

Gippsland Integrated Family Violence Service Reform Steering Committee Annual Report (Jan – Dec 2007)

Integrated Family Violence Service Reform Timeline

For most of the State, the outcomes of the Family Violence Submission process commenced in July 2006, when funding from the Department of Human Services (DHS) was received to introduce the Integrated Service Reforms over a four year period. In Gippsland the Submission process wasn't completed until Nov/Dec 2006, therefore delaying the starting process by six months.

Appointment of the Family Violence Strategic Development Coordinator

Gippsland Women's Health Service has the responsibility for the appointment and management of the leadership component of the Integrated Family Violence Service Reform Strategy. The current Gippsland Family Violence Strategic Directions Coordinator, Kerry Hamer commenced in the leadership position on the 16th January 2007. Prior to that Sarah Corbell had been in the position and had been involved in progressing the submission process through DHS workshops/consultation process and the preparation of draft documentation with regard to the establishment of the Regional Steering Committee, as well as participation in network meetings and discussions regarding the implementation of the Statewide Integrated Family Violence Reform Strategy.

First Regional Steering Committee Terms of Reference and Communication Strategy and Order of Priorities for Gippsland

The inaugural meeting of the Gippsland Integrated Family Violence Steering Committee was held on 14th March 2007. Meetings continue to be held bi – monthly. Funded Family Violence agencies and key stakeholders, who comprise the Committee, have sufficient seniority to represent the agency position, make commitments to partnership arrangements and ensure that regional integration strategies are actioned at an agency level. Additional members can be accessed when necessary.

Key stakeholders include;

- Police
- Family Services
- Gippsland Early Intervention Services (GEIS)
- Courts & Legal Services
- Housing sector (Community Housing LTD)
- DHS Representation from Housing, Child Protection & Indigenous sectors.

The Terms of Reference and the Communication Strategy were developed and implemented. The Committee weighted the Key Reform Priorities (KRP) from the *DHS Guiding Integrated Family Violence Service Reforms 2006- 2009* document. The Regional Strategic Plan was developed for six months from May to Nov 07 to enable consultation with practitioner's working in the family violence field and additional items were progressively added with a review being held in Jan 08.

The Key Reform Priorities for this period were;

Priority One – Establishment of the Regional coordination and planning structure

Priority Two – Working together to provide quality services for clients

Priority Three – Development of clear Referral Pathways and Intake Processes

Priority Eight – Developing Critical Linkages

Priority Nine – Workforce Development to support Quality Services

The initial areas of service coordination and planning highlighted by the Steering Committee were the Gippsland after hours crisis response and a facilitated Forum. A regional working party was formed to source ideas and offer support for the Gippsland after hours provider, Quantum, to improve the crisis response for face to face support. This meeting has occurred bi monthly since April '07. One of the major outcomes so far has been the development of a pilot program which will utilize Australian Home Care Service workers (AHC) as a support to Quantum after hours practitioners to provide when required, items of necessity such as food, nappies and formulae as well as possible transport to women and children who are victims of family violence. This will need carefully planned training of the AHC workers, but it could contribute to the Quantum after hours service being more accessible across the region.

A facilitated Forum was held on 9th October in Sale for 80 Gippsland professionals in the family violence sector. The aim was to ensure that those working in this sector were informed about the Integrated Service Reforms. Participants were given an opportunity to contribute to the Regional Family Violence Strategic Plan, through a consultation process using an interactive tool. The Forum also provided the opportunity for referral pathways and relevant Codes of Practice to be reinforced through a scenario segment.

Successful Funding Application

An application for \$5,000 made to DHS for Best Practice Grants for Integrated Family Violence Reform and Young People to develop a regional training resource from the DVD recorded from the scenario at the Family Violence Forum was successful. This will be completed by June 30th 2008.

Establishment of Sub Regional Reference Groups and Practitioner's Groups

The Communication Strategy supported the (re) establishment of the Sub Regional Reference Groups with an emphasis on the documentation of referral pathways between services and organizations. All three Sub Regional Reference Groups are meeting on a bi monthly basis. The Strategic Development Coordinator attends all three to ensure consistent feedback from and to the Regional Steering Committee. The next step is the establishment of the practitioner's meetings on a regular basis to enable networking opportunities and feedback from local workers.

Training

The Domestic Violence and Incest Resource Centre were approached to provide accredited family violence training in East Gippsland. DVIRC agreed to meet the needs of Gippsland practitioners and deliver training in the region, instead of staff having to travel long distances to Melbourne. This training was held in Bairnsdale on 6th, 7th, 13th & 14th Sept. with 18 people participating.

The benchmark training for the collection of supplementary data from funded family violence services was delivered in Gippsland through the coordinated efforts of the Strategic Development Coordinator and the Dept of Planning and Communities. It enabled more Gippsland representatives to attend the training in their own region than if they had to go to Melbourne. Rhonda Cumberland delivered the training and was able to devote some time to services to discuss the Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework which had been released in July.

Police

The Coordinator has been working with the Gippsland Family Violence Police Advisor for the development of Memorandums of Understanding between Gippsland Police and locally funded Family Violence Services as well as flow charts to reinforce the correct referral pathways, particularly for the after hours crisis response. This is building on a Family Violence Police Education Strategy for Gippsland which has been approved by the Gippsland Integrated Family Violence Service Reform Steering Committee to commence in March 08.

Legal Services and Courts

The Deputy Registrar with the Latrobe Law Courts, has completed the *Recognising and Responding to Family Violence* training and has been appointed the Family Violence Resource Officer for Gippsland. The Deputy Registrar is part of the Gippsland Integrated Family Violence Service Reform Steering Committee. Initial meetings have been held between the Strategic Development Coordinator, the Deputy Registrar and Gippsland Community Legal Service, as funding has become available for a .5EFT Family Violence lawyer to be based at the Latrobe Law Courts. This lawyer will also attend Quantum for half a day a week and be invited onto the Latrobe Sub Regional Reference Group.

Family Violence Web Site

The development of a regional Family Violence website is occurring to house all relevant documents, Codes of Practice and Protocols whether local, regional or statewide to ensure that they are readily available for professionals. The website will be found on the Gippsland Women's Health Service webpage with appropriate links to other relevant services, agencies and information.

Regional Meetings and Services

The Strategic Development Coordinator has formed links with the relevant Family and Children's Services and Housing sectors by delivering presentations to educate the sectors about what is happening in the family violence area. There is representation on the Regional Steering Committee from DHS Child Protection and Housing sectors as well as the Manager of the Indigenous Family Violence Strategy. The Strategic Development Coordinator attended the Indigenous Ten Year Plan Focus Group and in consultation with the DHS Family Violence Indigenous Liaison Officer, Sandra Patten has been able to identify actions to be implemented in the 2008 Gippsland Integrated Strategic Service Reform Plan.

Statewide Meetings and Services

The Strategic Development Coordinator attends the DHS Statewide Integrated Family Violence Leadership Reference Group meetings, DV Vic Leadership peer support meetings as well as the Practice Forums in Melbourne. The Statewide Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service was also visited to facilitate better relationships between the Gippsland Family Violence Services and the Statewide Service. The Statewide Coordinator reciprocated by attending the Integrated Family Violence Steering Committee Meeting to exchange information.

Kerry Hamer

Gippsland Family Violence Strategic Directions Coordinator

Gippsland Women's Health Service

22nd Jan '08

