

# Tracking progress in prevention

A national monitoring report  
on progress towards the primary  
prevention of violence against women  
and their children in Australia



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Our Watch acknowledges and pays our respects to the traditional owners of the land on which our office is located, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation.

As a national organisation we also acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of country across Australia and pay our respects to them, their cultures and their Elders past, present and future.

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# Executive summary

## Background

*Change the story: Australia's shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children*<sup>1</sup> identifies gender inequality as setting the necessary social context in which violence against women occurs. The framework demonstrates that there are particular expressions or manifestations of gender inequality that are most consistently associated with higher levels of violence against women. These are referred to in *Change the story* as the 'gendered drivers' of violence against women, and comprise:

- condoning of violence against women
- men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in public life and relationships
- rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity
- male peer relations that emphasise aggression and disrespect towards women.

These gendered drivers arise from unequal and discriminatory institutional, social and economic structures, social and cultural norms, and organisational, community, family and relationship practices. Together, these structures, norms and practices create environments in which women and men are not considered equal, and violence against women is both more likely to happen, and more likely to be tolerated and even condoned.

*Change the story* makes clear that because violence against women has multiple, interrelated drivers, which are located at – and find expression across – every level of society, preventing this violence requires a holistic, multi-layered approach. For primary prevention to be successful, it requires a large-scale effort, engaging the largest possible number of people and organisations. It needs a shared, national approach comprising multiple, mutually reinforcing efforts that together:

- address the multiple gendered drivers and reinforcing factors of violence
- use a range of different strategies and levers for change
- are implemented in different settings, across the life course, and using a variety of techniques
- target change at different levels – individual and interpersonal, organisational and community, system and institutional, and societal.

# Implementing a new approach to monitoring progress towards prevention

Because the drivers of violence are complex, and the elements necessary for a successful primary prevention approach are multiple and varied, monitoring the progress of prevention at a national, population level is not straightforward. It is not as simple as monitoring prevalence rates or tracking changes in individual attitudes towards violence or gender equality. Rather, it requires a series of measures and indicators that can help assess changes to the complex and interrelated sets of social norms, practices, systems and structures that together drive and reinforce violence against women, and perpetuate gender inequality. While prevention ultimately aims to deliver a future free from violence against women, monitoring progress towards this ambitious long-term goal requires periodic assessments of change along the way; a means of measuring the smaller steps and shorter-term achievements that indicate we are heading in the right direction.

In 2017, Our Watch and partners released *Counting on change: a guide to prevention monitoring*<sup>2</sup> as a companion document to *Change the story*.<sup>3</sup> *Counting on change* identified indicators aligned with:

1. *Short-term or process-level change*: the efforts that are being made to prevent violence against women, and the ‘infrastructure’, or systems, structures and human capacities that are being built and developed to support those primary prevention efforts. (In this report, we refer to these as the ‘prevention foundations’, which are the focus of Section 1).
2. *Medium-term to long-term outcomes*: positive change to the gendered drivers and reinforcing factors of violence against women, as measured at a whole-of-population level. These are the focus of Section 2 Part A of this report.
3. *Long-term change*: reductions in population-level prevalence rates of violence against women, which are the focus of Section 2 Part B of this report.

*Counting on change*<sup>4</sup> identified indicators and potential data sources to enable measurement aligned with medium- and long-term outcomes. It gave priority to data sources that allow for the quantification of change over time, are rigorous, and are representative of the Australian population.

This report operationalises *Counting on change* by presenting a picture of the current state (baseline) of progress towards primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia and, where possible, analysing the degree, nature and process of change over this decade.



