

# Free from Violence

## Monitoring and Evaluation Strategic Framework



June 2021



# Contents

<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2 Purpose and scope of the MES Framework</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>3 Strategy and policy</b>	<b>10</b>
3.1 Context	10
3.2 Free from Violence's strategic approach	12
3.2.1 Free from Violence Outcomes Framework	13
3.2.2 A model of drivers and factors of family violence and violence against women	16
3.2.3 Other models	20
3.3 Theory into action	23
3.4 Monitoring and evaluation: guiding principles	26
3.4.1 Long-term incremental change	26
3.4.2 Leverage collected data to evaluate collective impact	27
3.4.3 Focus on scaling up and sustainability	27
3.4.4 Participative approach	28
3.4.5 Cost-effectiveness and return on investment	28
3.4.6 Cyclical learning approach	28
3.4.7 Exploratory and innovative approaches	29
3.4.8 Ethical standards	29
3.4.9 Transparent and objective processes	29
<b>4 Monitoring and evaluation activity</b>	<b>30</b>
4.1 Levels of evaluation	31
4.1.1 Strategy level	31
4.1.2 Priority area level	32
4.1.3 Group/theme (cluster) level	32
4.1.4 Initiative level	32
4.2 Evaluation questions	34
4.2.1 Questions of the strategy	34
4.2.2 Questions of the five priority areas	36
4.3 Evaluation types and methods	38
4.4 Data collection: tools and methods	42
<b>5 Implementation of the MES Framework</b>	<b>45</b>
5.1 Governance, roles and responsibilities	45
5.2 Support for monitoring and evaluation	46
5.3 Rolling schedule	47
5.4 Reporting and knowledge sharing	49

## Tables

Table 1: Key evaluation questions that guide review of the Free from Violence strategy	34
Table 2: Design, methods and timing for each evaluation level	40
Table 3: Roadmap for monitoring and evaluation of Free from Violence strategy and its initiatives	48
Table 4: Typical characteristics of initiatives by evaluation types	54

## Figures

Figure 1: Free from Violence Outcomes Framework	14
Figure 2: Theoretical model underpinning Free from Violence initiatives	18
Figure 3: A socio-ecological model for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia	21
Figure 4: Program logic for the Free from Violence strategy	24
Figure 5: Data from monitoring and evaluation can be used to generate findings at a range of levels	33
Figure 6: Free from Violence evaluation decision tree	51

## Appendices

Appendix A Evaluation of Free from Violence initiatives: decision guidelines	51
------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----

## Abbreviations and definitions

MES Framework	Free from Violence – Monitoring and Evaluation Strategic Framework
Aboriginal peoples	A term used to refer to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. 'Indigenous' is retained if it is part of a title, program or quotation.
DFFH	Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
initiative	A term that refers to prevention activities undertaken to pursue Free from Violence objectives, such as a campaign, program, project, research or policy.
LGBTIQ+ people	People who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or gender diverse, intersex, asexual, queer or as having another gender or sexual identity.
ME Guides and Toolkits	Free from Violence Monitoring and Evaluation Guides and Toolkits
monitoring and evaluation	While both 'monitoring' and 'evaluation' are often used in conjunction in this document, the distinction between them is important. 'Monitoring' refers to the ongoing process of reviewing and documenting the progress made in implementing an initiative, including its impacts. 'Evaluation' refers to a more formal inquiry process to ascertain the value or effectiveness of an initiative.
monitoring and evaluation program	A program of monitoring and evaluation of Free from Violence strategy and its initiatives in line with the MES Framework.
norms, practices and structures	Socially constructed rules or models of behaviour of a particular social group, the ways these norms are habitually practised and how social structures arrange norms and practices in particular ways.
policy and practice	A term that refers to policy, standards, programs, projects, research and community engagement.
primary data	Original or raw data collected using methods such as surveys, interviews or experiments that are especially designed to understand and solve the problem at hand.
primary prevention sector	A sector comprising primary prevention specialists, workers and services whose focus is on responding to the drivers and reinforcing factors of family violence and violence against women, to prevent such violence from occurring in the first place.
primary prevention	Intervention that seeks to prevent all forms of family violence or violence against women before it occurs in the first instance.

## Foreword

Respect Victoria is pleased to share the Free from Violence Monitoring and Evaluation Strategic Framework (MES Framework). The MES Framework is a key next step in implementing Victoria's primary prevention of family violence and violence against women strategy.

As an independent Statutory Authority, it is Respect Victoria's legislated responsibility to ensure the Victorian Government is driving primary prevention that works. The MES Framework supports a transparent approach to assessing our collective impact and progress in primary prevention.

The MES Framework lays the foundations for how we measure the impact our prevention work has for Victorian communities. It shares guiding principles for evidence-based programming and offers overarching evaluation questions to improve how we measure progress towards our shared Free from Violence outcomes.

We know that evidence-based prevention works and understanding the impact of our efforts in prevention is critical to our learning so we can change the norms, practices and structures that drive family violence and violence against women.

The MES Framework will enable fund and program managers to assess the effectiveness of their primary prevention work. This will be supported by tools and resources to be developed together with funded organisations and the broader sector, which will give practitioners guidance for monitoring and evaluation design and methodology.

Victorian organisations are delivering critically important, world-leading work to end family violence and violence against women. Respect Victoria takes seriously our remit to ensure this work is supported to deliver the long-term outcome of a Victoria free from violence.

We acknowledge those who have led primary prevention work for decades, including victim-survivors, the women's movement, the primary prevention sector, the family violence sector, government, and Victorian communities in all their strength and diversity.

Respect Victoria looks forward to continuing our work and building our partnerships to create a Victoria where everyone is safe, equal, and respected.



Amy Prendergast

Acting Chief Executive Officer  
Respect Victoria





# 1 Introduction

The Free from Violence strategy is the Victorian Government's primary prevention strategy for family violence and all forms of violence against women. It is a key part of the government's family violence reforms in response to the findings of the [Royal Commission into Family Violence](#). In recognition that change on this societal issue is a long-term endeavour, the strategy is being progressively implemented in three stages over a 10-year period, beginning in 2018–19.

Under the Free from Violence strategy, the scope and scale of primary prevention activities undertaken by diverse organisations have been unprecedented in Victoria. These activities range from statewide community education campaigns to issue-specific research, programs and activities for and by particular communities. Given this investment, the government has committed to a comprehensive and robust monitoring and evaluation effort.

This Free from Violence – Monitoring and Evaluation Strategic Framework (MES Framework) outlines a strategic and transparent approach to assessing the strategy's progress towards its objectives and outcomes and identifying its impacts. It also enables learning to be shared and capability for monitoring and evaluation to be enhanced across organisations.

The MES Framework's target audience includes people in a range of government agencies and non-government organisations actively involved in the strategy. It provides high-level guidance to organisations responsible for funding or managing campaigns, projects or programs (i.e. initiatives)

under the Free from Violence strategy, and to all those charged with monitoring and evaluating the strategy. It is also a means through which the strategy can be governed strategically and with accountability. Ultimately, it supports the Victorian Government and our communities to assess the success of collective efforts in this vital social policy area.

While it does not provide detailed practice guidance, the MES Framework will interest all those involved in prevention efforts seeking to understand the broader context for their work.

Respect Victoria leads the overall evaluation program for the Free from Violence strategy and has coordinated the development of this document in close partnership with the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH). As the state's dedicated statutory authority for the prevention of family violence and violence against women, Respect Victoria looks forward to the application of the evaluation approaches outlined in this document across all primary prevention efforts in Victoria.



## 2 Purpose and scope of the MES Framework

The Victorian Government has made a clear commitment and investment in the research, monitoring and evaluation of its family violence reform and specifically of the Free from Violence strategy. The MES Framework is a core element of this reform agenda and its intent is to support a strategic, robust and transparent approach to assessing progress towards the strategy's outcomes and objectives. Implementation of the MES Framework will ensure that the state's investment is strategic and on course to achieving the desired outcomes, learnings under the strategy are shared and progress accelerated.

Given the significant investment and scale of primary prevention efforts in Victoria under the Free from Violence strategy, its monitoring and evaluation program will be broad and multifaceted. The MES Framework will inform understanding of which elements of the strategy have been most effective and identify gaps in the strategy's approach.

Monitoring and evaluation of key activities under the strategy have been undertaken since commencement of its [First Action Plan](#) (2018–21). The development of this MES Framework will take the monitoring and evaluation effort to the next step by:

- setting the context for assessing the performance of key initiatives under the strategy and establishing the theoretical and practical framework for robust measurement of the collective outcomes and overall impacts of the strategy

- framing the key overarching questions for evaluation and setting the criteria for assessing the overall performance, impacts and value of the strategy
- identifying broadly the streams of the Free from Violence initiatives that merit priority and detailed assessment or evaluation for the purposes of collecting relevant quantitative and qualitative evidence
- establishing guiding principles for evaluating individual initiatives
- establishing a system-wide, systematic approach to managing a monitoring and evaluation program required to produce a body of evidence necessary to inform a proposed strategy-wide review in 2022.

Going forward, the MES Framework will be complemented by a series of additional resources being developed by Respect Victoria to directly guide and support monitoring and evaluation activities under the Free from Violence strategy. These resources include the Free from Violence Monitoring and Evaluation Guides and Toolkits (ME Guides and Toolkits), which will provide detailed practical guidance to agencies delivering strategy initiatives on the design and reporting of evaluation activities. These resources include standardised project design, monitoring and evaluation tools and templates.

Together, the MES Framework and associated resources will help embed monitoring and evaluation activities across Free from Violence initiatives so that consistent, robust and appropriate information can be collected, assessed and reported in relation to its effectiveness.

Section 5 of the MES Framework provides a high-level roadmap or plan for implementing the monitoring and evaluation of strategy initiatives outlined in the First Action Plan. The roadmap identifies evaluation roles and responsibilities, and mechanisms for disseminating and sharing findings with funded agencies, government agencies, key stakeholders and communities more broadly. Specific advice on monitoring and evaluation will be provided in rolling schedules as implementation proceeds and additional initiatives commence.

In the first instance, the MES Framework applies to monitoring and evaluation of initiatives funded by the Victorian Government under the Free from Violence strategy. It will be refreshed at regular intervals to leverage learnings from the first wave of evaluations and to address the evaluation needs of the second and subsequent action plans for the strategy.

Finally, the MES Framework is also a general prescription for evaluation of other initiatives in the primary prevention of family violence and violence against women that are outside the Free from Violence strategy but are supported by other government or statutory agencies, non-government agencies and industry and corporate sectors. Such initiatives might focus on particular forms of violence, such as sexual violence and violence against specific groups (e.g. elder abuse, violence against people with disabilities in the home).



## 3 Strategy and policy

### 3.1 Context

In May 2017, the Victorian Government released [Free from Violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women](#). The strategy, which specifically addresses Recommendation 187 of the Royal Commission into Family Violence, is an integral component of broader reforms to the family violence prevention and service system that are outlined in the 10-year family violence reform plan, Ending Family Violence.

The Free from Violence strategy seeks to make Victoria free from violence and from fear of violence, a state where all Victorians:

- experience equality and respect in all their relationships, particularly in their families and with intimate partners
- are empowered and respected at home and everywhere
- are supported in their relationships to reach their full potential.

