

The Cross Sectoral Alliance to Respond to the Royal Commission into Family Violence

PRINCIPLES OF CO-DESIGN

The Cross Sectoral Alliance to Respond to the Royal Commission into Family Violence was established on 28 April. The Alliance is made up of 18 organisations including 11 peak bodies from the family violence and sexual assault sector, the family, youth and children's sector, women's health, homelessness and community legal sectors. Our membership represents many of the groups at higher risk of family violence; Aboriginal women, women from migrant and refugee communities, rural women, older women and women with disabilities.

The Cross Sectoral Alliance shares strong collective support for the Royal Commission's recommendations and the vision it provides for the Victorian family violence system. Our primary purpose is to advocate with one voice for the implementation of that vision, both the outcomes and the processes it prescribes to achieve it. The Royal Commission's Report represents a whole system change management process, which will have significant challenges as well as opportunities. Our Cross Sectoral Alliance aims to play a constructive role in achieving this change, providing cross-sector expert advice and engagement as well as solutions for implementation.

The Royal Commission's recommendations for reform are underpinned by the principles and delivery approaches of 'co-design' principles, with particular reference to the development of the Support and Safety Hubs, the work of the Statewide Family Violence Advisory Committee, primary prevention strategies, and the work of Victoria Police. In support of this approach the Cross Sectoral Alliance sets out our principles for effective 'co-design'.

What is co-design (or co-production) of systems, services and polices?

1. Co-design is generally understood to mean a partnership between service providers and service users. In this context, it is a partnership between government, service providers and service users.¹
2. Co-design requires:
 - Users being recognised to be experts in their own circumstances and capable of making decisions;
 - professionals to move from being fixers to facilitators; and
 - a relocation of power towards service users, necessitating new relationships with front-line professionals who need training to be empowered to take on these new roles²
3. The key features of co-design include
 - establishing partnerships with consumers in which decisions about what, where, and how services are delivered are made jointly,
 - power is shared equally.
4. Co-production is an overarching term that can be broken down into specific activities or stages in the end-to-end service development and delivery process. It encompasses
 - 'co-design' (including policy development and service planning),
 - co-decision-making (over the allocation of resources),
 - co-delivery (of services) and
 - co-evaluation (of services and outcomes).³

Principles of co-design in the implementation of the Royal Commission's recommendations

1. Co-design is built on a shared understanding of the evidence on the gendered nature of family violence.
2. Co-design begins with people who use the services. Women who have experienced family violence are members of co-design committees, including in a leadership role.

¹ Victorian Council of Social Services, 2015 Walk alongside: Co-designing social initiatives with people experiencing vulnerabilities VCOSS July 2015

² Moore T, McDonald, M, McHugh-Dillon H, & West S. 2016 *Community Engagement: A key strategy for improving outcomes for Australian Families* CFCA Paper 19, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne <https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/sites/default/files/cfca39-community-engagement.pdf>

³ Pollock, S 2016 Shifting the power...are we ready to embrace the full potential of co-production Insight 15 VCOSS forthcoming

3. Effective co-design requires information-sharing that is transparent, timely and respectful.
4. Co-design is not consultation; it is a process in which members have an equal role in decision-making to ensure members' skills and knowledge are recognised and valued.
5. Co-design is based on mutual recognition of and respect for the knowledge base and expertise of different practitioners and professionals.
6. Specialist family violence services are integral to co-design and must be engaged in the 'co-design' from the start of the process.
7. Specialist family violence and other services that work with women from Aboriginal communities, women from refugee and immigrant communities, women with disabilities, young people, LGBTI people, rural people, seniors and children should be included in all co-design and implementation processes.
8. Representation of specialist family violence services and the broader community sector should be undertaken in a systematic manner, reflective of roles, responsibilities and resourcing capacity and should be determined by the sector.
9. Services and service users are remunerated for their commitment of time and expertise to the co-design process – including reasonable accessible participation costs such as interpreters, taxi fares and disability support workers.
10. Co-design processes should consider the demand and impact on agencies and services, ie the scheduling, location, length and efficacy of meetings.
11. Co-design includes decision-making about procurement processes.
12. Co-design is not a linear process; to be effective it is necessarily iterative and takes time.

The Cross Sectoral Alliance is concerned to ensure that:

1. A genuine co-design process is undertaken from the start, which means that the peak bodies, relevant agencies and service users are involved in a collaborative process of system design and not 'consulted' after the event
2. The governance structures to oversee the implementation phase are established through a co-design process as a priority, including the composition of committees and the terms of reference
3. There is effective, transparent communication between government and the sector in the co-design process
4. To facilitate an effective co-design process, the co-ordination unit in DPC is headed up by someone with relevant family violence expertise who has authority and is respected within government and by the sector; is staffed with people with expertise in family violence; and is appropriately resourced to drive this complex and important process
5. All reforms reflect and are informed by evidence on the gendered nature of family violence
6. The representation and access requirements of diverse groups must be integrated across the process
7. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children must be a central focus.

Domestic Violence Victoria
No to Violence and Men's Referral Service
CASA Forum
Victorian Council of Social Services
Women with Disabilities Victoria
Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service
InTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence
Council for Homeless Persons
Federation of Community Legal Centres
Women's Legal Services Victoria
Multicultural Centre for Women's Health,
Women's Health Association Victoria
Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare
Youth Affairs Council of Victoria
Women's Health Victoria
Safesteps
Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association
Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria
Seniors Rights Victoria
Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria
Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights