Has there been a decrease in the number of repeat contacts from women escaping domestic violence?
7. Service system environment
- Has there been any variation in the pattern of Segment 1 and 3 public housing applications from women escaping domestic violence?
  - Has there been an increase in the level of referrals between domestic violence services and other local providers?
  - Has there been an increase in the accessibility of private rental properties to clients of domestic violence services?
  - Has there been any change to the pattern of contacts with WDVCS in relation to women from SMR?

There is no evaluator attached to the SMR CPF implementation process at this time. However, Department of Human Services recognises the need to resource such a position and is currently looking to source additional funds for this purpose.

With the short-medium term activities covering a period of two years, the evaluation process will take place at a number of points in time. Key data collection periods shall be six-monthly. Data collection tools used in evaluating the implementation process should be developed so as to minimise the impact that the collection has on service providers and other stakeholders. Strategies to ensure consistent analysis of the data collected should be developed through the CPF implementation groups as early as possible in the implementation process.

A final, but vital component of the impact evaluation is the identification of any unintended effects of the changes being implemented. To ensure that any unintended effects can be responded to effectively and in a timely manner, the CPF implementation groups in each part of the region will include representatives of all key service providers and Department of Human Services. Should an unintended side effect be detrimental to the clients of the service system, immediate review of related processes will be undertaken. If required, the implementation process will be changed as soon as possible to overcome the side effect identified.

The aim of the Evaluation Strategy is to produce a report each 12 months, to be provided to stakeholders across the region as a part of the Communication Strategy. This report will provide information on activities and achievements to date and direction for the coming months.

## Communication strategy

The proposed redevelopment of the SMR domestic violence service system includes some significant changes to the organisation and practices of SMR domestic violence services.

These changes are unlikely to result in broad improvements to the service system without the understanding, support and engagement of the services affected.

While some of these changes may present significant challenges for the domestic violence services in SMR, all of those services are supportive of improvements to the service system that will result in better outcomes for women and children subject to domestic violence.

It is important, therefore, that a sound communication strategy be implemented as soon as possible to keep stakeholders fully informed of impending changes and the ways in which their continuing participation in the redevelopment process will lead to better outcomes for their clients.

### Situation analysis

The environment in which the CPF is being implemented in SMR is complex, with multiple service sectors involved in assisting clients facing domestic violence.

Across these service sectors there is significant variance in the level of knowledge and understanding of the domestic violence service system in general and the aims of the CPF in particular. Despite the variety of stakeholders, there is across all service sectors, government and the media, a high level of interest in the issue of domestic violence, with stakeholders keen to receive information on developments in the area.

The CPF and the SMR Regional Implementation Plan recognise that merely increasing resources to the service sector will not, in itself, adequately address the issue of domestic violence crisis accommodation and support responses: changes can and must be made to the design and delivery of services. This plan identifies a number of challenges facing the domestic violence service sector that must be addressed if an effective and responsive service system is to result. These issues and the changes proposed to address them form one component of the communication needs of the SMR CPF Implementation Plan.

Additionally, as noted above, there are a number of other initiatives being undertaken that are focused on the issue of domestic violence. The majority of these initiatives will also have an impact on the delivery of domestic violence services in SMR in the longer term. To ensure that contradictory or confusing messages are not provided to stakeholders, the communication processes associated with each of these initiatives must also be considered in the development and implementation of the SMR CPF Communication Strategy.

Finally, it is important to consider the actual capacity of services to respond to domestic violence in their local area during the implementation phases of the CPF. It is probable that the increased visibility of local area domestic violence services will result in an increase in demand for those services. The messages provided as a part of the communications strategy should, therefore, be tempered by the need not to create unreal expectations in the minds of stakeholders.

Each of these factors is an important contextual consideration in the development and implementation of this strategy and the messages to be imparted must reflect them.

### Aims and objectives

The aims of this communication strategy are to:

- inform and educate SMR domestic violence service system stakeholders
- increase stakeholders' understanding of the SMR CPF implementation and its intended outcomes
- maximise awareness of the issues facing domestic violence services in SMR and the intentions of the SMR CPF implementation actions to address those issues
- maximise coordination between the SMR CPF process and other regional and statewide activities that will impact on the domestic violence service system.