## Key findings

The report finds that progress across the past decade includes:

- Visible political and civil society leadership creating an enabling environment for progress towards the nationwide cultural and systematic change needed to prevent violence against women.
- Policy reform across the country, with the Commonwealth and most state/territory governments identifying primary prevention as a priority in policies related to violence against women, domestic and family violence, and/or sexual violence, and some beginning to allocate specific funding to prevention programs, approaches and initiatives.
- Prevention programming, with proven and promising techniques being implemented across a range of settings to prevent violence against women.
- An emerging multiskilled, primary prevention workforce, playing a critical role in both implementing prevention initiatives and building the capacity of others to contribute to a shared, national approach.
- Organisations established under the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022* (the National Plan), peak bodies, women's health and gender equality organisations continuing to play an essential role by developing shared frameworks, conducting research, coordinating efforts and sharing resources.
- Civil society advocacy groups and specialist organisations making significant efforts to address the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination that drive violence against women, and to bring these issues to public attention.
- Critical investments in the development and implementation of monitoring guides, national research agendas and shared data platforms – helping to ensure that progress towards prevention can be monitored over the long term.
- Commitments to national data collection, monitoring, management and dissemination, and efforts being made to strengthen whole-of-population data by addressing omissions and methodological limitations. These improvements will enable a more nuanced understanding of violence against women and help guide more effective action to address the drivers of this violence.

Progressive shifts in some attitudes, have also taken place, such as:

- A reduction in the proportion of Australians whose attitudes condone or accept violence against women (particularly since 2013).
- An improvement in attitudes towards women's engagement in public life, with increased support for a broadening of the roles available to women, and greater acceptance of women's full participation in the workforce.

Some positive progress towards gender equality generally has also occurred, including:

- Increased paid hours of work for women.
- Increased representation of women in the public and private sectors.
- Gains in the representation of women in middle management roles.
- To some degree, increased representation of women in occupations previously seen as 'masculine' or 'men's work'.

This report also identifies gaps in current approaches, including:

- Relatively less investment in, and attention to, prevention interventions that contribute to broad and deep changes across society – changes at the community level, changes to social norms, changes in organisations, and broader structural and systemic change.
- National implementation efforts not yet having translated into mutually reinforcing activities (either simultaneously or sequentially) across all levels of society.
- Insufficient development of appropriate and shared evaluative practice that would assess the collaborative impact and shared effectiveness of prevention activity.

At the same time, this report demonstrates that change is not linear, that social population-level social change happens slowly, and that we have to continue to address the various forms of resistance and ‘backlash’ common to all efforts that challenge existing power dynamics.<sup>5</sup> The need to address these gaps in our current approach is evidenced by the report’s findings of limited progress against a range of indicators, including:

- only modest improvements in women’s decision-making power
- little evidence of substantial change in the rate of men taking up caring roles in the home or workforce
- men’s continued dominance of leadership positions in public life
- ongoing economic inequality for women, manifesting in the gender pay gap and superannuation gap
- many women continuing to experience discrimination and oppression on the basis of race, religion, Indigeneity, disability, sexuality, migration, lone parenthood and socioeconomic status.

In the attitudinal data, there are also some concerning signs of limited improvement in some areas, for example:

- Australians are less likely to recognise non-physical forms of violence than physical forms.
- There is a persistent mistrust of women’s reports of violence – evidenced, for example, by the proportion who believe that women going through custody disputes often make up or exaggerate claims of domestic violence.
- A concerning proportion of people hold attitudes which disregard the need for sexual consent in sexual relations.
- Many men continue to be influenced by the implicit or explicit expectations of their male peers. Such perceptions may encourage sexist behaviour within male peer groups and may also inhibit men from taking positive bystander action by calling out such behaviour among their peers.
- A correlation between attitudes supportive of violence against women and other types of discriminatory attitudes, such as racism.

## Implications of the findings for next steps and future priorities

Australia is currently responding to a global pandemic. Experience from past crises and disasters around the world is that progress in gender equality and the elimination of violence against women tends to backslide, both during the crisis and for a long time after.<sup>6</sup> There are indications that this is occurring during the current pandemic.<sup>7</sup>

In this context, this monitoring report has additional applications, providing stakeholders with a 'pre-COVID-19' baseline and solid foundations for tracking the consequences of the pandemic for primary prevention and gender equality. It can also be used to inform policy and investment decisions as Australia navigates the post-crisis recovery phase. The recommendations below provide opportunities to build prevention approaches into the work that governments across Australia are undertaking across social policy, in public health planning, and through economic measures. Beyond addressing the immediate impacts of the crisis on women, all governments have an opportunity to address the underlying drivers of violence against women and support primary prevention by embedding gender equality in crisis response and recovery planning and actions.

