



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE  
AND COMMUNITY SAFETY**

**(Inquiry into domestic and family violence—policy approaches  
and responses)**

**Members:**

**MS E LEE (Chair)  
MS B CODY (Deputy Chair)  
MS N LAWDER  
MR C STEEL**

**PROOF TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE**

**CANBERRA**

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**Secretary to the committee:  
Dr A Cullen (Ph: 620 50142)**

**By authority of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory**

Submissions, answers to questions on notice and other documents, including requests for clarification of the transcript of evidence, relevant to this inquiry that have been authorised for publication by the committee may be obtained from the Legislative Assembly website.

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*Amended 20 May 2013*

**The committee met at 3.01 pm.**

**BERRY, MS YVETTE**, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence

**WOOD, MS JO**, Coordinator-General for Family Safety, Community Services Directorate

**GILDING, MS LOUISE**, Executive Director, Housing, Community Services Directorate

**THE CHAIR:** Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome. I declare open this sixth public hearing of the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety's inquiry into domestic and family violence policy approaches and responses. Today the committee will hear from the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, the Coordinator-General for Family Violence, and other officials from the Community Service Directorate. On behalf of the committee, thank you, minister and officials, for making time to appear today, and thank you also for the government's written submission to the inquiry.

I remind witnesses of the protections and obligations afforded by parliamentary privilege and draw your attention to the privilege statement before you on the table. Can you confirm for the record that you understand the privilege implications of the statement?

**Ms Berry:** Yes, we do.

**THE CHAIR:** I also remind witnesses that the proceedings are being recorded by Hansard for transcription purposes and are being webstreamed and broadcast live. Before we proceed to questions from the committee, minister, would you like to make an opening statement?

**Ms Berry:** Yes, I would, thank you. I begin by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land, the Ngunnawal people. I pay my respects to their elders, past, present and future and acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution that they make to the life of this city and this region.

Domestic, family and sexual violence has a devastating impact on individuals, families and communities. Three major reports on domestic and family violence were released in 2016 in the ACT and provided a broad picture of the impact of domestic and family violence as well as the barriers, improving crisis responses, prevention and early intervention.

The ACT government's response to family violence responded to all three reports, and is the guiding document for the ACT's policy approaches and responses to domestic and family violence. The response is built around five themes: leadership, cultural change, prevention and early intervention, information sharing, collaboration and integration, and transparency and accountability.

For the first time the ACT has a Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, as well as a full-time Coordinator-General for Family Safety to lead change

and provide accountability across the service system. The government's commitment to family safety will continue with an investment of \$23.5 million over the four years from 2017-18.

We know there remains more work to do if we are to engage the whole community in the response and ultimately achieve zero tolerance to domestic and family violence in the ACT, but there has been a lot achieved since 2016. We are making a practical difference on the ground for women and families affected by domestic and family violence, and are also testing new and innovative approaches that will expand the support options that are available in the ACT.

Examples of our achievements include the new Family Violence Act 2016, which commenced in May 2016. The act broadened the definition of "family violence" in the ACT to include the full range of coercive and controlling behaviours, including emotional and financial abuse. Additional funding for the Domestic Violence Crisis Service and the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre has enabled them to provide additional services to people experiencing domestic and family violence and sexual assaults. We have increased support for non-English speakers seeking assistance for domestic and family violence with additional funding for translating and interpreting services provided to specialist services and the courts.

Room for change, a behaviour change program for men who use domestic and family violence, commenced on April 2017. This innovative program is supporting women and children to stay safely in their homes while providing supportive and therapeutic interventions for participating men. We have provided funding to build the capacity of alcohol and drug services to respond to domestic and family violence among their clients.

We provided funding for a number of initiatives to help the justice system respond better to domestic and family violence. There are now two family violence order liaison officers at ACT Policing to support victims with applications for orders and to apply for orders on their behalf. Police recordings of interviews at the crime scene can be admitted as evidence at court for domestic and family violence cases, which reduces the trauma for victims. There has been funding for increased legal assistance for victims through Legal Aid ACT.

The new leadership to drive cultural change in cross-cutting reform is already having an impact. We have seen better connections across government as well as the community. The family safety hub co-design is an example of this. Feedback from the process included that it was the most genuinely collaborative experience stakeholders have been involved in and that they think it will make a real difference in the community.

One important insight from the co-design work is that there is not enough focus on children and the impact of the significant trauma that they experience. I am happy to say that the Domestic Violence Prevention Council has taken the initiative to convene an extraordinary meeting bringing a focus to the impacts of domestic and family violence on children. I am looking forward to participating in that conversation tomorrow and the ideas that will be generated to improve our responses to children.

Chair, I am happy to take questions. Hopefully we can answer them for you today or we will take them on notice and provide information to the committee later.

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you, minister. At page 12 of the government's submission under the heading "School-based prevention", you talk about the social and emotional learning programs within schools. Can you give me some more information about that? Is that a curriculum-based thing? How is that rolled out across schools?

**Ms Berry:** Social and emotional learning is part of the Australian government's education curriculum, so it is available for schools to use. I do not know how much detail you want on it, but we could probably get some more information to you on how it works in schools.

**Ms Wood:** I do not have a lot of detail, but I understand that there is a lot of support for schools in terms of how they apply the principles of social and emotional learning at a school level. Obviously they have the capacity to adapt that to their own circumstances.

Since we made this submission—which was last year, so it is a bit of time ago—we brought Our Watch to Canberra to run a series of workshops on prevention in a range of different settings, and one of the focus areas was prevention through schools. We had very good engagement and a lot of interest from the Education Directorate. We had Our Watch run a specific session for the Education Directorate to look at how they build on the work they are already doing on social and emotional learning, the engagement they already have with respectful relationship curriculum resource development, which the commonwealth is leading and what is the next layer of that work for them.

Certainly the approach to prevention in schools is continuing to evolve and develop, but we can certainly get some more detail on the specifics of the social and emotional learning programs.

**THE CHAIR:** That would be great.

**Ms Berry:** Schools will often work with different groups. Schools have engaged Alan Tongue to talk with their students and the PCYC has been engaged at different schools for some of the work they have done with young people, particularly young boys. Schools work on the need within their school community. Programs are available on the Education Directorate website and if there are other things that meet that social and emotional learning curriculum requirement, like programs offered outside of the school, the schools decide which is the best fit for their community.

**THE CHAIR:** If you do have more information to bring to the committee, that would be great.

**MR STEEL:** In relation to the Our Watch program, the submission says some resources have been developed by the Australian government by Our Watch to support respectful relationships in schools. What is the status of those resources?

**Ms Wood:** I think they are still developing a range of resources. The Education

Directorate is the ACT representative in that work, so it is convened with all states and territories working with Our Watch.

**MR STEEL:** Is that through the education council?

**Ms Wood:** I cannot remember which body it is through.

**MR STEEL:** So it is not through a COAG process?

**Ms Wood:** It is under the national plan, so it is part of the commitment under the national plan to develop a series of resources. They are still in development.

