



EMR RFVP

Eastern Metropolitan Region
**Regional Family Violence
Partnership**

Regional Family Violence Partnership
Eastern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)
2015-2018

The Regional Family Violence Partnership, Eastern Metropolitan Region, Memorandum of Understanding is a statement of common purpose.

It describes the relationships of stakeholders to each other in this forum, to the community it serves and to the delivery of services in the family violence sector.

Revision History

This MoU was first developed by consultant, Liz Olle in consultation with signatories and the original Regional Family Violence Committee, Eastern Metropolitan Region and endorsed in November, 2007

First amendment: March 2010 by RIC, Rose Solomon & Chair Tracy Castelino in consultation with Regional Family Violence Partnership Executive Committee

Second amendment: October 2012 by RIC's, Erin Davis & Denise Roberts, Chair Kathleen Maltzahn and consultant Tracy Castelino in consultation with the Regional Family Violence Partnership Executive Committee

Third amendment: July-Jan 2015 by RIC, Jelena Djurdjevic & MOU sub-committee; Maryclare Machen, Rose Solomon and Belinda Lo in consultation with the RFVPEC

This MoU is due to be reviewed: 2018

Responsibility for initiating review process: Chair of the RFVP

Table of Contents

Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians of the Land	5
Memorandum of Understanding Executive Summary.....	6
Statement of Purpose	7
Statement of Principles	7
Key Operational Features.....	13
Membership and Participation	14
Partnership Membership	14
Associate Membership.....	14
Executive Committee.....	15
Confidentiality.....	17
Communication Methods.....	17
RFVP Leadership.....	18

Table of Acronyms

Acronym	Full title
AAV	Aboriginal Affairs Victoria
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CDM	Consensus Decision Making
CEDAW	United Nations' Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CRAF	Common Risk Assessment Framework
DHHS	Department of Health & Human Services
DPCD	Department of Planning and Community Development
EDVOS	Eastern Domestic Violence Service
EMBCC	Eastern Men's Behaviour Change Consortium
EMR	Eastern Metropolitan Region
FVIP	Family Violence Integrating Partnership
FVPA	Family Violence Protection Act (2008)
IFVRAG	Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Group
MBCP	Men's Behaviour Change Program
MoD	Management of Differences
OWP	Office of Women's Policy
RIC	Regional Integration Coordinator
RFVP	Regional Family Violence Partnership
RFVPEC	Regional Family Violence Partnership Executive Committee

Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians of the Land

The stakeholders and signatories of the Regional Family Violence Partnership (RFVP) acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land, the Wurundjeri people and their Elders past and present, all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in the Eastern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne, and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia.

We affirm our deep sorrow at the violence and injustices that have been wrought on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their culture as a result of European settlement and the hurt and distress this has caused.

We affirm our commitment to the continuing right of all people to respect and dignity and we acknowledge that these things have been denied to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We affirm our desire for reconciliation and a commitment to building a future that is respectful of, values and embraces the heritage and culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and provides justice and equality for all.

We acknowledge the distinctive rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of this land including the right to a distinct status and culture, the right to self-determination, and the right to land.

We acknowledge Elders as the keepers of a rich culture and history and we recognise the uniqueness and diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, society and history.

Please note: We gratefully acknowledge the following, whose words have informed this statement - EMR Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Group, EMR Aboriginal Health Promotion and Chronic Care Partnership, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, Victorian Indigenous Family Violence Taskforce, Aboriginal Affairs Victoria, Berry Street Victoria.

Memorandum of Understanding Executive Summary

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is to build and strengthen partnerships between particular organisations that seek to enhance the response to women and children who experience violence, enhance accountability of perpetrators, continue building a more collaborative regional family violence service system. Alongside a cohesive service system is the need to support and embed work that seeks to prevent violence before it occurs.

One of the key goals is to develop partnerships among all of the parties to the MoU as they work more closely together and benefit from the exchange of ideas and practices. The original MoU (2007) established the baseline for a fortified partnership, which has resulted in enhanced services for women and children affected by family violence and strengthened accountability of perpetrators.

Overseas and Australian research indicates that the most effective solutions involve a whole of government, coordinated community response. This community coordinated response should include a strong police and judicial response, and well targeted human service responses, including housing for women, children and men. All services need to work together to actively respond to family violence.

