

NEXT SHOWCASE

Strengthening leadership to end family violence

Background

Family violence is Victoria's "number one law and order challenge".¹ As CEO of Family Safety Victoria (FSV) Eleri Butler has noted, in 2020 Victorians have been dealing with the double pandemic of Covid-19 as well as the global pandemic of violence against women and children.² Following the Royal Commission into Family Violence – an Australian first which delivered its findings and recommendations in 2015 – the Victorian Government initiated an ambitious reform agenda to end family violence. This agenda encompasses services and supports for victim survivors and family violence prevention initiatives including tackling community attitudes that underpin this epidemic of gendered violence. The Government has developed a series of strategies and plans including [Building from Strength: 10-Year Industry Plan for Family Violence Prevention and Response](#). Critical to the effective implementation of these plans is **leadership that is equipped and enabled to navigate unprecedented change and transformation**. That's where RMIT's Future Social Service Institute (FSSI) comes in.

Overview

Established in 2016 as a partnership between RMIT and the Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS), FSSI is playing a key role in developing leadership capability within the family violence sector. Since 2018 FSSI has been delivering a suite of activities designed to build leadership and change management capability of the family violence sector. These activities – which are captured under Focus Area 4 in [Strengthening the Foundations: First Rolling Action Plan 2019-2022](#) – include delivery of FSSI's Leadership Intensive Program to 15 cohorts, hosting of fora and events, convening a Leadership Network and undertaking an action research project on feminist leadership.

Leadership Training



- Leadership Intensive Program delivered to over 330 leaders across 15 cohorts
- 12 face-to-face cohorts in 2018 and 2019 - 6 metro and 6 regional
- 3 online cohorts in 2020
- 6 cohorts planned for 2021

Research and Evaluation



- Leadership Intensive Program Evaluation 2018 - 2020
- Action Research Project on Feminist Leadership
- Research Project on Retention and Career Progression (NEW in 2021)

Network and Events



- Leadership Network - *Leadership Matters* e-newsletter, events program and LinkedIn Group
- Building from Strength Forum - March 2019
- Conversations With* Panel - June 2018

All of this work has been possible due to strong partnerships between FSSI and Victoria's family violence peak bodies – including Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria / Domestic Violence Victoria, No to Violence and the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare – and sustained support from Family Safety Victoria's Centre for Workforce Excellence which is responsible for leading reform initiatives to support workers and organisations who interact with victim survivors and perpetrators of family violence.

¹ Premier's Foreword, [Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change](#)

² See FSSI vlog featuring Eleri Butler "[Violence against women and children is also a global pandemic](#)"

The centrepiece of this work is the Leadership Intensive Program. This non-accredited program uses a co-design approach which enables participants to provide input to the program content. As part of the program, participants hear from a diverse group of experts and leaders on a range of topics including trauma-informed leadership, feminist leadership and collaborations and partnerships. An evaluation enables participants to provide feedback throughout the program and allows FSSI to recalibrate the program content and delivery to meet participant needs. The 2020 Leadership Intensive Program – which was delivered wholly online due to the Covid-19 pandemic – recently concluded in October with a keynote address by internationally renowned wellbeing expert Michelle McQuaid. Demand for this program remains strong and so FSSI will be delivering the Leadership Intensive Program again in 2021. To find out more about this program and other FSSI initiatives visit the [FSSI website](#) and subscribe to e-newsletter *FSSI Link*.