**Ms Berry:** The important things to think about with regard to schools is that the work is delivered through the curriculum. It is important to have that culture embedded in the school communities rather than some individuals coming from outside and delivering different programs to try to change that or to try to implement that culture. It really needs to be embedded in the same way that we have done around cultural proficiency with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and multicultural communities in the ACT. It is embedding that whole cultural change within school communities.

**Ms Wood:** Our Watch is piloting a whole-school approach in Queensland and Victoria to test some of the resources and approaches that they have developed. As a member of Our Watch, the evaluation of that and the learnings from that and any extra tools that get developed will be available to us and to all the other members of Our Watch.

**MS LAWDER:** Does that mean we are a paid-up member of Our Watch now?

**Ms Wood:** That is right.

**Ms Berry:** Yes.

**MS LAWDER:** When did that begin?

**Ms Wood:** It predates me; I think 2016.

**Ms Berry:** It might have been earlier than that actually.

**Ms Wood:** Yes, but we can take that on notice and check.

**MR STEEL:** In the submission you say that you know that the role of the coordinator-general will change the way that you engage as a government with, particularly, non-government organisations in responding to family violence. I was just wondering in what ways you think that relationship will change. Obviously it will be a more coordinated approach but how do you think things will improve in terms of how you work with non-government organisations?

**Ms Berry:** Before Ms Wood starts explaining her role as coordinator-general, I will say that it has already had an enormous impact on and benefit in working with the

services in particular but also in coordinating our effort across government and also coordinating across the non-government sector as well. I have heard only very positive things about Jo's interactions with the community service organisations in this space but it is new for this sector to be working so closely together but also so closely with government as well.

**Ms Wood:** I think the family safety hub co-design process is a good example of how we are working differently with both government partners and the community sector and actually bringing all the different players that have different roles in what we call a system but what is actually a series of sectors that intersect because domestic and family violence is so cross-cutting. We are actually bringing those people together and those different perspectives and that different expertise together to actually do the design work, identify the problem and define the problem, which our insights report gathered a whole lot of input on and developed a set of insights on, which then led us to be able to more clearly define a series of problems that we need to tackle and then also to be involved in the design work.

One of the parts of that process that I think has been particularly important is ensuring that the people who are actually doing the front-line delivery are involved in the design, in the problem definition and in the design conversation because, if we try to develop policy that is not informed by those front-line perspectives, for both the people who work on the front line and also the people who have the lived experience of violence that we are trying to support, what we develop is not going to be effective.

A really important part of it is keeping that integration between the policy whole-of-system work we are doing and the people who are actually on the front line but also, importantly, bringing those cross-cutting perspectives together. That is a critical part of how we then join up the services and join up the pathways for people.

**MR STEEL:** Six workshops have so far been undertaken to help design the hub. Is that that co-design process?

**Ms Wood:** Yes. There were two major stages to the co-design work last year. The first was the insights gathering, which was the user research. We did start out with a set of principles, and they are at the front of our insights report, that really shaped how we approached that co-design.

The first principle was that the co-design needed to be informed by people with a lived experience of violence and the front-line workers who support them. On that first piece, we did intend to start with people with the experience of violence but we actually involved some of the community partners and representative organisations in looking at how we would do the co-design process itself and take on board their advice about how we did that safely.

We actually started with interviews and focus groups with front-line workers and we used the people who had trusted relationships with former clients to actually reach people with a lived experience of violence. We had about 50 people who worked in a range of front-line roles participate in that research phase and we then interviewed 20 people with a lived experience of violence. That was the first piece that generated the insights that we then took to the actual design process.

We had a design team, which was government and community sector people, and there was a pretty big ask of the design team. We asked them for six half days over eight weeks and, for community sector organisations, that is a really big ask. The test, for me, about how well people were engaged in the process was that the people actually moved things and did a whole lot of rearranging so that they could participate in that conversation. Some people who were invited to be in the design team just could not physically give us that amount of time. So we had a critical friends group as well. After every couple of design workshops, we would take the output from the design team back to this broader critical friends group and get some other feedback. That enabled us to bring some other broader perspectives into the design work as well.

**MR STEEL:** And then the next stage is that you will take the pilot of the family safety hub through that process again?

**Ms Wood:** We are taking a model to government so that government can make a decision about the final model of the hub. In everything we do around the hub and everything we do in terms of our response to domestic and family violence, we know we have got to test things and we have actually got to test them in a quite disciplined way to assess the impact that they have and whether they are taking us in the right direction. We know that there will be constant testing and refining of our approach and we will be looking to try to make sure that we are doing that in a way that we are capturing the lessons as we go and that we are improving as we go.

**THE CHAIR:** As a follow-up on that, what has been the greatest challenge for you in your role as coordinator-general to date? It is obviously a new role that the ACT government has initiated. What has been a particular challenge for you?

**Ms Wood:** I think the thing that is really challenging for everyone is how complex the service system and the needs of people experiencing domestic and family violence are. I think the thing that I was most struck by when I first arrived in this role was—having lived here for a long time I knew that the ACT was a small jurisdiction—just how many stakeholders there were that had a role to play in the response to domestic and family violence. There are large organisations and small organisations and they meet a whole range of different needs. We need that kind of diversity but it does mean it makes it complex for people to navigate. It makes it complex for the services themselves to navigate and it makes it complex for clients as well potentially.

When you think about domestic and family violence cutting across policing, the justice and court systems, the whole range of services to support children and families, the homelessness sector, financial kinds of issues, it really is a lot of things to join up. Finding ways to streamline some of those connections and make it easier for people, I think, remains our biggest challenge. And it is not just our biggest challenge. Whenever we get together with other state and territories, everyone is facing those really similar kinds of challenges.

**MS LAWDER:** I was looking again at some of the projects funded through the women's safety grants at page 12. What I am interested in is the online training for workers in the disability sector. Are you able to provide any further information about that particular training package and/or has there been any assessment as to the

effectiveness of that training package?

**Ms Wood:** I can get a bit more information and provide it on notice. What I do know about that project is that it was intended to provide two-way training: training for disability sector workers on domestic and family violence, and for the domestic and family violence sector on the needs of clients with disabilities.

I think it was a pretty small grant that supported that. I do not think it would have had a big evaluation wrapped around it. But there may have been some data collected about people's perceptions of the training and how they felt in terms of whether they felt better equipped. But we can take that away and come back on notice in detail.

**MS LAWDER:** As I know and as you know, women with disabilities are over-represented in the family violence area. Is it common amongst all these projects that perhaps there was not a lot of evaluation included or—

**Ms Wood:** We would have to actually take that on notice. Almost all of them, I think, are pretty small grants. You have got to have a proportionate evaluation to the size of the project.

**MS LAWDER:** But if you were going to do those types of grants again I guess you would like to have a feel for what worked and what did not and what was successful?

**Ms Wood:** Yes, and part of our objective in bringing Our Watch to Canberra was to actually start the conversation with a whole range of different people with an interest in prevention work and start to get a common language around how we understand our primary prevention approach. And we would certainly be looking at the resources that Our Watch have produced. They have developed some frameworks that help you measure the impact of prevention.