This MoU is a written agreement that serves to clarify relationships and responsibilities between key stakeholders and their organisations in the RFVP that share a vision to continue reforming the family violence service system. It details governance structure, information sharing and confidentiality obligations for all signatories. All partners sign to acknowledge agreement.

Through this MoU, the RFVP continues to strengthen its strategic and practice work with a set of messages that emphasise the effectiveness of coordination across agencies, government and non-government, in the contribution to lower recidivism, increase engagement with victims, and decreased resistance from abusers to the state's role in confronting the abuse. The RFVP extends messages of help; that is, to protect victims and to provide perpetrators with opportunities for change. It also extends messages of accountability, through the justice system and engagement through the men's family violence behaviour change sector.

As this requires complex and long term collaboration, we have reviewed and revised the MoU over the years. We have learnt that the RFVP requires substantial documented corroboration to clearly outline roles and responsibilities and the development of structures and processes that take care of the partnership's overarching goals.

Previously the MOU warranted two sections, one outlining the background and context of the RFVP and the second an operational framework. In this current MOU a decision was made to reallocate the background and context to a partnership legacy document. The MOU will focus

on providing an operational framework to service the maintenance and ongoing work of the RFVP.

Operational Framework

The operational framework of the RFVP is not a legally binding document, but rather reflects the intentions and aspirations of partners. The intention is signatories to this MoU and partnership members actively participate in the RFVP, value the framework, purpose and principles as central to their own responses to family violence.

Statement of Purpose

Through collective effort, the RFVP works to build a system that provides safety and justice to all women and children experiencing family violence in our region; and to build an equitable society that prevents violence against women and their children, their families and communities in all its forms. To carry out this purpose, the RFVP works with the following key principles:

1. Safety of women and children; ensuring the needs and independent rights of children who live with or experience family violence are upheld
2. Women's right to access information enabling them to make informed decisions; providing choice, control and agency over their lives and future
3. Strengthening risk management and accountability mechanisms for perpetrators
4. Acknowledgement and recognition of the distinctive rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; the importance of cultural safety and the right to work within culturally relevant frameworks
5. Recognition of the diversity of individuals and communities; promoting inclusion and cultural safety
6. Recognition of a human rights approach including a gendered analysis
7. Preventing violence before it happens; including a commitment to applying a prevention lens to all elements of our partnership's work
8. In the spirit of partnership; collaborating to achieve a coordinated response to family violence and sexual assault

Statement of Principles

1. Safety of women and children

The RFVP recognises that family violence significantly affects women and children and we will work to uphold their safety. We recognise Australia's commitment to United Nation's Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 1979 (CEDAW) and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, 1993 (DEVAW).

Women have the right to be safe in their intimate relationships and in their homes.

Regional Family Violence Partnership (RFVP), Eastern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne (EMR)
Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) 2015-2018

In 2005 statistics and research urged the Victorian government to reform the intervention response to women who experience violence, and the data continues to provide an overall picture of impact, severity and lethality. Current data and research indicates:

- Intimate partner violence alone contributes 9% to the disease burden in Victorian women aged 15-44 years, making it the largest known contributor to the preventable disease burden in this group.¹
- A woman dies at the hands of a current or former partner almost every week in Australia.²
- One woman in three has experienced physical violence, since the age of 15.³
- One woman in five has experienced sexual violence.⁴
- One woman in four has experienced emotional abuse by a current or former partner.⁵
- Women in Australia are three times more likely than men to experience violence at the hands of a partner.⁶
- Almost half of the women who experience violence by an ex-partner said children had seen or heard the violence.⁷
- Young women (18 - 24 years) experience significantly higher rates of physical and sexual violence than women in older age groups.⁸
- There is growing evidence that women with a disability are more likely to experience violence. For example, 90% of Australian women with an intellectual disability have been subjected to sexual abuse.⁹
- Indigenous women experience disproportionately high levels of family violence.¹⁰

The RFVP recognises the independent rights and needs of the child, and affirms and aims to work in ways consistent with the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1990. We affirm our commitment to the safety, protection and wellbeing of all children, to recognise the best interests and independent rights of the child, to support the mother-child relationship (where mother is non-offending parent), and recognise and respond to the cultural identity of the child.¹¹

Family violence is recognised as a form of child abuse that impacts on children's development, safety and well-being. This impact occurs when children witness violence against mothers and other family members; when direct attacks are made on children; and when children act to protect mothers and/or siblings and are caught in the cross-fire. The absence of a safe and nurturing environment may also impact on children's psycho-social development. A key feature of both the legislative and policy reforms for both the Victorian