The strategy aims to:

- foster innovation in the design and delivery of multiple and mutually reinforcing primary prevention programs and policies
- build an evidence base for what works in primary prevention
- ensure that gains are maximised by scaling up proven and promising projects.

These objectives are to be achieved in three phases outlined in a series of three-yearly action plans that detail the primary prevention initiatives and required investment to implement the strategy over the short, medium and long term.

A critical component of the strategy is the Free from Violence Outcomes Framework, which establishes the high-level outcomes and associated indicators that are the ultimate benchmarks for assessing the strategy's success. This is discussed below.

The First Action Plan 2018–21 outlines the Free from Violence strategy's five priority areas:

- Build prevention structures and systems
- Research and evaluate
- Innovate and inform
- Scale up and build on what we know works
- Engage and communicate with the community.

The strategy is one of a number of interconnected strategies, policies and frameworks that guide and support action in the primary prevention of family violence and violence against women in Victoria. The key elements of this broader policy context are:

- [Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change](#) is a 10-year plan that outlines how the Royal Commission's 227 recommendations will be implemented, including the outcomes and initial targets to be achieved to prevent and respond to family violence, and the Family Violence Reform Rolling Action Plan 2017–20.

- [Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy](#) sets out a framework to achieve enduring and sustained gender equality by progressively building on the attitudinal and behavioural change required to reduce violence against women and to achieve gender equality.
- The [Gender Equality Act 2020 \(Vic\)](#) requires the public sector, councils and universities to take positive action towards workplace gender equality through their externally facing policies, programs and services.
- [Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families](#) is the Victorian Government's 10-year plan to support a safer future for Aboriginal families. This plan operates within the framework of [Dhulk Dja \(Safe Our Way: Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families\)](#), a key Aboriginal-led Victorian agreement that commits the signatories – Aboriginal communities, Aboriginal service providers and government – to work together and be accountable to ensure that Aboriginal peoples, families and communities are stronger and safer, thriving and living free from family violence.
- [Roadmap for Reform: Strong Families, Safe Children](#) is the Victorian Government's roadmap for reform of children, youth and family services.
- [Building from Strength: 10-year Industry Plan for Family Violence Prevention and Response](#) seeks to build a family violence prevention and service system in which specialist family violence and primary prevention sectors work together with community services, health, justice,

education and training sectors to respond to the complexity and harms of family violence and violence against women, and to prevent this violence from occurring in the first place.

Other statewide strategies and plans will inform and be informed by the evaluation of the strategy, including those that address the needs of particular population groups experiencing family violence, and those associated with various service systems that have important roles in the primary prevention of family violence.

Finally, the implementation and evaluation of the Free from Violence strategy occurs within a context of national policies that address violence against women and their children:

- [National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children](#) aims to coordinate the important work of all Australian governments, community organisations and individuals to reduce violence and ensure that each year, less women experience violence and more women and their children live safely.
- [Change the Story: a shared framework for the prevention of violence against women and their children](#) is a national framework for a consistent and integrated approach to preventing violence against women and their children in Australia.



### 3.2 Free from Violence's strategic approach

Understanding the principles that underpin the strategy is critical to deciding what needs to be evaluated and how. It will help determine how specific elements of the strategy have been incorporated into actions and to what degree these actions have led to expected outcomes. It will help us formulate an appropriate and effective monitoring and evaluation approach to understand what works, identify additional elements that require more focused attention or inclusion in the strategy as we go forward, and determine whether its overall implementation is coherent and sufficient for achieving strategy goals at a population level.

The strategy focuses on two different but overlapping and interrelated forms of violence. The first – family violence – is defined in the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic)* and includes many different expressions of violence in different population groups and family relationships. The second form of violence – violence against women – can occur in a family context but also in many other public and private contexts. Violence against women includes sexual assault and harassment.

Critical to the Free from Violence's strategic approach is the recognition that all these forms of violence are associated with inappropriate use of power and control, often underpinned by gender inequality and gender discrimination, and inequalities that result from other forms of discrimination such as racism, ageism, ableism or heterosexism.

The corollary of this recognition is the prevention of violence before it manifests as an incident or is even identified as a risk in a specific situation. Therefore, the focus of our prevention activities is on the population and communities as a whole, in all settings in which people live, work and play, including but not limited to local communities and families, schools, universities and colleges, sports, workplaces, faith settings, health and community services, transport, justice, police and courts. The actions we need to take in these settings are focused on creating social structures, norms, attitudes and behaviours that prevent or protect against the emergence or expression of violence.



#### 3.2.1 Free from Violence Outcomes Framework

A critical component of the strategy – and central to its evaluation – is the Free from Violence Outcomes Framework, which is the basis for all activities under the strategy. The Free from Violence Outcomes Framework was developed to ensure that genuine progress towards the long-term goals is made collectively across the range of strategy initiatives. The Free from Violence Outcomes Framework, and its associated indicators and measures, is intended to facilitate the consistent collection of the required data that drives policy and program change.

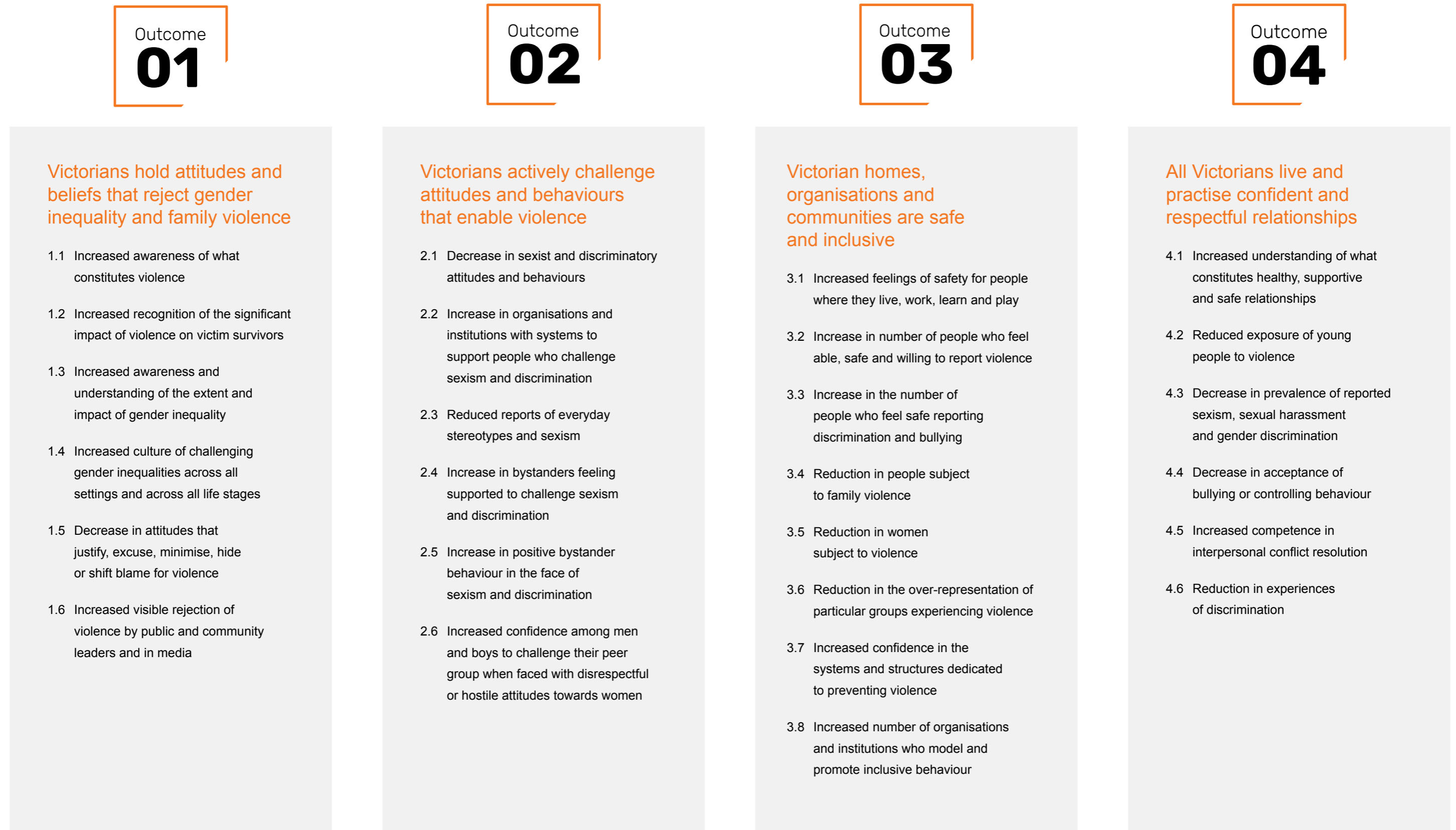
The Free from Violence Outcomes Framework describes the attitudinal, behavioural and systemic changes that are required to stop violence before it starts. Measuring Victorian attitudes and beliefs about gender equality and family violence will enable us to identify what works, and track progress towards lasting change, as described in *Ending Family Violence*.

The Free from Violence Outcomes Framework comprises four outcomes and 26 indicators, outlined in Figure 1.

This Free from Violence Outcomes Framework has now been adopted as the prevention domain (Domain 1) of the broader Victorian Government Family Violence Outcomes Framework and is therefore a core part of regular public reporting. A review of the Free from Violence Outcomes Framework is scheduled to occur in 2021, and its existing list of measures, indicators and outcomes are expected to be refined.



Figure 1: Free from Violence Outcomes Framework





### 3.2.2 A model of drivers and factors of family violence and violence against women

The Free from Violence strategy's approach to the primary prevention of family violence and violence against women is consistent with Change the Story, Australia's national shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children, which provides a clear analysis of the key drivers of violence against women and describes how women need to be central to solutions that are designed. Change the Story draws from globally accepted approaches to the primary prevention of violence against women.

Key to Change the Story is recognition that gender inequality is at the heart of family violence and all forms of violence against women, and it is gendered drivers of violence that are the target of interventions in the strategy. This is critical to evaluating the theoretical soundness of Free from Violence and the consequent interventions that are adopted.

A focus on gender is complemented in the strategy by an acknowledgement of intersectionality in the context of family violence and violence against women – that different factors that uniquely comprise a social and political identity are subject to inequality, discrimination and inappropriate exercise of power and control can intersect and then compound gender inequality, and shape patterns of violence against women and family violence of all forms.

The strategy gives special attention to the additional drivers of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities; in particular, the ongoing impacts of colonisation and dispossession, and the compounding nature of the intersecting drivers that lead to severe and complex impacts on Aboriginal

peoples. Violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women is described further in [Changing the picture](#), a companion document to Change the Story that was developed by Our Watch.

The MES Framework draws on the important distinction, made in Change the Story, between fundamental drivers and reinforcing factors of violence against women. Fundamental drivers are the social dynamics that consistently predict higher rates of violence against women: addressing these fundamental drivers is therefore essential to primary prevention. Reinforcing factors can escalate, exacerbate and sustain the violence – again at a societal level – but do not on their own create violence against women.

