**Pandemic Partnerships - Lessons Learned from the COVID-19 FDV Taskforce**

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The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of strong partnerships and relationships between State Government agencies and community sector service partners.

As part of the State Government’s COVID-19 response the Department of Communities established nine taskforces to leverage the collective capabilities of the community services sector and government to identify and respond to the needs of Western Australia’s most vulnerable people impacted by COVID-19.

Evidence shows that family and domestic violence increases in times of disaster and the COVID-19 pandemic posed specific risks potentially contributing to this escalation.  The COVID-19 Family and Domestic Violence taskforce combined the efforts of community sector service partners and the State Government to identify emerging impacts and key priorities for women and children at risk of or experiencing family and domestic violence during the pandemic, and the services that support them.

The taskforce collaboration delivered a number of initiatives that contributed to women’s and children’s safety, service sustainability and perpetrator visibility and accountability during the pandemic.  Alongside the successes of the taskforce were significant lessons learned about how to work better together to get help quickly to where it is most needed.  These important lessons will help inform future pandemic and crisis response planning, COVID-19 recovery efforts, and improvements to ‘business as usual’.