To achieve these aims, the objectives of this communication strategy are to:

- maximise participation in the SMR CPF implementation process

- detail the aims, purposes and intended benefits of the SMR CPF process at both a systemic level and an individual client level
- Provide clear, up-to-date data and information on the project to a variety of stakeholders; and
- Provide an avenue through which concerns and issues that may arise can be addressed in a timely manner.

### Target audiences

To achieve the above objectives it is necessary to target a number of different audiences throughout the implementation process.

The purpose of engaging each of these audiences differs depending on their level of interaction and interest in the domestic violence services system. Consequently, the key messages and method of engaging each target groups also differs.

#### 1. Primary audience

Domestic violence service providers and implementation group members, including:

- Caroline Lodge
- Olive's Place Women's Refuge
- Good Shepherd/Valerie House
- The Salvation Army
- WAYSS Ltd
- WDVCS
- SECASA
- DVIRC
- IWDVS
- Hanover Southern
- Victoria Police
- Springvale Monash Legal Service
- Anglicare Rosebud
- VAP
- Southern Housing and Support Services Network
- SMR Family Violence Network.

#### 2. Secondary Audience

Other community service providers responding to women and children experiencing domestic violence, including:

- family support agencies
- family violence and prevention services
- homelessness agencies
- child protection
- medical services
- drug and alcohol services
- mental health services
- women's health services
- Centrelink
- CALD services
- Indigenous services

- maternal and child health services
- primary care partnerships
- hospitals
- long-term housing providers
- family and community services.

### 3. Other stakeholders

- Key stakeholders that are not involved in provision of services to clients, including:
  - Minister for Housing
  - local members of Parliament
  - Department of Human Services
  - Statewide Steering Committee to Reduce Family Violence.

## Key messages

The key messages for each target audience differ according to the purpose of engagement.

The following table details the audience, the messages to be communicated, the communication activities and the agencies/positions/departments responsible for delivering that message. The timelines provided are estimates and are subject to change depending on local activities and issues that arise during the implementation process.

Audience	Message	Activity	Responsibility and Timeline
Primary/secondary	During the finalisation of the SMR CPF Implementation Plan, a number of key changes have occurred in the domestic violence service system.	Two page flier created and disseminated, detailing new services, roles and contact details sent to all key stakeholders	DHS and CPF implementation groups (Jan 04)
Primary/secondary/other	In response to issues raised during the final SMR CPF Steering Group meeting and other feedback, the SMR CPF Implementation Plan has been finalised.	Release of the SMR CPF Regional Implementation Plan	DHS (Jan 04)
Primary/secondary/other	The SMR CPF Implementation Plan is about improving responses for women and children escaping domestic violence.	Domestic violence services and DHS welcome the input of regional services into the continued implementation of the plan.	Regional CPF forum DHS and CPF implementation project officers (Feb 04)
Primary/secondary	Update on regional CPF activities	Flier or newsletter distributed every quarter to local stakeholders	DHS &/or CPF implementation project officers (March 04 and ongoing)
Primary	The development of interim common assessment and referral tools including risk assessment tools	Individual agency negotiations or subregional working groups to coordinate activities	Individual agencies (March 04)
Primary/secondary	The development of comprehensive linkages across the region is a key factor in the success of the SMR CPF process	Individual agency negotiations or subregional working groups to coordinate activities	CPF implementation project officers (Jan 04 and ongoing)
Primary and HSSD project group in Outer South	The activities of the CPF implementation process and the HSSD planning and implementation process need to be coordinated and complementary.	Ongoing reporting and coordination between HSSD Steering Group and CPF Outer South Implementation Group	CPF implementation project officer and HSSD project manager (Dec 03 and ongoing)
Primary	The CPF implementation groups require an awareness and understanding of the SPG activities in order to coordinate any impact these have on the local area service systems	Ongoing reporting and coordination between SPG and CPF implementation groups	DHS (Jan 04 and ongoing)

Primary/secondary	The CPF implementation process will result in a comprehensive domestic violence service system with the capacity to respond to the needs of CALD and Indigenous communities	Engagement of CALD and Indigenous communities through participation in local forums held in the communities	DHS and service providers (Feb 04 and ongoing)
Other	Key achievements in region	Briefings and updates provided to key DHS program areas or ministers and local members of Parliament.	DHS (ongoing)

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## Strategic direction

Implementation of the Action Plan, detailed above, will bring significant benefits to the clients of domestic violence services in SMR.