A comprehensive theory of change for all forms of family violence is still evolving. Respect Victoria is developing such a model that over time will provide more detailed evidence-based guidance on the intersecting drivers and risk factors of different forms of family violence, as well as guidance on the models of change underpinning the strategy's interventions and initiatives. This model of family violence will be made available in stages and progressively enhanced as evidence – including evidence from evaluations under the strategy – is generated.

Figure 2 is a schematic summary of the drivers and reinforcing factors that are targeted by the initiatives undertaken by the strategy. These actions aim to identify proven and promising approaches in preventing family violence and violence against women and are underpinned by the five priority areas of the strategy (identified currently in the First Action Plan and subject to review). Having a collective understanding of the drivers and actions to address them provides a transparent and consistent basis from which evaluation can take place.





Figure 2: Theoretical model underpinning Free from Violence initiatives

## Key drivers

to be addressed

### Actions to address drivers of violence against women<sup>1</sup>

- Challenge condoning of violence against women
- Promote women's independence and decision-making in public life
- Foster positive personal identities and challenge gender stereotypes and roles
- Combat compounding impacts of discrimination against women as a result of intersectionality

### Actions to address drivers of other forms of family violence<sup>2</sup>

- Reduce other major forms of discrimination and marginalisation (e.g. ageism, ableism, homophobia, racism, colonialism)
- Combat inappropriate exercise of power, coercion or control between family members
- Promote respectful relationships in all family types
- Build healthy strong communities based on cultural identity and belonging

## Strategy priority areas

to support action

- Build prevention structures and systems
- Research and evaluate
- Innovate and inform
- Scale up and build on what we know works
- Engage and communicate with communities

*\*The priority areas defined for the First Action Plan may be reviewed and revised in future action plans.*

<sup>1</sup> As outlined in *Change the story*.

<sup>2</sup> Based on emerging evidence.

## Reinforcing factors

to be addressed

### Actions to address reinforcing factors of violence against women<sup>1</sup>

- Challenge normalisation of violence as an expression of masculinity or male dominance
- Prevent exposure to violence and support those affected to reduce its consequences
- Address the intersections between social norms relating to alcohol and gender
- Reduce backlash by engaging men and boys in gender equality, building relationship skills and social connections
- Promote broader social equality and address structural discrimination and disadvantage

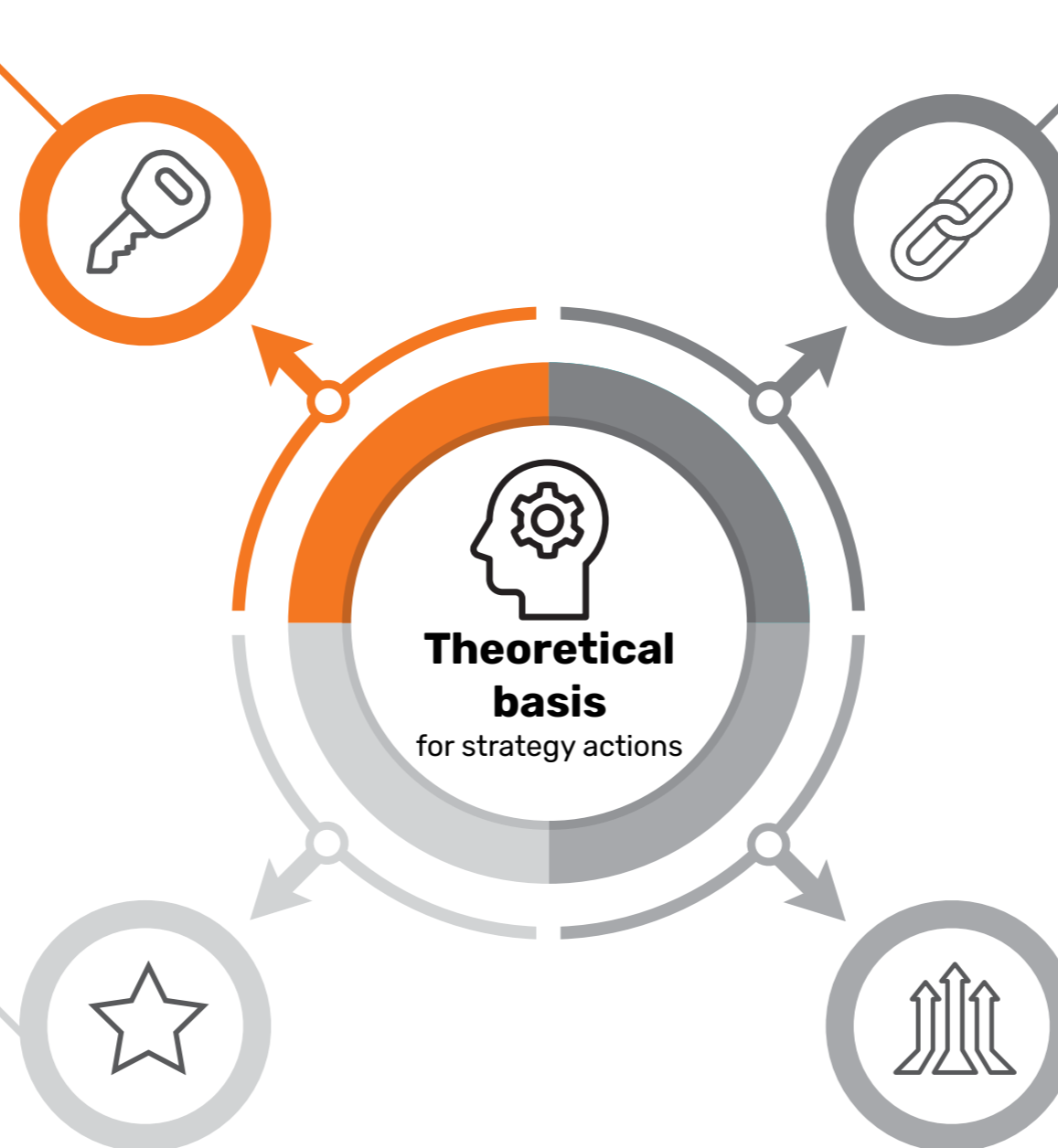
### Actions to address reinforcing factors of other forms of family violence<sup>2</sup>

- Challenge condoning of violence in general
- Reduce exposure to and experience of violence
- Combat weakening of prosocial behaviours from harmful use of alcohol and drugs
- Reduce socioeconomic inequality
- Avoid or address backlash and resistance to prosocial change towards equality and anti-discrimination

## Proven and promising approaches

to counteract drivers and reinforcing factors

- Community education, building knowledge and skills around healthy relationships, including peer education and parenting
- Mobilising and supporting stronger communities to foster and support respectful relationships and social norms across all settings in which people live, work, learn and play
- Organisational policy development to challenge violence and promote equality, respect and non-discrimination
- Communications and social marketing to combat social norms that support violence and to promote and model prosocial attitudes and behaviours
- Encourage civil society advocacy to shift social norms and initiate structural change required to counteract drivers of violence against women and family violence





### 3.2.3 Other models

This section summarises the complementary models that can inform the design and implementation of Free from Violence initiatives. Effective evaluation of strategy initiatives can examine, among other things, the degree to which appropriate consideration has been given to these models in the design and delivery of initiatives. Supplementary guidance and resources are being developed to support practical application of these models.

#### Primary prevention using a public health model

Consistent with approaches and frameworks adopted nationally and globally, the Free from Violence strategy uses a primary prevention framework that is focused on stopping family violence and violence against women before it is expressed by:

- focusing on changing the **underlying social determinants** – the social conditions that drive or enable the harm to occur; building social structures, norms and practices that reduce the risk of harm occurring; and enhancing the protective factors (in this instance, against family violence and violence against women)
- working at a **whole-of-population level** and in a range of settings (e.g. educational settings, workplaces, local government, health services) and across a range of societal levels (e.g. individual relationships, community or organisational practices). That is, implementing transformative, large-scale, multilayered and mutually reinforcing strategies that reach and engage everyone in a given population (in this instance, Victoria)
- reaching people across different domains of their lives, across the life course and across generations.

This primary prevention approach works alongside and complements **secondary prevention** (early intervention with those at higher risk of experiencing or perpetrating violence) and **tertiary prevention** (responding and providing support where harm has been experienced and preventing its recurrence) in the Victorian Government's broader family violence reform.

Public health models of primary prevention require a long-term view and adequate resourcing to achieve change. The model used by the Free from Violence strategy assumes family violence and violence against women can be prevented or stopped by adopting a primary prevention approach that complements secondary and tertiary prevention. The model employs a broader public health framework to challenge and transform the underlying drivers of family violence and violence against women with whole-of-population strategies that reach people in different settings, domains and stages of their lives over the long term.

#### Socio-ecological model

The notion of a 'social ecology' is useful for understanding individual behaviour in a social context and illustrating the dynamic interrelations between relevant factors at the individual, organisational, community, systemic and social levels. A socio-ecological model can illustrate the different levels at which drivers of violence, and hence responses, may be situated.

A socio-ecological model that was used in *Change the Story* and outlined in Figure 3 suggests that expressions of gender inequality – conveyed through ideas, values or beliefs – that are common or dominant in a society or community become social or cultural norms. Norms are reflected in our

institutional or community practices or behaviours, and are supported by social structures, both formal (e.g. legislation) and informal (e.g. hierarchies within a family or community). International research demonstrates that gender inequality is the social context that is necessary for violence against women and family violence to occur.

This socio-ecological model thus assumes that work to prevent family violence and violence against women must occur across all levels of society – from individual attitudes and behaviours, organisational and community practices and norms, to institutional

structures and more broadly, systems and society. The work undertaken must therefore address expressions of gender inequality identified as the drivers of this violence, and related reinforcing factors, and challenge existing social norms, practices and structures.

Variations to the socio-ecological model have been developed for different population groups and for different forms of family violence and violence against women. In addition to gender inequality, these variations also address norms, behaviours and practices associated with other types of inequality.

Figure 3: A socio-ecological model for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia



Source: Our Watch, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) and VicHealth (2015), *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia*, Our Watch, Melbourne, Australia, p. 21.

### Aboriginal self-determination

The strategy recognises that Aboriginal peoples, especially women, disproportionately experience violence perpetrated by people of all backgrounds including including non-Aboriginal people. Moreover, the violence experienced by Aboriginal peoples is driven by unique and intersecting forms of disadvantage and inequality, namely ongoing and compounding impacts of colonisation, dispossession, racism and gender inequality.

Aboriginal peoples' right to self-determination is critical to effective primary prevention of family violence and violence against women in First Nations communities. Consequently, it is important that Aboriginal peoples and community-controlled organisations lead, co-design and partner on primary prevention efforts and build on community-led initiatives to prevent family violence and violence against women in Aboriginal communities.

The prevention of violence experienced by Aboriginal peoples also means that whole-of-population efforts should seek to transform the drivers of colonisation and racism. The Free from Violence strategy recognises the resilience of Victorian Aboriginal cultures and communities, and the great wealth of knowledge and leadership among Aboriginal peoples and organisations for leading change in their communities.

### Intersectionality

The scope of the Free from Violence strategy encompasses family violence as well as all forms of violence against women. Therefore, it has within its sights family violence affecting Aboriginal peoples, people with disability, older people, LGBTIQ+ people, immigrants, people from refugee backgrounds including those currently seeking asylum; family violence affecting and experienced by children and

young people; and family violence affecting men. It should be acknowledged that individuals can hold multiple identities, for example, an Aboriginal woman who has a disability. Identities can also shift over time.