Definitely as we do more of this we would be looking at how we bring an outcomes framework to what we do on prevention, understanding that we have got to have a population-level outcomes framework because really we are trying to change people's attitudes and behaviours in their private lives, in their own homes. We have got to have that population-level perspective but we know that to have an impact with different parts of our community we are going to need different types of strategies as well. How do you measure what impact you are having on the population as a whole and how do you measure what impact you are having for different types of groups?

**MS LAWDER:** Do you know whether that particular one about the online training was granted to a disability organisation?

**Ms Wood:** I think it was Women with Disabilities ACT that did that work. Certainly Sue Malthouse was involved, yes.

**MS CODY:** On page 13 of your submission you talk about early intervention, and we all know that that has shown some great signs of effectiveness. I am keen to talk about the justice reinvestment trial with Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders. Can you expand on that a little bit?

**Ms Wood:** The justice reinvestment trial was itself a trial that was co-designed. What came out of that was a direction for the trial which focused on families connected with the justice system where there are children involved. It is looking at a concerted, more intensive, engagement with a number of families. It is working with both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations but also some of the mainstream organisations. Certainly Winnunga is a partner in that as is the Domestic Violence Crisis Service.

It is looking at the full range of needs of those families, so beyond people's specific interaction with the justice system and what else that family might need to reduce future interaction with the justice system. It also connects with work around commitments to look at reducing recidivism. Obviously it is also important in terms of input into looking at what children might need. So children in families that are having that justice system interaction are part of the whole-of-family approach.

**MS CODY:** The trial started in 2015. Have you done some evaluation or is it still too early to look at how some of the early stuff has happened?

**Ms Wood:** Yes, 2015 was when the co-design work was done so it has been progressively rolled out. It is led by JACS, and it is probably a bit early. Given that we are talking about kind of a whole-of-family approach where there are complex needs, obviously some of those outcomes are long-term. But we could get a bit more information from JACS about more recent outcomes.

**MS CODY:** I know it is very early days for that particular program, but it would be interesting to see if we have already seen something, positive or negative, and ways they are adapting that trial to make it work better for families.

**Ms Berry:** One of the things to comment on, though, is the conversation that has been occurring through the co-design work around what people want out of domestic and family violence. The response to it has shown that more and more people are saying that they do not necessarily want the legal response; they want the restorative response or some other way that does not have to go down a legal path.

**Ms Wood:** Two of our insights go to that issue. Our first insight is do we hear what people are saying, which is really people telling us that we do not have the responses that they want. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women particularly and some parts of the CALD community—and I suspect many other groups if you could talk broadly across our community in an anonymous way—are fearful of the justice system interaction. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families are particularly fearful about the justice system, family violence, child protection interaction.

Women told us they want the violence to end, not the relationship. For a lot of women, the idea that the relationship ends is overly simplistic, particularly where there are children. Relationships continue and there are extended family relationships. The family situation is quite complex, and just leaving your partner does not mean you have left that whole context.

There is a desire to have non-justice responses, so having some way to reduce the violence, some way to potentially hold perpetrators accountable, which could be through restorative processes that are not through the formal justice system. But,

equally, we have to understand that the flipside of that message is that we also need to continue to do the work to ensure that the justice system does work better for people so there is less fear about going down that pathway.

**THE CHAIR:** On page 8 of the submissions there is a reference to the ACT strategy to prevent violence against women and children. It says that will be finalised at the end of 2017. It could be that I just could not find it, but has that been finalised?

**Ms Wood:** We are finalising the reporting against that strategy now. The strategy ran until the end of 2017, so we have been collecting the reporting to compile a final report on that strategy. It had two action plans, so there was some reporting against the first action and we are wrapping up the reporting against the second at the moment.

**THE CHAIR:** Do you have an estimated time when that might be available?

**Ms Wood:** Very soon. It is in the final stages, so within the next month or so.

**THE CHAIR:** If it is in the next month or so before the committee has reported—

**Ms Berry:** If it is ready, we can provide it.

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you.

**MR STEEL:** My question is in relation to the initiative to establish the child and youth quality assurance improvement committee and how that has been going in terms of supporting children and the complex relationship between family violence and the child protection system.

**Ms Wood:** In the safer families package from 2016 there was a funded measure which I think encompassed both establishing a case analysis team in Child and Youth Protection Services, and the child and youth protection quality assurance improvement committee, and those two measures work together to look at improving practice in care and protection not only in relation to family violence but obviously with a strong family violence focus. I am one of the nominated members the quality assurance and improvement committee as the coordinator-general. It also has external members, so experts from outside the ACT, and it is chaired by the director-general.

That committee has a focus on the trends and issues in child protection practice in the ACT. It is informed by information that comes from some of the front-line workers, the team leaders, about their experiences on the ground. It is informed by the work of the case analysis team, and that team is really critical because it is an opportunity for people who are front-line care and protection workers to possibly themselves refer some of their cases to case analysis so they get another perspective on the most complex cases. There has been a bit of reporting in the *Canberra Times* recently about one of the first reports from that case analysis team, and it really has focused on the most complex cases. Unsurprisingly, some of the most complex cases that care and protection see are those where there is domestic and family violence, drug and alcohol issues and mental health issues.

The case analysis team is supporting the front-line workers to improve their practice

in dealing with those complex cases. The quality assurance and improvement committee has a focus across all of care and protection to look at where are the emerging trends and issues and what are the practices from elsewhere that we could be looking at applying in the ACT.

One of the important initiatives that the quality assurance and improvement committee provided input into was to the scoping of the terms of reference for the review of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care. That review is now being conducted as an independent review led by an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander steering committee, but that committee has had an opportunity to provide input into some of those key initiatives.

**MR STEEL:** Can you provide us with a practical example of how the case analysis team might have helped to deal with a particularly difficult family violence situation as opposed to the current child protection system?

**Ms Wood:** The work of the case analysis team will inform the training for workers in care and protection, so when issues are emerging where it is clear that there is a bit of a trend and we need a bigger focus on that particular aspect in the training. That is one of the ways it is embedding an improved practice. Some of what the case analysis team does can inform front-line workers directly. It helps improve that system as a whole, but it provides a different perspective that people can reflect on and use in their own practice.

I should have said at the beginning that this work also happens alongside a big investment in training in Child and Youth Protection Services on domestic and family violence. There is intensive five-day training for care and protection workers, and the case analysis work helps inform what that next tranche of training might need to include.

**MR STEEL:** In terms of how Child and Youth Protection Services works with non-government organisations in the broader family violence sector, do you think those two initiatives have helped to strengthen connections and referrals to organisations and how we support and strengthen families?

**Ms Wood:** The work that Child and Youth Protection Services have done in building relationships with the community sector is a good example of how we need to work to drive cultural change and to raise awareness and build capability and understanding more broadly. There has been quite an active program of developing partnerships and collaborations with the community sector. That includes two community-based child protection workers based in OneLink, so building the connections between OneLink and CYPS. They are different models, but in some cases it is child protection workers going out to community organisations and in other cases it is community sector workers being in-posted for a day, a fortnight or in some other way. They have built relationships in that way with Domestic Violence Crisis Service and Canberra Rape Crisis Centre as well as with ACT Policing.

