



**STOPPING**  
FAMILY VIOLENCE



**1st Annual Report**  
**2016/2017**



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# Chairman's Report

The increased awareness and concern about Family and Domestic Violence (FDV) in Australia continued in 2016 with a growing interest in what can be done to stop such violence.

Although perpetrator interventions have existed for many years, the focus of national policy priority has until now largely concentrated on services that support women and children who have experienced violence.

The inclusion of perpetrator responses as a parallel national policy priority has provided a wider lens with which to view the possible range of responses needed to ultimately improve the safety of women and children and decrease perpetrators' use of violence.

Improving the practices and capacities of perpetrator interventions can provide vital enhancement to existing systems of perpetrator accountability and significantly reduce risk for women and children.

This unprecedented national spotlight presented an opportunity to establish an organisation dedicated to the enhancement of perpetrator responses and growing the evidence base that supports this work. Consequently, on 26th August 2016 Stopping Family Violence (SFV) was incorporated with this vision in mind.

Stopping Family Violence's mission is to create a better and safer future for women and children experiencing domestic violence. To achieve this our efforts are focused on shifting service responses to increase the means of perpetrator accountability and improve the system's capacity to make this transformation.

Our first year has been spent developing relationships, working to gain an understanding of the needs of the sector, understanding the perceptions of men's behaviour change programs (MBCPs) and responding, to opportunities to be involved in research, training and sector development. Consequently, in this first year, a large proportion of SFV efforts have involved advocacy, collaboration and partnership building, consultation with many elements of the FDV response system, research and training.

We have worked with a diverse array of service providers and individuals involved and interested in understanding the purpose and intent of programs

and interventions that work to reduce risk, increase accountability, and ultimately change the behaviour of perpetrators.

At the policy and strategic level this continues to involve strong working relationships with the Department of Communities to develop an implementation plan for the National Outcome Standards for Perpetrator Intervention (NOSPI) in Western Australia and the establishment of the Western Australian Men's Behaviour Change Network (The Network).

This has culminated in a year of SFV consultations, training events, preparation of evidence papers and working closely with partner organisations to address gaps in FDV knowledge across the wider community services sector.

The breadth of activities undertaken in our first year and the support we have received from both the FDV and wider community services sector is testament, I believe, to a growing community concern to address family and domestic violence. There is incredible goodwill and passion amongst those involved in stopping FDV which has been inspiring to observe and led to significant collaborations for SFV.

I would particularly like to thank our founding partners, The Women's Council for Family and Domestic Violence and Curtin University, for their unwavering support in the first year of SFV's establishment. Their collaboration helps us to ensure that we are continually focused on our goal of increasing the safety of all women and children and that we have the knowledge, and capacity, to undertake important research and training in this sphere.

As we move into our second year, Stopping Family Violence is focused on increasing training opportunities for people working within the FDV sector, educating the community services sector on FDV and changing long-held misperceptions about the issue.

Currently in WA there is no universal base training across both targeted and non-targeted perpetrator interventions, and it is difficult to realistically evaluate the contributions of various programs that form part of the system of responses. To improve this situation and support the development of an evidence base, we will

work with the MBC sector to develop an accreditation and training program to address the current professional development gap which exists. Other Australian states have already commenced developing these accreditation frameworks, underpinned by the NOSPI, we will use the benefit of their learnings, while also drawing on international experiences, to help shape the Western Australian framework.

We will continue to seek opportunities to increase community awareness of Family and Domestic Violence and engage with organisations and communities to enhance the ways they can support victims and partner with them to both help change the conversation and better signpost people to seek effective help where needed.

I believe we are in a time of growing knowledge about what is important in responding to FDV and that the sector is open to opportunities to refine and enhance what is done. With this momentum we can collaborate to take significant steps towards reducing risk and one day stopping family and domestic violence. I am excited at the potential of the coming year.

Damian Green  
Chairman  
Stopping Family Violence

## With Thanks

Stopping Family Violence would like to thank the following organisations for their support this year:

- **Department of Child Protection and Family Support** (now Department of Communities)- for funding received for the development of the implementation plan for the National Outcome Standards for Perpetrator Interventions in Western Australia and to establish the WA Men's Behaviour Change Network.
- **Rare Creative** - thanks to Rare Stopping Family Violence has a brand which reflects our purpose and our hope for a future safe from fear of violence for all women and children.
- **PSC Foundation**- for kindly providing funding for SFV to begin work on the development of an eLearning platform, ensuring that knowledge of FDV continues to grow and that all service providers can equip themselves with the tools to help to support women and children at risk.
- **ANROWS** - SFV has been the recipient of ANROWS funding for a number of important research projects this year which will help to drive forward the agenda of perpetrator response.