Implementation of the Communication Strategy will ensure that all stakeholders are aware of developments and potential benefits to clients in their local area and across the region. Implementation of the Evaluation Strategy will ensure that any issues identified can be responded to in a timely manner.

Application of these strategies alone will not resolve the ongoing issue of domestic violence in our community nor will they, in isolation, provide a service system capacity sufficient to meet the needs of all people in SMR who are subject to domestic violence.

While these activities will have a significant impact on the response to domestic violence across SMR, it is imperative that the successful implementation of the actions detailed above is not seen as the sole response required in SMR. Indeed, there is a clear recognition that further coordinated responses to domestic violence are required for these long-term aims to be achieved. At a statewide and policy level these issues are being addressed through a number of ongoing initiatives, including:

- the Statewide Steering Committee to Reduce Family Violence
- the Women's Safety Strategy
- the Indigenous Family Violence Strategy.

These initiatives are only a small percentage of the activities being undertaken across the state by both government and non-government agencies. Significant work is also being undertaken at the Commonwealth level to address the level of domestic violence in our community.

Implementation of coordinated responses at every level, from national strategies to local community actions, are required if family and domestic violence is to be addressed as the complex issue that it is. As such, the SMR CPF Action Plan should be seen as providing a solid foundation upon which further development of the regional domestic violence service system can rest.

Clearly, such development will be an iterative process, the directions of which will be determined by the needs of the people in SMR. Nevertheless, there are a number of aims that will remain a high priority for the region within this context. These aims include:

1. Further development of service models to meet client need, including:
  - development of a capital facility and 24/7 response to domestic violence in the Outer/Peninsula catchment area
  - development of a capital facility and 24/7 response to domestic violence in the Inner/Middle South catchment area
  - identification of any remaining service gaps across the region, including a determination of any client groups not provided with a specialist domestic violence response
  - development of a response to any service gaps or client groups identified.
2. Growth in resources available to respond to client need across the region, including:
  - client support resources across the continuum of service delivery options
  - children's support resources across the region.
3. Continued and increasing interagency and inter-departmental collaboration at a local level, including:
  - further development of linkages or co-location opportunities between domestic violence services and homelessness services, through the HSSD implementation and similar activities
  - integration of domestic violence services into the planned common assessment and referral process, common data collection and bed vacancy register
  - further development of links between mainstream domestic violence services and CALD and Indigenous communities across the region
  - further development of linkages or co-location opportunities between domestic violence services and employment, education and income support providers across the region
  - development of links between domestic violence services and local long-term affordable housing providers

- further development of links or co-location opportunities between domestic violence services and police and justice responses across the region.
- creation of a broader understanding of domestic violence and its links to homelessness, poverty and social disadvantage in the community.

Department of Human Services SMR is committed to the ongoing prioritisation and achievement of these aims. However, it recognises that to achieve these aims, a strong and ongoing commitment is also required from the community agencies that respond to domestic violence on a daily basis. Working together, Department of Human Services and the community sector will, perhaps inevitably, face disagreement and divergence of opinion; for government departments and community agencies bring with them a diverse range of philosophies and experiences. Such diversity is a strength. Indeed, a comprehensive response, appropriate to the numerous and complex needs of people experiencing domestic violence is not possible without diversity.

Continuing the partnership between government and non-government stakeholders that has enabled this plan to be developed, will provide all of us with the opportunity to create a strong and united service system. A service system with the capacity to bring about safe, long-term, sustainable outcomes for people who are, or have been, subjected to domestic violence, wherever they are located in the region.

## Abbreviations

CALD	Culturally and linguistically diverse
CAP	Crisis accommodation property
CCC	St Kilda Crisis Contact Centre
CPF	Family and Domestic Violence Crisis Protection Framework
DVIRC	Domestic Violence and Incest Resource Centre
EFT	Effective full-time
HEF	Housing Establishment Fund
HSSD	Homelessness Service System Development project
ISDVS	Inner South Domestic Violence Service
IWDVS	Immigrant Women's Domestic Violence Service
LGA	Local government area
NDCA	National Data Collection Agency
NTV	No To Violence
SAAP	Supported Accommodation Assistance Program
SECAS	South East Crisis Accommodation Service
SECASA	South East Centre Against Sexual Assault
SMR	Southern Metropolitan Region
THM	Transitional Housing Management
VAP	Victim's Assistance Program
VHS	Victorian Homelessness Strategy
WAYSS DVO	WAYSS Domestic Violence Outreach Service
WDVCS	Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service