This report suggests that priorities for the next phase of this work include:

- A greater focus on actions to drive institutional, systemic and structural change, including strengthening the gender policy machinery of governments.
- Increased investment in, and focus on, evaluation frameworks and strategies to evaluate collective and coordinated primary prevention impact across Australia.
- Development of a deeper and broader understanding of what constitutes research and evidence in primary prevention, and how different types of evidence will be collected and reported on by various stakeholders.
- A stronger focus on masculinity – in particular, an expansion of prevention initiatives that challenge rigid attachment to dominant norms of masculinity and disrupt male peer relations and expressions of masculinity that normalise aggression, disrespect and hostility towards women, and power and control over women.
- Increased actions to support systemic reform which addresses intersecting forms of discrimination and inequality – such as racism or ableism – that play a role in driving violence against women.
- Embedding a gendered approach into work to address all forms of inequality and discrimination across all social policy areas.

The report also draws attention to the need to continue building and extending a strong prevention infrastructure, including by:

- Undertaking ongoing, periodic national monitoring of progress towards prevention – including establishing a coordinating body or mechanism to undertake this monitoring and analysis on an ongoing basis.
- Implementing a national workforce development strategy, including processes for coordination and mechanisms to bring together key stakeholders to inform and contribute to the development of the primary prevention workforce.

- Moving towards longer-term and ongoing funding for primary prevention programs and activities, so that funding terms reflect the time periods of the frameworks and plans under which they are funded (such as the 12-year period covered by the current National Plan), in order to support the sustained long-term work that these plans recognise to be necessary to prevent violence against women.
- Increased attention to, and investment in, transforming systemic and structural forms of oppression and discrimination that intersect with sexism and gender inequality, to ensure prevention works for all women.
- Establishing and strengthening policy, governance and coordination mechanisms across portfolios, within jurisdictions, and between levels of government, to support coordinated, holistic and more effective efforts across the country.
- Responding to the correlation between attitudes supportive of violence against women and other types of discriminatory attitudes, such as racism. The persistence of these is of significant concern, and calls for greater leadership, investment and action. Preventing violence against women who experience multiple forms of oppression requires a greater focus on structural and systemic reform, in order to address all forms of oppression and discrimination.

# Introduction

*Change the story: Australia's shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children*<sup>8</sup> identifies gender inequality as setting the necessary social context in which violence against women occurs. The framework demonstrates that there are particular expressions or manifestations of gender inequality that are most consistently associated with higher levels of violence against women. These are referred to in *Change the story* as the 'gendered drivers' of violence against women, and comprise:

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This report operationalises *Counting on change* by presenting a picture of the current state (baseline) of progress towards primary prevention of violence against women in Australia and, where possible, analysing the degree, nature and process of change over this decade.

## Scope

This first report tracking progress in the primary prevention of violence against women focuses on change over a significant decade in Australia’s recent history – 2009 to 2019. This scope deliberately corresponds to the decade in which Australia has had a *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022* (the National Plan), and the decade during which momentum towards effective primary prevention has been building. The focus in this first report is less upon quantitative assessment of change based on narrow data points, and more about establishing a picture of social phenomena and their patterns of change or consistency in the decade under consideration, taking into account multiple points of comparable data wherever possible.

# How to read this report

This report is in two sections. Section 1, Quality primary prevention infrastructure: the foundations of change, considers how and where the foundations to support primary prevention have developed over the decade between 2009 and 2019. Understanding and measuring progress in the development of, and investment in, prevention infrastructure and programming is critically important in telling us whether Australia is heading in the right direction to ultimately reduce prevalence of violence against women. The findings of this section provide important context for understanding how and where our foundational efforts are supporting medium- and long-term change to prevent violence against women. An assessment of progress against medium- to long-term change measures is the focus of Section 2.

