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New model for supporting women and children fleeing family violence recommends key amendments to services

“Filling The Gap: Integrated Post Crisis Response for Women Who Have Experienced Family Violence” addresses a number of long-standing gaps in existing service provisions which make it harder for many women leaving situations of violence to rebuild their lives.

The model draws upon extensive primary research commissioned by Good Shepherd Youth & Family Service, in addition to research reports undertaken by a number of community sector and government bodies.

It was developed in consultation with a reference group comprising a range of key sector stakeholders as well as policy and practice experts in the field of family violence.

Good Shepherd Youth & Family Service, in association with McAuley Community Services for Women, will shortly release the model for comment from the family violence sector.

The model recommends complementing existing service provisions to create a systematic response for women and children who require more targeted and longer term support than the current Victorian Integrated Family Violence Service System provides.

“Extensive research into family violence and homelessness has identified that some women having experienced sustained family violence or childhood abuse find it extremely difficult to re-establish their lives after fleeing the situation of violence,” says Dr Kathy Landvogt from Good Shepherd Youth & Family Service’s Social Policy and Research Unit.

“They are trying to stabilise and rebuild their lives, often with minimal personal or financial resources, and without longer term support these women and their children risk returning to violent situations because they lack alternatives.”

While the family violence service system in Victoria has improved significantly in the past five years there are still omissions in the provision of systematic long-term post crisis support for women and children fleeing situations of family violence.

The new model aims to help women sustain the changes they have already made in their lives and regain true independence and economic and emotional stability. It is designed to extend the capacity of the current service system and prevent women returning to violent relationships due to lack of support: to break the cycle of family violence.

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