



VICTORIA POLICE

SAFE FROM HARM

Victoria Police

Strategy for Family Violence,
Sexual Offences and Child Abuse

2024–2029



Victoria Police Strategy for Family Violence, Sexual Offences and Child Abuse 2024–2029

Safe from Harm

The role of Victoria Police is to serve the Victorian community and uphold the law so as to promote a safe, secure and orderly society.

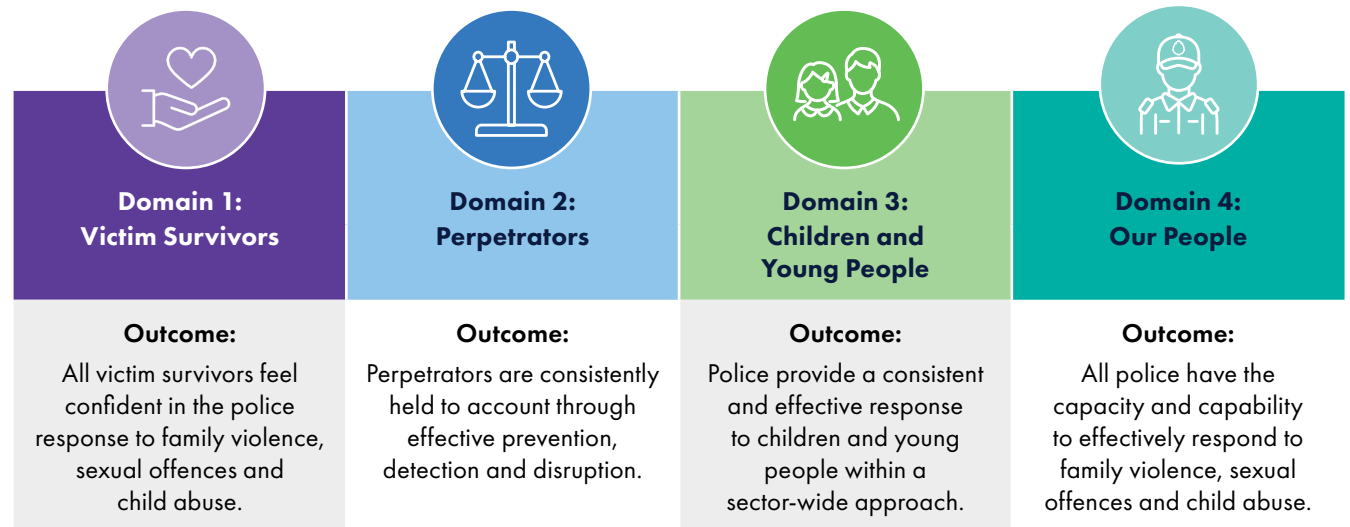
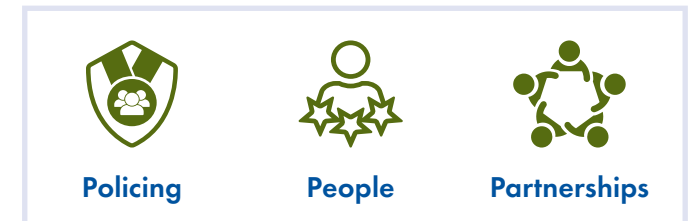
This includes responding to family violence, sexual offences and child abuse, ensuring victim survivors are safe and supported, and holding perpetrators to account.

Our goal is for Victoria Police to consistently deliver high quality responses to family violence, sexual offences and child abuse, within a sector-wide approach, to enhance community safety.

This goal is part of our **vision** outlined in *Keeping You Safe: Victoria Police Strategy 2023–2028* for a Victorian community in which:

- » everyone is safe and feels safe
- » those affected by crime feel supported
- » those who break the law are held to account
- » police work with the Victorian community and our partners to prevent crime, reduce harm and build a better, safer Victoria.

Over the next five years, we will work towards our goal through focusing on: **policing, people** and **partnerships** across four domains:



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Acknowledgements

Victim survivor acknowledgement

Victoria Police acknowledges those who have experienced family violence, sexual offences and child abuse, including those who continue to be harmed. We also recognise the courage and resilience of victim survivors.

We understand family violence, sexual offences and child abuse as fundamental breaches of human rights and abuses of power and trust. We also recognise that family violence, sexual offences and child abuse primarily impact women and children, but that people of all genders can be subject to these crimes.

Victoria Police also acknowledges the particular consequences that family and sexual violence have for children and young people. We recognise that children and young people living in homes where there is violence are victim survivors in their own right.

We recognise, remember and pay our respect to those who have been harmed by and lost their lives to family violence, sexual offences and child abuse.

Aboriginal community acknowledgement

Victoria Police acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the traditional custodians of the land and waterways on which we work.

We pay our respects to Elders, past and present, and continue to recognise and embrace the fact that Aboriginal People are connected to the oldest, continuous culture and history.



Message from Chief Commissioner Shane Patton

Victoria Police recognises that family violence, sexual offences and child abuse cause significant community harm. A sustained whole of government and sector partnership approach is required to address disadvantage, complexities, and attitudes that support violence. We know that police have a unique role in protecting victim survivors and reducing harm, and we outline this aim in our *Keeping You Safe: Victoria Police Strategy 2023–2028*.

