

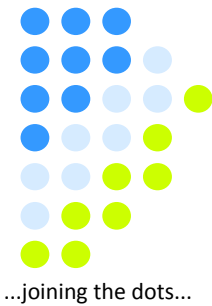
...joining the dots...

***QEC's Fifth Biennial International Conference Reaching
Out to Vulnerable Families: Achieving Better Outcomes
for Children***

***Dedication and Desire;
Is it Enough?***

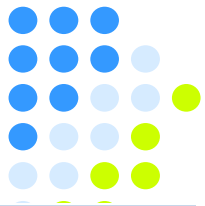
Dr Leigh Gassner

21 November, 2008

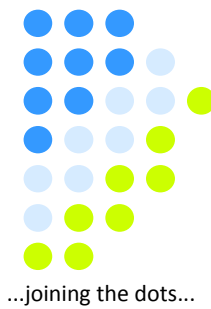


- **Misalignment of systems!! –
Creates a misalignment of effort at all levels.**

Committee Membership



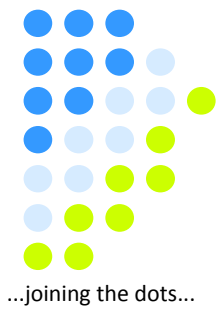
Director, Office of Women's Policy (Co-Chair)	Assistant Commissioner, Victoria Police (Co-Chair)
Family Violence Networker	Elizabeth Hoffman House
DV Vic	South Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault
No to Violence, Male Family Violence Prevention Association	Department of Human Services (Office for Children; Office of Housing)
Gatehouse, Royal Children's Hospital	Department of Education and Training
Immigrant Women's Domestic Violence Service	Indigenous Family Violence Taskforce
Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service	Department of Justice (Community Operations and Strategy; Victims Services Taskforce; Legal Policy)
Domestic Violence and Incest Resource Centre	Children's Court
Magistrates Court	VicHealth
Federation of Community Legal Centres	



Work of the Statewide Steering Committee to Reduce Family Violence

- terms of reference for the Committee was to provide advice to Government on a multi-agency response to family violence
- SSCRFV government and community agencies around one table
- develop a response that could be implemented throughout the entire state of Victoria
- *Reforming the Family Violence System in Victoria.* This document outlined the key principles and elements of a best practice approach to responding to family violence (2005-2006 funding round (ERC) - \$35.1 million over four years, now (2008/09 budget approx. \$74 million)

Crystallising Intent



Are we on the “same page”?

(community/government, community/community, government/government)

**Crystallise intent – build around
delivering the intent – we all
possess different world views of the
same situation**

In drafting *Reforming the Family Violence System in Victoria*, the Committee was guided by the following principles:

•Family violence is a fundamental violation of human rights and unacceptable in any Form.

•Physical or sexual violence within the family is a crime which warrants a strong and effective justice response.

•Responses to family violence must recognise and address the power imbalance and gender inequality between those using violence (predominantly men) and those experiencing violence (predominantly women and children).

•The safety of women and children who have experienced, or are experiencing family violence, is of paramount consideration in any response.

•The voices of women and children who have experienced violence must be heard and represented at all levels of decision making to help assist in reform.

•Men who use violence should be held accountable and challenged to take responsibility for their actions.

In drafting *Reforming the Family Violence System in Victoria*, the Committee was guided by the following principles (cont.):

- Family violence affects the entire community and occurs in all areas of society, regardless of location, socioeconomic and health status, age, culture, gender, sexual identity, ability, ethnicity, or religion. Response to family Violence must take into account the needs and experiences of people from these diverse backgrounds and communities. Family violence is not acceptable in any community or culture.

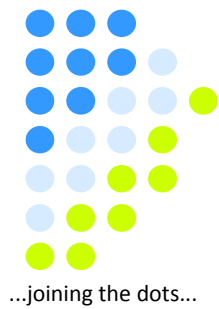
- Preventing family violence is the responsibility of the whole community and requires a shared understanding that family violence is unacceptable.

