Briefing on Operation RIBBON

I am writing to inform you about a new police operation regarding our engagement activities with high-risk AFMs and perpetrators, Operation Ribbon.

Victoria Police recognises this is a particularly high-risk time for family violence, with the added challenges that self-isolation brings for AFMs needing to seek help or report family violence.

In addition to maintaining usual police responses to reports of family violence, Family Violence Investigation Units (FVIUs) have been tasked with ensuring they actively engage with their highest risk perpetrators and vulnerable AFMs and record these engagements centrally.

Operation Ribbon will ensure that family violence remains a focus and priority during the COVID-19 event and there remains a strong emphasis on maintaining visibility of high-risk AFMs and appropriate control measures have been established to prioritise the safety of AFMs and keep perpetrators in view.

What this means in practice is, the specialist family violence investigators in the FVIUs will contact those perpetrators and AFMs who have been identified as at the highest risk of committing or experiencing further family violence through the L17 risk assessment and Case Prioritisation and Risk Management processes.

Wherever safe and practical, this contact will be made in person. Where investigators assess that, based on the safety plan in place for each of these AFMs, face to face contact may escalate or trigger an increased risk, investigators will use alternative methods (e.g. telephone call) to make contact.

FVIU managers and their teams already apply this practice and are well placed to make this decision using their existing risk assessment processes and engagement with partner agencies. For specialist family violence services these checks may result in some of their existing clients making contact with services for additional support.

More generally, Victoria Police requests that family violence services encourage their clients to report any breaches of orders or new family violence incidents that have occurred.

Please be aware that Operation Ribbon is likely to be communicated in a press conference on Tuesday 21st April by Deputy Commissioner Shane Patton and Police Minister Neville. The media release for this press conference will highlight the availability of support for AFMs via Safe Steps.

Assistant Commissioner Dean McWhirter
Family Violence Command