## Appendix 1

### SMR CPF regional steering group membership

Agency	Providers represented	Participant
1. Anglicare	family support agencies	Sally Alsop
2. Caroline Lodge	SMR women's refuges	Helen Chetcuti
3. Family Violence Network	family violence prevention and support services	Sandra Maudier
4. Inner South Domestic Violence Service	domestic violence outreach services	Catherine Plunkett
5. City of Kingston	local government	Lisa Foord
6. Ethnic Communities Council of the Southeast	CALD clients	Phong Nguyen
7. IWDVS	CALD clients and services	Muktesh Chibber
8. Olive's Place	SMR women's refuges	Matilde Vella
9. SAAP Regional Services Network	SMR SAAP services	Susan Fallaw
10. SECASA	sexual assault centres	Caroline Worth
11. Shire of Cardinia	local government	Lynda Turbiak
12. Victoria Police	Victoria Police	District Inspector John Heynes
13. Victoria Police	Victoria Police	Chief Inspector George Johnson
14. WAYSS DVO	domestic violence outreach services	Janice Peterson
15. WAYSS THM	THM programs	Kim Stowe
16. Department of Human Services SMR	Manager, Housing, Primary and Complex Care	Helen Russell (Chair)
17. Department of Human Services SMR	Team Leader, Homelessness Services	Tracie Martin
18. Department of Human Services SMR	Manager, Social and Community Strategy Unit	Phil Dalling
19. Department of Human Services SMR	Manager, Family and Community Support Services	Marilyn Collins

## Appendix 2

### External SMR CPF subregional working group participants

<b>Frankston Peninsula subregion agencies</b>	<b>Participant</b>
Anglicare	Sally Alsop (Chairperson)
Peninsula Community Health Service	Andrea Bowles
WAYSS DVO	Amanda Graham
WAYSS THM	Jen Kelly
Good Shepherd Youth and Family Services	David Munro
Victoria Police	
<b>Outer South subregion agencies</b>	<b>Participant</b>
WAYSS DVO	Janice Peterson (Chairperson)
Regional SAAP Network	Susan Fallaw
WAYSS THM	Jen Kelly
Kilvington Women's Refuge	Lynne
SAAP Regional Children's Services Network	Brett McDonnell
SECAS	Mark Matthews
Monash Community Legal Service	Mary Rahilly
City of Greater Dandenong	Hayden Brown
Victoria Police	Inspector John Henderickson
<b>Middle South subregion agencies</b>	<b>Participant</b>
Caroline Lodge Women's Refuge	Helen Chetcuti (Chairperson)
Centrelink	Monica Aguilar
Hanover THM	Lyn Lanham
Hanover Support Services	Linda Davis
Mediation Centre	Max Wright
Olive's Place Women's Refuge	Matilde Vella
WAYSS DVO	Yvonne Der Hertog
Central Bayside Community Health Centre	JulieAnne Garland
Victoria Police	
Southern Family Life	Marlene Butler
<b>Inner South subregion agencies</b>	<b>Participant</b>
Inner South Domestic Violence Service	Catherine Plunkett (Chairperson)
St Kilda CCC	Sally Coutts
Argyle Street Housing Service	Sue Grigg
Sacred Heart Mission	Cathy Humphrey
City of Port Melbourne	Peter Streker
Inner South Community Health Service	Michelle Wright
Victoria Police	Sergeant Brook Hall
Victoria Police	Sergeant Mark Delahunty

## Appendix 3

### SMR CPF regional implementation group participants

<b>Inner/Middle South</b>	<b>Participant</b>
The Salvation Army	Catherine Plunkett
Caroline Lodge Women's Refuge	Con Smith
ISDVS	Bree Oliver
Olive's Place Women's Refuge	Matilde Vella
Hanover Southern	Lyn Lanham
Verve	Nicole
SECASA	Caroline Worth
SMR Family Violence Network	Sandra Maudier
SMR Housing and Support Services Network	Susan Fallaw
Inner South Community Health Service	
Victoria Police	
DHS SMR	Tracie Martin
<b>Outer/Peninsula</b>	<b>Participant</b>
WAYSS Support Services	Janice Peterson (Chairperson)
WAYSS Crisis Services	Cora Campbell
WAYSS THM	Jen Kelly
WAYSS DVO	Sahroun Kaohn
Homelessness Service System Development Project	Bob Bryx
Windermere	Jan Donaldson
Monash Community Legal Service	Mary Rahilly
City of Greater Dandenong	Hayden Brown
SMR Family Violence Network	Sandra Maudier
SMR Housing and Support Services Network	Susan Fallaw
Good Shpeherd	David Munro
Valerie House	Angela Palmer
Victoria Police	
DHS SMR	Tracie Martin

## Appendix 4

### Supporting data

**Table A4.1 Population by family types and LGA Inner South 2001 (as per Figure 1)**

Inner South Local Government Areas	Total people	Total people in households with >1 person	Total people living in sole parent households with >1 person over 15	Total people in couple households no children	Total people in couple households with children <15*	Total people in couple households with children >15
Port Phillip (C)	78,075	37,478	3,032	17,263	12,264	4,919
Stonnington (C)	86,962	51,648	3,760	17,444	21,067	9,377
<b>Total</b>	<b>165,037</b>	<b>89,126</b>	<b>6,792</b>	<b>34,707</b>	<b>33,331</b>	<b>14,296</b>

\* includes households with under and over 15 year old children in each of the following tables

**Table A4.2 Population by family types and LGA Middle South 2001 (as per Figure 2)**

Middle South Local Government Areas	Total people	Total people in households with >1 person	Total people living in sole parent households with >1 person over 15	Total people in couple households no children	Total people in couple households with children <15*	Total people in couple households with children >15
Bayside (C)	85,741	64,377	4,745	16,464	30,812	12,356
Kingston (C)	129,513	96,869	7,444	24,636	44,210	20,579
Glen Eira (C)	119,306	83,484	6,085	22,711	38,567	16,121
<b>Middle South</b>	<b>334,560</b>	<b>244,730</b>	<b>18,274</b>	<b>63,811</b>	<b>113,589</b>	<b>49,056</b>

**Table A4.3 Population by family types and LGA Outer South 2001 (as per Figure 3)**

Outer South Local Government Areas	Total people	Total people in households with >1 person	Total people living in sole parent households with >1 person over 15	Total people in couple households no children	Total people in couple households with children <15*	Total people in couple households with children >15
Cardinia (S)	46,075	36,808	2,106	7,597	20,853	6,252
Casey (C)	177,159	144,604	8,589	25,370	84,747	25,898
Greater Dandenong	124,405	94,225	9,255	18,383	43,455	23,132
<b>Outer South</b>	<b>347,639</b>	<b>275,637</b>	<b>19,950</b>	<b>51,350</b>	<b>149,055</b>	<b>55,282</b>

**Table A4.4 Population by family types and LGA Outer South 2001(as per Figure 4)**

Frankston/ Peninsula Government Areas	Total people	Total people in households with >1 person	Total people living in sole parent households with >1 person over 15	Total people in couple households no children	Total people in couple households with children <15*	Total people in couple households with children
Frankston (C)	111,152	81,260	6,884	19,630	40,063	14,683
Mornington Peninsula (S)	177,159	92,735	5,888	28,988	43,731	14,128
<b>Frankston/Peninsula</b>	<b>288,311</b>	<b>173,995</b>	<b>12,772</b>	<b>48,618</b>	<b>83,794</b>	<b>28,811</b>

**Table A4.5 SMR population by family type and LGA 2001 (as per Figure 5)**

Local Government Areas	Total people	Total people in households with >1 person	Total people living in sole parent households with	Total people in couple households no children	Total people in couple households with children <15*	Total people in couple households Bayside (C)
Bayside (C)	7.6%	8.2%	8.2%	8.3%	8.1%	8.4%
Kingston (C)	11.4%	12.4%	12.9%	12.4%	11.6%	14.0%
Glen Eira (C)	10.5%	10.7%	10.5%	11.4%	10.2%	10.9%
Port Phillip (C)	6.9%	4.8%	5.2%	8.7%	3.2%	3.3%
Stonnington (C)	7.7%	6.6%	6.5%	8.8%	5.5%	6.4%
Cardinia (S)	4.1%	4.7%	3.6%	3.8%	5.5%	4.2%
Casey (C)	15.6%	18.5%	14.9%	12.8%	22.3%	17.6%
Greater Dandenong (C)	11.0%	12.0%	16.0%	9.3%	11.4%	15.7%
Frankston (C)	9.8%	10.4%	11.9%	9.9%	10.5%	10.0%
Mornington Peninsula (S)	15.6%	11.8%	10.2%	14.6%	11.5%	9.6%
SMR Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Table A4.6 SMR domestic violence accommodation and support services 2001-2002 (as per Figure 7)**