You may wish to read only one section or subsection of this report in order to gain an understanding of a particular area of interest. For this reason, individual sections are available for download. Alternatively, you may be primarily interested in the overarching analysis of findings for each monitoring domain – in which case, see the ‘summary of key findings’ at the beginning of each domain.

## Methodology

### Section 1

The first section of the monitoring report outlines emerging insights into how and where the foundations to support primary prevention have developed over the decade between 2009 and 2019. This section provides insight into the current context of reform, particularly in relation to institutional, organisational and structural reforms that we know are necessary to provide the foundations for long-term change. This section is not a comprehensive mapping, nor does it attempt to gather data on all the possible measures outlined in *Counting on change*. Rather, drawing on primary and secondary qualitative and quantitative data, it paints an emerging picture of how and where primary prevention infrastructure has developed in this period, and how and where these elements of infrastructure reinforce and support each other. It does not attempt to make a definitive quantitative assessment of change between 2009 and 2019, as comparative data for these two particular points in the decade is not available for all measures, and this is too short a period to measure change on some of the indicators. Rather, the aim is to paint a picture of how the foundations for prevention have been developing over this decade and present a baseline for future monitoring reports to refer to.

For Section 1, the measures proposed in *Counting on change* provided an appropriate starting point to guide the collection of primary and secondary data and a checkpoint for collecting data that was relevant and pertinent to the infrastructure domains outlined in it. Analysis of data was framed by these measures, and key findings are presented with these measures in mind. This process was also useful in highlighting where appropriate evidence does and does not exist. Additional detail was added to ensure incremental successes could also be captured. One limitation of the methodology used in this section is that the search strategies relied heavily on publicly available information. To help address this limitation, data from desktop searches was combined with survey data. Suggestions for further



refinement in future monitoring efforts have been made throughout the report. Additional methodological caveats and limitations are recorded throughout the report and in Appendix A: Methodology and limitations.

The findings of this first section of the report provide important context for interpreting the findings in Section 2.

## Section 2

Section 2 provides an assessment of progress against medium- to long-term change measures. It analyses a wide array of primarily population-level, publicly available, quantitative datasets against a sophisticated framework of indicators. These indicators were designed to align with the multiple facets of population-level change we expect to see along the journey to large-scale prevention of violence against women. The approach in this section is to descriptively analyse the statistical or quantitative evidence against each individual indicator, and then to qualitatively analyse findings across a suite of indicators to form an overall picture of progress.

In Section 2, wherever possible, the report compares two data points within the decade under consideration, in order to make some assessment of the degree of change to date. However, there are several caveats to the assessment of change over time made in this report:

1. Where there is more than one wave of data available for a particular dataset within the 2009 to 2019 period, these occur at different intervals and at different points in time (for example, the Personal Safety Survey (PSS) in 2012 and 2016, and the National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS) in 2009, 2013 and 2017). As such, even with data allowing the tracking of change over time, available data does not lend itself to a definitive statement of ten years of change (that is, by comparing 2009 and 2019). In many instances, such as with the PSS, we have only been able to examine a small number of years of change (2012 compared with 2016 waves). This is not a long enough period to make a determination of a trend, and we would not expect to see statistically significant change to population-level markers in this time period in most cases. In other instances, changes to data collection tools (such as the addition of questions or changes to questions) also result in data that is not comparable.
2. The focus of *Counting on change* was the identification of studies which are large, population-representative, and repeated at regular intervals in order to allow for tracking over time. However, we encountered limits to the availability of appropriate data against all indicators. For this reason, some single and smaller studies were also included, in order to provide a more comprehensive picture of where Australia stands with regard to prevention of violence against women in the decade in focus. A single wave of data means that in those instances we can only identify a baseline rather than any change.
3. Currency and availability of data: to the best of our knowledge, data from the major quantitative sources contained in this report is up to date as of 15 February 2020. We recognise that certain datasets will have published new releases of data after this point. With a few minor exceptions, we have also only collated and analysed data made publicly available through publications and data tables.



In implementing the *Counting on change* monitoring guide at a national level for the first time, we have learned a great deal about the process of population-level prevention monitoring. Where necessary, the project team refined, revised and further developed aspects of the *Counting on change* guide. In Appendix A: Methodology and limitations, we describe and provide the rationale for the adjustments made to the framework during the project.

