

# Media Release

**The Hon Lisa Neville MP**

Minister for the Coordination of Environment, Land, Water, and Planning – COVID-19  
Minister for Police and Emergency Services  
Minister for Water



Tuesday, 21 April 2020

## POLICE FOCUSED ON FAMILY VIOLENCE DURING CORONAVIRUS

Vulnerable Victorian families will be the priority of a dedicated police operation tackling family violence during the coronavirus pandemic.

Minister for Police and Emergency Services Lisa Neville today joined Deputy Commissioner Shane Patton to officially launch Operation Ribbon, which will see members of Victoria Police's dedicated Family Violence Investigation Unit reaching out to Victorians who they know are at risk.

There are concerns that the restrictions in place because of coronavirus may make it harder for victims to reach out for help.

Officers will check on the wellbeing of families across the state, as well as identifying and following up with known family violence perpetrators to make sure they're complying with any conditions placed on them by the courts or family violence management plans.

The operation will make sure victims know that help is still available, and perpetrators know that police remain focused on tackling the scourge of family violence during the coronavirus pandemic.

The dedicated and specially trained taskforce will be out across Victoria knocking on doors of known family violence offenders to ensure they're not causing any harm. They'll also be visiting victim survivors and communicating with them through a number of different channels to confirm their wellbeing and safety.

The operation has already seen police conduct 106 compliance checks on high-risk perpetrators and speak to 241 victims across the state since it started last week.

Family violence frontline services including crisis accommodation, police and courts continue to operate to support women, children and families at risk.

The Victorian Government recently announced a \$40.2 million investment in crisis accommodation and specialist services for people suffering or at risk of family violence during the coronavirus pandemic.

A 500-strong police taskforce has been established to ensure Victorians are following the strict physical distancing measures and Chief Health Officer directions. 200 PSOs have also been deployed to major activity centres in the Melbourne CBD, as well as commercial hubs and suburban areas across greater Melbourne and the regions.

They will continue to take action to stop people who choose to ignore these rules and put the health and safety of Victorians at risk. Anyone who breaches these directions faces on-the-spot fines of \$1,652 for individuals and \$9,913 for businesses.

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Police and Emergency Services Lisa Neville

*"Family violence doesn't take a break while we work to slow the spread of coronavirus – that's why police are out there every day, checking on family violence victims and perpetrators."*

*"I want to thank our hard-working Victoria Police officers who continue to do their job under incredibly challenging circumstances and who remain dedicated to tackling the threat of family violence in our community."*

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**Quote attributable to Minister for Prevention of Family Violence Gabrielle Williams**

*“For some in our community, the reality of being at home with a violent partner is more frightening than the pandemic itself. We’ll continue to actively support and assist vulnerable families when and where they need it most.”*