Safe from Harm continues to implement the vision of *Keeping You Safe* and sets out our direction to consistently deliver high quality responses to family violence, sexual offences and child abuse within a sector-wide approach. Victoria Police is committed to delivering best practice responses to family violence, sexual offences, and child abuse, and we have continuously evolved and grown our capability over the past 20 years. Since the launch of our last strategy in 2018, there have been sector-wide efforts to address this offending, resulting in significant changes across legislation, training, technology, policy, and practice that have shaped and improved our frontline and specialist responses.

This strategy builds on our progress and continues to uplift our practice and partnership approach in responding to family violence, sexual offences and child abuse so that all victim survivors who seek our help feel seen, heard, and safe.

Victoria Police's core role is to protect victim survivors from harm by putting in place safety mechanisms, investigating crime and apprehending offenders. This strategy confirms our commitment to hold perpetrators to account.

Victoria Police sees first-hand the scale of harm experienced by children and young people as a result of these crimes. This strategy supports our workforce by enhancing their capability to keep our most vulnerable victim survivors safe.

We acknowledge our people and the work they do every day to respond to family violence, sexual offences, and child abuse. Victoria Police will maintain a strong focus through this strategy and continue to build, train, and equip our people to work professionally and competently in their response to these crime themes.

As Chief Commissioner I am proud to affirm Victoria Police's strong commitment to addressing family violence, sexual offences and child abuse as per our previous strategies and strong reform agenda, and to lead our organisation through the next phase of reform.



Shane Patton APM
Chief Commissioner



6 minutes



Police responded to one family violence incident around every six minutes

60%



Incidents of sexual offending reported to police have increased 60% over the past ten years

2,579 (5%)



family violence perpetrators were 'prolific perpetrators' – having committed five or more family violence incidents in the year. Prolific perpetrators were responsible for 19% of all incidents

27%



Police issued a Family Violence Safety Notice or applied for an Intervention Order at 27% of family violence incidents

Our commitment

Safe from Harm: Victoria Police Strategy for Family Violence, Sexual Offences and Child Abuse 2024–2029 reflects our commitment to continue improving our approaches to family violence, sexual offences and child abuse.

Victoria Police is at the frontline of responding to family violence, sexual offences and child abuse. We play a critical role in increasing the safety of victim survivors and holding perpetrators to account. We are committed to serving the Victorian community by consistently delivering high-quality responses to all victim survivors.

Victoria Police is not doing this work alone. *Safe from Harm* is aligned to key national, Victorian and Victoria Police policy frameworks and we are working closely with our government and sector partners in an effort to prevent and reduce these crimes across our communities, state and country.

A new focus on outcomes

Over many years of sustained effort through structures, training, policy and programs, we have transformed how Victoria Police understands and responds to family violence, sexual offences and child abuse. Building on this foundation, our next set of reforms will be guided by a stronger focus on the outcomes generated by our efforts and the impact we have on the community.

Safe from Harm is underpinned by a new *Victoria Police Family Violence, Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Outcomes Framework* (Outcomes Framework).

The Outcomes Framework establishes a structured and evidence-based approach to continuous improvement that will allow us to measure the quality of our responses.

Safe from Harm sets out our five-year plan to progress the goals and outcomes established in our Outcomes Framework.

A note on data

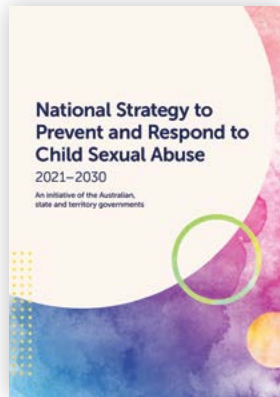
Crime data used in this Strategy relates to the 2023 Calendar Year (01-Jan-2023 to 31-Dec-2023) and as such is point in time. The data included in this report has been obtained from the Crime Statistics Agency (CSA) Victoria.

All percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

For explanatory information on how data is counted and reported, refer to the CSA.



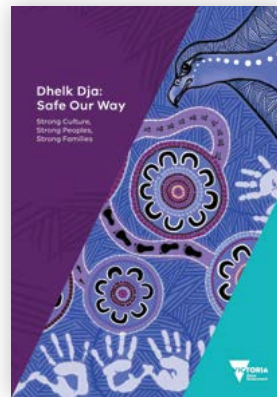
National



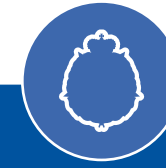
- » *The National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022–2032*
- » *National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021–2030*



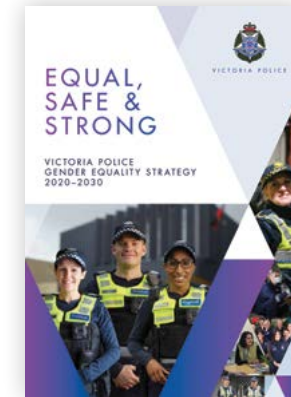
Victoria



- » *Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change*
- » *Strong foundations: Building on Victoria's work to end family violence*
- » *Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way*



Victoria Police



- » *Keeping You Safe: Victoria Police Strategy 2023–2028*
- » *Equal, Safe & Strong: Victoria Police Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2030*

62%



In 62% of family violence incidents, the perpetrator was the affected family member's (AFM) current or former partner



29% ● Current intimate partner
33% ● Former intimate partner
38% ● Other family member

Women



Women and girls were the victim survivor in:

83% of sexual offending victim reports



83% ● Females
17% ○ Males

74% of family violence incidents



74% ● Females
26% ○ Males

What do we know?