¹ Vic Health, 2004

² Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC), 2003

³ Vic Health, 2014

⁴ Vic Health, 2014

⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2012

⁶ ABS, 2013

⁷ ABS, 2013

⁸ ABS, 2013

⁹ Women With Disabilities Australian (WWDA), 2004

¹⁰ AIC, 2004

¹¹ This statement is built on the key aims of the 2008 state-wide partnership agreement template that was developed to promote integration between Family Violence, Child First/Family Services and Child Protection services in Victoria.

child and family services sector and the family violence sector is the establishment of multi service approaches that work together more effectively to meet the needs of vulnerable children and young people through better prevention and earlier intervention approaches. Service provision that has a focus on recovery is also important in responding to children who have experienced family violence.

Clearly defined and well understood collaborative arrangements are required in order to ensure that children, young people, women and men receive services that will respond to immediate and longer term concerns about individual and family safety, rights, health and well-being.¹²

Partnership work between the family violence, child protection and family services sectors is located within the structures of the RFVP and these groups are represented at the Executive Committee. It is important for these sectors to utilise the principles of this MoU, the RFVP Strategic Plan and the Executive Committee as a platform to create opportunities for better service integration and joint practice that prioritises the safety and protection of children.

2. Women's right to access information enabling them to make informed decisions

The RFVP recognises and upholds the right of women's agency to be at the centre of family violence responses. Respect for autonomy is a key principle for all programs addressing violence against women.

3. Strengthening risk management and accountability mechanisms for perpetrators

The EMR RFVP comprises government and community representatives working in collaboration to achieve a coordinated community response to family violence and is a shared responsibility.

The RFVP recognises coordinated community responses must actively strengthen risk management and hold perpetrators of violence accountable.

The RFVP is committed to advocating for a strong criminal justice response; increased co-ordination with the police, courts and correctional services; proactive and prompt prosecution; increased court mandated participation in perpetrator programs and sufficient monitoring of offender compliance.

4. Acknowledgement and recognition of the distinctive rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

The RFVP acknowledges the historic and present context of colonisation and oppression that must inform culturally safe responses to family violence in partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

¹² This background information is taken from the original partnership agreement template from the 2008 Family Violence, Child First/Family Services, and Child Protection state-wide partnership.

Regional Family Violence Partnership (RFVP), Eastern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne (EMR)
Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) 2015-2018

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities respond to family violence within a particular cultural context of colonisation, oppression and injustice. In addition, as services committed to the safety of women and children we acknowledge there is a particular historical relationship for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their families with services that in the past have been responsible for the forced removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. These policies and practices of removal had, and continue to have an impact on the identity, dignity and spirit of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Therefore, we seek to work respectfully in partnership to effectively develop culturally safe responses to family violence, guided by the values stated by the Victorian Indigenous Family Violence Taskforce and noted in the government policy, *Strong Cultures, Strong Peoples, Strong Families* (AAV-DPCD, 2008). These values are:

- safety and security for victims of violence
- strong community leadership and positive role models
- shared responsibility and support for one another
- healthy lifestyles, harmonious relationships and respect for self and others
- cultural integrity/respect and cultural safety within Indigenous and mainstream services
- healing for victims and perpetrators, and
- no more violence - in the home, in the family, in the community or in the workplace.

5. Recognition of the diversity of individuals and communities

The RFVP acknowledges the inherent worth and dignity of every person and commits to honouring diversity, seeking equality and opposing discrimination based on sex, ethnic and/or cultural identity, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, spiritual choice, citizenship or ability.

Definitions of diversity differ greatly from organisation to organisation according to how such differences are perceived, which are prioritised and how they are managed, and to the extent to which they address power relations and discrimination. The RFVP endeavours to cover the complexity and richness of diverse identities.

The diversity of individuals, groups or communities may be influenced by the following:

Cultural identity
Ethnic identity
Nationality
Acculturation
Ability
Colonisation
Class
Education
Language

Regional Family Violence Partnership (RFVP), Eastern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne (EMR)
Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) 2015-2018

Literacy
Family configuration
Social history
Gender identity
Sexuality
Religion and spiritual views
Perception of time
Political orientation

Effective family violence prevention, intervention and service systems account for the realities of peoples' unique circumstances and social standing. We will collaborate within the RFVP to be respectful of all people and communities, their perspectives, and their potential contribution. Diversity and equality principles will advise the Executive on recognising and honouring often marginalised and diverse perspectives, experiences, knowledge, and culture.