There is a lot more exchange happening and a lot more opportunity for those people in front-line roles to get a better understanding of what CYPS's role is and then, on the flip-side, what DVCS's role is, and how they improve referrals. That is really

important because one of the things that is an issue and something people are working on is a default referral to CYPS whenever there is any domestic and family violence. Where children are at risk, that is obviously entirely appropriate but we need to have a broader range of responses and referral pathways for children where the family is experiencing domestic and family violence. Particularly we need to get better at that early intervention referral where a family might be struggling and wanting help but it is not actually a child protection issue.

Those partnerships are about trying to ensure that the right cases are being referred into care and protection and that people are being referred to the most appropriate service if that is not the right response.

**MS CODY:** You mentioned front-line staff. What sort of training is being undertaken to help those front-line staff understand their role better and give them the support they need in those roles?

**Ms Wood:** In care and protection, as I mentioned, there has been quite intensive training developed. There is five-day intensive training for front-line child protection workers. There has also been a range of other training. There has been a whole range of training for staff in corrections, and some of that is more specifically around dealing with domestic and family violence offenders.

ACT Policing has done a range of training, and it is built into their induction, but there is a range of other training they do as well, specifically training on how to use the family violence risk assessment tool—a consistent approach to risk assessment for front-line police officers—but also training in how to use the evidence-in-chief provisions and how to capture those interviews.

There is also a range of different training in different directorates, some through White Ribbon in the Education Directorate. It is happening in a range of ways, and that is really important and that is positive.

We are leading some work to look at a whole-of-government approach to how we do that front-line worker training. That is not intended to displace the effort that is already there but is intended to ensure that we build consistency in the way that we do that training and also that we embed it into our capability frameworks and our workforce strategies across ACT government, because we want training on domestic and family violence to have the biggest reach it can have in terms of reaching the biggest range of front-line workers and also that it gets embedded so that it is not a one-off thing that people can tick the box and say they have done but is something we build into how we train our workforce into the future.

As part of that whole-of-government strategy work, we have consulted across all directorates. We have had a consultant leading that work with us. Actually last week we brought together a range of front-line people—across Health, Education, emergency services, ACT Policing, corrections, care and protection; I am sure there were others—to actually test some of the things that have come out of that consultation in terms of looking at what the capability framework might be, because we know that people need different training depending on their role. There is a foundation piece that we need everyone to have and then, depending on their role,

there is increasing complexity.

We brought together those people who actually do the front-line work to test some of the thinking around the capability framework and the way we might deliver training because we want it to be training that meets their needs and has an impact and that people find it useful. I would say that in all the different forums where I have had the opportunity to talk to people in front-line work, even people you would think would be quite skilled—people who are social workers and have a whole range of training—there is a huge demand to have more on this topic. People do feel that it is complex and they want to be better equipped.

I think the thing that I take from that is that, when we get to rolling out the whole-of-government training, the demand is there and I think we can expect to see people engage really positively with that.

**MS LAWDER:** In April 2016 we had the Glanfield report, and the government responded with a number of commitments. I am just wondering: can you run through what changes have been made as a result which have led to and will lead to a joined-up, holistic response on family violence?

**Ms Wood:** The government responded to Glanfield, the Domestic Violence Prevention Council's death review and also the Domestic Violence Crisis Service's system gap analysis. All three reports were wrapped up in the government response to family violence and all of those commitments. We have reported in the budget papers in detail against all the commitments, and the funded measures in particular, and safer families, just to highlight a few of those. Certainly the creation of the role of coordinator-general was a big part of that.

**MS LAWDER:** I mentioned Glanfield because I was specifically interested in the information-sharing side of things.

**Ms Wood:** The coordinator-general role was created to drive connectedness and provide leadership for that reform. Some of that reform is, I guess, legislative and structural reform but a lot of it is actually about cultural change. In information sharing there were some commitments to early change. There was some legislative change around the Children and Young People Act and establishing a reportable conduct scheme that specifically was about better information sharing in relation to risks to children.

When I came into this role at the end of 2016 there was a consultation process that was led by my office and that was looking at whether there was a need for broader legislative change around information sharing. The thing that came out most strongly from that consultation was that cultural change and customer practice were as important as the legislative framework. The legislative framework can be an enabler but its complexity can also make it a barrier.

I guess what we focused on since coming out of that consultation was not to rush into new legislation, and we looked at what the options were. There was a risk that we were going to create another patch on the patchwork quilt of privacy and information-sharing provisions. The thing that concerns me is that, if what we do around

legislative reform does not make it simpler, it is probably not going to have a big impact because people, when it is complex, default to “no”. But I think there is a whole range of work that has happened about the cultural change part of that.

What I talked about in terms of care and protection, building relationships with DVCS, Canberra Rape Crisis Centre, OneLink, ACT Policing, all of that is embedding protocols around information sharing and ensuring that people understand each other’s world better so that they can do more information sharing. The other big focus area for information sharing is using the existing mechanism we have through the family violence intervention program. As of this year, I have taken over from John Hinchey as chair of the Family Violence Intervention Program Coordinating Committee, and that committee oversees the case tracking work that happens.

**Ms Berry:** This might not be something that people know a lot about, what that committee does and what that tracking work is actually about. This is a bit of that information-sharing work that is going on across directorates, not about hanging out people’s dirty laundry, if you like.

**Ms Wood:** The family violence intervention program involves all the stakeholders who have an interest in families and cases that are before the criminal justice system. It includes police, the courts, the DPP, care and protection, DVCS, Canberra Rape Crisis Centre, victim support. I am sure I have missed someone, but it includes a range of agencies.

The case tracking part of it, which has existed in the ACT for a very long time, is an active forum for sharing information about cases that are considered higher risk and before the criminal justice process, when they are going to court. That has been an interesting, live test case, I guess, of where we find the barriers to information sharing, and are the barriers about culture and practice or are the barriers about the legislative framework. We are having a conversation with family violence intervention program stakeholders about how in that setting we can improve information sharing. Because it has got all the right kinds of players who already have a need to share information or are actively sharing it, it is a way for us to actually test where some of the barriers are.

I think ACT Policing, when they gave some evidence last week, talked about one restriction they have identified that allows them to share information in that forum only when there is a live criminal justice issue. That is one issue we want to explore with them a bit more. The other thing is just that the practical barriers to information sharing are really big in the case tracking model. The need to try to share information across a whole range of directorates and systems is incredibly time intensive and quite a manual process.

We are doing some work with that family violence intervention program group to look at how we could streamline that to allow more rapid information sharing and get closer to real-time information sharing. We have had an initial conversation with Data61 to look at whether there is a technological solution to that question. Their initial reaction to us was, “That is a really interesting and really hard problem you have there.” But we are going to explore that a bit more because, if we could streamline some of that process around the information sharing for that group, then they would have capacity to look more broadly and potentially be broadening out the

range of cases that they look at.

That is still a work in progress. But we have a good foundation there in terms of having the right stakeholders who already have a model for sharing information around high-risk cases.

**MS LAWDER:** One impetus for the Glanfield inquiry was sharing information between jurisdictions as well. Have there been any changes in that area?