What do we know about the current state of family violence, sexual offences and child abuse?

Family violence, sexual offences and child abuse are prevalent in the Victorian community.

One in four women and one in 17 men in Australia have experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner since the age of 15.¹ One in five women and one in 16 men in Australia having experienced sexual violence since the age of 15.²

Sexual offending also impacts children, with 11% of Australian women and 3.6% of men having experienced childhood sexual abuse. Most of these victim survivors experienced more than one incident.³

Family violence, sexual offences and child abuse are gendered crimes because they disproportionately impact women and girls. Gendered violence occurs in a context of gender inequality and is driven by deeply held attitudes, beliefs and gender stereotypes. Stalking is also a gendered crime, with the perpetrator most often a male known to a female victim survivor.

There were 7,379 victim reports of stalking, harassment and threatening behaviour offences recorded by police. 57% of these victim reports were related to family violence.

In 2023, Victoria Police responded to 94,170 family violence incidents; this is one incident around every six minutes. Family violence incidents have increased 38% over the past ten years.

In 2023, police also recorded 14,446 sexual offences. These crimes are most often perpetrated by someone known to the victim survivor.

In this time, police also recorded 6,082 victim reports of physical assaults and 3,631 victim reports of sexual offending against children and young people (aged 17 years or under).



36%



Children were recorded as present at 36% of family violence incidents

64%



of victim reports of sexual offending, the offender was known to the victim survivor

55%



of all crimes against the person related to family violence or sexual offending

25%



A family member was the perpetrator in 25% of victim reports of sexual offending against children

How far have we come?

In 2002, Victoria Police launched our first strategy for combatting violence against women and children. Since then, we have delivered significant organisational reforms which have greatly improved our capacity and capability in victim-centric, highly visible and responsive policing.



We have built upon lessons learned from the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence and the national Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse alongside other significant reviews and inquiries. This has included the Victorian Law Reform Commission's reports into *Stalking* and *Improving the Justice System Response to Sexual Offences*.

The timeline at the end of this Strategy outlines significant Victoria Police reform initiatives in family violence, sexual offences and child abuse since the Royal Commission into Family Violence in 2016. Each reform has provided opportunities to improve frontline and specialist police responses.

Victoria Police now has in place an extensive network of generalist and specialist functions that respond to these crimes.

Frontline police are often the first responders to incidents, playing a critical role in managing risks to safety, supporting victim survivors and investigating offences. Our police lawyers and prosecutors are responsible for prosecuting intervention order applications and criminal offences. These critical roles are complemented by a range of specialist teams and roles across Victoria Police.

An overview of some of these specialist functions is also outlined at the end of this Strategy.

Where do we want to be?

Victoria Police aims to consistently deliver high quality responses to family violence, sexual offences and child abuse, within a sector-wide approach, to enhance community safety. Our goal will take ongoing, sustained effort and leadership to achieve. The actions we take under *Safe from Harm* will help us work towards this goal.

How are we going to get there?

Safe from Harm reflects our commitment to:



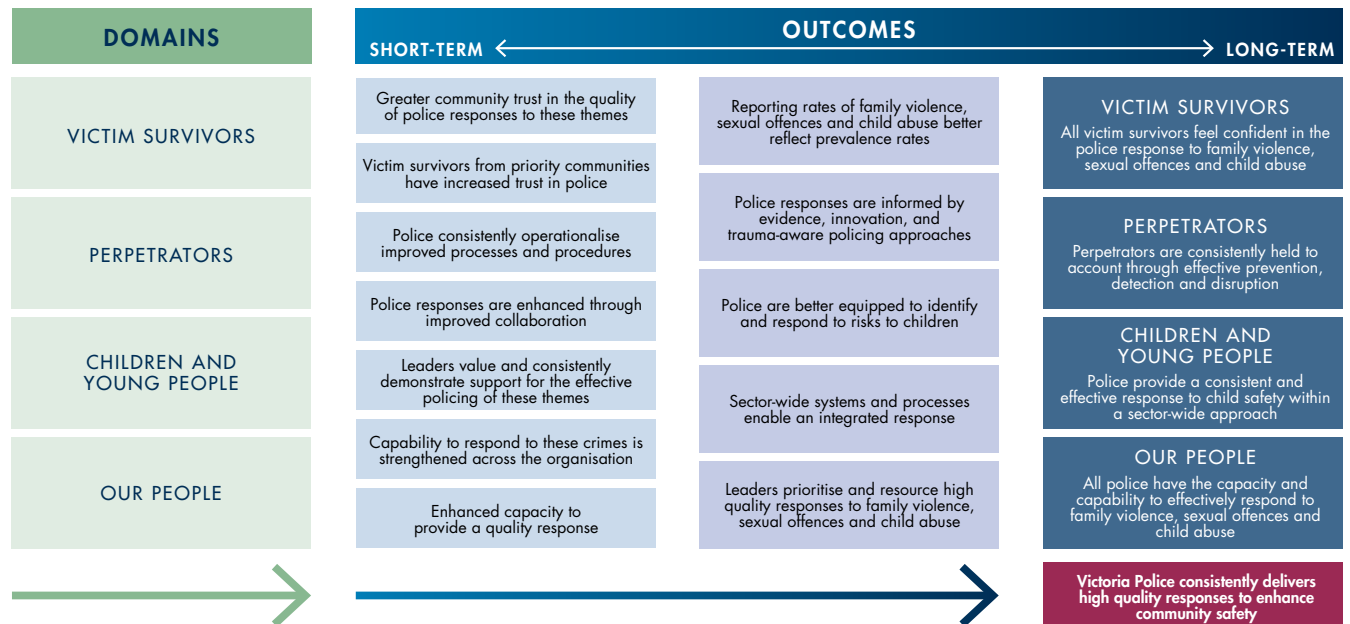
The initiatives that we will progress under *Safe from Harm* are aligned to these core pillars across four domains:

1. Victim survivors
2. Perpetrators
3. Children and young people
4. Our people.

The specific actions we undertake will be driven by our Outcomes Framework, a best practice approach that directs our efforts towards improving outcomes in the short, medium and long term.

We will undertake yearly planning to map our activities and initiatives, ensuring we are progressing the right actions to work towards our goal. These actions will be driven by emerging evidence, insights and community need.

The flagship initiatives outlined under each domain provides a snapshot of some of the actions we are committed to progressing under *Safe from Harm*.





Domain 1: Victim Survivors

Outcome

The outcome we want is for all victim survivors to feel confident in the police response to family violence, sexual offences and child abuse.

With a strong reputation for providing a trauma-aware response, victim survivors will trust that when they report family violence, sexual offences or child abuse to Victoria Police, they will be heard and supported. Our approach will be strengthened by collaborating with our sector partners, victim survivors and advocates from priority communities. We will continue to work with all victim survivors and those that are particularly vulnerable, including children and young people, Aboriginal people, people from LGBTIQ+ communities, people from multicultural and multifaith communities, seniors, and people with disability or living with mental illness.

Achieved through

We will achieve this outcome as we:

- » **Implement reforms to our family violence, sexual offence and child abuse policies and procedures:** Victoria Police will be at the forefront of innovation and continuous improvement to best serve the Victorian community.
- » **Tailor partnerships with priority communities:** Victoria Police will earn the trust of our diverse communities by building cultural understanding and capability in our response to family violence, sexual offences and child abuse. We acknowledge that under reporting can occur in diverse communities and will continue to focus on building confidence to report.
- » **Develop a strategic framework for stakeholder partnerships:** Victoria Police will continue to work in partnership across government, services and communities, recognising our unique roles and common purpose in delivering safety for victim survivors and holding perpetrators to account.

Initiatives

Flagship initiatives under this domain:

- » **Partner to improve responses to victim survivors from priority communities:**



We will build clear pathways for people with lived experience and advocates to inform our responses to family violence, sexual offences and child abuse. Engagement with priority communities, as well as victim survivor feedback, will provide a deeper understanding of the quality of our responses and highlight areas for improvement. We will continue to collaborate in the Dhelk Dja Partnership Forum and Police and Aboriginal Community Protocols Against Family Violence groups to learn from our Aboriginal communities. Engagement in representative advisory groups, consultation with sector partners, lived experience and community expertise will drive our response models, policies, practice and training.

- » **Strengthen police identification of the predominant aggressor:**



Victoria Police will continue to deliver our program of work to reduce and rectify misidentification of the predominant aggressor in family violence cases. This includes developing further guidance to support our police to accurately identify the predominant aggressor, strengthening how we work with other agencies when misidentification is raised, and establishing and clarifying rectification actions when misidentification is determined. We will also review our platforms for opportunities to address misidentification in our records and implement training to improve police understanding.







Domain 2: Perpetrators

Outcome

The outcome we want is for perpetrators to be consistently held to account through effective prevention, detection and disruption.

Victoria Police will consistently and proactively identify and disrupt perpetrators to ensure the safety of victim survivors and the Victorian community. We will continue to enhance approaches to resourcing and capability development across all levels of the organisation to ensure our police can effectively manage risk and hold perpetrators to account.




Achieved through

We will achieve this outcome as we:

- » **Enhance risk identification and management of perpetrators:** Victoria Police will rely on validated, evidence-based tools to identify perpetrator risk and develop tailored approaches to prevent and disrupt offending.