Service	Service model	Subregion location	Support periods	Average DOS
ISDVO	Transitional/Outreach	Inner	182	6 weeks
WAYSS DVO	Transitional/ Outreach	Outer/Peninsula	426	16 weeks
Caroline Lodge	Crisis/Refuge	Middle	142	7 weeks
Olive's Place	Crisis/Refuge	Middle	121	5 weeks
Valerie House	Crisis/Refuge	Peninsula	103	8 weeks
Kilvington House	Crisis/Refuge	Outer	54	6 weeks
Total			1028	

**Table A4.7 SMR domestic violence services accompanying children 2001-02 (as per Figure 8)**

Agency	Number of children	Number of support periods	Average number of children per support period
Caroline Lodge	87	60	1.5
Olive's Place	106	88	1.2
Valerie House	49	37	1.3
ISDVS	25	14	1.8
WAYSS DVO	574	309	1.9

**Table A4.8 Number of aggrieved family members by LGA 1999-2001 (police response)** (as per Figure 12)

LGA	99-00	00-01	Percentage increase	Percentage of region police reports 00-01	Percentage of region population in >1 person households
Port Phillip	460	490	6.5%	9.0%	1.4%
Stonington	340	330	-2.9%	6.1%	0.6%
Glen Eira	390	395	1.3%	7.3%	0.4%
Bayside	265	265	0.0%	4.9%	0.8%
Kingston	540	770	42.6%	14.2%	0.5%
Greater Dandenong	670	760	13.4%	14.0%	0.8%
Casey	865	895	3.5%	16.5%	0.6%
Cardinia	265	230	-13.2%	4.2%	0.6%
Frankston	480	755	57.3%	13.9%	0.9%
Mornington Peninsula	490	545	11.2%	10.0%	0.5%
<b>Total Region</b>	<b>4765</b>	<b>5435</b>	<b>119.7%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>0.7%</b>

**Table A4.9 Age of aggrieved family members 2000-2001 by LGA (police response)** (as per Figure 14)

LGA	<15	16-17	18-24	25-34	35-64	>64	Total
Port Phillip	5	15	80	170	185	15	470
Stonington	5	10	50	80	155	10	310
Glen Eira	0	10	50	115	185	10	370
Bayside	5	10	25	65	135	5	245
Kingston	20	10	110	245	335	15	735
Greater Dandenong	15	15	145	240	300	15	730
Casey	10	25	150	275	385	15	860
Cardinia	5	5	20	110	75	0	215
Frankston	10	25	110	275	300	10	730
Mornington Peninsula	10	10	110	160	230	10	530
<b>Total Region</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>2.6%</b>	<b>16.4%</b>	<b>33.4%</b>	<b>44.0%</b>	<b>2.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Table A4.10 Children present at family violence incidents 2000-2001 by LGA (as per Figure 15)**

LGA	0-4 years	5-9 years	10-16 years	Total children present	Total number of incidents in which children present	Percentage of incidents in LGA in which children present
Port Phillip	70	45	50	165	110	22.4%
Stonington	45	25	40	110	65	19.7%
Glen Eira	80	60	115	255	155	39.2%
Bayside	50	40	75	165	100	37.7%
Kingston	255	180	215	650	340	44.2%
Greater Dandenong	290	205	205	700	375	49.3%
Casey	350	305	310	965	475	53.1%
Cardinia	100	105	70	275	130	56.5%
Frankston	325	215	160	700	355	47.0%
Mornington Peninsula	225	160	160	545	270	49.5%
<b>Total Region</b>	<b>1790</b>	<b>1340</b>	<b>1400</b>	<b>4530</b>	<b>2375</b>	<b>43.7%</b>