**Ms Wood:** I know there is a range of work that the Education Directorate has led to look at how they can do that, to respond to those recommendations. I do not have a lot of detail. I know they are doing that work, and I have had conversations with them about that work, but exactly where it is up to we could take on notice.

**Ms Berry:** I am sorry, I am just trying to recall it. We are getting into another portfolio here. I am going to have to take it on notice, but there was some work done and there has been some agreement about some information sharing. I just cannot recall the actual detail of it. I can probably get it to you by the end of this.

**Ms Wood:** The other thing I would say about that issue, though, is that there are different ways that information can be shared across jurisdictions, and one way that information is regularly shared across jurisdictions is through the child protection system. There are already avenues, where there are children involved and there is concern, to actually communicate from care and protection in the ACT to the equivalent organisation in other jurisdictions and there is capacity for them to be sharing with Education as well. But there was certainly work also being done on how education directorates could directly share information.

**Ms Berry:** It was more about enrolment. Just flicking through the files in my head, it was about where children are enrolled for school.

**MS LAWDER:** It was also about the criminal history of a carer not being shared across jurisdictions in the case of an eight-year-old boy who was killed, I think. It was CYP as well.

**Ms Berry:** Yes.

**THE CHAIR:** You talked about the complexities of information sharing across different agencies and directorates. Would you not include in the mix the different community organisations as well who may be the first point of call for some of the victims? Is any work being undertaken at the moment to consider better ways to share information with the whole range of stakeholders, not just across agencies and—

**Ms Wood:** Yes. The conversation at the family violence intervention program does involve community sector partners as well. It involves Canberra Rape Crisis Centre and DVCS. I am not sure, there may be others, but they are the two top-of-mind ones.

We are looking broadly at and understanding that better information sharing, and there is information sharing obviously for different purposes. There is the information sharing that is about identifying risk and managing risk, but there is also how we

streamline information sharing to enable people not to have to repeat their story, and how we do the kind of warm handover from one service provider to another so that people are not re-traumatised by having to repeat that story. We are looking at both parts of the information-sharing equation.

**Ms Berry:** Going back to the question around training of front-line workers, we did not cover what Housing is doing.

**Ms Gilding:** In terms of working with external agencies, apart from other community agencies, as you know, we have a total facilities management provider, which means that we do thousands of work orders. We are in people's houses, so we have eyes and ears in terms of subcontractors. One of the things we have been working on with them over the past 12 months is that often our subbies will be concerned and it is about what they do with that information. The current provider has worked out a risk assessment system so that when they see property damage that is inconsistent with the usual property damage, those subcontractors, electricians, plasterers or whoever it might be in the house know what to do with that information.

They are able to report that as a potential concern or risk, and then they pass that onto us. Our housing managers will then sensitively connect in and take action if needed in terms of what we see. That is about also having another way where we can work with community, particularly in a prevention space as well.

**MS CODY:** What sort of training is provided, particularly within ACT government agencies, about giving staff the ability to take information they believe they have that is sensitive and could be of a disturbing nature and place that in the right people's hands and offer support to co-workers or raise concerns with the way a co-worker is treating another co-worker? All those things have major impacts. Are we doing things in that space as well?

**Ms Berry:** Yes, that is the work in evaluating the training that is already out there and what is happening. Then it is what each of the directorates and individuals needs, and how it is going to change culture, and then embedding that as part of ordinary work practice rather than it being just a one-off tick box: "Yes, we've done the training. It's all good. Don't have to do that again." It is continuous learning about the way the community is learning about domestic and family violence and then the way that the government and community respond to that. We need to make sure that that is happening on an ongoing basis within government, but also within the services that connect with government and do the work of government.

**Ms Wood:** The other thing we are very conscious of is that we cannot train our workforce to deal with clients around domestic and family violence without looking at support within our workforce for people who have lived experience of violence themselves. The way we train our front-line workers has to be conscious of that and has to ensure that managers and HR areas are equipped to deal with disclosures and that we have the right supports and the right options to offer people. Obviously, within the public service access to domestic violence training is an important part of that, as is the family violence toolkit, but it is also ensuring—and this is part of our whole-of-government strategy—that we have the right training for managers as well.

**MS CODY:** Minister, I have raised this with other witnesses: I am a person with lived experience and so I tend to attract other women, generally, with lived experience. In assisting some of those women it has been very difficult to find them—not public housing; this is not directed at that—somewhere to go if they have a son who is 12 years of age, because they are considered a male. As we know, this is about protecting women from male perpetrators. Minister, you may not have heard of this as an issue, and that is absolutely fine, but are there programs we are looking at?

**Ms Gilding:** I am really curious as to where that information came from, because basically all of our refuges take children—and male children—over the age of 10. I am wondering whether they are not looking at our specialist homelessness sector. I am assuming—

**MS CODY:** We have had witnesses tell us the same information.

**Ms Gilding:** they are talking about the Beryl, the Dorises and the Tooras. So that is not their policy. Women with boys over the age of 10 are able to access the homelessness refuges.

**Ms Berry:** So that might just be a decision for the people who have come to you and have said they could not find it—

**MS CODY:** We have also heard it from other witnesses who have had the same stories. DVCS have provided that information, I think.

**Ms Gilding:** We know our supply is always being outstripped by our demand.

**MS CODY:** Absolutely.

**Ms Gilding:** Beryl and Doris accept boys up to the age of 12 years old in the shared or co-located crisis accommodation they have, but then they also have capacity up to the age of 18 in our stand-alone housing properties. Again, that takes care of that one.

Toora accommodates mothers with boys up to the age of 16 in their shared accommodation, and then over 16 in the stand-alone accommodation. I understand Northside supported accommodation accepts boys of all ages, including male adult children if they are still living with their mother, and the YWCA housing support unit for families escaping domestic violence accepts mothers with children of any age and gender. If you have some specifics I would love to unpack that a bit more, because I—

**MS CODY:** I would have to check with the people who have come to me.

**Ms Gilding:** Yes, sure. I would be happy, through the minister, if you wanted to get a message. We could have a look at that, because it is a concern.

**MS CODY:** Absolutely. As long as you understand, though, I am not directing that at public housing.

**Ms Gilding:** No, absolutely understood.

**Ms Berry:** Sometimes, these kinds of stories can be perpetuated across social media when people ask for advice.

**MS CODY:** Absolutely, yes.

**Ms Berry:** Perhaps through this committee's work we can clarify that a bit better.

**MS CODY:** Yes, absolutely.

**THE CHAIR:** At page 21 of your submission you talk about the pilot program through Housing ACT, the rental bonds loan scheme. It says in the fourth paragraph that the grants were approved for four eligible people and the take-up of the program was less than anticipated so the planned evaluation and review were brought forward to the second half of 2017. Has that review been undertaken?

**Ms Gilding:** We are partway through the review in terms of now coming back and making recommendations to government around some changes to the legislative instrument that set that up with the bond loan program. We are going to separate it from the bond loan program to try to make access far easier for people to—

**THE CHAIR:** To clarify, separate what out?

**Ms Gilding:** The grants. The grants were part of it. The idea of the grants in the first place was about trying to keep a roof over somebody's head. It may not necessarily be for people who are eligible for public housing but just sitting outside that. Our bond loans help people access private rental in the private rental market, so the idea of the grants was that they would sit alongside that assistance as well. We have found that not everybody wants a bond loan and that if we delink that it will make it more accessible.

**Ms Berry:** It was just very targeted. We will provide some more information once we have completed the review, but I think that probably the main challenge was that it was so targeted that it was limiting. But there is a whole bunch of other financial support services as well available through Care and the beyond crisis loan scheme. There are a whole lot of other financial loan services to support women and children, or women and families—anyone really—who need support getting through that crisis period. Did you want to know some more information?

**THE CHAIR:** Yes. You just talked about the beyond crisis loan scheme.

**Ms Wood:** The beyond crisis project as a whole was led by the Women's Centre for Health Matters with DVCS. It got some seed money from a women's safety grant. They took a broad look at the needs of women leaving violent relationships and what the whole of community could do about that and who are the different players in the community who could make a contribution.

The first initiative that has been established out of that is the assistance beyond crisis loan scheme which provides no-interest loans to women—I think it is to women but I would have to check—leaving domestic violence. It has been funded privately by

businesses in Canberra and by philanthropic donors. So that is another option. They are connected with Care financial and it is supported by Beyond Bank.

So they have a range of partnerships that support it, which means that people are also getting access to financial advice and counselling if they need that. One of the big issues, obviously, for women, where there has been financial abuse, is that they might leave their relationship with a whole lot of debt that they probably should not have incurred. Care financial is an important part of helping people work through that.

It is really positive that we have a diversity of options to deal with that financial kind of impact. The work that PwC did that looked at the cost to the nation of domestic and family violence estimated it at \$22 billion. About two-thirds of that is borne by women themselves so the financial impact is huge. With the safer families grants and now this new loan scheme, we are trying some different models to meet those financial needs. Then we are refining them as we test them to see if they are reaching the right people and filling the right need.

**MS CODY:** You are talking about financial advice and counselling. Is that as far-reaching as it goes or does this assistance provide—“teaching” is not quite the right word, but there are women that have come out of financially abusive relationships who do not even understand how to do internet banking, for example, let alone understand how to balance their own budget and understand the cost of things.

**Ms Berry:** They would not even have their own bank account sometimes.

**MS CODY:** That is exactly right. Do the advice and counselling assist in those areas as well?

**Ms Wood:** Going to the detail of exactly what Care does, I think they do some of that kind of educative work with people. Some of the other community services also do some of that kind of work as part of case management with people.

**MS LAWDER:** Independent living skills kind of work?

**Ms Wood:** Yes, wrapped up in that kind of broader life skills category. I think Care do some specific work around financial literacy, but it is—

**MS CODY:** Yes. They were here last week and they were saying that it is usually when the person comes to them and they are in deep financial debt that they help. As a proactive measure they are not necessarily doing that side of things.

**Ms Wood:** That is probably true.

**THE CHAIR:** It is mostly the resourcing issue, isn't it?

**MS CODY:** Yes. They were more about saying that if you are actually in debt they will help you work through the way to get out. They do not necessarily go, “So that you do not get into debt, here are the things you need to think about.”

**Ms Wood:** I think the financial issue remains a big issue for people, for women.

Certainly in relation to some of the stories that people shared with us as part of our co-design, some of the women who had been in incredibly controlling relationships talked about how they left that relationship and that they did not have any confidence but also did not have the skills to manage a whole range of things. That is one of the things we need to respond to coming out of that insights report.

**MS CODY:** Do those grants or those programs help with legal assistance?

**Ms Wood:** I do not think that either of those programs offer legal assistance, but we have Legal Aid, the Women's Legal Centre and the Canberra committee.

**MS CODY:** I understand, but there are also women who fall outside those categories.

**Ms Wood:** Yes, absolutely.

**MS CODY:** I was wondering whether, when we are talking about assistance for women escaping, it includes the cost, albeit minimal. It can be quite expensive. Are there grants to assist with legal costs or legal assistance?

**Ms Wood:** You are talking about, say, legal assistance around the Family Court and the costs there?

**MS CODY:** Yes.

**Ms Wood:** I think not directly for people who fall outside. The Women's Legal Centre does a lot of family law work, but you need to be eligible, obviously. Yes, that is another area where there are huge financial pressures for people, around Family Court processes, which can run for a really long time as well.

**MS CODY:** Yes, some \$55,000 or \$200,000.

**Ms Wood:** Yes. In one of the stories in our insights report, the woman who shared her story with us talked about the fact that her partner set out to bankrupt her through the court process. That was his strategy.

**MS CODY:** Yes, absolutely. It happens quite a lot.

**MR STEEL:** Obviously, the government is working closely with non-government partners but also with our other government partner, the commonwealth, and through a couple of national partnership agreements. I was wondering whether you could provide an update about both of the major national partnership agreements. In relation to the national partnership on legal assistance services, can you go to how funding is playing out there, whether it is adequate on an ongoing basis and the changes that were implemented through the recent negotiation. In relation to the national partnership agreement on homelessness, which is still forming part of a negotiation, I understand, where is that up to and what outcomes do you hope to achieve from that, particularly for people escaping family and domestic violence?

**Ms Berry:** Before Jo goes into a bit more detail, it has been a while since housing ministers have met to discuss the national partnership agreements on housing and

homelessness, but every time we got together, states and territories asked for continued funding on the national partnership agreement, and they would tell us that it would be funded and it would be increased. I think I would be confident in saying that the federal government have not made a commitment to increase the funding. The process so far is about incorporating the national partnership agreement with the affordable housing agreement so that they become one agreement, but states and territories and the government are still negotiating what that will look like and what it will cover. It is still, unfortunately, an unfinished conversation. I cannot even recall when we are meeting again. I have not seen a date or anything.

**Ms Gilding:** The housing ministers do not. It is being led by the treasury heads, and they are meeting soon.

**MR STEEL:** Will it have an explicit focus on family violence as part of that combined agreement, do you think?

**Ms Gilding:** It is possible that domestic and family violence may be named as a policy priority or a key cohort within that agreement, but it is essentially a national housing and homelessness agreement bringing those two things together.

**Ms Berry:** Previously, with the requirement under the NPAH, the national partnership agreement on housing, it did have a focus on domestic and family violence. I am not sure whether that will be the same or whether it will be incorporated in the agreement somehow but in a different—

**Ms Gilding:** There are going to be two parts of the agreement. There is what they call the multi-lat and the bi-lat. Within our bilateral, we will be able to focus on and target the needs of our jurisdiction in terms of housing and homelessness. One of the things we do know is that domestic violence is a leading cause of homelessness, so it will certainly be a focus for us as a jurisdiction.

**Ms Wood:** I was just going to briefly cover off the national partnership agreement on legal assistance services. That is also an area where there has been some funding instability, some direct opportunities around domestic and family violence. There is the commonwealth funding for the Women's Legal Centre, for a family violence program, but in terms of where it is exactly up to now, I would need to take that on notice, because it is being led from the JACS portfolio.

**MR STEEL:** It was not absolutely clear to me which ones continued to have funding, and then the ACT government stepped in to provide \$2.8 million. There were a couple where it was not clear to me that they had an ongoing funding source. And there was the EDO, but I am sure the EDO does not have too much of a family violence focus.