# SFV Activity Report

In its first year SFV has undertaken a diverse range of activities to support the sector, drive forward the

agenda of perpetrator response and to reduce risk for women and children.

## Implementation Plan for the National Outcome Standards for Perpetrator Intervention

This year SFV, in collaboration with Department of Child Protection and Family Support (now Department of Communities), has developed a project plan for the implementation of NOSPI in WA.

The project plan is part of an ongoing process to strengthen safety for victims, accountability for perpetrators, and help define roles and responsibilities within the FDV systems response. This will support identification and responses to perpetrators, keeping them within view of the system, especially in terms of ongoing risk assessment and risk management.

Target outcomes of the project plan:

- Improved awareness, and identification of strategies to address gaps between NOSPI and service providers' current role in perpetrator response work.
- Increased understanding of responsibilities and linkages with regard to the NOSPI, including strengthening information sharing, data collection and collaborative working.
- Increased understanding of training required for the implementation of the NOSPI.

## Release of Issues Paper

In May SFV released their first issues paper 'Family and domestic violence perpetrator programs. Issues paper of current and emerging trends, developments and expectations'.

The paper represents the first attempt to, in detail and at a national level, grapple with the wide range of issues influencing how the men's behaviour change program field might evolve in the years to come, so that we can make use of the current spotlight to push the work forward in effective directions.

The paper offers a national view of trends and developments in family and domestic violence research and literature, ranging from the systemic level to daily practice, to stimulate discussion and action about the steps required to build perpetrator intervention systems which will strengthen existing FDV efforts and MBCPs within the system.

## Stopping Family Violence Newsletter

In March SFV launched a quarterly newsletter designed to keep the FDV sector up to date on research, upcoming events, training opportunities and the progress of projects impacting the sector, such as the implementation plan for the NOSPI.

The mailing list has grown to just under 200 subscribers from both targeted and non-targeted perpetrator interventions as well as the broader sector, including MBCP providers, legal services, corrective services, alcohol and drug (AOD) services, women's services, health services, Indigenous services, LGBTQI services, universities, and several advocacy groups.

The ability to disseminate the latest and most relevant evidence-based research, policy updates, as well as cross-sector events and professional development opportunities to these diverse organisations has further established SFV's role as a pivotal information link across the sector.

## Consultations

One of the key agenda items for SFV in its first year was to develop relationships and communication channels to foster a collective understanding of the issues facing the sector and ensure information is disseminated, particularly in relation to NOSPI, and understood across the wider community support services sector.

SFV's relationship building through consultations has been far-reaching and diverse with key agencies at many levels of WA's perpetrator intervention sector represented, including:

- Targeted perpetrator interventions including voluntary and mandated behaviour change programs - MBCP providers, Department of Communities (Child Protection), Department of Justice and WAPOL;
- Secondary perpetrator interventions such as AOD, Health, not-for-profit organisations, employment and financial support services, housing, CALD agencies and community law centres; and
- Women's and children's services that support victims of family and domestic violence.

The consultations are essential in being able to close the main gaps in perpetrator response work as highlighted in the NOSPI Project Plan and to work towards improving the following areas across the sector:

- The need for an increased awareness across agencies around the NOSPI themselves but also about the availability and accessibility of MBCPs;
- The need for a continual improvement of positive working relationships across agencies;
- Training for staff in both targeted and non-targeted perpetrator interventions;
- Improved assessment of risk for both harm to the victim and potential harm from the perpetrator; and
- Improved data collection systems and training for service providers.

