Make the justice system safe and supportive

In the lead up to the 2014 Victorian election, we call on all political parties to commit to investing in our family violence intervention order system. A safe, integrated, responsive and well-resourced court system will save lives.

What happens now?

Family violence victims get ‘postcode justice’

- Only 5 out of Victoria’s 53 Magistrates Courts currently have court employed victim support workers.
- Only 1 court in Victoria has a dedicated safe waiting space for family violence victims so women and children are not at risk at coming into contact with the perpetrator.
- No court in Victoria employs a disability advocate or culturally specific worker for victims at high risk, and only 2 courts fund a Koori support worker. This is despite evidence showing that women and children with disabilities or from culturally diverse backgrounds are many times more likely to suffer family violence, with Aboriginal women 31 times more at risk of being hospitalised.
- Lack of accountability for perpetrators saw at least 820 offenders breach intervention orders at least three times in 2013-14 – with the real breach numbers expected to be much higher.

What needs to be done?

- Establish specialist family violence units in every court across Victoria staffed by victim support and respondent workers and specialist advocates for women from groups at particularly high risk.
- Create safe waiting spaces for victims and access to remote witness facilities in all courts that hear family violence Intervention Order cases.
- Roll out court-based training for magistrates, court staff, lawyers and other justice workers on risk assessment and management, the dynamics of family violence and victims’ experiences.
- Stop the federal/state blame game on the funding of community legal centres so all regions are funded to provide sufficient legal clinics and duty lawyer services to assist all family violence victims to obtain Intervention Orders.
- Provide dedicated funding for Victoria’s Systemic Review of Family Violence Deaths so it can continue to lead the way internationally around the causes of family violence deaths and prevent further deaths.
Family violence in Victoria: why we need to act now


For more information, please contact:

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