Moreover, the Free from Violence strategy recognises that the following types of systemic discrimination and prejudice can interact, overlap and create specific barriers to accessing information or support, and influence social attitudes that lead to stigmatisation and exclusion of particular groups of people, putting them at increased risk of violence:

- sexism
- racism
- classism
- homophobia
- biphobia
- transphobia and intersex discrimination
- ableism
- ageism
- stigma
- dispossession
- colonialism.

Over the long term, initiatives rolled out under the strategy will contribute to the promotion of gender equality and challenge particular expressions of gender inequality (the gendered drivers of violence against women) such as rigid gender roles and other forms of discrimination. In addition, these initiatives should consider how social characteristics can or could be embedded into the different forms of discrimination for individuals or groups, and how they can be addressed in these interventions. For example, a number of projects funded under the Aboriginal Family Violence Primary Prevention Innovation Fund sought to address impacts of colonisation, dispossession, racism and gender inequality.

### 3.3 Theory into action

The theoretical models outlined above have informed the direction taken by the Free from Violence strategy in its First Action Plan, which implemented a wide range of activities to address the key elements of the models. In particular, the First Action Plan has put the infrastructure in place, with a range of initiatives implemented at individual and organisational levels across a range of settings, as well as initiatives at the population level (e.g. social marketing campaigns).

Over time, this work is expected to lead to positive measurable change at the level of individuals, relationships, communities and organisations. Over the long term – as the infrastructure for primary prevention improves and is embedded statewide – this work is expected to facilitate the achievement of long-term outcomes of the strategy and sustain their impacts in preventing family violence and violence against women in Victoria.

Figure 4 displays a basic program logic for the inputs sought, the five priority areas and their associated activities, the intended changes or impacts, and the desired outcomes of the Free from Violence strategy. This program logic will guide and inform the mid-term evaluation of the strategy. Detailed program logic models will need to be developed for individual initiatives and group-level (thematic) evaluations. Applying this program logic provides a disciplined framework for reviewing, confirming and documenting explicit assumptions, resources, activities and expected outcomes that are associated with all initiatives funded and undertaken under the strategy. It can also guide decisions about the priority and focus of investments in evaluation research.

This model is based on the key actions identified in the strategy's First Action Plan, and will be further developed and adapted as priority actions are confirmed for subsequent action plans.





Figure 4: Program logic for the Free from Violence strategy



## Outcomes

Violence against women and family violence are prevented

➤ Victorians hold attitudes and beliefs that reject gender inequality and family violence

➤ Victorians actively challenge attitudes and behaviours that enable violence

➤ Victorian homes, organisations and communities are safe and inclusive

➤ All Victorians live and practise confident and respectful relationships



## Impacts

(changes as a result of key activities)

Leadership exists in various sectors on policies and supportive structures to tackle gender inequality and other sources of discrimination and disempowerment.

Key settings promote social norms and model behaviours that reject control, abuse and violence.

Generalist and specialist workforces are trained and deployed to advance efforts to prevent family violence and violence against women.

Improved knowledge and understanding of effective prevention of family violence and violence against women is made available and shared.

Communities are motivated and prepared to initiate and sustain effective and tailored primary prevention of all forms of family violence and violence against women.

Increasing numbers of Victorians are influenced to change attitudes and take positive bystander roles to prevent spread of violence.

### Priority area 1

Build prevention structures and systems



- Establish a family violence prevention agency
- Fund key national prevention architecture
- Build and develop the primary prevention workforce
- Support capacity building
- Embed prevention practitioners and supports in key allied sector workforces to build capacity for primary prevention
- Support future workforces to drive prevention
- Establish a primary prevention coordination model
- Strengthen the primary prevention system

### Priority area 2

Research and evaluate



- Develop the Prevention of Family Violence Data Platform
- Develop a theory of change
- Establish a research agenda and alliances
- Conduct research and evaluation to inform a strong evidence base
- Translate research and evaluation findings to support adoption and use of learnings

### Priority area 3

Innovate and inform



- Pilot initiatives to test new prevention approaches
- Trial existing initiatives in new settings and with different communities

### Priority area 4

Scale up and build on what we know works



- Scale up prevention models and approaches that have demonstrated success
- Scale up and embed successful approaches to support change in key settings
- Engage across sectors

### Priority area 5

Engage and communicate with the community



- Deliver mass awareness and behaviour change campaigns
- Deliver campaigns targeting violence against specific groups
- Advocate need for policy and structural change to key bodies



## Priority areas and key initiatives

(examples based on First Action Plan)



## Inputs

Investment by the Victorian Government, provision of resources, expertise, engagement of partners



### 3.4 Monitoring and evaluation: guiding principles

This section outlines the underpinning assumptions and key elements and principles of the Free from Violence strategy that need to be considered in its monitoring and evaluation. The way these are applied may differ depending on the level of monitoring or evaluation being undertaken.

#### 3.4.1 Long-term incremental change

Ending family violence and violence against women through primary prevention is a **long-term** endeavour requiring sustained effort and adequate resourcing. This long-term horizon needs to be acknowledged in monitoring and evaluation. For example, a longitudinal design can be used to track change over time at the population level, but population-level measures must not be expected to indicate year-on-year change. In fact, some indicators may worsen in the medium term as awareness of what constitutes violence becomes more widely recognised (and thus reported).

There is a likelihood of some community backlash and resistance to addressing family violence and violence against women, gender inequality and other forms of discrimination in the short to medium term. Such resistance may also lead to a plateauing or subduing effect on population-level indicators for some groups in the short to medium term. Over the long term, however, population prevalence rates should begin to fall as expressions of gender inequality become more widely rejected.

Meanwhile, it is important that evaluations look at short- to medium-term indicators of change relating to the drivers and reinforcing factors of family violence and violence against women.



#### 3.4.2 Leverage collected data to evaluate collective impact

The strategy's monitoring and evaluation program will seek to build a picture of the collective impacts over time of the many different but complementary initiatives being implemented by organisations and communities across Victoria. As such, the evaluation program will leverage previously completed and current and ongoing evaluations, monitoring tools and sources of data – including data collected in individual programs for program monitoring purposes as well as data collected for broader population-based or administrative analyses.

The emphasis on collective impacts means that evaluations that cross multiple initiatives are particularly important, including evaluations of how partnerships and networks between prevention stakeholders are built and strengthened. It also means that a key focus of evaluation inquiry should be on how actions for change at the organisational, community and population level complement each other and create synergies.

#### 3.4.3 Focus on scaling up and sustainability

A related principle of the strategy is that initiatives shown to work, where appropriate, are scaled up and in the process considered for and tailored to various contexts across geographical regions, settings and other target groups. Evaluations should include assessment of an initiative's potential for sustainability, replicability (including assessment of suitability across regions and cohorts) and scalability. Evaluations may identify projects based on best practice criteria for scaling up, impacts for the funded duration and highlight sustainability of initiatives.





### 3.4.4 Participative approach

Participative approaches – involving the co-design and co-production of programs with those who are leading and or directly affected by those programs – are particularly important in work on sensitive topics with specific diverse population groups, especially in relation to the lived experience of victims and survivors. The self-determination of Aboriginal communities (outlined above) is a key consideration in participative approaches.

These approaches need to be built into both the design and conduct of monitoring and evaluation activity. Participative methodologies and valuing the experiences of those who have critical stakes in this work must be embedded in any monitoring and evaluation activity. Considerations associated with such approaches include data sovereignty, consent to engage in evaluation research and the importance of feedback to participants.

### 3.4.5 Cost-effectiveness and return on investment

An important purpose of evaluating the strategy is to demonstrate both the cost-effectiveness of particular types of intervention and their return on investment. Applying measures of cost-effectiveness and return on investment in primary prevention is not straightforward; significant work is needed to develop and enhance appropriate methodologies in this area. While this is occurring, individual and group evaluations of strategy initiatives should

explore simple ways to assess their cost benefit, including use of comparative studies across initiatives both within this field and in other fields of prevention. Sophisticated tools and specialist expertise will be required for this type of evaluation.

### 3.4.6 Cyclical learning approach

An evidence-informed approach is crucial to a rigorous evaluation of strategy, and several elements are required to ensure that this happens. It is essential that there be feedback loops to enable research and evaluation learnings to be conveyed and understood by decision-makers and those implementing the initiatives. Further, the strategy's monitoring and evaluation program must be sufficiently flexible to continually incorporate learnings as they are identified and to adapt its approach. This flexibility includes continued trialling of promising practice(s), embedding evidence of and scaling up what works (see below), leading to the maturation of an effective adaptive approach to primary prevention of violence that is best practice and sustainable.

At the level of an individual initiative, this means examining the degree to which the design of an intervention/initiative is informed by a growing evidence base of what works. The mid-term review of the strategy should include a system-wide examination of the degree to which learnings from research and evaluation on what works are communicated to decision-makers and relevant organisations more broadly, and the degree to which they are utilised to adapt approaches on the ground.

### 3.4.7 Exploratory and innovative approaches

Efforts of this scale to achieve whole-of-community change and prevent family violence have not been undertaken before in Victoria. The groundbreaking nature of a number of components of the Free from Violence strategy necessitates an exploratory, learning and adaptive approach – one that is open to innovation.

Sophisticated evaluation tools and expertise will be required for higher-level evaluations.

### 3.4.8 Ethical standards

Evaluations are to be conducted in accordance with ethical standards for the conduct of research involving humans. These standards include abiding by the values and principles underpinning the ethical conduct of research, such as respect, research merit and integrity, justice and beneficence. The Australian Evaluation Society's Guidelines for Ethical Conduct of Evaluations, which includes guidance on the commissioning of and preparing for an evaluation, can also be used to ensure monitoring and evaluation for Free from Violence initiatives is undertaken ethically.

### 3.4.9 Transparent and objective processes

To ensure impartiality, major evaluations should be conducted independently of, but with input from, policymakers, implementation agencies and program managers. Evaluations conducted by third parties (external evaluations) are to be commissioned in accordance with the relevant policies of the Victorian Government Purchasing Board. Evaluators must possess appropriate capabilities, expertise and experience. For some smaller initiatives for which funding for external evaluation is unavailable but assessment of their impacts are considered important (e.g. trialling of a pilot initiative), support to conduct self-evaluations may be available. If evaluation findings suggest promising results, further implementations of the initiative may satisfy requirements for an external evaluation.

## 4 Monitoring and evaluation activity

This section provides an overview of the various levels and types of monitoring and evaluation that need to occur for different elements of the strategy over time. As outlined previously, the term ‘monitoring’ refers to the ongoing process of reviewing and documenting the progress of implementing an initiative, including the impact of the initiative. The term ‘evaluation’ refers to a more formal inquiry process to ascertain the value of the initiative.

Basic monitoring activity and associated reporting will apply to all initiatives funded under the strategy. The MES Framework and supporting practice guidelines and resources are not intended to be applied retrospectively to program evaluations that are substantially underway or concluded. The MES Framework and associated resources are future-focused, applying to Free from Violence activity funded post its release.