The RFVP seeks to ensure that voices across community, political, social, and culture sectors and beyond are heard with the aim to:

- support the RFVP in promoting its value of confronting inequality and celebrating diversity in relation to all stakeholders and more broadly in the EMR;
- promote an inclusive, supportive, respectful and equitable multi-agency partnership;
- take responsibility for the development, implementation, review and monitoring of procedures and practices; to support the inclusion of equality and diversity in the work of the RFVP;
- promote training and the importance of embedding inclusive practice within the RFVP and member agencies.

6. Recognition of a human rights approach including a gendered analysis

The RFVP uses a human rights approach and gendered analysis of family violence. This is consistent with current data and evidence both within Australia and internationally. Violence against women is any act of gender based violence that causes or could cause physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering, including threats of harm or coercion, in public or in private life.¹³ Violence against women and family violence are recognised as inherent abuses of human rights under covenants at the international, national and state-wide levels.

This includes:

- The United Nations' *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)*
- The United Nations' Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women
- Time for Action: The National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and Children
- Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities

¹³ United Nations (UN) Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, 1993

Family violence is one of the most common forms of violence against women and their children in Australia. Sexual violence is another form of violence and can occur in intimate partner and family contexts, in workplaces, in schools, and in many other circumstances. The RFVP acknowledges that all violence is wrong, regardless of the sex of the victim or perpetrator. However, there are distinct patterns in the perpetration and impact of violence which identify gender as being a key factor and consideration.

For example, both sexes are more likely to experience violence at the hands of men.¹⁴ Men are more likely to experience violence by other men in public places, women are more likely to experience violence from men they know, often in the home.¹⁵

The overwhelming majority of acts of family violence and sexual assault are perpetrated by men against women, and it is likely to have more severe impacts on female than male victims. This doesn't minimise the experiences of male victims. It does however point to the need for an approach that acknowledges research findings and addresses the gendered dynamics of violence.

Our partnership works to prevent and respond to family violence in the context of violence against women and their children. Work in our region to promote equitable, respectful and non-violent relationships and challenge sexism and gender stereotypes benefits the whole community, including men.

7. Preventing violence before it happens

The RFVP will work on and support primary prevention initiatives and strive for the EMR to be a region where all women are free from violence, where every girl and boy grows up to be equally heard and respected.

While it is important to ensure that women have access to justice and services, these approaches alone will never end violence against women. Primary prevention of violence against women means addressing the fundamental causes - gender inequality and adherence to rigid gender stereotypes. Primary prevention programs are designed to build equal and respectful relationships between individuals and within organisations, communities and society. They challenge prevailing social norms about gender equality and expectations based on gender stereotypes and engage men and boys as partners in ending violence against women.

'Efforts to prevent violence against women and girls cannot be separated from service provision, including police and criminal justice responses to existing violence. Prevention and response strategies should be developed and implemented as a holistic and integrated system that upholds the human rights of girls and women to live in societies, communities and families that are free of such violence. Given women and girls are likely to identify violence in their own lives as a result of the awareness-raising elements of prevention activity and therefore seek assistance, effective and adequately resourced services need to be available

¹⁴ ABS, 2013

¹⁵ ABS, 2013

to respond to their disclosures that may arise. When adhering to good practice standards and processes, prevention activity reinforces response activity and vice versa, each increasing the effectiveness of the other'.¹⁶

8. Collaborating to achieve a coordinated response to family violence and sexual assault

Terms such as “integration”, “community coordinated response” and “multi-agency family violence work” tend to be used interchangeably. The EMR note that there are differences, sometimes subtle and sometimes significant. Initiatives develop differently depending on local conditions. There is no one model. *Coordinated community partnerships* work best for family violence initiatives. Evidence shows that projects that only address one sector or group of stakeholders are rarely successful. All efforts, whether in communities or at the government level, can only work if they include all stakeholders, including active responses to perpetrators by working in partnership across the justice system, courts, police and the men’s family violence sectors. The RFVP endeavours to monitor the system wide response to family violence cases.

The RFVP have chosen the term *community co-ordinated partnership* to denote the leadership of community organisations, specifically women’s services in driving the systems reform. A *community co-ordinated partnership* is understood as several services joining together to form one service system and identity with a singular infrastructure and outcome.