## Relationship Development

Through ongoing consultations SFV has established a number of meaningful relationships across multiple sectors. The development of these relationships indicates a desire and need within the wider community services sector for information and support on issues related to family and domestic violence. Significant relationships have been established with the:

- Humanitarian Entrants Interagency Network (HEIN); SFV is now attending their regular bi-monthly meetings. The meetings focus on participating agencies increasing their knowledge of services available for CALD communities.
- Holyoke (AOD sector) and SFV are working collaboratively to develop ways to hold perpetrators accountable. This included the delivery of bespoke training to Holyoke staff on how to work with perpetrators of FDV in an AOD context.
- SFV has been working with WA Police to develop training for new recruits on how best to interact with perpetrators and create opportunities for intervention. The team also provided input into scripts which have been recorded by actors to represent perpetrators of FDV.
- The relationship with the Women's Council and its member organisations have grown and flourished this year. A consultation with member organisations in February was pivotal in taking the first steps to close the gap between women's and men's services and to ensure that the needs of women's services were understood when developing the implementation plan for the NOSPI.
- The partnership with Curtin University has enabled SFV to grow its research capabilities and increase capacity to participate in a wide variety of research projects.

# WA Men's Behaviour Change Network

In February 2017 the first meeting of the newly formed WA Men's Behaviour Change Network (The Network) was held.

The Network is a collaborative group established to strengthen the working relationships across the perpetrator intervention system in Western Australia.

The Network provides a forum to support current practice whilst striving to further develop the sector through improved collaboration and evidence based innovation.

The Network's purpose is to bring the sector together to provide advocacy and support as we work to reduce family and domestic violence in Australia.

Since its inception, The Network has worked to develop a collective, powerful voice for perpetrator programs in WA and support the ongoing evolution toward a standard of excellence across the sector.

It has become a forum for collaborative practice, discussion, and establishing cohesive research and development agendas across the perpetrator response sphere.

One of the initial priorities of The Network is the development of accredited training for providers of men's behaviour change programs. This is imperative to support the practice standards and ensure practitioners are meeting well-defined requirements within their practice.

The membership of The Network in 2016/2017 financial year included the following organisations who currently deliver men's behaviour change programs:

- Anglicare
- Centrecare
- Communicare
- Department of Justice
- Relationships Australia WA

Each organisation is represented by up to two current staff members on The Network.

## A new eLearning platform

Thanks to generous funding from the PSC Foundation SFV has begun work on a new eLearning platform. The purpose of the platform is to be a tool to increase education about family and domestic violence.

The first course, is being developed for service providers who may come into contact with men exhibiting violent behaviours towards children. The program will help people develop skills and access resources on:

- How to identify men with violent behaviours;
- Understanding the impact these behaviours have on children;
- Strategies around how to address these behaviours;
- Strategies and programs to enable them to work with individuals to help them understand positive relationships and how they can change their relationship with their children; and
- Information on programs available for men to be referred to, and how to refer them.

The platform will then be utilised to support the accredited training, currently in development, free education courses for the community services sector and ongoing professional development..

# Research

One of the key priorities of SFV is to support the development of the evidence base that informs policy and practice. This has been done in a variety of ways throughout the year:

- The development of an online research library;
- Ongoing communication of recently released research through the SFV newsletter;
- Release of the issues paper; and
- Engagement in a number of research projects (refer table below).

Research Title	SFV's Role	About the research
ANROWS Program quality and outcomes in men's behaviour change programs <i>January 2017 – January 2018</i>	Advisory group role and subcontracted researcher role.	<p>This project seeks to update current knowledge about MBCP outcomes and systematically review existing approaches to outcome measurement and quality assurance methods. The project will also review the logic underpinning the delivery of current MBCPs and explore current methods of assessing quality.</p> <p>The project will articulate the program logic of MBCPs, identify appropriate intermediate outcomes and quality assurance tools, and inform an approach to evaluation practice that is based on the application of empirical knowledge about behavioural change.</p>
ANROWS Improving safety through better engagement and retention of perpetrators across the systems of interventions <i>January 2017 – December 2018</i>	Advisory group role	<p>This project seeks to inform the processes required to shift system focus onto the perpetrators of FDV and alleviate the burden placed on women and children.</p> <p>The project will aim to develop clear future directions which place the spotlight on the perpetrator, manage his risk and shift the burden away from women and children being responsible for their own safety, the project examines various parts of the perpetrator intervention system to understand how it can best be reshaped to achieve this shift</p>
ANROWS Invisible Practices: Moving towards child protection practices through a community of practice approach <i>July 2017 – August 2018</i>	Advisory group role and shared research associate.	<p>A significant amount of intervention with men who use violence and abuse in relationships does not occur in specialised MBCPs but through child protection and family services interventions, yet these practices are neither documented nor evidence-based. With some exceptions, detail is generally lacking in this sensitive area of work about models for good practice that address the diversity of perpetrators seen by child protection and family service practitioners. No standards and little guidance exists in most states.</p> <p>This project aims to research a current practice and knowledge gap, namely the skills required by child protection and non-statutory service practitioners to work with fathers who use violence and to document the skills. It will provide a unique focus on research and workforce development. It will shine a light on the ubiquitous but unacknowledged work of frontline practitioners in child protection and non-statutory services intervening with fathers who use FDV.</p> <p>A key output will be the development of practice guidelines for how practitioners work with fathers who use violence and controlling behaviours.</p>