In the case of Free from Violence activities funded prior to the release of the MES Framework, the MES Framework will apply only to those initiatives at the pre-evaluation commencement stage or at the early stages of evaluation. Respect Victoria will work with funded agencies to enhance data collection and reporting processes to enable programs to provide inputs to the mid-term review.

Evaluation methods for the mid-term review will be carefully selected, recognising and accommodating differences in evaluation reporting across programs over time. They will draw on the best available information in order to answer key

evaluation questions and demonstrate progress towards Free from Violence’s outcomes. The decision to formally evaluate initiatives can be made based on a transparent set of criteria:

- whether a formal evaluation should be conducted (and whether this is to be done within an allocated budget)
- who conducts it (an external third party, departmental officers or those implementing the initiative)
- what type(s) of evaluation will be conducted (formative, summative, outcome, economic)
- when evaluation will occur (baseline measurements, during and/or after intervention, ongoing).

Further information on the criteria for these decisions is provided in Appendix A.

The rolling monitoring and evaluation program (described in Section 5.3) will be determined by

- the levels of evaluation (described in Section 4.1)
- the key streams of initiatives that are funded for the different phases of the strategy
- the strategy’s priority action areas.

Cross-cutting themes related to settings, particular population groups or types of initiative will also be the focus of discrete evaluation projects.

The sequencing of evaluation will take into account the variable and staggered commencement and duration of initiatives, including the need to include initiatives that have already concluded, if possible.

Sequencing will also consider the potential to deliver immediate evidence of progress towards outcomes, the necessity for process evaluations as precursors of effectiveness/impact evaluations, and the need to evaluate individual initiatives prior to collective or cross-cutting evaluations.

### 4.1 Levels of evaluation

There are four levels at which evaluations may be undertaken. While evaluations at each level will have distinct purpose(s), all will have a role in informing our understanding, learning and progress towards the Free from Violence objectives. Data from evaluations of individual projects or initiatives will be aggregated in higher-level evaluations to inform progress towards strategy-level objectives and generate key learnings that cut across settings, sectors and cohorts.

#### 4.1.1 Strategy level

The strategy-wide review will use consolidated findings from all data sources (individual project level evaluations, analysis of population-level data, additional primary data) to provide a consolidated picture of the impacts of the Free from Violence strategy as a whole. Such a review will:

- provide an overall assessment of the strategy’s effectiveness in the Victorian community; that is, the degree to which its activities have led to the prevention of family violence and of violence against women. The assessment may also consider unintended consequences at an aggregate level
- assess elements of the strategy that are most effective and areas of comparative weakness or gaps in approach
- assess the extent to which the strategy’s overall design and implementation are appropriate for primary prevention of family violence and violence against women in Victorian communities
- provide critical evidence to inform primary prevention policy and programming going forward. The findings will also inform the broader evaluation of the Victorian Government’s family violence reform
- support policy accountability and determine the value and cost-effectiveness of the strategy
- contribute to the Victorian, national and global evidence base on what works to prevent family violence and violence against women.



### 4.1.2 Priority area level

Evaluations at the level of the strategy's priority areas will use consolidated findings from relevant lower level evaluations together with additional primary data as required to assess progress in the Free from Violence strategy's priority areas. Evaluations at this level will:

- assess whether a priority area's investments have rolled out initiatives as intended and met its identified objectives
- make a broad assessment of the outcomes and impacts of an initiative delivered under priority areas to inform key learnings about 'what works'. The evaluation findings at this level are critical inputs into the development of future action plans
- inform investor decisions about where scarce resources should be allocated to optimise impacts.

### 4.1.3 Group/theme (cluster) level

Evaluations at the group/theme level will consolidate relevant information and data on the outcomes of the Free from Violence strategy for specific groups of projects or initiatives of interest (e.g. across cohorts, settings, regions). Evaluations at this level will:

- assess the effectiveness of initiatives (outcomes and impacts) and establish key learnings in relation to specific cohort(s) or group(s) of interest and/or in different settings
- consider the extent to which outcomes for this group (cluster) of interest contributes towards the aims and objectives of the strategy

- provide important evidence to inform successive action plans, investment priorities, program development, primary prevention policies and service delivery decisions (i.e. facilitate continuous improvement in process design and implementation of interventions)
- contribute to the Victorian, national and global evidence base on what works for whom to prevent family violence and violence against women.

### 4.1.4 Initiative level

Evaluations at the level of initiatives will use data gathered for or in relation to specific initiatives that were rolled out (e.g. projects, campaigns, programs). Evaluations at this level will:

- assess the extent to which an initiative has been implemented as intended
- assess the extent to which intended outcomes have been realised for participants and other beneficiaries (individuals and organisations), and the extent to which these outcomes contribute towards the aims and objectives of the strategy
- establish key implementation lessons and assess any unintended outcomes/consequences
- provide findings that will inform the design and implementation of future initiatives (e.g. what might need adjustment, replication and/or scaling up) and will be aggregated for use in relevant higher-level evaluations (group/cluster or priority area evaluations or strategy-wide review).

Figure 5: Data from monitoring and evaluation can be used to generate findings at a range of levels





## 4.2 Evaluation questions

There are many reasons for undertaking an evaluation, and each evaluation project should begin with a clear statement of its purpose(s) and the questions that will guide it.

### 4.2.1 Questions of the strategy

The key evaluation questions in Table 1 are designed to explore eight domains of inquiry to evaluate the strategy as a whole. These domains are deliberately high level. These questions will also be varied for relevance at the initiative, group/theme (cluster) and priority area level so that comparable evidence can inform the strategy-wide review. It is important to acknowledge that some evaluations are or will be self-evaluated while others externally evaluated.

Table 1: Key evaluation questions that guide review of the Free from Violence strategy

Domain evaluated	Key evaluation questions
Appropriateness	<p>To what extent does the overall design of the strategy address the identified problem(s)?</p> <p>To what extent is the overall design of the strategy suitable for meeting the needs of key stakeholders and beneficiaries, and for progressing prevention of family violence and violence against women?</p> <p>Are the initiatives individually and collectively acceptable to stakeholders?</p>
Implementation process and learning	<p>To what extent has the strategy been implemented as intended, delivering the agreed activities and outputs and reaching the intended cohort(s) and settings?</p> <p>What is being learned about the design and implementation of the strategy (e.g. in terms of realising its effectiveness, responding to contextual factors, degree of innovation, partnerships and collaboration, and emergent good practice principles)?</p> <p>To what extent are these learnings being translated and applied to inform adaptations of strategy activities?</p>
Intersectionality, self-determination, equity and inclusion	<p>To what extent is the strategy supporting intersectional and Aboriginal self-determination approaches to the primary prevention of family violence and violence against women?</p>

Domain evaluated	Key evaluation questions
Effectiveness	<p>To what extent is the strategy meeting its stated objectives and demonstrating progress towards or succeeding in delivering outcomes?</p> <p>Are all the components and initiatives under the strategy working effectively to meet the stated objectives at the relevant initiative, cluster and strategy level?</p>
Efficiency	<p>To what extent is strategy being implemented in an efficient manner? (This considers, for example, the cost-effectiveness, efficient use of resources and degree of good governance in the implementation of the strategy.)</p>
Impact	<p>What effect has the strategy had on family violence and all forms of violence against women and its drivers?</p> <p>Have there been unintended consequences (positive and negative) associated with the strategy?</p>
System	<p>Is the strategy supporting the emergence and sustainability of a connected and collaborative system of primary prevention of family violence and violence against women in Victoria?</p>
Sustainability	<p>To what degree are there indications of ongoing benefits that can be attributed to the strategy?</p> <p>What capability and structures have been established to support the sustainability of the strategy's benefits?</p>

An initial set of broad evaluation questions relating to each of the five priority areas is also provided. The answers to the evaluation questions for the strategy's five priority areas will facilitate the responses to the evaluation questions for the strategy-wide review (listed in Table 1).

Additional specific sub-questions will be provided in further guidance materials (to be developed), so that evaluations at the various levels can feed upwards into the strategy's mid-term review. In addition, these sub-questions can also guide the development of questions for evaluations of initiatives. Individual

project evaluations, for example, may focus on a specific subset of these questions or domains, as appropriate to the type and focus of the evaluation.

The focus on particular domains or questions may also vary depending on the timing of the evaluation. For example the focus of questions for a mid-term review is likely to differ from that for an endpoint review of what is a 10-year strategy. Adaptations to initiatives may also require additional questions that are specific to the initiative – particularly likely in relation to evaluations of particular thematic areas.





#### 4.2.2 Questions of the five priority areas

##### Priority area 1 Build prevention structures and systems

- 1.1 To what extent are the systems and structures for prevention established under the strategy appropriate and adequate?
- 1.2 To what extent has the strategy contributed to building the primary prevention infrastructure and systems required to prevent family violence and violence against women in Victoria?
- 1.3 How effective are prevention structures and systems in embedding, coordinating and driving primary prevention of family violence across Victoria?
- 1.4 To what extent have strategy systems and structures contributed to strengthening the knowledge, skills, capabilities and competencies of specialist family violence and primary prevention practitioners to implement interventions that prevent family violence and violence against women across a broad range of settings (e.g. schools, workplaces, communities and the media) and communities (e.g. LGBTIQ+, Aboriginal and culturally diverse communities, older adults and people with disability)?
- 1.5 How effective are governance and advisory structures and systems at facilitating the involvement of the wide range of stakeholders required for population-level changes against family violence?

##### Priority area 2 Research and evaluate

- 2.1 To what extent have strategy activities contributed to the evolving evidence base on what works to prevent family violence and violence against women?
- 2.2 To what extent have research and evaluation activities helped to address critical knowledge gaps in the prevention of violence against older adults, Aboriginal peoples and communities, people with disability, culturally diverse groups, adolescents and LGBTIQ+ communities?
- 2.3 To what extent have emerging Free from Violence research, evaluation and market research findings and data supported or enhanced the development of primary prevention community education campaigns as well as practice and program implementation of initiatives across settings and sectors?

##### Priority area 3 Innovate and inform

- 3.1 To what extent has the strategy supported innovation in the design, implementation and evaluation of primary prevention techniques, initiatives and programs to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women and to achieve gender equality?
- 3.2 To what extent has the trialling and testing of new and innovative initiatives built our knowledge of effective primary prevention in different settings and contexts and informed policy and practice?

##### Priority area 4 Scale up and build on what we know works

- 4.1 To what extent have small-scale primary prevention models, approaches and initiatives that have trialled successfully at the local level been supported to be expanded and scaled up?
- 4.2 How effectively has local government been supported to lead efforts to build primary prevention capacity and effect organisational change at the local level?
- 4.3 To what extent have workforces, including workforces in the public sector, universities and TAFEs, been supported to implement best practice prevention interventions (e.g. programs or activities) that promote awareness of and change attitudes towards inequality and violence?
- 4.4 To what extent have effective Free from Violence initiatives been increased in scale and reach?
- 4.5 To what extent have primary prevention, systems, structures and innovative practice been embedded across the prevention sector?