- Responses to family violence can be improved through increased recognition and greater coordination of services in responding to the independent rights and needs of the child.

- **Responses to family violence can be improved through the development of a multi-faceted approach in which responses are integrated and specifically designed to enhance the safety of women and children.**

- The prevention of family violence requires changing community attitudes and behaviour, responding to people at risk at the earliest possible stage and improving responses to women and children who experience violence and to the men who perpetrate it.

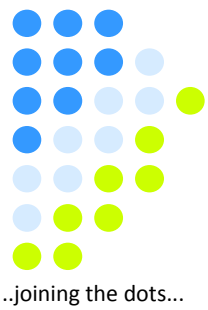
Evidence Base



Increasing evidence base

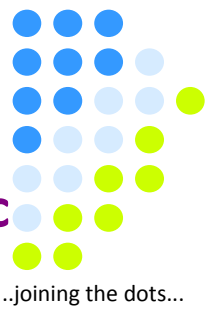
- **Police Evidence**

- significant evidence base concerning the incidence, prevalence and harmful effects of violence on women and children
- number of family violence incidents reports submitted by police had increased by 45% over the previous three years (since 2007)
- In 50% of cases, children had been present at the scene
- 33-36% were repeat attendances



Increasing Evidence Base

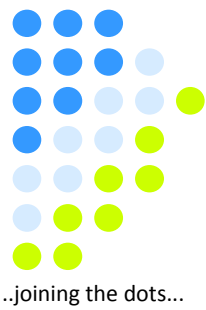
- **Other Agencies**
 - **VicHealth (Victoria's Health Promotion Agency) study. Intimate partner violence is responsible for more ill-health and premature death in Victorian women under the age of 45 than any other risk factor – including high blood pressure, smoking and obesity**
 - **Australian Institute of criminology - two in five homicides occur between family members. Around 60 per cent of these occur between intimate partners, three-quarters of which involved men killing women**
 - **Child abuse - family violence was a major factor in 52% of substantiated child protection cases**
 - **Access Economics - cost of violence to the economy and determined that it was approximately \$8billion dollars per year. Pro-rata likely to be costing Victoria \$2b a year (powerful argument to Treasury)**



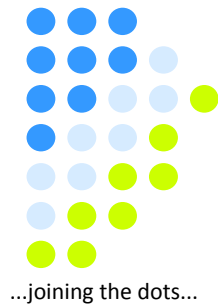
Increasing Evidence Base

- research regarding the harmful effects of living with domestic violence on children and young people
 - found that witnessing or hearing violence against their mother or siblings has reaching effects on children's wellbeing
 - children who witness violence have a greater tendency to accept and legitimise violence, higher levels of aggression, sibling violence and drug and alcohol issues.
 - education and learning impeded by constant change of environment.
 - *Governments are aware that both economic success and social cohesion depend on almost every young person achieving high standards by the time they leave school.*
 - Sir Michael Barber, McKinsey & Co. (former senior adviser to Blair)
 - The Age, 23/9/05

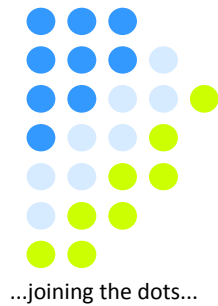
Increasing Evidence Base - Children and young people cont...



- effects of family violence on children in primary schools can include:
 - children begin to see violence as a means of conflict resolution
 - Gender patterns more pronounced
 - There are difficulties with school-work poor academic performance
 - There is poor concentration at school
 - There is poor relations with peers; and
 - There may be rebellion against adult authority



- Understand and respect each others position/skills/capabilities/capacity/impediments/strengths (structural and attitudinal) - power share!!!!
- Build trust - invest it to be “drawn down” in the future
- Don’t assume everyone understands everything – take the time to find out



Thank You

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