# Training

A key area of need identified by both SFV and The Network has been the lack of training and professional development opportunities for MBC practitioners and the wider FDV sector.

To address this gap SFV been working to develop new training opportunities and establish a training calendar to support practitioners in their ongoing professional development. Some highlights this year are discussed below.

Training	Date	Presenters	About the Training
Giving our programs the best go: Improving quality, managing expectations, working collaboratively from start to finish	May 2017	Rodney Vlais	In this half day workshop Rodney Vlais shared his knowledge of innovations and over-the-horizon trends in MBCP design and practice. Drawing upon his understanding of relevant research literature and perpetrator intervention systems throughout Australia and beyond, Rodney facilitated interactive discussions that enabled workshop participants to reflect on challenges and opportunities that will increasingly drive our work.
Caring Dad's	June 2017	Dr Katreena Scott Tim Kelly - program creators	This intervention program is for fathers (including biological, step, common-law) who have physically or emotionally abused or neglected their children, or exposed their children to domestic violence. The training provided an opportunity for service providers to come together and engage with facilitator training that shifts the system's focus of accountability and visibility back onto the perpetrator, with emphasis on his fathering.
FDV Conference – Pivoting to the perpetrator; honouring children's experiences	June 2017	Dr Katreena Scott Dr Susan Heward-Belle Prof. Donna Chung Dr Alan Campbell Prof. Patrick O'Leary	Thanks to funding from the Department of Child Protection and Family Support, the conference hosted national and international speakers to discuss and consider children within the context of perpetrator response.  The presentations delivered covered various issues and debates relevant to perpetrator response systems and honouring children's experiences within them.

## Organisation Specific Training Programs

This year SFV has worked with individual organisations to develop bespoke programs to address the needs of their employees.

### **Holyoake**

As an alcohol and drug service provider Holyoake staff often find themselves interacting with people who are either perpetrators of DV or victims. A training program was developed to increase staff knowledge about FDV and provide them with strategies on how to work with victims and perpetrators of FDV.

### **Legal Aid**

SFV has been providing advice to Legal Aid as they develop an adaptation of a Victorian based Family Violence framework document and training for their staff. The Framework is a comprehensive document to support staff within Legal Aid to work more effectively in the area of FDV. This compulsory training is far-reaching and will inform all Legal Aid workers from administrative to managerial levels on how to work with victims and perpetrators of FDV.

### **WA Police**

SFV has aided WA Police in the formation of training scenario videos for new recruits to help them understand how to better approach situations involving perpetrators of family and domestic violence.

SFV's involvement opens opportunities for instilling notions of perpetrator accountability, visibility, and gendered violence at this early stage of police training and socialisation.

### **Dignity Conference 2017**

Over 40 years of women's activism has culminated in emerging national conversations about family and domestic violence like never before. The stakes and gravity of these conversations are of course very high. With new and a greater diversity of community representatives, groups and organisations taking an interest and joining in on these conversations, the future feels both tentatively promising and unpredictable.

One part of these conversations concerns work with those (largely males) who perpetrate family and domestic violence, and the contentious issues that abound. What do we consider to be a perpetrator intervention? How do men's behaviour change programs fit into broader perpetrator intervention systems? Do these programs work? For whom, and under what contexts? How do we define and measure success? Is this work 'therapy' or part of a community accountability response striving for broader social changes? What are the pervasive default narratives concerning perpetrator accountability, and where might they lead us? In what ways can this work ally with women's and children's struggle for dignity and freedom from coercive control?

Through a highly participatory workshop, Damian Green and Rodney Vlasis discussed these and other related questions concerning perpetrator intervention work at the Dignity Conference held in May.



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