A *community co-ordinated partnership* response focuses on collaboration between individuals or organisations to address violence against women and children, enhance perpetrator accountability and deliver outcomes that are not easily or effectively achieved by working alone. Coordinated responses to family violence aim to become central to the way we work, deliver services and produce innovations. The RFVP also notes in addition to community organisations, it is essential for whole of government approaches to work alongside and in partnership with community responses to achieve both short and long term outcomes.

Key Operational Features

The key features of the RFVP are:

- A considered model of governance and management that includes key sector representatives at the Executive Committee level and various options for involvement of cross-sectoral partners in the partnership;
- A purpose and guiding principles that prioritise the safety of women and children and the accountability of perpetrators throughout all of the strategies and initiatives of the partnership;
- Specialist family violence knowledge and expertise with links to state-wide family violence services, policy and responses at the local, national and international level;
- Capacity to develop and provide training and workforce development;

¹⁶ Fergus, L. (2012). Prevention of violence against women and girls, UN Women Expert Group Meeting, EGM/PVAWG/2012/BP.1, p7

Regional Family Violence Partnership (RFVP), Eastern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne (EMR)
Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) 2015-2018

- Capacity to provide a regional and state advocacy platform;
- A human rights approach including a gendered analysis of family violence ;
- Integrated responses for women, men and children that acknowledge cultural safety;
- A focus on the context of family violence in justice system and strong partnerships with police and courts;
- An Independent Chair at the Executive Committee who is independent from the services in the EMR; and
- A Regional Integration Coordinator position

Membership and Participation

Family violence reform and integration cannot occur without the active commitment and participation of stakeholders across multiple sectors.

To progress the most critical aspects of reform work, there are core community and statutory sectors which must be at the leadership table. This is reflected in the makeup of the Executive Committee level and is based on the government document “*Guiding Integrated Family Violence Service Reform 2006-2009 (Department of Human Services)*”.

Furthermore, the RFVP is organised into varied levels of membership and participation, so that services in these sectors may nominate the extent to which they endeavour to participate in and progress reform.

As described below, membership in the Regional Family Violence Partnership includes partnership and associate level membership. The ways in which these members may participate in the RFVP includes: the Executive Committee, working groups, annual forums, training opportunities and/or through various communication methods.

Partnership Membership

Partnership members are managerial level persons in agencies that are signed on to the memorandum of understanding. They may participate as either a member or chair of a working group or, if appointed, act as sector representative on the Executive Committee. Partnership members are also able to attend training events, receive information on the distribution list and participate in the annual forums.

Associate Membership

Associate members are workers who come from the broad range of sectors involved in the work of the RFVP at a level that is determined by them and/or their agency. This component of the membership can either elect to receive information on the distribution list, join a working group, attend training events and participate at annual forums. Associate members are not eligible to participate at the Executive Committee or chair a working group.

Executive Committee

Central to the RFVP is the Executive Committee. The RFVPEC holds the responsibility for driving and monitoring the implementation of family violence integration at a regional level. The RFVPEC provides the cross-sector leadership required to develop a strategic plan, advise on family violence integration initiatives and advocate for improvements at the state-wide level.

Sector representation:

The appointment of sector representatives to the Executive Committee is premised on the basis that they are able to fulfil roles that effectively represent sectors which *stand to undergo the most significant change* under family violence reform. These representatives hold voting rights in the Executive Committee, are signatories to the MoU, and must be managerial level decision-makers in their agencies.

Representatives are expected to hold their positions for a minimum of two years. In the event that a sector representative resigns or leaves his/her position prior to the completion of the term, the Regional Integration Coordinator will inform the relevant sector of the vacancy and that agency, sector or government department will appoint a replacement representative.

The question of whether an organisation should have more than one member on the Executive Committee will be decided by the Executive Committee on a case-to-case basis.