#### **A note on statistical significance**

Where a dataset has produced analysis of change over time for particular data points (or ‘timeseries analysis’) and change between two or more time points has been identified through testing as statistically significant, that statistical significance has been noted in this report. Otherwise, we have not had the capacity to analyse raw data for statistical significance ourselves. In many instances in the time period under consideration, change has not been statistically significant. In other instances, where there has been evident change, we or the owners of the datasets have noted this change as considerable or meaningful; that is, it is of practical significance as a result of meaningful change to the social phenomena being studied within a particular indicator. To prevent confusion we have tried to avoid the use of the term ‘significant’ other than to indicate statistical significance.

## **Context and further reading**

This report draws significantly upon previous Our Watch resources, which in turn draw extensively upon a large body of research and evaluation. We encourage readers to read this report alongside not only *Counting on change*, but the various other Our Watch publications that explicate the underpinnings of violence against women and set out the path for effective prevention, including:

- *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia* (2015)<sup>11</sup>
- *Primary prevention of family violence against people from LGBTI communities – An analysis of existing research* (2017)<sup>12</sup>
- *Changing the picture: A national resource to support the prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children* (2018)<sup>13</sup>
- *Men in focus: Unpacking masculinities and engaging men in the prevention of violence against women* (2019)<sup>14</sup>
- *Change the story three years on: Reflections on uptake and impact, lessons learned and Our Watch’s ongoing work to embed and expand the evidence on prevention* (2019)<sup>15</sup>

# Section 1: Quality primary prevention infrastructure: the foundations of change

High-quality infrastructure for primary prevention is the first step in creating the necessary systems, processes, activities, strategies and leadership to support ongoing, comprehensive action to prevent violence against women. The infrastructure required includes:

- political, sector-specific and civil society leadership
- policy and legislative reform
- an expert workforce
- mechanisms for coordination, collaboration and quality assurance
- shared monitoring, reporting and evaluation frameworks, and
- quality primary prevention programming.

This section explores and provides early insight into how the foundations for prevention in the Australian context are developing across each of these six domains and makes suggestions for future monitoring of progress towards their full establishment. It captures emerging insights into how, where and to what extent the foundations to support primary prevention have developed over the decade between 2009 and 2019, in order to support sustained change across institutions, systems, organisations and communities in Australia.

This section provides insight into the current context for reform, particularly in relation to the institutional, organisational and structural reforms that are necessary to provide the foundations for long-term change.

While each of the six infrastructure domains is discussed individually, they are deeply interrelated, overlapping and at times interdependent. Progress in one domain may be supported or hindered by progress or inactivity in another. Analysis across the domains helps identify these relationships, for example by highlighting the role of leadership in ensuring coordination mechanisms are effective and efficient.

This section provides important context for interpreting the findings in Section 2 by providing insight into the establishment of infrastructure to drive short- and medium-term change in the drivers and reinforcing factors for violence against women, and ultimately achieve a long-term reduction in prevalence rates.

## Methodology for this section

*Counting on change* identified some possible measures for assessing change to each foundational element or domain of prevention infrastructure. However, these were only briefly explored, leaving scope for further development of an approach to monitoring the development of this infrastructure.

This project has ‘operationalised’ *Counting on change*, but further developed and refined the method. The project team carefully reconsidered the most appropriate ways to understand and track change, together with the feasibility of different options. As a result, the project did not attempt to collect data for every possible measure identified in *Counting on change* but instead selected those measures – or parts of measures – for which data could be collected or analysed within the time and with the resources available. During this process, additional data was also collected, some of which did not easily correspond to specific measures but proved useful in contributing to the overall domain findings.

