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LATROBE VALLEY WEATHER

TUESDAY **28** EARLY FOG ☀️

WEDNESDAY **18** RAIN AT TIMES ☁️

THURSDAY **17** MORNING SHOWER ☁️

FRIDAY **19** CLOUDY ☁️

photograph hayley mills

Cougar town

Churchill defused the Traralgon Tyers United Bombers 14.12 (96) to 9.13 (67) in round one of the North Gippsland Football Netball League. Dean Degroot booted a bag of four to help the Cougars home. Turn to Valley Sport for more.



High time for change

By EMMA WATSON

GIPPSLAND representatives are relieved the once hidden issue of family violence has been brought into the open.

After 13 months, spending \$13.5 million and hearing from hundreds of victims and experts, Australia's first Royal Commission into Family Violence last week handed down 227 recommendations to tackle family violence in Victoria.

The State Government has promised to implement all of them.

"The report's fantastic - the devil's now in the detail," Quantum Support Services

chief executive Alan Wilson said.

"It's ticking all the right boxes; we certainly see it's addressed, so far, all of the issues we've raised."

The commission's report comes as the Latrobe Valley continues to top the state list of recorded family violence incidents at a rate of 3387.6 per 100,000 population, according to Crime Statistics Agency data.

That is an increase of 18.7 per cent between December 2014 and December 2015.

Although Mr Wilson believes that's a conservative jump, he said it was now a

matter of working both locally and with the wider sector to support the growing demand for services.

Gippsland family violence regional integration coordinator Kerry Hamer and Latrobe City Council staff are also keen to see a new model focus on education, prevention and the complexity of regional demographics.

As part of the recommendations, a one-stop safety hub for victims will be set up in 17 areas across the state.

These centres will receive referrals, perform risk assessments and provide access to relevant and nearby services,

including specialist support and links to crisis accommodation.

A central information point will prioritise victim safety over privacy, allowing police, the courts, government departments and family violence support services to share information about perpetrators.

Additional funding will be given to family violence support services and after-hours responses, to have the capacity for face-to-face crisis responses when required.

Victims will be better supported to safely stay or return home, and the

perpetrator to leave where possible.

More crisis or emergency accommodation will be made available; behavioural change programs will be reviewed and funded to meet demand; and public hospitals will be resourced to implement a whole-of-hospital response model.

The report acknowledges not all violence is perpetrated by men against women or children, but points to data that shows the overwhelming majority of violence is.

• To see how local groups responded to the commission's report, turn to page 4.

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