Currently the Executive Committee consists of the following sector representatives:

- Women's Sector
- Eastern Men's Behaviour Change Consortium
- Children's Services Sector
- DV East family violence crisis accommodation network
- Victoria Police (Family Violence Advisors, Eastern Region Division 1 & 2)
- Magistrates' Court of Victoria (Ringwood Court Senior Registrar)
- Department of Health & Human Services, Eastern Region
- Child Protection, Eastern Region
- Inner and Outer East Integrated Family Services
- EMR Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Group
- Indigenous Services Sector
- Disability Sector
- Women's Health
- Community Legal Sector
- Corrections Victoria - South/East region
- Homelessness Sector
- Eastern Centre against Sexual Assault

Regional Family Violence Partnership (RFVP), Eastern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne (EMR)
Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) 2015-2018

Executive Committee Terms of Reference:

- To work towards the development and delivery of good practice within a coordinated response to family violence in the Eastern Region.
- To hold partner agencies accountable for the role they have agreed to as set out in the MoU and policies and procedures.
- Identify issues, needs and priorities to resolve, coordinate and advocate within an integrated continuum of prevention, early intervention and response to family violence;
- Assist the broader RFVP membership to coordinate their planning and implementation around regional family violence integration;
- Review, plan, authorise and monitor partnership accountabilities through the strategic plan;
- Support and monitor the diverse activities of the various working groups; and
- Act as an advisory body for local, regional and statewide developments seeking to address family violence reform and integration.

Executive Committee member responsibilities are:

- following governance processes outlined in the MoU and RFVP policies and procedures;
- providing updates on the key reform issues, programs and policies impacting their capacity to deliver integrated services;
- providing updates on the progress of priorities relevant to the RFVP strategic plan;
- reporting back to their respective sectors or working groups on the developments occurring within the RFVP and decisions made at Executive committee - it is expected that each member of the Executive is able to articulate how this occurs through a Statement of Purpose;
- reading and understanding regional and statewide family violence integration policy;
- reading the agenda and relevant papers provided prior to the committee meeting and preparing to engage in discussion and decision-making;
- considering and endorsing the work plans and activities of working groups, proposed forums and other projects as they are presented;
- working collaboratively with a range of service providers, stakeholders and other family violence networks in the EMR to maximise the opportunities to promote integrated family violence service improvement;
- providing feedback and guidance through regional and state wide consultations;
- attending the annual strategic planning day to review and develop the strategic plan;

Executive Committee processes:

- a quorum will be 5 voting members plus the Chair;
- decision-making will be by consensus (see below and consensus decision making policy);

Regional Family Violence Partnership (RFVP), Eastern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne (EMR)
Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) 2015-2018

- in matters where there are differences between parties that require resolution outside of the RFVPEC meeting, the Chair will utilise a management of differences process (see below and management of differences policy);
- in matters where there is a grievance against a member or group in the RFVPEC, the Chair will utilise a grievance resolution process, except in those instances where the grievance might be regarding the Chair, an alternative facilitator will be sought (see below and grievance resolution policy);
- decisions at the RFVPEC meetings are recorded as motions;
- electronic endorsement via email is available for decisions to be ratified out-of-session - requires a quorum of 5 voting members responses and a minimum of 3 days for a response (see electronic endorsement policy);
- agenda and accompanying papers will be sent to the Executive Committee at least 5 working days prior to the meeting;
- minutes of the meeting will be sent to the Executive Committee at least 10 working days after the meeting;
- minutes of meetings will record attendance, decision-making and actions;
- minutes of meetings must be endorsed at the following meeting before they are available for public release;
- only one person will speak at a time;
- a show of hands will alert the meeting facilitator/chair to the fact you have something to say;
- the facilitator/chair will undertake to attempt to steer speakers back to the point if they begin to wander or repeat themselves;
- members will each frame what they have to say in a respectful manner, restrict comments and questions to the matters at hand and undertake these discussions in the spirit of good will;
- processes required for the Executive Committee and the broader RFVP will be developed as Policies and Procedures and maintained as living documents separate to the MoU; and
- the Executive committee will undertake an annual review of its own structure and processes, including membership criteria and members.

Confidentiality

Subject to any legal limitations, committee members undertake to exchange information relevant to meeting the objectives of the regional plan.

Further, committee members will hold confidential any information exchanged at the committee meeting unless it is necessary to the advancement of the vision and mission of the RFVP.

Communication Methods

Any practitioner or community member across the region or state may receive updates about the work of the partnership via several communication methods, including:

Regional Family Violence Partnership (RFVP), Eastern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne (EMR)
Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) 2015-2018

- Email distribution list - the RIC will circulate regional and state wide information and resources via an email distribution list.
- RFVP Website - the RIC will maintain an RFVP website.
- Executive Committee meeting minutes - Sector representatives/Working group chairs are encouraged to share approved Executive Committee minutes (i.e. minutes from the previous month's meeting) with their sector group, alliance, and/or working group.
- Executive sector representatives/Working group chairs are encouraged to make their position as a RFVP representative known to regional practitioners.

