Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way

Delivering through our partnership with Aboriginal communities to address family violence
The Victorian Government is developing the second Family Violence Reform Rolling Action Plan 2020 – 2023 (RAP2) as part of its commitment in the 10-year plan: 'Ending Family Violence: Victoria’s plan for change'. RAP2 will be launched at the end of 2020 as the plan for the next phase of the long-term reform of Victoria’s family violence system.

Over the period of the first RAP (2017 – 2020) we have delivered key parts of the reform and we are beginning to make a difference to the lives of victim survivors. For example, the first specialist family violence courts are up and running, investment in housing and support pathways is enabling us to help more families, quicker, with better and more stable housing options. More than 1,480 Victorian schools have signed on to the whole school approach to Respectful Relationships to create a culture of gender equality and respect and change the story of family violence for future generations.

While more than two thirds of the Family Violence Royal Commission recommendations have now been implemented, we are nearly four years into a 10-year plan to rebuild the family violence system. Through RAP2 we will continue to deliver the key parts of the reform such as the continued roll out of The Orange Door, building a specialist family violence workforce and providing training in risk assessment (MARAM) and information sharing. We will have an increased focus on perpetrators and prevention which will embed the reforms to ensure the family violence system is sustainable and enduring.

We will continue to incorporate what we have learnt so far, and from coronavirus (COVID-19), into the reform, to ensure it is responsive and adaptive. As the reform evolves from implementing the Royal Commission recommendations we will tell the community how we are going by measuring our progress through reporting against the Family Violence Outcomes Framework (FVOF).

Our RAP2 priorities are 10 themes and programs that we will prioritise for the next three years to ensure we remain on course to deliver long-term reform.

Underpinning the 10 priorities are these 3 reform principles which inform our approach to all our activity.

### Consultation content – Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way

This set of slides highlight what government has done so far, and what it intends to do over the coming three years to ensure investment in Aboriginal-led community family violence services.

- **Slide 3**: summarises what government is doing and shows how Aboriginal-led community family violence activities support the achievement of the Family Violence Outcomes Framework (FVOF) as we continue to implement Royal Commission recommendations.
- **Slide 4**: showcases key achievements during RAP1.
- **Slide 5**: sets out the activities government proposes to deliver for this priority over the next three years.
- **Slide 6**: reflects on how coronavirus (COVID-19) has impacted reform delivery to Aboriginal communities.
- **Slide 7**: shows how the three reform principles have influenced our strategy to build Aboriginal-led, culturally safe services.
Reform Intent
The Royal Commission into Family Violence recognised the disproportionate impact of family violence on Aboriginal people and communities, especially women and children, and the significant barriers they face to accessing culturally safe and responsive services.

Following the Royal Commission, the Dhelk Dja Partnership Forum developed a new 10-year agreement: Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way – Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families.

How we are developing a culturally safe response to family violence for Aboriginal Victorians

- Embedding cultural safety framework and action plan
- Strengthening legal responses for Aboriginal family violence
- Building workforce supply, capabilities, practice guidance and leadership
- Embedding information sharing and risk coordination
- Building data and evidence, to improve evaluation of Aboriginal-led community family violence services

The Family Violence Outcomes Framework (FVOF)
The FVOF articulates the government’s vision to end family violence.

- The four FVOF domains reflect the long term outcomes sought through the collective efforts of the reform.
- The FVOF represent the key priorities in preventing and responding to family violence and clarifying what constitutes success.

