



The Hon Daniel Andrews MP

Premier of Victoria



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Judge Iain West  
Acting State Coroner  
Coroners Court of Victoria  
65 Kavanagh Street  
SOUTHBANK VIC 3006

M18/8130

18 SEP 2018

Dear Judge West

**Victorian Government Response to Findings into the Death of Ms Rowley (Coroners Court of Victoria reference COR 2011-003947)**

I refer to the letter from Judge Hinchey, in her role as the Victorian State Coroner, dated 1 August 2018 regarding the inquest into the death of Ms Rowley. I would like to take this opportunity to commend the role that the Coroners Court has played in government's work to end family violence.

I am writing in response to the second recommendation in Judge Hinchey's report, that the government annually review the adequacy of resources and funding provided to family violence support services to ensure that the demand for services is met. I am providing this detailed response in accordance with sections 72(3) and (4) of the *Coroners Act 2008 (Vic)*.

Our government is working to end family violence in Victoria. That is why we established Australia's first Royal Commission into Family Violence, and committed to implement each of its 227 recommendations. Since 2016, our government has committed over \$2.6 billion towards our goal of ending family violence and all forms of violence against women in Victoria. As part of this reform, our government is committed to the implementation of your second recommendation. Work undertaken as part of our government's response to the Royal Commission into Family Violence does and will continue to acquit the recommendation.

The Royal Commission into Family Violence (RCFV) acknowledged that addressing the demand for family violence services is one of the most significant challenges faced in responding to family violence. Investing in effective and increased support for victim survivors has been a key focus of our government's efforts to address family violence. Recommendation 223 of the RCFV recommended that government develop a demand-modelling tool or set of indicators to be used for planning how government as a whole and relevant departments and agencies themselves (including those providing or funding universal services) respond to family violence. It also noted that budget processes should take account of the cost of forecast demand for services.

In response to recommendation 223 of the RCFV, our government has developed a Family Violence Demand model. This will allow for demand modelling to support services including the new Orange Door services and multi-agency safeguarding, and allow our government to better understand demand across family violence services, supporting investment decisions. In addition, it is part of government's standard budget process to review funding for all services, including family violence support services.

Our government's investment in support for victims of family violence includes the development of the Orange Door services. It will be a new way for women, children and young people experiencing family violence, and families in need of support with the care, wellbeing and development of children and young people, to access coordinated support from justice, health and social services. Our government has committed to 17 Orange Door locations by 2021, which will include one Orange Door in each Department of Health and Human Services area. The first five Orange Door locations were selected on the basis of demand for specialist services and sector readiness, and four of the first five locations are now operational. Family violence reforms across Victoria have focused on locations and services which demonstrate the highest demand.

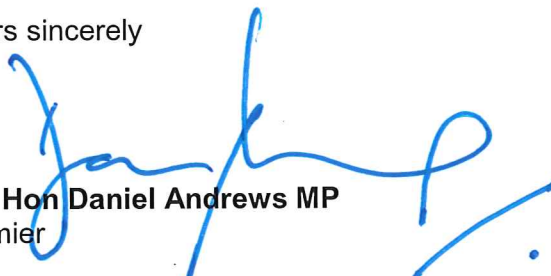
Alongside the Orange Door services, government has invested in a number of other reforms to provide effective support to victim survivors. In *The Victorian State Budget 2016/17*, our government allocated \$40 million over two years to flexible support packages for victims of family violence, which can be used to cover costs like rent, home alarms, CCTV, clothing, beds, books, medication and education costs for victim survivors who need financial support in order to leave situations of family violence. These packages are delivered by 19 family violence specialist service providers. *The Victorian State Budget 2017/18* included a further \$164.7 million for accessible and flexible support for victim survivors, which included funding for additional flexible support packages and a range of other targeted supports. Most recently, *The Victorian State Budget 2018/19* included \$141.1 million to continue our government's response to and prevention of family violence. As part of this funding, \$49.8 million over four years will fund another 6,500 flexible support packages, as well as providing other targeted support for victim survivors.

Finally, I note the reference the report to the stand-alone offence of strangulation, and the ongoing work of Victoria Police in this regard. This issue will be given further consideration as part of our government's ongoing commitment to family violence reform.

Should you require any further information regarding the Victorian Government's response to this recommendation, please contact Peta McCammon, Executive Director of Family Violence and the National Disability Insurance Scheme at the Department of Premier and Cabinet, via [peta.mccammon@dpc.vic.gov.au](mailto:peta.mccammon@dpc.vic.gov.au).

I understand that Judge Hinchey wrote to Mr Graham Ashton AM, Chief Commissioner of Victoria Police, to invite his response to the recommendation related to Victoria Police's systemic review of family violence related deaths. I understand that Victoria Police is preparing a separate response to this recommendation. While there is still a lot of work to be done across the family violence reforms, I am proud of our progress so far.

Yours sincerely

  
**The Hon Daniel Andrews MP**  
Premier