##### Priority area 5 Engage and communicate with the community

- 5.1 To what extent have community education campaigns and communication strategies that seek to raise awareness of violence against women and to change attitudes and behaviours that drive and perpetuate discrimination, inequality and violence, been informed by evidenced?
- 5.2 To what extent have community education campaigns and communication strategies been appropriately tailored for communities (such as the LGBTIQ+, older adult or Aboriginal communities)?
- 5.3 To what extent have community education campaigns and communication strategies been effective at achieving outcomes, including increasing:
  - a. awareness of what constitutes family violence and forms of violence against women
  - b. the number of individuals seeking assistance or support services
  - c. awareness of and preparedness to challenge fixed gender roles, gender inequality, sexism and discrimination to break the cycle of violence.
- 5.4 How effective has the strategy been in engaging and creating linkages across government, local government, the primary prevention sector and other stakeholders, to enable collective ownership and action?



### 4.3 Evaluation types and methods

This section provides an introduction to the types and methods of evaluation that might be relevant to the different levels of evaluating the Free from Violence strategy. Broadly, these refer to both formative and summative evaluation – both of which will be conducted across the course of the strategy and across all its levels.

**Formative evaluation** occurs during the period of investment or intervention and focuses on the **process** – what is being done and produced, who is being reached or engaged, what is being learned along the way, emergent outcomes and causal mechanisms, and gaps that may require attention. Formative evaluation supports improvements, redesigns and development of new initiatives to address identified gaps.

**Summative evaluation** seeks to judge the worth of an initiative, typically at the end of a cycle of intervention or investment (e.g. end of a project or campaign, a program cycle, an action plan or at a particular

point in the life of the strategy). Its focus can be on both the short- and medium-term impacts and the longer-term outcomes and causal mechanisms of change, as well as the appropriateness of an overall strategy or program design. Cost-effectiveness and related economic evaluation will also be important and appropriate for some aspects of the strategy.

Within and across formative and summative evaluations, a variety of evaluation approaches and data collection and analysis methods can be used. Table 2 outlines the approaches and methods to be used at the different levels of evaluation. As can be seen, higher-level evaluations will be significantly more complex than evaluations of individual initiatives.

Decisions regarding the evaluation approach and methods for individual initiatives and groups (cluster) will be made in their detailed plans and will depend on factors such as the evaluation questions being answered and the scope of the evaluation.





Table 2: Design, methods and timing for each evaluation level

Evaluation Level	Evaluation Design	Methods	Timing
Strategy-wide review	<p>Mid-term review of the strategy should be both formative and summative in orientation. End-of-term review or evaluation should be primarily summative.</p> <p>A complex evaluation design will be required, drawing on a range of approaches including a systems approach, to examine the broad effectiveness of the strategy, its areas of strength, gaps in the system that increase or decrease the effectiveness of investment across initiatives, and overall appropriateness of design for primary prevention.</p> <p>Evaluation at this level will focus on both the breadth and depth of the strategy, with analyses drawing on data from a range of sources to answer strategy-level evaluation questions outlined in this document.</p>	<p>Existing and new data will be analysed to address the evaluation questions.</p> <p>Relevant findings and data will be aggregated from initiative, group/theme (cluster) and priority area evaluations to enable an overall assessment of the effectiveness of the strategy in realising its objectives and intended outcomes, its impacts on Victorian communities and its areas of strengths and weakness in the primary prevention and family violence response systems.</p> <p>Secondary analyses (including baseline establishment and time-series analysis) will be conducted on relevant population-level quantitative data from the Prevention of Family Violence Data Platform<sup>3</sup> to provide an indication of progress towards intended population-level outcomes.</p> <p>Such existing data will be supplemented with additional data collected as required to support a strategy-wide examination, including appropriateness of strategy design to progress primary prevention of family violence and violence against women. Such data collection may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ structured literature reviews</li> <li>▪ interviews</li> <li>▪ surveys</li> <li>▪ focus group discussions</li> <li>▪ systems mapping.</li> </ul>	<p>Mid-term strategy review occurs in 2022.</p>
Priority area level	<p>Evaluation at this level should be both formative and summative.</p> <p>A reasonably complex design will be required, drawing on a range of approaches and data sources.</p> <p>Evaluation will address the evaluation questions of the relevant priority area and assess implementation fidelity and effectiveness in realising intended outcomes for the priority area.</p>	<p>Existing and new data will be analysed to address the evaluation questions.</p> <p>Relevant findings and data will be aggregated from project/initiative and group (cluster) evaluations to assess the degree to which activity has been implemented as intended (implementation fidelity) and the overall effectiveness of this activity in realising the intended outcomes and impacts of the priority area.</p> <p>Existing data will be supplemented with additional data collected as required to address the evaluation questions. Such data collection may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ structured literature reviews</li> <li>▪ interviews</li> <li>▪ surveys</li> <li>▪ focus group discussions</li> <li>▪ systems mapping.</li> </ul>	<p>Periodic. Initial evaluation to coincide with strategy review in 2022.</p>
Group (cluster) level	<p>Evaluations at this level should be both formative and summative.</p> <p>A somewhat complex design will be used, focused on answering the evaluation questions adapted to the specific focus, objectives and any underlying theory of an initiative or theme-oriented cluster of interventions, and on assessing the effectiveness of identified group/cluster in realising outcomes.</p> <p>Evaluation design will draw upon a range of approaches as outlined in Section 4.3.</p>	<p>Existing and new data will be analysed to address the evaluation questions.</p> <p>Some aggregation and meta-analysis of existing monitoring and evaluation data from relevant initiatives will be undertaken to assess the effectiveness of this group of initiatives in achieving their intended outcomes.</p> <p>Existing data will be supplemented with additional data collected as required to address the evaluation questions. Such data collection may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ structured literature reviews</li> <li>▪ interviews</li> <li>▪ surveys</li> <li>▪ focus group discussions</li> <li>▪ systems mapping</li> <li>▪ other forms of stakeholder engagement and feedback (e.g. website tracking data, feedback emails).</li> </ul>	<p>Periodic. Timing to be determined in the rolling schedule for the monitoring and evaluation program for the strategy.</p>
Initiative level	<p>Evaluations are likely to be mostly summative, but monitoring data for the initiative that is suitable for aggregation for formative evaluation (at the group or priority area levels) may also be required.</p> <p>A simpler design will be used at this level, reflecting a more focused evaluation and scope of inquiry. Evaluation design is likely to employ one or two key approaches, with a likely orientation towards realist and case study approaches</p>	<p>Primary data collection may include (depending on scope and resources):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ interviews</li> <li>▪ surveys</li> <li>▪ focus group discussions.</li> </ul> <p>Aggregation of other relevant project-level monitoring data, including reports, records, documented team reflections, stakeholder engagement and feedback may also be included.</p>	<p>Timing of individual monitoring and evaluation will be driven by implementation of the initiative and identified need. Work will be outlined in rolling schedule for the monitoring and evaluation program</p>

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix A for a list of identified indicators and associated data sources for long-term outcomes.

#### 4.4 Data collection: tools and methods

Apart from the most basic ‘single-project’ evaluation, in most cases multiple methods of data collection will be employed. The data collection tools and methods that are chosen will support the type of evaluation undertaken and address the relevant evaluation questions. Where possible, the data that is collected should aid meaningful analyses and shared outcomes measurement through triangulation, aggregation and comparison.

Use of secondary data – data collected by others for a different primary purpose – may also be useful where it exists to improve collection efficiency and data consistency, and avoid overburdening participants.

As outlined in Table 2 above, a mix of quantitative and qualitative data will be required. Quantitative data may draw from, compare or replicate key components of established data sets in the field, including:

- major population surveys such as the Australia’s National Research Organisation for Women’s Safety’s (ANROWS’s) National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS) and statistics on violence against women and children, and the Australian Bureau of Statistics’ Personal Safety Survey (PSS)
- other surveys of specific population groups or settings that measure known or proposed drivers of and risk factors for family violence and violence against women
- administrative data collected by funded services and as part of monitoring of initiatives associated with the strategy.

Further guidance will be issued in forthcoming resources on the use and applicability of these data sets – 32 of which are relevant and accessible from the Prevention of Family Violence Data Platform (see below).



### Prevention of Family Violence Data Platform

The Prevention of Family Violence Data Platform (the Data Platform), to be launched in 2021, is a partnership between Respect Victoria and the Crime Statistics Agency. With data organised according to the Free from Violence Outcomes Framework and associated indicators, the Data Platform brings together relevant data from some 35 national and Victorian data sources, including surveys, studies, censuses and administrative data sets.

In addition to these data sets, the Data Platform also contains state-level findings based on this data, illuminating diverse aspects of how Victoria is tracking towards the prevention of family violence and violence against women, particularly in relation to the prevalence of this violence, community attitudes towards gender equality and violence against women, and other markers of gender inequality and discrimination at the interpersonal, organisational and structural levels. Many of these findings are previously unknown.

Many of the profiled data sets are at the population or group/cohort level and are rigorous and reliable measures owned by different statistical, research or sectoral agencies. Preference has been given to data sets that are collected at regular intervals, from annual to every four or five years, although a small number of one-off data sets have been included where they fill specific information gaps. The Data Platform houses data collected between 2009 and 2020, and wherever possible provides findings that compares results over time and between demographic groups (e.g. differences between women and men).

The Data Platform can support the Free from Violence strategy’s evaluation needs, especially by providing contextual information on big-picture trends and guiding collective impact assessment of shared outcomes under the strategy.

Larger surveys such as the NCAS and PSS will be subject to targeted analyses at various points (such as when new survey waves are completed) and these results will be fed into higher-level strategy evaluation as relevant. Respect Victoria will oversee and support these information linkages in conjunction with data custodians.

All these data sets – and those that might be constructed or tailored for the purposes of evaluating the Free from Violence strategy or its parts – will have limitations, such as insufficient sample size and lack of sample diversity, insufficient frequency of collection and insufficient sensitivity to change over a reasonable time horizon. They will need to be carefully assessed and qualified in terms of their fitness for purpose. The degree to which they can be used to evaluate degree of change, in a pre- and post-intervention quantitative analysis approach, will vary widely.

As also outlined in Tables 2 to 5, qualitative data collection and analyses will be equally important and relevant. Such data collection tools will take various forms:

- interviews with key informants, participants or target group representatives
- review of documents such as policies, protocols and guidelines
- case studies
- focus groups
- mainstream and social media analyses.



The extraction of data from such tools to answer specific evaluation questions will require a range of methods, such as coding and thematic content analysis.

Where possible, data collection methods and measures should be used consistently across evaluations to facilitate data aggregation at higher levels of evaluation. Notwithstanding this, some questions may be inappropriate for a specific evaluation and additional questions may be required for the specific purposes of individual evaluations.

To facilitate a consistent and standard evaluation approach across individual initiatives (e.g. projects, campaigns and programs), the ME Guides (being developed in 2021) will provide guidance on standardised methodological approaches, tools, templates and measures. Further guidance on the scope of evaluation and requirements for specific evaluation methods and measures will be provided to specific initiatives as part of their individual evaluation planning where appropriate.



## 5 Implementation of the MES Framework

This section provides guidance on how the MES Framework will be applied over the life of the Free from Violence strategy. The implementation of the MES Framework will require a supported, rolling program of planned monitoring and evaluation to ensure that quality is regularly monitored, evaluation prioritised, emerging findings reviewed and synthesised, and outcomes publicly reported and accountability demonstrated. The monitoring and evaluation program will also emphasise capacity building across participating sectors for effective evaluation, the sharing and uptake of lessons by practitioners, and ongoing development and refinement of the overall MES Framework through feedback from all stakeholders.