RFVP Leadership

The Regional Family Violence Partnership requires key roles to drive leadership in family violence reform and coordinate the ongoing functions of the partnership.

Auspice agency - Eastern Domestic Violence Service (EDVOS)

The RIC position is overseen by an auspice agency as a means of facilitating the implementation of the RFVP's strategic priorities. As the auspice agency, EDVOS manages integration funds and provides line management of the Independent Chair and Regional Integration Coordinator.

RFVP Independent Chair

The RFVP has an Independent Chair (i.e. independent from the services in the EMR) whose role is to facilitate discussion in the RFVP EC and maintain focus on the purpose and principles of committee as outlined in this MoU, in particular the key principles of safety of women and children and the accountability of perpetrators . The Chair has authority over the proceedings at RFVPEC meetings but does not have voting rights in the committee. At a regional and state wide level, the Chair is accountable to the RFVPEC for decision-making that affects the work of the partnership. The Chair is employed by EDVOS and reports to the EDVOS Executive Officer. Please note that the EDVOS Executive Officer will hold two roles in respect of the RFVPEC Chair - one as line manager and one as participant in RFVPEC.

Chair responsibilities include:

- prepares agenda in collaboration with the Regional Integration Coordinator (RIC)
- uses this MoU and the RFVP strategic plan to guide the work of RFVPEC
- calls meetings to order on time and in accordance with the Executive Committee processes outlined in the previous section;
- promotes focus on purposeful questioning, listening and clarifying amongst RFVPEC members;
- delegates responsibilities to committee members;
- involves all members in the consensus decision-making process;
- collaborates with the RIC to report back the work of RFVPEC at state-wide level;

Regional Family Violence Partnership (RFVP), Eastern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne (EMR)
Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) 2015-2018

- convenes meetings as required to facilitate management of differences and dispute resolution processes (see relevant policies).
- Assessing and facilitating the environment for collaboration
- Creating clarity –visioning & mobilizing: defining shared values and engaging people in positive action to achieve the partnership vision and the strategic plan.
- Building trust & creating safety: creating meetings that are respectful and support the development of shared purpose and action.
- Sharing power and influence: developing the synergy of people, organisations, and communities to accomplish the partnership goals.
- Developing the partnership – commitment to bringing out the best from each stakeholder and realising people are a key asset to building an effective community coordinated response.
- Critical reflection – thinking critically about the impact their role on the group’s progress toward achieving its goals.

Regional Family Violence Integration Coordinator

The Regional Integration Coordinator (RIC) is a key role within the family violence system reform and is instrumental in the development and coordination of the RFVP. The role is of strategic leadership in steering integration initiatives and activities that support the achievement of the strategic plan. This position, based with the auspice organisation, will retain independence to enable examination of system requirements from a range of perspectives.

The RIC works with the Chair to coordinate the executive meetings but does not have voting rights in the committee. At a regional and state wide level, the RIC is accountable to the RFVPEC for decision-making that affects the work of the partnership.

RIC responsibilities include:

- support the on-going functions of the RFVP, including maintaining linkages between participating agencies;
- in a consultative and collaborative manner, with the RFVPEC review/develop an annual plan, based on state wide and regional integration, indicating future activities, forecast needs, reviewing progress and negotiating local solutions to improve service coordination;
- participate in capacity building projects with RFVPEC members or other relevant regional/state-wide networks, including the identification and documentation of best practice models of integrated service delivery;
- dissemination of information locally regionally and state-wide, and production and dissemination of local information products;
- coordinate and resource programs, regional forums and community activities; and
- in collaboration with the RFVPEC, collect and analyse data for the purpose of service improvement and planning.

RIC Administrative Support Worker

This position will provide administrative support to the RIC to support the functions of the RFVP.

Administrative responsibilities include:

- maintaining the email distribution list, website and other communication functions;
- contributing to the development of the RFVP through creating improved systems, procedures, document drafts, promotion tools;
- support the RFVP membership by answering information requests;
- take minutes at the Executive Committee meeting; and
- undertake event management tasks for forums/events in collaboration with the RIC and appropriate working group chair and/or Executive Committee member.