Royal Commission into Family Violence (RCFV)
With more than two-thirds of the Family Violence Royal Commission recommendations now implemented, delivery of activities under this priority over the next three years will continue to support recommendation implementation. Updates will continue to be provided via the vic.gov.au website.
### ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE 2016

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<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>INVESTMENT</strong></td>
<td>We have strengthened investment in embedding Aboriginal-led community family violence services</td>
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<td>$50 million in funding to deliver the <em>Dhelk Dja Agreement: Safe Our Way – Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families</em> (Dhelk Dja agreement), which includes the establishment of the Dhelk Dja Fund to support holistic healing and frontlines service responses</td>
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<td>$1.1 million annual investment in the Aboriginal Community Initiatives Fund, enabling 11 Dhelk Dja Action Groups across Victoria to support local Aboriginal community-led family violence prevention and education projects</td>
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<td>30 projects funded through the Preventing the Cycle of Violence Aboriginal Fund and Aboriginal Community Initiatives Fund. This includes a $2.7 million investment in two-year funding grants for Aboriginal-led family violence prevention and early intervention initiatives</td>
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| **SUPPORT** | We are strengthening the cultural safety of prevention programs and family violence support and response |
|  | Aboriginal-led prevention has been strengthened through updating the Indigenous Family Violence Primary Prevention Framework and implementing an Aboriginal-led family violence prevention campaign and education program |
|  | Community consultation in the design and preparation for *Aboriginal Access Points*. The access points will resource Aboriginal services as primary partners within The Orange Door network |
|  | Improvements to the cultural safety of mainstream services, and court and police responses |

| **JOBS** | We are building a specialist Aboriginal workforce |
|  | In partnership with Family Safety Victoria, the Dhelk Dja 3 Year Action Plan (2019-2021) will increase Aboriginal representation across the family violence workforce |
|  | Aboriginal frontline family violence services are being strengthened through the design and implementation of the Dhelk Dja Fund and Aboriginal Family Violence Industry Strategy |

<p>| <strong>EVALUATION</strong> | We are building an evidence base |
|  | A Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability Plan (MEAP) accompanies the Dhelk Dja agreement. The MEAP sets out a monitoring and evaluation strategy for the Dhelk Dja Partnership Forum, including conducting an evaluation study |
|  | The MEAP oversees performance monitoring of key initiatives, programs and actions under the Dhelk Dja agreement. Reporting on the implementation of actions in each 3 Year Action Plan will be formally monitored at Dhelk Dja Partnership Forum meetings. Indicators are being developed for reporting annually to enable the Partnership Forum to track progress and make strategic decisions about priorities |
|  | An evaluation of capacity-building for the Preventing the Cycle of Violence Aboriginal Fund and the Aboriginal Community Initiatives Fund is underway |</p>
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<tr>
<th>FVOF Domains</th>
<th>Summary of proposed activities</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2023</th>
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<tr>
<td>Family violence and gender inequality are not tolerated</td>
<td>Strengthen Aboriginal-led prevention through updating the Indigenous Family Violence Primary Prevention Framework, and implementing an Aboriginal-led family violence prevention campaign and education program</td>
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<td>Victim Survivors, vulnerable children and families are safe and supported to recover and thrive</td>
<td>Design and establish Aboriginal Access Points alongside The Orange Door network, to be inclusive of victim survivors, vulnerable children and families and those who use violence</td>
<td></td>
<td>Final service design model for Aboriginal Access Points tabled for endorsement by the Dhelk Dja Partnership Forum</td>
<td>Establish the first Aboriginal Access Point</td>
<td>All Aboriginal Access Points established</td>
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<td>Preventing and responding to family violence is systemic and enduring</td>
<td>Design and implement the Dhelk Dja Fund and an Aboriginal Family Violence Industry Strategy to strengthen Aboriginal frontline family violence services</td>
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<td>Dheelk Dja Fund established and expressions of interest sought</td>
<td>Aboriginal Family Violence Industry Strategy endorsed by the Dhelk Dja Partnership Forum</td>
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<td>Development of Regional Action Plans by the 11 place-based Dhelk Dja Action Groups</td>
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<td>Regional Action Plans presented to Dhelk Dja Partnership Forum and launched locally</td>
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<td>Review and update progress against Action Plan</td>
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<td>Develop the Dhelk Dja 10 Year Investment Strategy to provide a mechanism for the Dhelk Dja Koori Caucus and Partnership Forum to inform the government’s budget development process</td>
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<td>Dheolk Dja 10 Year Investment Strategy endorsed by the Dhelk Dja Partnership Forum</td>
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NB: Timeline milestones have been included where applicable; text in panels indicates an ongoing and/or non-date specific activity.
Service delivery adaptation, learnings and innovations during coronavirus (COVID-19)

Coronavirus (COVID-19) has impacted service delivery across family violence reform. Some Dhelk Dja implementation work has been impacted, mainly because of increased need to focus on immediate service delivery and operational service continuity.