Initiatives

Flagship initiatives under this domain:

- » **Enhance targeting of perpetrators of child sexual exploitation:** We will continue to keep Victoria's most vulnerable children and young people safe through a stronger focus on child sexual exploitation (CSE). We will achieve this through a whole-of-organisation approach to the disruption of CSE perpetrators. We will increase our intelligence regarding perpetrators through improved record holdings and new pathways for intelligence sharing with our partners. This will put Victoria Police in a stronger position to identify persons of interest who present the greatest risk of CSE and to integrate their management within divisional resource planning and prioritisation. This will enable police across different areas to maximise opportunities to target perpetrators and to ensure that all our interactions with vulnerable children and young people increase our ability to keep them safe. 
- » **Improve identification and management of high-risk family violence perpetrators:** We will ensure we keep continued focus on the most serious, complex and high-risk family violence perpetrators through enhancing our Case Prioritisation and Response Model. Using this model to assess the potential for reoffending and escalation of risk, our Family Violence Investigation Units (FVIUs) identify and prioritise the highest risk cases and tailor risk management approaches to prevent serious harm. 
- » **Strengthen our approach to stalking cases:** We will continue work to improve how we identify and respond to cases of stalking. Through evaluation of our Stalking Pilot, we will identify learnings and explore opportunities to build the capability of our workforce to detect and disrupt stalking perpetrators. 



Domain 3: Children and Young People

Outcome

The outcome we want is for police to provide a consistent and effective response to children and young people within a sector-wide approach.

The safety of children and young people will be at the forefront of all Victoria Police responses to family violence, sexual offences and child abuse. Risks to children and young people will be actively and consistently identified and managed. We will continue to work with our sector partners to strengthen system-wide approaches to victim survivors who are children and young people, as well as children and young people who use violence. While children and young people are considered in everything we do, the initiatives under this domain reflect our understanding of the need for a dedicated focus in this area.



Achieved through

We will achieve this outcome as we:

- » **Strengthen identification, management and support of children at risk:** Victoria Police will continue to build our understanding of the unique experiences and specific needs of victim survivors of family violence, sexual offences and child abuse who are children and young people, including those who witness or live with violence. This will include improving our identification, response, support and prevention models. We recognise that the term 'child' encompasses multiple age ranges (infant, toddler, child, young person) and understand that experiences may present differently within these stages of childhood.

Initiatives

Flagship initiatives under this domain:

- » **Enhance our child abuse response model:** We will build on our existing approach to responding to child abuse by further refining how we prioritise and respond to reports. We will also strengthen our partnership with Child Protection through improved information sharing. This will support our ability to allocate investigations to people with the right skills and improve the quality of our joint investigations. 
- » **Strengthen integration of responses across family violence, sexual offences and child abuse:** We will recognise and respond to the complex and often inter-related experiences of children and young people exposed to and/or experiencing violence or abuse. This will include strengthening our identification of all forms of child abuse at family violence incidents. We will also improve our understanding of the complex drivers of children and young people's use of violence, ensuring we address any co-occurring victimisation. We will develop shared capability across Sexual Offence and Child Abuse Investigation Teams (SOCITs), FVIUs and the frontline, and maintain a strong collaborative approach through our Multidisciplinary Centres (MDCs) and other sector partnerships. 







Domain 4: Our People

Outcome

The outcome we want is for all police to have the capacity and capability to effectively respond to family violence, sexual offences and child abuse.

Enabled by strong leadership with a commitment to continuous improvement, we will consistently utilise the levers that support our police to effectively and efficiently provide a high-quality response to victim survivors of these crimes.




Achieved through

We will achieve this outcome as we:

- » **Enhance organisational capability to effectively police family violence, sexual offences and child abuse:** We will grow our skills and capability across all levels of the organisation through our strategic workforce planning. This includes visible and responsive policing of employee-related family violence. We will continue our efforts towards achieving gender equality and increasing diversity within our organisation so our workforce meets community needs and maintains community trust.
- » **Identify and prioritise opportunities for increased efficiency in operational responses:** Victoria Police systems and processes for responding to family violence, sexual offences and child abuse will be streamlined and modernised to maximise the quality of our service to victim survivors.

Initiatives

Flagship initiatives under this domain:

- » **Build our capability to provide trauma-aware responses:** We will establish a program of work to enable our police to better understand, recognise and respond to trauma in our service to the Victorian community. Building on 15 years of victim-centric practice through our SOCITs, we will focus on building and equipping other parts of our workforce. We will support our police so our interactions with the community minimise trauma and re-victimisation. 
- » **Streamlining our procedures and processes to improve efficiencies:** Building on and complementing our Staff Allocation Model (SAM), we will undertake a comprehensive review of our workforce in FVIUs, SOCITs and targeted family violence support roles, to ensure we effectively direct our resources. With increased efficiency and consistency, we will strengthen our organisational capacity to respond to family violence, sexual offences and child abuse. 
- » **Enhance responses to employee-related family violence:** In 2021, Victoria Police released the first policy of its kind in Australia aimed at providing our organisation with extensive guidance to respond to and manage family violence involving police employees. We will build on this foundation, implementing improvements to ensure perpetrators are held to account and victim survivors are supported. 