This section also highlights the importance of governance of the MES Framework as its implementation proceeds.

Further details of MES Framework implementation and associated resources will be progressively made available and regularly updated through direct communication with stakeholders and through a commonly accessible online portal that will be maintained and managed by Respect Victoria.

### 5.1 Governance, roles and responsibilities

While Respect Victoria is charged with overall leadership of the Free from Violence's monitoring and evaluation program, we will also continue to collaborate closely with DFFH – through a formal cross-agency steering committee – to provide advice, oversight and coordination, and decide on the prioritisation and sequencing of the work in the monitoring and evaluation program. This cross-agency steering committee will also help ensure that the strategy's monitoring and evaluation program is aligned and coordinated with the monitoring, evaluation and reporting structures across government for the broader family violence reform.

In this governance arrangement, Respect Victoria, DFFH and other government funders of Free from Violence initiatives will take responsibility for applying the MES Framework to those Free from Violence-funded initiatives that they directly manage. Over time the scope of this governance may expand to support and engage funders and managers of programs that are not currently nor directly funded under the strategy but are seeking to address similar outcomes and objectives. Such programs are likely carried out in the education, justice, health, sports and other portfolios.

Respect Victoria will also be responsible for the mid-term whole-of-strategy evaluation, to be conducted in 2021–22, which would encompass the five priority areas and various cross-cutting themes.

Input from community organisations will be critical to the management and ongoing refinement of the strategy's monitoring and evaluation program. To this end, bodies such as the Prevention Sector Strategic Reference Group, established under the Family Violence Reform Advisory Group, will play a complementary advisory role on aspects of the evaluation.

Other avenues for expert input in monitoring and evaluating the Free from Violence strategy will be considered over time. Sources of expert input may include Respect Victoria's Research Alliance; family violence reform, research and evaluation advisory bodies; and targeted consultations.

A range of other Free from Violence strategy partners and stakeholders, within and outside of government, will have supplementary roles in the monitoring and evaluation effort. Some will contribute through collecting, storing, analysing, and reporting data that will be generated by and used for monitoring and evaluation. Others will play vital roles in applying monitoring and evaluation findings to support the ongoing development or refinement of policy, programs and community education initiatives.

## 5.2 Support for monitoring and evaluation

In due course, the MES Framework can be applied alongside a series of additional resources by those implementing and evaluating initiatives under the strategy. These resources will be available through Respect Victoria's website.

The Free from Violence ME Practice Guides and Toolkits – being developed by Respect Victoria in 2021 in collaboration with DFFH – will provide specific directions on the monitoring and evaluation of strategy-funded projects, programs and campaigns.

The MES Framework and associated ME Guides represent the next step in building a systematic and consistent approach to monitoring and evaluating individual initiatives so that findings can be easily aggregated to inform higher-level evaluations. The ME Guides will provide advice on the design, evaluation questions, standardised methods and approaches, reporting templates as well as the measures and data collection tools to be used. Guidance will also be provided to ensure that the monitoring and evaluation effort undertaken is proportional to the size and scope of the initiative.

In 2021, Respect Victoria will lead the development of a comprehensive stakeholder engagement plan with key stakeholders to ensure that strategy-funded agencies are fully informed of the monitoring and evaluation resources being developed, funder and fundee learning is supported, and the MES Framework and its associated resources are adopted across the primary prevention sector.

## 5.3 Rolling schedule

In the interests of transparency and efficient planning, Respect Victoria in conjunction with DFFH will maintain a flexible rolling schedule of monitoring and evaluation work for all initiatives under the strategy. This schedule will include work at all evaluation levels that are articulated in this MES Framework. It will also incorporate evaluation support and capacity building for initiative managers, and identify the major points at which reporting is expected (detailed in Section 5.4).

Evaluation activities will be determined and prioritised according to the decision-making framework and criteria set out in Appendix A. In particular, this decision framework will guide the allocation of additional and available resources to support discrete evaluation work that is above and beyond the capacity of an initiative's budget. As new initiatives are funded under the strategy, funders should expect transparency on whether monitoring and evaluation of the initiative under consideration can be carried out within budget.

The rolling program of monitoring and evaluation will commence with a rapid audit of the status of monitoring and evaluation reporting of initiatives to date. This audit will identify those initiatives for which evaluations have been completed, in what form and by whom, acknowledging that as the First Action Plan commenced in 2018, there will be differences

in monitoring and evaluation approaches and in the levels of evaluation data collected. This audit will guide the next steps for how to best assess individual evaluations, as well as cluster-based evaluations, of initiatives that have been completed. Audit results will also identify those elements of completed initiatives that warrant further retrospective evaluation, either as a discrete evaluation or as an element of a wider cross-theme or cross-strategy evaluation.

The next tranche of evaluations will be undertaken on ongoing and newly funded initiatives. This work will prioritise process evaluations that are considered necessary precursors for effectiveness or impact evaluations, and evaluations of initiatives that will deliver immediate evidence of progress towards outcomes.

At the same time, priority will be given to commissioning the first set of thematic/cluster evaluations. Planning will also commence for the mid-term review of the strategy. This review will involve aggregating and examining the collective work delivered chiefly under the Free from Violence strategy's First Action Plan.

The rolling schedule of monitoring and evaluation will be available on Respect Victoria's website. Table 3 provides a high-level roadmap of this schedule.



Table 3: Roadmap for monitoring and evaluation of Free from Violence strategy and its initiatives

Action	Time frame
Rapid audit of the status of monitoring and evaluation to date of initiatives under the strategy (initiative level).	Second half of 2021
Develop monitoring and evaluation plans for activity funded under the Strategy.	Ongoing
Commence first set of thematic/cluster evaluations. These evaluations will include an evaluation of the full series of social marketing campaigns now managed by Respect Victoria.	Second half of 2021
Collate baseline data for the strategy's outcome indicators and identify data gaps in population-level indicators held in the Prevention of Family Violence Data Platform.	Second half of 2021
Produce evaluation guidance and toolkit resources for practitioners.	Second half of 2021
Commence mid-term review of the strategy.	Second half of 2021
Complete mid-term review of the strategy.	First half of 2022
Develop the Second Action Plan with details of an enhanced monitoring program.	First half of 2022
Commence second set of thematic/cluster evaluations.	Second half of 2022

## 5.4 Reporting and knowledge sharing

To optimise the value of ongoing work under the strategy, the outputs of the strategy's monitoring and evaluation program will be shared and reported in a variety of ways. This will require commitment to regular formal reporting to ensure accountability to funders and policymakers, and periodic public reporting to ensure that communities and other stakeholders have access to findings and a clear view of our progress.

The key elements of this reporting will be:

- Individual initiatives will provide **monitoring reports** directly to funders on a regular basis as agreed in funding contracts, but not less than six-monthly intervals.
- Evaluation reports** for individual initiatives will be provided to funders within timelines as agreed in funding contracts. While there may be reasons for why some evaluation materials cannot be shared, every effort will be made to share evaluation learnings, as efficiently as possible, to all Free from Violence stakeholders. Learnings can be disseminated in various ways including through presentations or other formats instead of formal reports.

- A publicly released **Free from Violence annual report** will be developed (following the first annual report, released in October 2019). This annual report will draw on monitoring reports and provide a snapshot of implementation activity under the strategy and the MES Framework for the relevant period.
- A **three-yearly report to Parliament** will be produced by Respect Victoria on progress in primary prevention, as required under the *Prevention of Family Violence Act 2018 (Vic)*. This report will draw on the inputs of the strategy's monitoring and evaluation program. The first report is scheduled for 2022.
- Family Violence Outcomes Framework reporting** will occur annually, with the first report scheduled for late 2021. This public report will provide the most up-to-date reading of progress towards Outcomes specified in the Framework's prevention component (Domain 1), which are aligned with the Free from Violence outcomes. This reporting may be informed by the strategy's monitoring and evaluation findings.
- The Free from Violence's **mid-term review** will be an important evaluation of its progress, to be completed and published in 2022. The timing of further whole-of-strategy evaluation activities will be determined as we move into the Second Action Plan.

Further details on the timing and scope of these reports will be provided in due course on Respect Victoria’s website.

In addition to formal reporting, sustained efforts will be undertaken to translate and disseminate findings and learnings as effectively and efficiently as possible to stakeholders. The timing and format of evaluation reports that are to be made available will be signalled on the Respect Victoria website as the rolling schedule for monitoring and evaluation is developed and regularly reviewed.

Additional translation activities will ensure evaluation findings are utilised continuously to encourage a culture of learning, improvement and planning, to guide organisational and practice change, adapt approaches and inform future investment decision-making. For example:

- individually funded initiatives will be asked to provide a clear plan for disseminating findings back to the prevention sector
- important findings from reports and annual reports will be translated into short briefs for government and other funders so that evidence can rapidly inform additional actions within or across action plans
- capacity building activities and events for participating organisations will be held to accelerate uptake of emerging evidence to improve practice.

In accordance with its legislative remit, Respect Victoria will synthesise learnings from the monitoring and evaluation program to support the development of standards and, ultimately, a program design and practice model that endorses the primary prevention programs.



## Appendix A Evaluation of Free from Violence initiatives: decision guidelines

All Free from Violence–funded initiatives should be considered for evaluation at the earliest opportunity. Whilst there is an expectation that all funded activity will undergo some form of evaluation, decision guidelines have been developed to assist fund administrators to determine whether to evaluate formally and the nature, timing and management of any agreed evaluation activity.