**Ms Wood:** No. The other one is NOSPI, the national partnership on national outcome standards for perpetrator intervention. That one had only a very minimal amount of commonwealth funding for jurisdictions, which has ceased, but it is focused on aligning our data and having consistent definitions and consistent reporting of key data that relates to perpetrator intervention.

All jurisdictions have contributed to that first report, which will be available, we think,

some time this year, hopefully earlier rather than later. It is a starting point, because what it has revealed for all of us is that we all have to do some more work on key data. That work is already in train in a range of areas. That will be our first chance to look across jurisdictions at data around perpetrator intervention. That is policing data, behaviour change programs and a range of other—

**MR STEEL:** And that is feeding into the development of the outcomes framework that you were talking about earlier?

**Ms Wood:** That will inform part of our outcomes framework, yes.

**THE CHAIR:** I am conscious that we have been throwing questions at you for well over an hour so we will have a short break.

### **Short suspension.**

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you, we will now resume. Ms Lawder?

**MS LAWDER:** In your submission, you talk about research from the staying at home project. I was wondering if, in the ACT, we have something like what in Victoria is called safe at home, where women and/or their children can stay in the home and a male, the perpetrator of the violence, leaves. It is for security and safety upgrades of the home. Do we have that kind of program here in the ACT?

**Ms Wood:** Yes, we do.

**MS LAWDER:** Do you know the program I am referring to?

**Ms Wood:** Yes, I do. Yes, we do. The Domestic Violence Crisis Service has funding to do those kinds of upgrades to people's homes. From what I understand, although the data on this is not necessarily available, the ACT probably has a higher proportion of women who leave violent relationships and stay at home rather than actually leave the home. Obviously, it is really important that we can provide those kinds of upgrades. There is also funding for that in public housing.

**Ms Gilding:** Yes. We would do a similar thing in terms of the security upgrades for homes. We would do that through our maintenance budget as part of the TFM to ensure that women and children can stay safely in their homes. That is in terms of security upgrades and such. Then there is the room for change program. Is that what you were also wanting to talk about?

**MS LAWDER:** I am not sure what that one is.

**Ms Berry:** The room for change program is a new program in Australia and in the ACT. It is where the family stays in the home and the perpetrator leaves the home and goes and participates in a six-month intensive behaviour change program. It is only very new; it has only just started. It is throwing a lot of challenges at DVCS. The accommodation, the housing part of that program, was provided by Housing ACT. I cannot recall how many there are.

**Ms Gilding:** The funding was announced in, I think, the 2016-17 year, when the package was announced. It is a unique, innovative program. There are various models internationally, but we worked with DVCS to do the program design and to figure out what was going to suit us and our context. The program started 12 months ago, in April 2017. It now has the capacity to deal with 12 men in a residential setting within six properties as part of the Housing portfolio and then also provide support externally to that.

One of the things about the program is that it is not working just with men and perpetrators of violence but also working with the family. That is providing some very interesting benefits in terms of holistic working and that information and understanding. Understanding the context for the family and how to keep them safe is something that is a real benefit that is flowing through from the case workers and their work across the whole.

The program is new. It is unique. We are looking at evaluating it. We are starting the early phase of collecting that data. We have linked in with a researcher at the ANU and will do a full qualitative and quantitative analysis of that. We are collecting the data now but looking for some early findings at the end of year 2 in terms of looking for the outcomes of that, particularly around behaviour change.

**MS LAWDER:** In relation to housing properties—not ACT Housing specifically, but managed by other community providers especially—do you have any feel for the percentage of those properties that may have CCTV and enhanced security arrangements? There must be numerous instances where a perpetrator finds out where someone is living, and I guess there is a lot of risk associated with that.

**Ms Gilding:** In terms of the number of properties that sit within the community sector that provide specialist housing services and how many of those have CCTV, I do not know. I would not know what the saturation or the uptake of that is. I could have a look at our portfolio, but CCTV is not something that we would have as part of the suite of security measures within our public housing portfolio.

**MS LAWDER:** Ms Wood, do you have a view about CCTV at safe houses?

**Ms Wood:** We want to support women to be safe and feel safe. I do not know what the evidence is about the best kinds of measures for improving safety, so I do not have a strong view about one particular part of what a safety upgrade might be. One of the ways to reduce the stress on crisis accommodation is to enable people to stay safely at home more. Things like room for change which actually remove the perpetrator from the home are really interesting. They are really interesting from our perspective in our insights report where people say they want support for the whole family. We are testing some new things and want to be evaluating them well to see which ones work best in the ACT. Understanding that in our context, for example, the proportion of women who stay at home might be higher than other places, we might need some different responses.

**THE CHAIR:** I note that the committee is going to be getting the family hub walk through and explanation, and I know you referred to it earlier today, but is there anything that you want to add on a broad level to give the committee a good

introduction and understanding before we go and meet with you specifically for that reason so that we are best utilising your time and the committee's time? Do you want to give us a bit more of an overview?

**Ms Wood:** The thing that I would focus on is that we did all that front-end work, user insights work, when we interviewed 50 people from front-line services and 20 people with lived experience of violence. We did prioritise some key cohorts of people who are possibly more vulnerable to domestic and family violence or who find it hardest to get support through existing services. That was really important, to put diverse needs at the centre of our design work.

We prioritise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and families, culturally and linguistically diverse women and families, women with disability, the LGBTIQ community and young men with a lived experience of violence in their family. Some of the providers and representative organisations told us at the beginning that we would find it really hard to reach some of these groups directly, and that certainly proved to be the case. That in itself was an important insight. An important lesson that came out for us was that in terms of the individuals that we interviewed, we did not reach anyone with disability directly, even though that was something we worked hard at. It tells us that there is more work to do there. With the LGBTIQ community, I do not think we reached anyone directly to tell their individual story with that community, which also is an insight about needing to do more work to even have the conversation with that part of the community.

For us, it is an ongoing process to reach people. But for me, putting diverse needs at the centre of what we are doing is really critical, to ensure that whatever we design in any of our policy work is very person-centred, tailored and flexible, that it can meet the diverse range of needs. That is an important part of how we have approached the design work.

In terms of the insights that have come out of it, a couple that are particularly critical in shaping the final design of the family safety hub have been insights that tell us, first, about trust and how critical trust is for vulnerable people seeking help. It is about understanding what people's help-seeking behaviour looks like. For a lot of people, it is not coming to the shiny front door that says "Family violence help here," which in the ACT would be going to the police or Domestic Violence Crisis Service. Often people only disclose their experience of domestic or family violence after they have built a trusting relationship with some professional. It might be in a health setting; they might present with an issue around a child's development in a child and family centre; they might seek help through a financial counselling service for financial stress.

That underscores how critical it is that we can bring the right support to people wherever they seek help and that we need to use those trusted relationships and equip those people—it goes back to our conversation about training as well—wherever they are in the system, to have the right level of understanding and right level of capability so that either they can work with that person or they have the right kind of referral pathways available. That is a really important one, because it really does say that we know that people are going to come through a lot of front doors and we need to support them wherever they enter.

