



Research Brief *Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence*

Introduction

Understanding the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence (RCFV) and its processes is the aim of this research brief. This brief will summarise the background and purpose of the Commission, touch on the outcomes of consultations, examine the roles of submissions, and review the public hearings that occurred.

Background

Rosie Batty's story was instrumental in the establishment of this Commission. After her son Luke was killed by his father, she became an advocate for domestic violence victims and established the Luke Batty Foundation to help women and children affected by family violence.

The RCFV was established in February 2015 to examine and evaluate family violence (FV) in Victoria; it will submit a report and recommendations to the Victorian government by 29 February 2016. The Commission is gathering information through a number of avenues, including submissions, consultations, expert roundtables, hearings, and research. The commission is headed by Justice Marcia Neave AO, formerly Dean of Monash Law School.

Purpose

Research around family violence is not new, but the implementation of laws and programs in this area has often failed victims (Fitz-Gibbon 2012; Fitz-Gibbon & Pickering 2012; Flynn & Fitz-Gibbon 2011; Tyson 2011, 2012). Looking to improve Victoria's response to family violence, the RCFV inquires into and evaluates responses to FV and then provides practical recommendations on this topic. Four main tasks have been given to the RCFV:

- *Examine and Evaluate:* prevention, early intervention, support, perpetrator accountability
- *Investigate:* police, corrections, and legal systematic responses
- *Investigate:* government and community organisational responses
- *Provide:* how to best evaluate and measure success.

Focusing on system-wide issues that can be addressed, the Commission does not look at individual cases.

Consultations

Community: Consultations in the area to date have included over 800 individuals who were affected or work closely with those who are affected by FV. Individuals were both victims and perpetrators, as well as being from varied cultural, religious, and ethnic backgrounds, diverse age and able-bodied status, and the LGBTQI community.

Briefing and Site Visits: Consultations in this area included informal briefings from experts and site visits to organisations to gather information about research agendas, content of public hearings, and guidance for formal processes of the RCFV.

Stakeholder and Expert: Consultations in this area included discussions with stakeholders and experts from outside and within FV, providing key opportunity for discussion and debate of existing strategies, approaches and limitations.

Submissions

From both individuals and organisations throughout Victoria, the RCFV received almost 1000 submissions, with 740 published on the Commission website. The submissions emerged from a wide range of stakeholders: magistrate courts to victims to councils to police.

The RCFV will use this input for systematic examination and evaluation. Submissions were accepted by the RCFV through written format only and were accepted until 29 May 2015.

Public Hearings Spanning twenty-five days of hearings and almost 250 witnesses, the purpose of the public hearings was to examine and evaluate the operations of organisations, governments, enforcement and service providers in responding to family violence.

Definitions

Community Organisation means any non-government body, agency, association, institution, organisation or other entity or group of entities of any kind (whether incorporated or unincorporated) and however described, that provides services or conducts activities to prevent or respond to family violence (Terms of Reference 2015).

References

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