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> The Women's Safety Strategy can be accessed at [www.women.vic.gov.au](http://www.women.vic.gov.au). The Women's Safety Strategy is comprised of three parts: *Women's Safety Strategy: a policy framework*; *Acting on the Women's Safety Strategy*; and *Women's safety, women's voices*.
- Key directions in women's safety: a coordinated approach to reducing violence against women*, released by the Office of Women's Policy in December 2001, which provides further detail on the proposed directions, can also be accessed at the above site.
- <sup>2</sup> *Family and Domestic Violence Crisis Protection Framework*, Department of Human Services, 2002, available at [www.dhs.vic.gov.au/housing](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/housing).
- <sup>3</sup> A full discussion of these components can be found in the *Family and Domestic Violence Crisis Protection Framework*; *ibid*
- <sup>4</sup> *Victorian Homelessness Strategy: Directions for Change*, Department Human Services, 2003. This report can be accessed and downloaded from the VHS website: [www.dhs.vic.gov.au/vhs](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/vhs).
- <sup>5</sup> For a list of participating agencies see Appendix 1.
- <sup>6</sup> For a list of participating agencies in each of the subregional working groups see Appendix 2.
- <sup>7</sup> Copies of these documents are available from SMR Department of Human Services on request.
- <sup>8</sup> The population data included here has been sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2001 Census. This data is available at [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au).
- <sup>9</sup> This data reflects the distribution of resources prior to the SMR CPF planning process. It excludes six EFT crisis support positions previously managed by The Kilvington House Collective Inc. These resources are further referenced as unallocated resources throughout this document.
- <sup>10</sup> During the 2001-02 financial year, a fourth women's refuge (The Kilvington House Collective Inc.) was also operating in SMR. This service voluntarily ceased to provide services in October 2002. This service had a total six EFT and recorded 54 episodes of support for the 2001-02 period. The resources attached to this refuge are currently being used by an interim domestic violence crisis response service until the CPF Regional Implementation Plan is complete and a permanent allocation can be made to a selected provider.
- <sup>11</sup> This number is approximate only. The National Data Collection Agency (NDCA), which collects and reviews data on the performance of SAAP funded services, provides information based on the number of children supported by the service within an identified range, rather than an accurate identified number. For the purposes of this report the lowest number in the range for each service has been used.
- <sup>12</sup> All SAAP services participated in a two-week unmet demand collection during the weeks of 22-28 August 2001 and 8-14 May 2002. During these periods, services recorded the number of clients seeking but unable to obtain assistance from their service.
- <sup>13</sup> The Victorian Family Violence Database has provided the following police data to Department of Human Services SMR. The data is provided courtesy of the Statistical Services Division of Victoria Police and the Magistrates' Court of Victoria to the Victorian Family Violence Database. It should be noted that numbers reported in this section have been rounded to the nearest 5 to avoid unintentional identification of individuals. For this reason, total scores for SMR may not accurately reflect the true total score.
- <sup>14</sup> An aggrieved family member is defined by Victoria Police as the family member whose person or property is the subject of the complaint for an intervention order (in court data) or who is the subject of a family violence report (in police data).
- <sup>15</sup> A project is currently being undertaken in the outer part of SMR to develop these linkages and establish protocols between the services. The outcomes of this project are likely to be available to all SMR services in the next financial year.
- <sup>16</sup> *Taking Responsibility: A framework for developing best practice in programs for men who use violence towards family members*, was completed in December 2001. Undertaken with the support of Partnerships Against Domestic Violence Taskforce, a Commonwealth Government initiative, this report is available from the Office of Women's Policy website: [www.women.vic.gov.au](http://www.women.vic.gov.au).
- <sup>17</sup> NTV offers considerable comment on this issue at their website: [www.ntv.net.au](http://www.ntv.net.au). The following points reflect the policy position of NTV. Further detail is available at the website.

- <sup>18</sup> The current response to these women is primarily a referral to one of the regional domestic violence outreach services. This practice puts considerable pressure on these services to act as local area based crisis services in addition to their funded role as transitional support services.
- <sup>19</sup> The common assessment tool and the integrated data collection are currently being developed by Community Programs Group on a statewide level. It is expected that these tools will be completed in 2004 for use in the Homelessness Service System Development projects. A similar timeframe would match the proposed redevelopment of the domestic violence sector in SMR.