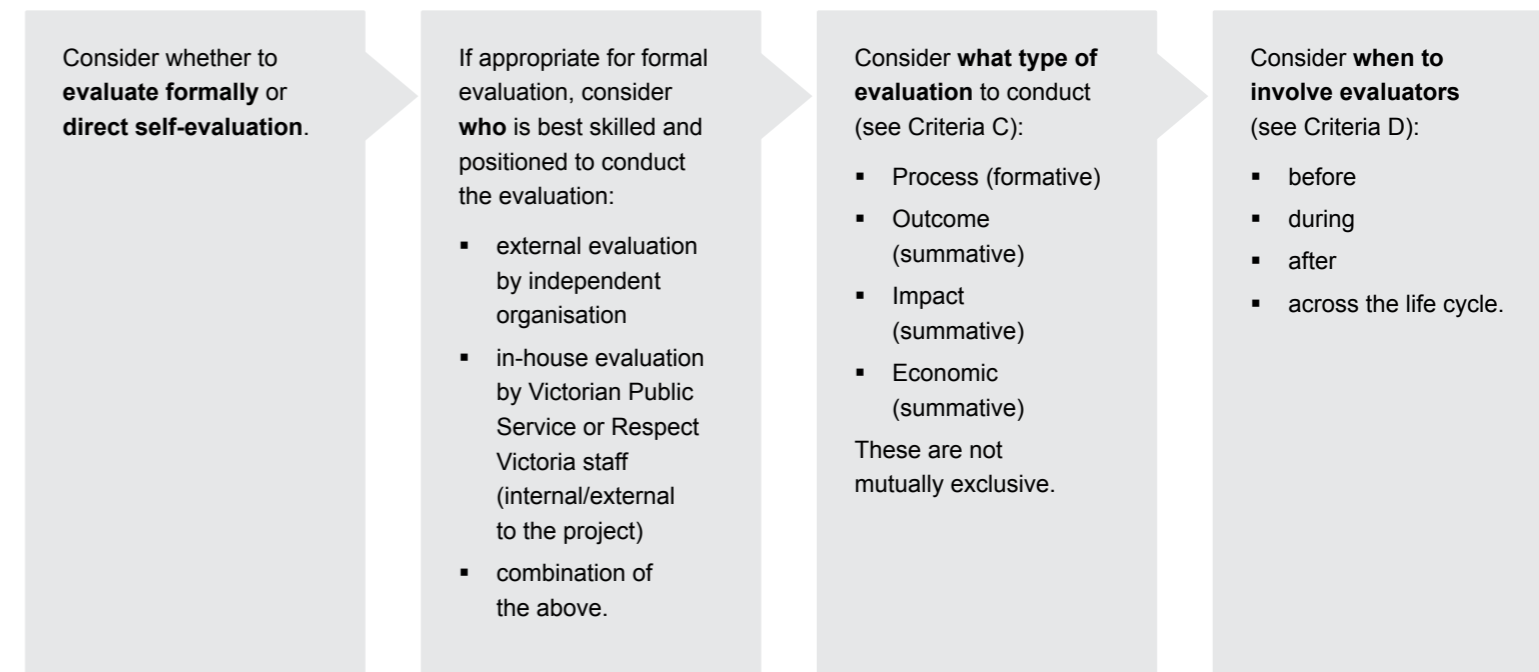
This appendix provides information to assist fund administrators to determine the most appropriate scope, type and timing for evaluating Free from Violence initiatives. The guidelines apply to both individual initiatives and clusters of initiatives.

The decision tree in Figure 6 outlines the key

considerations for determining a planned program of evaluation activity across the life of the Free from Violence strategy. Decisions made as a result of applying these guidelines will inform the development of a rolling workplan of monitoring and evaluating activity that will assist with evaluating the overarching success of the strategy.

Notwithstanding this decision tree, it is important to note that decision-making processes are not necessarily linear nor static. The program of planned monitoring and evaluation activity will require constant review as conceptual directions outlined in the strategy’s action plans are progressively operationalised into discrete initiatives and streams of work, and budgets are established.

Figure 6: Free from Violence evaluation decision tree





## Criteria for decision-making

### A. Gateway determination: whether to evaluate

Not all Free from Violence initiatives will be formally evaluated. Only initiatives that meet one or more of the following gateway criteria should qualify for further consideration of whether or not formal evaluation should be undertaken:

- the initiative represents a large investment, is large in scale or complex (as determined by factors such as range of partners and/ or beneficiaries, range of cohorts targeted, breadth of geographical spread) or innovative
- whether evaluation findings are likely to contribute to the existing knowledge base of what works in primary prevention (why, for whom, under what conditions and for how long) or answer core questions that will influence future initiatives and intervention design and implementation (i.e. have broader transferrable application)
- the initiative is amenable to evaluation (this criterion may exclude research or literature review type activities) and there are no sensitivities or challenges that are likely to constrain/prohibit evaluation
- evaluation findings are considered a critical input to future programming and policymaking (e.g. successive Free from Violence action plans), legislative development, and initiatives and further implementation.

### B. Selection of evaluator

If it is determined that evaluations should be undertaken in relation to Free from Violence initiatives, the next step is to determine which type of evaluation activity is most suitable.

- evaluation is contracted out to an external evaluator with procurement, contract and project management by DFFH or Respect Victoria project staff or their nominees, in accordance with their respective organisational roles and responsibilities
- in-house evaluation by DFFH or Respect Victoria staff or their nominees (e.g. another government department or organisational affiliate)

Initiatives that do not meet the gateway criteria for formal evaluation, but are amenable to evaluation, will be required to undergo self-evaluation by the fund recipient.

Table 4 outlines further detail on approaches that may assist with determination of the most appropriate evaluation types.



Table 4: Typical characteristics of initiatives by evaluation types

---

## External evaluation

---

- Innovative and/or large-scale initiatives that require a robust evidence base (i.e. generated by summative evaluation) to inform decisions on replication, scale-up and amendment to scope
  - Likely to be more complex in design, scope or reach (e.g. multistage, multisite, higher intensity, high participant throughput or high-volume outputs) and require specialist or technical evaluation skills (e.g. cost benefit, cost-effectiveness, return on investment, outcome or impact evaluation)
  - Sufficient budget exists to support an external evaluation
  - The data collected/planned to be collected (quantitative and qualitative) is appropriate, sufficiently robust and of a quality standard to support formal measurement of anticipated outcomes and impacts
- 

## In-house evaluation

---

- Prior to engagement of an external evaluator, consideration should be given to undertaking evaluation internally where appropriate, giving consideration to cost effectiveness factors
  - Appropriate for initiatives of all levels of complexity) provided the availability of resources and specialist or technical evaluation skills that may be required for higher complexity initiatives
- 

## Self-evaluation by fund recipient

---

Evaluations of this nature are appropriate and useful when:

- Initiatives are likely to be smaller in scale and lower in complexity
  - Funds for evaluation may be non-existent, low in relation to total budget for the initiative/s are insufficient to attract a suitable external evaluator
  - Initiatives are time limited and do not support summative type evaluation
  - Size and duration of the initiative does not justify cost of a specialised or higher transparency evaluation
  - Self-evaluation by in-house staff involved in the initiative is regarded adequate to meet the requirements of a formative review
  - Data on the initiative (actual or planned) is not sufficiently robust to support summative types of evaluation
  - Initiatives are taking an action-research learning approach
- 

It should be noted that while evaluation types are presented as discrete categories, in certain circumstances, a cross-organisational evaluation team might be mobilised, comprising a mix of people with different backgrounds and perspectives.

### C. Selecting an evaluation approach

Evaluations can be designed to answer a range of questions, which can be broadly classified as follows:

- how a policy or initiative was delivered and operated in a certain way
- whether or not the policy or initiative made a difference and the reasons why/why not
- whether observed benefits generated by the policy or initiative justify the costs
- whether any design or implementation adjustments or improvements are required.

There are several factors to be considered when deciding the type of evaluation most appropriate for assessing a given intervention. Broad evaluation types and intended areas of inquiry are as follows.

#### *Process review: how was the process delivered?*

This type of evaluation reviews the process associated with development and implementation of an intervention (policy or initiative), including its inputs (e.g. budget, staff, resources leveraged), activities delivered and pathways of delivery. Rather than drawing upon a generic set of questions, issues for exploration are tailored to the nature of the policy or initiative under review.

In general, however, process-related questions are intentionally descriptive. Common areas of inquiry, for example, include a description of how participants of the intervention were recruited, the criteria used to recruit trainers and the qualification of trainers,

how these factors varied across delivery sites, how they benefited or worked to the detriment of participant groups (e.g. those from different ethnic groups, those with disabilities), the barriers to delivering an intervention as planned and strategies implemented to deal with implementation challenges.

#### *Outcome and impact review: what difference did the intervention make?*

This type of evaluation focuses on the measurable achievements of the intervention (policy or initiative), which themselves are either direct objectives or contributors to the objectives of the intervention, and the benefits that they generate.

Outcome-based evaluations generally focus on the short- to intermediate-term benefits of the intervention for the beneficiaries (e.g. participants, stakeholders), while impact evaluations focus on the longer-term benefits for the target cohort or broader community.

Questions typically explored by this type of evaluation include:

- Did the intervention (policy or initiative) achieve its stated objectives; that is, was it effective?
- What were the observed outcomes and how significant were the changes relative to the pre-intervention situation?
- To what extent were the observed outcomes attributable to the intervention as opposed to other factors, and what would have happened in its absence (i.e. the counterfactual)?



- To what extent, if any, did observed changes vary across individuals, settings, cohorts, etc., and were these changes consistent with anticipated differences?
- Were there any unintended outcomes, and if so, how significant were these and to what factors may they be attributed?

#### *Economic evaluation: did the benefits justify the cost?*

If conducted well, an outcome/impact evaluation can demonstrate and quantify the outcomes generated by an intervention. It will not, however, be able to demonstrate whether the observed outcomes justify introducing the intervention from an economic perspective. That is, it will not be able to show whether the benefits outweigh the costs of intervention. Types of economic evaluations include:

- cost-effectiveness (CEA) – relates the cost of implementing and delivering an intervention to the total quantity of observed outcomes generated to produce an estimated ‘cost per unit of outcome’ (e.g. the cost per additional individual participating in an intervention)
- cost benefit analysis (CBA) – goes further than a CEA by attributing a monetary value to the observed changes in outcomes (e.g. the value of placing an additional individual in the intervention). CEA quantifies as many costs and benefits of an intervention as is feasible – including wider social impacts – to explore intervention justification (i.e. do the benefits outweigh the costs) and compares interventions associated with different types of outcomes.



#### *What brought about the observed outcomes/impacts?*

Questions relating to attribution are difficult to answer definitively but are critically important. Most evaluations are focused on demonstrating achievement of outcomes and impacts, without exploring the precise mechanisms involved. Understanding why an intervention generated observed outcomes and impacts is, however, desirable for a number of reasons, including:

- improving effectiveness and value for money by enhancing successful aspects of an intervention and minimising or ceasing components that were not as successful. By identifying factors hindering effectiveness, unintended consequences can be avoided and the intervention can be improved for cohorts and/or delivery areas that benefited less than others
- generating the evidence base for ‘what works’ to extend intervention scope and coverage (i.e. replicability and scalability)
- improving decision-making and its transparency as well as strengthening credibility, accountability and value for money statements.

The choice of evaluation approach will be influenced by a range of issues, including:

- the degree of complexity in the relationship between the intervention and its desired outcomes and the ability to control for other drivers of outcomes. Simple relationships can be investigated robustly by implementing a process evaluation, but more complex relationships point towards the value of an outcome/impact evaluation

- the ‘significance’ of potential outcomes in contributing to the achievement of the intervention’s overall objectives. An outcome evaluation may, for example, robustly evaluate intermediate outcomes but is unlikely to directly measure the broader benefits of the intervention and their longevity
- the degree of identifiable change in practice or increase in resources introduced by the intervention. Sizeable changes from interventions are more likely to be represented as distinct and identifiable and to generate effects large enough to be differentiated from those generated by other potential drivers
- intervention implementation and whether this facilitates or hinders estimation of the counterfactual (e.g. implementation design, robustness and appropriateness of performance measurement and monitoring).

#### *D. Timing*

It is important to consider the type of evaluation to be pursued early in the policy cycle within which the intervention operates, and ensure that outcome, impact and economic type evaluations, where required, are built into intervention design as early as possible. For instance, impact evaluations may require establishment of intervention designs (e.g. use of comparison groups) and specific evaluation techniques (e.g. pilots, randomised control trials, phased introduction, allocation by scoring). Failure to consider these requirements early enough can limit evaluation options and the reliability of the evidence that can be obtained.



**Respect  
Victoria**

**Preventing  
Family  
Violence**