Centre for Excellence
in Child and Family Welfare Inc.

Media Release

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FAMILY VIOLENCE REPORT WELCOME BUT NEED TO GET IMPLEMENTATION RIGHT

The Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare today welcomed the comprehensive report delivered by the Royal Commission into Family Violence, saying that prioritising the safety of women and children in their own home was a pivotal moment for Victoria.

"For too long, women and children have been forced to endure violence, abuse and trauma in their homes often without the support they need. Those who have sought help have been confronted with a disjointed system that in many instances has let them down or caused even further trauma," CEO Deb Tsorbaris said today.

"We now have an opportunity, as a community, to finally say to women and their children: you don't have to endure violence because the help you need is at hand – whether it's to bring a stop to the cycle of violence in your home, to get the right support for your family, to establish a new life away from a violent partner or to have the perpetrator of that violence brought to justice.

"We particularly welcome the report's view that: *'in implementing the Commission's recommendations, services should place children at the centre of responses to family violence so that their safety and wellbeing are paramount'*.

"We also strongly support the Royal Commission's recommendation for a specific culturally appropriate response to address family violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

"There is no doubt these reforms will change lives. The real challenge now is how they are implemented."

Ms Tsorbaris welcomed the establishment of Support and Safety Hubs throughout Victoria to ensure families were receiving coordinated, comprehensive support, including referral to the right specialist services, but said that there needed to be a good balance between early intervention support and crisis support.

"The protection of children must be front and centre in the coming reforms – and that means limiting their exposure to family violence through early intervention.

“We know that trauma and violence has a cumulative impact on children’s wellbeing and their physical, emotional and mental development. Well-resourced early intervention services delivered by well-trained specialists limits the damage family violence inflicts on children.”

Ms Tsorbaris also said the Child FIRST integrated referral and intake model provided a strong foundation on which to base the new Hubs.

“These services have a wealth of expertise in linking children and families with the support services they need and should play a key co-design role in the implementation and ongoing management of the new Support and Safety Hubs.

“We also need to learn from the Child FIRST experience in terms of resourcing.

“The strong focus on family violence will see more women and children coming forward in need of support. It will be crucial that the new Hubs are adequately resourced to address demand at the early intervention and crisis stages.”

Ms Tsorbaris said the Centre for Excellence would now carefully review the extensive Royal Commission report recommendations and looked forward to working closely with the Government on their implementation.

“The Andrews Government deserves congratulations for its willingness to shine a light on one of the darkest corners of our community.

“This is a pivotal moment for our state. Our Government, our community, our network of services now must work together to deliver these reforms quickly and effectively for the sake of women and children throughout Victoria.”

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