



Secretary

Department of Families, Fairness and Housing

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BAC-CO-57411

Kate Sanderson
Coroner's Registrar
Coroners Court of Victoria

By email: cpuresponses@coronerscourt.vic.gov.au

Dear Ms Sanderson

Investigation into the death of Helena Broadbent – COR 2019 005285

Thank you for your correspondence of 23 July 2025 enclosing former State Coroner Judge Cain's findings into the death of Helena Broadbent and recommendations made to the Department of Premier and Cabinet and Family Safety Victoria.

My deepest condolences go out to Ms Broadbent's family, loved ones and community.

Family Safety Victoria is a division of the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (the department) and accordingly, I provide this response to recommendation 2 which is enclosed at Attachment 1 of this letter.

The department is committed to working with sector partners, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and victim survivors to strengthen the Family Support Package (FSP) program and ensure consistent, trauma informed and coordinated support across Victoria. The former State Coroner's recommendation provides a valuable opportunity to enhance program guidance, invest in system improvements and reinforce workforce capability. The department will continue to take a continuous improvement approach to ensure victim survivors receive safe, appropriate and high-quality support through the FSP program.

Should you have any queries, please contact Melanie Heenan, Deputy Secretary, Family Safety Victoria [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

Peta McCammon
Secretary
21/10/2025

Encl DFFH response to COR 2019 005285

Attachment 1 – Response to former State Coroner Judge Cain’s Recommendation

Recommendation 2 - That Family Safety Victoria makes the following changes to the Flexible Support Package:

- a) Ensuring that all FSP providers comply with consistent and comprehensive guidelines, removing situations in which “*some providers appear to be more lenient than others*”, in particular, that updates to packages are not discouraged or disallowed, providing they comply with the guidelines.
- b) Exploring enhancements to the FSP online portal to make it more user-friendly and transform it into an end-to-end platform, rather than relying on email correspondence between FSP providers and case managers.
- c) Require all case managers who assist victim-survivors to access FSPs to be trained in trauma-informed care and practice, to better support people who have experienced family violence.

The State Coroner’s recommendation is under consideration.

Background

The FSP program provides tailored brokerage of up to \$10,000 to assist adult and child victim survivors of family violence to stabilise, recover and build long term safety, wellbeing and independence. FSPs are delivered in conjunction with case management and are aligned with the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM) Framework to ensure risk is assessed, managed and monitored in line with best practice. The Victorian Government is committed to continuously improving the consistency, quality and accessibility of the FSP program in partnership with the specialist family violence sector and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.

There are 22 FSP providers across the state, including four Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and one statewide Aboriginal provider to ensure culturally safe access. Case managers supporting victim survivors to access FSPs submit applications through the FSP online portal in accordance with program guidelines.

Recommendation 2(a): Ensure that all FSP providers comply with consistent and comprehensive guidelines, removing situations in which “some providers appear to be more lenient than others”, in particular, that updates to packages are not discouraged or disallowed, providing they comply with the guidelines

The department recognises the importance of ensuring consistent delivery of the FSP program across all providers while maintaining the flexibility required to respond to individual needs and circumstances. The FSP program guidelines, first introduced in 2019 and updated in 2024, set out detailed requirements to promote statewide consistency in eligibility, assessment, funding use and decision making. The guidelines state that where variations to packages are required, case managers must provide an updated rationale, case management or support plan and risk assessment to demonstrate alignment with program intent and client safety goals.

To support consistent program delivery, the Victorian Government funds a Statewide FSP Coordinator based at Safe and Equal, the peak body for Victorian organisations that specialise in family and gender-based violence. The Coordinator provides leadership, secondary consultation and shared practice guidance across all 22 providers. Regular forums facilitate collaboration, promote shared interpretation of the guidelines and ensure

alignment to statewide expectations. This infrastructure supports consistent practice while enabling tailored responses.

The department acknowledges that clarity and transparency around the application of variations can strengthen provider confidence and reinforce the intent of the guidelines. Ensuring clear and easy to understand guidance is essential to supporting consistent implementation across different service settings and client cohorts.

Planning is currently underway for the scheduled review of the FSP program guidelines, which is due to commence in 2026 following completion of the Personal Safety Initiative (PSI) review. As part of this process, Family Safety Victoria will work with FSP providers, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and sector partners to further strengthen clarity relating to variations, decision making and documentation requirements. This will ensure the guidelines continue to support statewide consistency while maintaining flexibility in response to risk and recovery needs.

Recommendation 2(b): Explore enhancements to the FSP online portal to make it more user-friendly and transform it into an end-to-end platform, rather than relying on email correspondence between FSP providers and case managers

The department recognises that the FSP online portal plays a central role in administering the program and supports application, assessment, approval and acquittal processes. The portal was introduced in 2022 to streamline practices and improve consistency across providers. The department is committed to ensuring the portal continues to evolve in line with service system expectations and technological advances.

The current contract with the commercial provider that hosts the portal is due to conclude in 2026. The department is currently considering long-term options for the future of the system and expects to undertake detailed planning and design work over the next 6-12 months. This presents a timely opportunity to consider enhancements that will support a more integrated and user-friendly platform.

Former State Coroner Cain's recommendation will inform the scope of this work. In particular, the department intends to explore opportunities to strengthen end-to-end functionality, support more seamless communication within the portal and improve visibility and tracking of application progress and any variations. The future system will be designed to better support program efficiency, transparency and ease of use.

The department will engage with FSP providers, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, case managers and victim survivor representatives to inform system design. Co-design will ensure any enhancements reflect operational needs and promote consistency, accessibility and cultural safety. This work will support the long-term sustainability of the portal and strengthen the delivery of FSPs across Victoria.

Recommendation 2(c): Require all case managers who assist victim-survivors to access FSPs to be trained in trauma-informed care and practice, to better support people who have experienced family violence

The department agrees that case managers supporting victim survivors to access FSPs must have the necessary skills to respond safely, respectfully and in a trauma informed manner. The FSP program guidelines state that only practitioners prescribed under the MARAM Framework at the Intermediate or Comprehensive practice level may apply for FSPs on behalf of clients. MARAM practice resources and tools are grounded in trauma and violence

informed principles and outline the knowledge and skills practitioners must use in identifying, assessing and managing risk. This ensures that FSP applications are developed in line with case plans that promote safety, recovery and empowerment.

The department has recently updated the Responding to Family Violence Capability Framework, which aligns closely with MARAM and articulates the capabilities required across relevant workforces. The updated framework, due to be released shortly, includes specific capabilities relating to trauma informed practice, cultural safety and supporting access to therapeutic services for longer term recovery. The department will support implementation of this framework across the family violence and broader community services workforce.

In partnership with the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions, the department has also developed accredited family violence courses within the Vocational Education and Training sector. Since 2020, the Course in Identifying and Responding to Family Violence Risk has been available and accessible to all Victorian workers who support people experiencing family violence. The course, which is also listed on Free TAFE includes content on referral pathways, trauma informed approaches and responding to both victim survivors and adults using family violence. Work is underway to expand accredited training offerings across higher practice levels and specialist roles.

The department has also commenced work with the Statewide FSP Coordinator to identify and integrate additional training and professional development opportunities for FSP providers and case managers on trauma-informed practice. This will build on existing MARAM-aligned requirements and ensure that capability development is targeted, consistent and responsive to sector needs. The department will continue to work collaboratively with the Statewide Coordinator and sector partners to embed trauma informed approaches across service delivery and support the effective implementation of the coroner's recommendation.