Our commitment to the Aboriginal community

Victoria Police is committed at all levels to:

- » supporting Aboriginal self-determination
- » working with the community to achieve better outcomes for Aboriginal people in Victoria

We know that Aboriginal women and children in Victoria are disproportionately impacted by family violence, and that this violence can be perpetrated by men of all cultural backgrounds.⁴ The Victorian *Family Violence Protection Act 2008* recognises that, for Aboriginal people, family members include people considered relatives under traditional or social practice.⁵ As signatories to the *Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way* agreement, Victoria Police is also committed to working together with Aboriginal communities, Aboriginal services and government to ensure Aboriginal people are stronger, safer, thriving and living free from family violence.⁶

As an organisation we will focus our efforts to support all Aboriginal victim survivors to feel confident in Victoria Police's response to family violence, sexual offences and child abuse.





How are we tracking our progress?

We will track our progress towards meeting our short, medium and long-term outcomes through our Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Plan under our Outcomes Framework.

The MEL Plan components are:

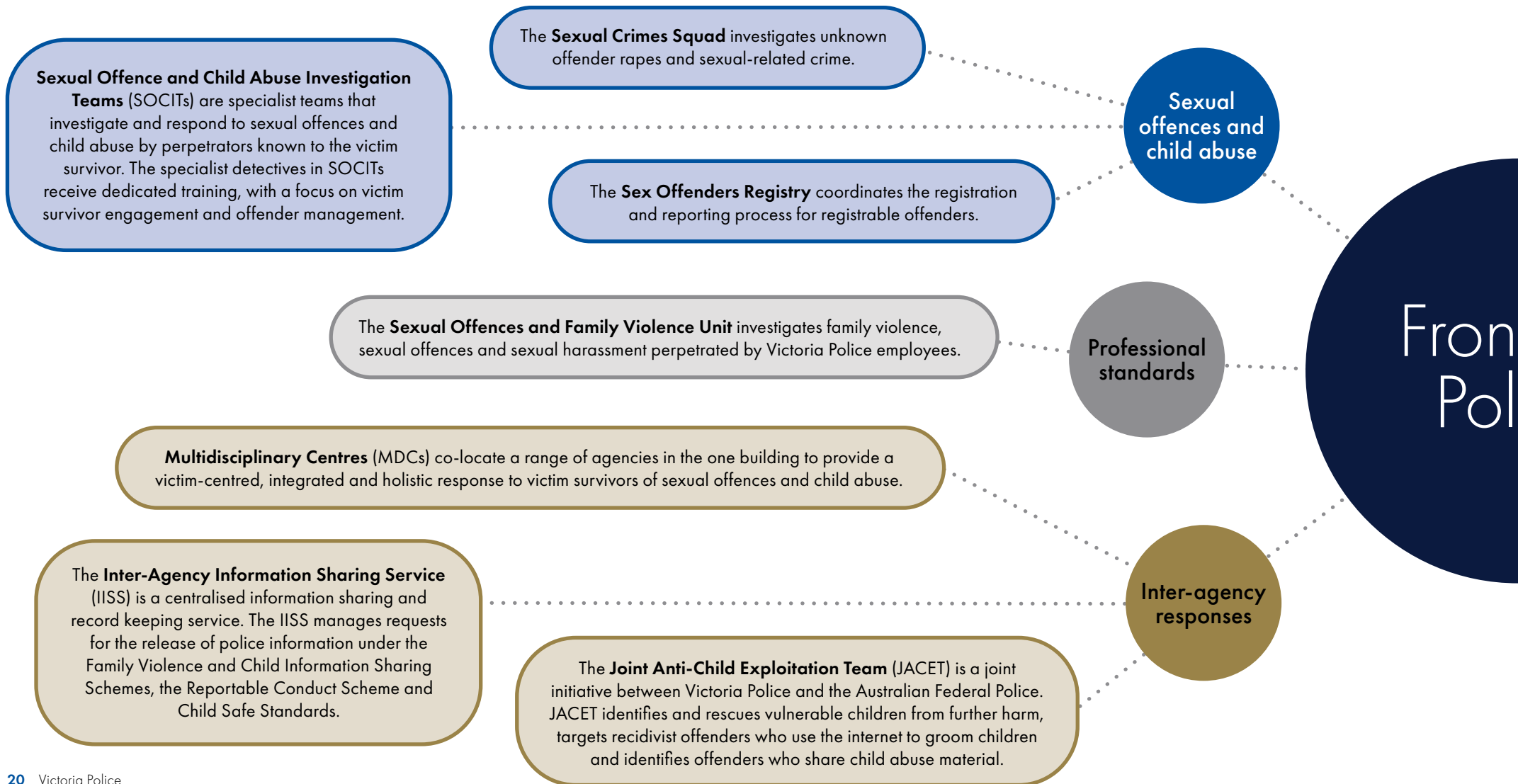
- » **Monitoring:** Outcomes Framework implementation will be monitored through internal reporting to Victoria Police executive and decision-making committees. Regular reporting on data provides opportunities for learning and strategic planning.
- » **Evaluation:** Family Violence Command will evaluate the Outcomes Framework by measuring its implementation:
 - **Effectiveness** – To what extent have our outcomes been achieved? Which activities were most successful at delivering these outcomes?
 - **Impact** – To what extent have we improved the experiences of victim survivors, including those from priority communities?
 - **Coherence** – How has our work in the sector complemented and supported the work of other agencies?
 - **Sustainability** – How is resourcing being sustained? What are the gaps, opportunities, and priorities going forward?

» **Learning:** Implementation of the Outcomes Framework is an iterative process, requiring adaptability to new learnings. Impact evaluation measures will be continuously tested and assessed to ensure we are accurately measuring our impact.

The MEL Plan reforms our data collection and analysis to provide an evidence base about how we drive consistent and quality responses. This will support the continuous improvement of our response models and resourcing prioritisation across Victoria Police.

The MEL Plan contains specific indicators that measure outcomes for victim survivors, perpetrators, children and young people, and our people. The indicators will be regularly examined over the course of the strategy to ensure that Victoria Police is tracking towards each outcome and our overall organisational goal.

How we respond to family violence, sexual offences and child abuse



Family Violence Liaison Officers (FVLOs) are supervisors responsible for quality assurance and ensuring a consistent and coordinated police response to family violence. FVLOs are present at 24-hour police stations.

The **Family Violence Command Taskforce** is an investigative unit that supports specialist police to manage high-risk family violence, sexual offences and child sexual exploitation cases.

Family Violence Investigation Units (FVIUs) respond to priority family violence victim survivors and perpetrators, manage high risk cases and provide oversight of frontline investigations. Investigators are supported by intelligence analysts who collect, triage and evaluate intelligence to assist investigations.

Family violence

The **Centre for Family Violence** provide contemporary specialist family violence training and education equipping Victoria Police staff with the knowledge, skills and confidence to deliver high quality responses to family violence.

Family Violence Training Officers (FVTOs) provide family violence training to police across the state. FVTOs deploy a range of teaching methods, from practical one-on-one advice to formal training sessions.

Training and development

Family Violence Command delivers strategic reforms on the policing of family violence, sexual offences and child abuse through policy development, projects, intelligence and engagement.

Family Violence Court Liaison Officers (FVCLOs) act as a nexus between prosecutors or police lawyers, police informants, legal representatives, victim survivors, perpetrators, court staff and support agencies. This includes ensuring victim survivors are supported and all parties are kept informed of proceedings.

Prosecutions

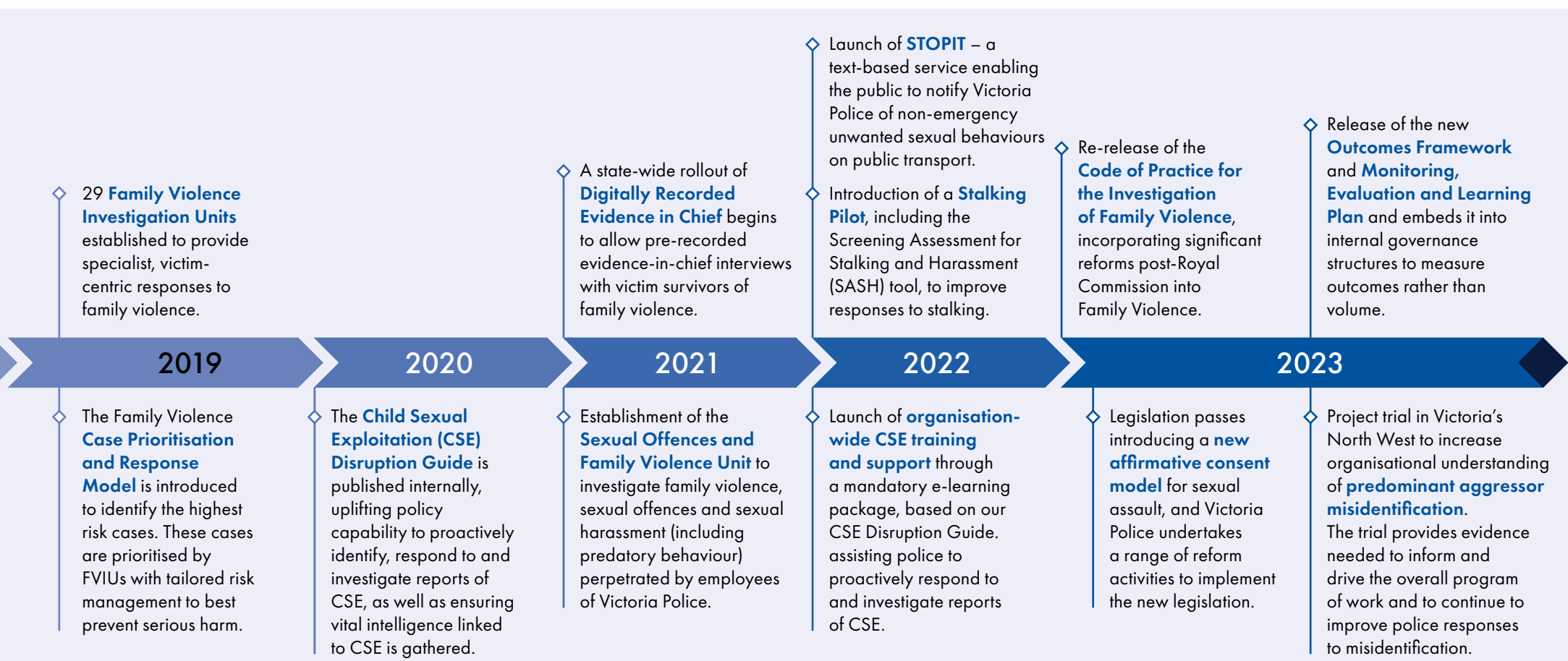
The **Family Violence and Therapeutic Courts Group** provides state-wide specialist legal support, training and advice to all areas of Victoria Police relating to family violence, as well as the Assessment and Referral Court, Drug Court and Koori Court.