Another thing, which we have touched on as we have gone through the options that people want, is that, as we think about how we connect up services and provide a more integrated and holistic response, we can only integrate what we have. If we do not have the right responses—if we do not have enough responses for people who want a whole of family response—just integrating what we have is not going to help. There are still people who are afraid of a legal response who are going to continue to stay away if they think that the only response that the system will offer them is pushing them down a legal pathway. So it is also really important to think about that.

Our insights have told us that we need a more diverse range of responses. We have had some of those messages as well from organisations that work with the LGBTIQ community, that we need to have responses for people in a range of relationships. We also need to ensure that we continue to apply a gender lens to looking at domestic and intimate partner violence, which is a highly gendered form of violence, but we need a diverse range of options for people who do not fit those kinds of categories.

That is really important in where we go next. The other thing I would say about the insights we have gathered and the insights report is that it has pointed us at a whole range of system change and system reform that we need to improve our response to domestic and family violence and to get better at early intervention, in particular, and also prevention.

We are seeing the insights as an evidence base for future policy broadly. It will inform the family safety hub but it is a really rich range of insights that will also inform a range of future policy and strategies. We are seeking to take that kind of insights work, which is our local evidence base, and marry that up with the published evidence, both nationally and internationally, and also what the data from the services is telling us in terms of what are emerging as trends, needs and gaps in the ACT.

**MS LAWDER:** I noticed that you have a reference to the Tara Costigan Foundation and two lots of \$20,000, I think, one from the proceeds of crime or something and another one.

**Ms Wood:** Yes.

**MS LAWDER:** It is \$20,000 through the safer families package and a further \$20,000 from a confiscated assets trust fund. Was that in a financial year? Is there ongoing funding for the Tara Costigan Foundation?

**Ms Wood:** That was in a financial year; it was in 2016-17 that that funding was provided. Obviously they also do a whole range of fundraising, and they have used those funds to establish a Tara's Angels service which is also funded from their fundraising. I guess it could be considered seed funding for something that they have continued.

**MS LAWDER:** I think I went to a fundraiser recently where they are looking to employ a second Tara's angel.

**Ms Wood:** Yes.

**MS LAWDER:** But it cannot be cheap. It is not something that fits within your funding, to provide them with additional ongoing funding?

**Ms Wood:** I met with them recently, as they were looking to expand their service, about the funding options for them. Obviously, fundraising is one. If they are seeking government funding, they will have opportunities through tendering and other processes when the government puts services to tender.

**MS LAWDER:** So the ball is in their court to apply for specific grants for something?

**Ms Wood:** Yes.

**Ms Gilding:** I think so.

**THE CHAIR:** Earlier, Ms Gilding, you were referring to a risk assessment tool to allow your subbies to report incidents where you think domestic and family violence might exist. Can you tell me a bit more about the risk assessment tool? How is that being developed? Is that something that is only what you use at Housing ACT or is it broader across the directorate?

**Ms Gilding:** They are able to report a risk that they see. It is part of their toolbox training that they would have as part of their TFM. They would be looking for particular signs that they might see, and then they would report that back to their management centre as part of that. An actual risk assessment tool—no.

**Ms Wood:** I can talk a bit more about conversations and future work around risk assessment for the ACT. One of the things we have looked at is whether the right approach in the ACT is a common risk assessment tool, across domestic and family violence and the whole range of services.

The ACT police have adopted—and adapted, I think—a tool from the Tasmanian police for a family violence risk assessment consistent approach across ACT Policing. Their risk assessment tool is being specifically evaluated by someone. The Australian Institute of Criminology, I think, is doing a formal evaluation of that risk assessment tool. The family violence risk assessment tool that ACT police use is the framing for the conversations at the case tracking meetings. It is a framework that is being used at least on an informal basis across all of the organisations involved in case tracking.

There is other work. We have had a range of conversations with people with expertise in risk assessment in the ACT and other jurisdictions. There are always different perspectives. One perspective is that we absolutely need a common risk assessment tool and everyone needs to be using it. The other perspective, from some of the specialist organisations, is that that runs a risk of a “tick a box” kind of model; that it is actually about risk assessment capability; and that risk is not a static thing, risk is dynamic, and they need to be assessing it constantly. So we are interested in the evaluation that will happen of the police family violence risk assessment tool.

There is also national work that is happening, led by DSS, to establish a set of

national risk assessment principles that then become a framework that people develop tools and other resources within. We have had a recent consultation in the ACT to help inform those risk assessment principles.

We are also looking at the work that is happening in Victoria. They have done a big review of their risk assessment. They call it RAMP; I cannot remember what that stands for. Also, for a similar purpose to our case tracking system, they have a kind of risk assessment framework that has a number of levels. Different organisations, depending on their level of specialisation, will use different layers of that tool.

We are waiting to see what comes out of the national work, Victoria and the evaluation of the ACT Policing risk assessment tool, to look at what are the common pieces that we need to be using, across a whole range of organisations. And does that mean that it will become a single tool or is it a more principles-based kind of approach across a range of organisations? We are really waiting to see what emerges from all those reviews about what actually is best practice and what is most effective on the ground.

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you. Any final questions before we wrap up?

**Ms Berry:** Can I just provide some information on a question that Ms Lawder asked about education in response to the Glanfield inquiry? There is some work occurring across jurisdictions. It is complex because of jurisdictions' different legislation in the education space, but that work is occurring. And a response that the government provided was that it would continue to do that work on sharing information across jurisdictions. That work is continuing. There also is mandatory reporting now, which there was not previously in schools; they now have a reporting channel, which they did not have previously.

**MS LAWDER:** Are you able to provide a more detailed answer about the complex work that is going on across jurisdictions? You can take it on notice.

**Ms Berry:** Just that jurisdictions have different legislation in place that is different from ours in education.

**MS LAWDER:** I asked about police information as well in terms of sharing information. There was a Glanfield recommendation about information sharing across jurisdictions. I am interested in a more detailed answer about what work there was. The government agreed—

**MS CODY:** I am not sure that the Glanfield report had much to do with family and domestic—

**MS LAWDER:** I think it might have.

**MS CODY:** There was a whole broader subject matter.

**MS LAWDER:** Yes, but the government responded to the three reports that were tabled in that year; I think it was 2016. The fact that a young boy was killed by his father I think is an example of family violence.

## PROOF

**Ms Berry:** What is happening is that there is work happening across jurisdictions. I do not know if there is information that can be provided to you on that actual work, but it is complex because there are different laws within different states and territories that we are trying to make the same. That is the complex nature of the work, and that is occurring with the Education Council. I do not know if I can provide you with any more information than that at the moment.

**MS LAWDER:** Thank you. I think it is a broader government question rather than education.

**THE CHAIR:** When available, a proof transcript will be forwarded to witnesses to provide an opportunity to check the transcript and suggest any corrections. If witnesses undertook to provide further information or took questions on notice, and I think there were a few during the course of the hearing, we would appreciate it if that could be done within two weeks—obviously, the report is not due out yet—if that is made available.

On behalf of the committee, I thank the minister and witnesses.

**The committee adjourned at 4.42 pm.**