General impacts on services

Reports from service providers include:

- Increased prevalence of mental health concerns related to isolation and increased drug and alcohol abuse leading to an increase in family violence risk factors in particular for large families and conversely for single person households
- Coronavirus (COVID-19) has exposed some of the poor living conditions of people in remote Aboriginal communities, including access to primary health and family violence support services
- Greater perpetrator engagement with services, which have transitioned to providing online contact with perpetrators
- Most service providers have shifted from face to face or group work to a telephone/online platform to provide counselling advice and support.

Impacts on reform deliverables for the Dhelk Dja agreement

- Due to coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions, the ability to engage with Aboriginal communities and the Aboriginal sector for face to face meetings and consultations is constrained, including driving key projects and initiatives under the Dhelk Dja 3 Year Action Plan.
- Other forms of community consultation and co-design have increased in focus, including online meetings, interviews and surveys.
- Coordinated engagement for upcoming consultation opportunities with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and Aboriginal Community is in progress; meetings of the full Dhelk Dja Partnership Forum had been postponed while restrictions were evaluated.

Adaptations and funding support

- The coronavirus (COVID-19) funding package included targeted funding for ACCOs to meet additional demand for family violence case management and crisis support.
- Digital and virtual platforms created to support innovative engagement with Dhelk Dja members and key stakeholders to support attendance at various Dhelk Dja governance structures.
- Infrastructure and training provided to support capacity of the ACCO sector to shift components of their service delivery to telephone/online.

NB: This is an interim summary of the impacts, adaptations and innovations which have arisen as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19). These will continue to be monitored and considered as the final RAP is developed.
The principles that underpin the reform have influenced our strategy to build Aboriginal-led, culturally safe services

**Lived Experience**

- The *Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way: Strong Culture, Strong People, Strong Families* (Dhelk Dja agreement) recognises the importance of whole of family and whole of community approaches that value the strength, knowledge and rich diversity of Aboriginal people, families and communities. The agreement considers Aboriginal people with disabilities and mental health issues; LGBTIQ+ people; Elders and older people; children and young people; people in or exiting out-of-home care; prison or other institutions; people living in rural and regional areas; and families comprising Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal family members.

- Dhelk Dja is investing in self-determining structures to ensure that Aboriginal lived experience is embedded in policy, program development, services and initiatives for Aboriginal people, including:
  - the Dhelk Dja Partnership Forum and its strategic priority working groups
  - Dhelk Dja Action Groups
  - Aboriginal community organisations to lead governance, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of family violence reform.

**Intersectionality**

- The Dhelk Dja agreement takes an intersectional approach to ensure family violence reforms meet the needs and aspirations of the Victorian Aboriginal community including in the design, delivery and evaluation of services.

- Dhelk Dja membership is representative of the Aboriginal community and facilitates this approach.

- Aboriginal community representatives from various services and government departments participate in working groups and strategic workshops to inform the development of family violence reform initiatives, such as the high-level concept design for Aboriginal Access Points.

**Aboriginal Self-Determination**

- *Nargneit Birrang Family Violence Holistic Healing Framework* (released in Dec 2019) is an Aboriginal-led, culturally appropriate approach for Aboriginal communities to develop appropriate and effective holistic healing approaches to better support Aboriginal families, children, young people to respond to trauma and promote wellbeing.

- Advancing cultural safety through sharing of best practice among practitioners through Cultural Safety Communities of Practice.

- The Aboriginal Inclusion Action Plan, a three year plan to embed inclusion, access and equity in The Orange Door, is under development.

- The transfer of 1,448 Director of Housing-owned properties transferred to Aboriginal Housing Victoria to support community self-determination.