The **Specialist Sexual Offences Prosecution Unit** is a team of experienced prosecutors who appear as advocates in complex sexual offence prosecutions, provide state-wide support to prosecutors and operational police in summary prosecutions, and provide pre-charge legal advice to investigators for both indictable and summary offences.

Significant Victoria Police initiatives

Significant Victoria Police initiatives to address family violence, sexual offences and child abuse, 2016–2023 since the delivery of the Royal Commission into Family Violence.





29 **Family Violence Investigation Units** established to provide specialist, victim-centric responses to family violence.

2019

The **Family Violence Case Prioritisation and Response Model** is introduced to identify the highest risk cases. These cases are prioritised by FVIUs with tailored risk management to best prevent serious harm.

2020

The **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Disruption Guide** is published internally, uplifting policy capability to proactively identify, respond to and investigate reports of CSE, as well as ensuring vital intelligence linked to CSE is gathered.

A state-wide rollout of **Digitally Recorded Evidence in Chief** begins to allow pre-recorded evidence-in-chief interviews with victim survivors of family violence.

2021

Establishment of the **Sexual Offences and Family Violence Unit** to investigate family violence, sexual offences and sexual harassment (including predatory behaviour) perpetrated by employees of Victoria Police.

Launch of **STOPIT** – a text-based service enabling the public to notify Victoria Police of non-emergency unwanted sexual behaviours on public transport.

Introduction of a **Stalking Pilot**, including the Screening Assessment for Stalking and Harassment (SASH) tool, to improve responses to stalking.

2022

Launch of **organisation-wide CSE training and support** through a mandatory e-learning package, based on our CSE Disruption Guide, assisting police to proactively respond to and investigate reports of CSE.

Re-release of the **Code of Practice for the Investigation of Family Violence**, incorporating significant reforms post-Royal Commission into Family Violence.

2023

Legislation passes introducing a **new affirmative consent model** for sexual assault, and Victoria Police undertakes a range of reform activities to implement the new legislation.

Release of the new **Outcomes Framework and Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan** and embeds it into internal governance structures to measure outcomes rather than volume.

Project trial in Victoria's North West to increase organisational understanding of **predominant aggressor misidentification**. The trial provides evidence needed to inform and drive the overall program of work and to continue to improve police responses to misidentification.

Language statement

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in Victoria have diverse languages and cultures. The term Aboriginal is used in this strategy when referring to First Nations people from across Australia. Our use of this term is not intended to deny the right of Aboriginal people to determine the way in which they are referred.

The Victorian Government defines family violence as the use of violence by a current or former intimate partner or family member.⁷ Family violence may be physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, cultural or financial. Family is broadly defined and includes people who share a variety of family and family-like relationships.

Sexual violence is a form of violence in which any sexual act is attempted, or occurs, without consent. This includes both physical acts and non-physical acts (such as image-based sexual abuse). Victoria Police uses the term sexual offences to reflect our primary role in responding to sexual violence as a crime.

Child abuse may be physical, emotional, psychological or sexual, and can include grooming or neglect. Sexual violence and child abuse can be forms of family violence or can occur outside of family relationships.

Gender-based violence refers to violence that is used against someone because of their gender.⁸ While people of all genders can experience gender-based violence, the term is most often used to describe violence against women and girls. Victoria Police refers to this as gendered violence or gendered crime.

While people of any gender can be a perpetrator or victim survivor of family violence, sexual offences, child abuse and stalking, we know that these crimes are predominantly perpetrated by men against women and children.

We acknowledge the Victorian Government's use of both the term victim survivor and person who has experienced violence. We use the term victim survivor in recognition of the strength and resilience shown by people who experience family violence, sexual offences and child abuse. In engaging with victim survivors, we know that the experience of these crimes does not define a victim survivor.

We note the Victorian Government's use of the terms perpetrator and person who uses violence interchangeably. Victoria Police primarily describes people who have committed family violence, sexual offences or child abuse as perpetrators. In family violence cases, the term predominant aggressor refers to the person who, through actions within the relationship, is exerting the greatest amount of harm and control over their partner or family member.⁹

We acknowledge that the terms victim survivor and perpetrator will not encompass how some people may choose to identify themselves or others.





References

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- 6 *Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way – Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families*, 2018, Department of Health and Human Services, Melbourne Australia
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Accessibility

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