This gradual refinement of the methodology reflects the emerging nature of population-level primary prevention monitoring. This section provides a starting point and exemplar for how monitoring change towards process or infrastructure measures can be achieved and is intended to support the ongoing refinement and evolution of infrastructure measures that can guide monitoring into the future. This pragmatic mixed method research has used a hybrid approach to integrate data-driven and theory-driven analysis. The summaries have qualitatively analysed findings drawn together from a combination of primary research collected through a research survey and two semi-structured interviews, rapid content analysis and desktop scans, combined with secondary data from a variety of sources. An overview of the methods used for each domain in Section 1 is provided in Appendix A: Methodology and limitations.

# Domain 1: Political and civil society leadership<sup>i</sup>

*Change the story*<sup>16</sup> states that everyone has a part to play in leading the prevention of violence against women in Australia – governments, organisations, sectors, civil society and individuals. Collectively, leadership by each of these stakeholders creates an enabling environment that encourages and supports change and ensures it is sustained over time. This leadership helps to draw national attention to the importance of primary prevention, in order to legitimise, support and motivate widespread participation by a range of stakeholders. Research has shown that leadership skill and capability should be measured by its ability to achieve the social, legal, political and economic transformation required to prevent violence against women.<sup>17</sup> This requires leaders to recognise and reject gendered power relationships, and act to redistribute resources, power, authority and decision-making more equally.

Many of the measures explored in this domain focus on public and visible forms of leadership from individuals, organisations and institutions with significant political, social or economic power. However, this is often the result of years of sustained grassroots activism and advocacy which builds buy-in and commitment at the leadership level.<sup>18</sup> Leadership can be formal and informal, public and private, hierarchical and distributed and future tracking reports could provide further insight into the ways in which different forms of leadership can support the foundations of prevention infrastructure. However, at present, the scope of this monitoring report has only allowed for the measurement of visible, and sometimes largely symbolic, leadership. The discussion of progress in this domain identifies opportunities for expanded data collection to inform future monitoring reports.

## Political and civil society leadership: summary of findings

There is evidence that political and civil society leadership has been effective in increasing political discourse in relation to gender equality and violence against women. In some Australian parliaments, there have been increases in mentions of violence against women and gender equality across the decade, often linked to observance days such as International Women's Day and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. However, observance days that draw attention to other kinds of structural inequality and discrimination that intersect with gender inequality, such as Ochre Ribbon Week, receive comparatively fewer mentions. This suggests further opportunities for political and civil society leaders to expand their focus to include attention to these intersecting drivers of violence against women.

Increased leadership by public, private and not-for-profit organisations can also be seen across the decade. As an example, civil society activism from unions and women's advocacy groups culminated in policy and legislation reform, establishing the Workplace Gender Equality Agency in 2012 (formerly the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace

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i Another aspect of leadership that *Counting on change* suggests is important is sector-specific leadership. Limited time and resources meant this project was unable to consider this aspect of leadership, but it is an area worthy of consideration in future efforts to refine the approach.

Agency),<sup>ii</sup> a statutory body with responsibility for overseeing, promoting and reporting on advancements in workplace gender equality across Australia. Many employers and organisational leaders have responded to these reporting requirements by implementing various measures, for example by adapting or broadening existing workplace provisions, such as specific leave entitlements. To date, the kinds of measures implemented tend to be those that involve changes to existing policies or procedures rather than those that require redistribution of resources or structural change. To increase impact, the next stage of organisational leadership requires actions involving greater effort and investment from organisations, and a greater redistribution of resources, for example employers ensuring equal pay for comparable work.

## **Public statements by political leaders, across the political spectrum and at different levels of government**

One way that leadership on the prevention of violence against women and the promotion of gender equality is demonstrated is through public statements made by political leaders, across the political spectrum and at different levels of government.

While focusing on public statements does not measure action taken, it does provide an indication of the presence and prominence of violence against women in political (or at least parliamentary) discourse. As such, this measure can help identify the emergence of new trends in attention to the issue, which can be a precursor to action to address it.

As a starting point, we measured the number of times public statements including keywords linked to the prevention of violence against women were recorded within the Commonwealth Senate and House of Representatives, the Parliament of New South Wales and the Parliament of South Australia. These jurisdictions were chosen as a sample because they had the most comparable search functions (for the full methodology, see Appendix A: Methodology and limitations).

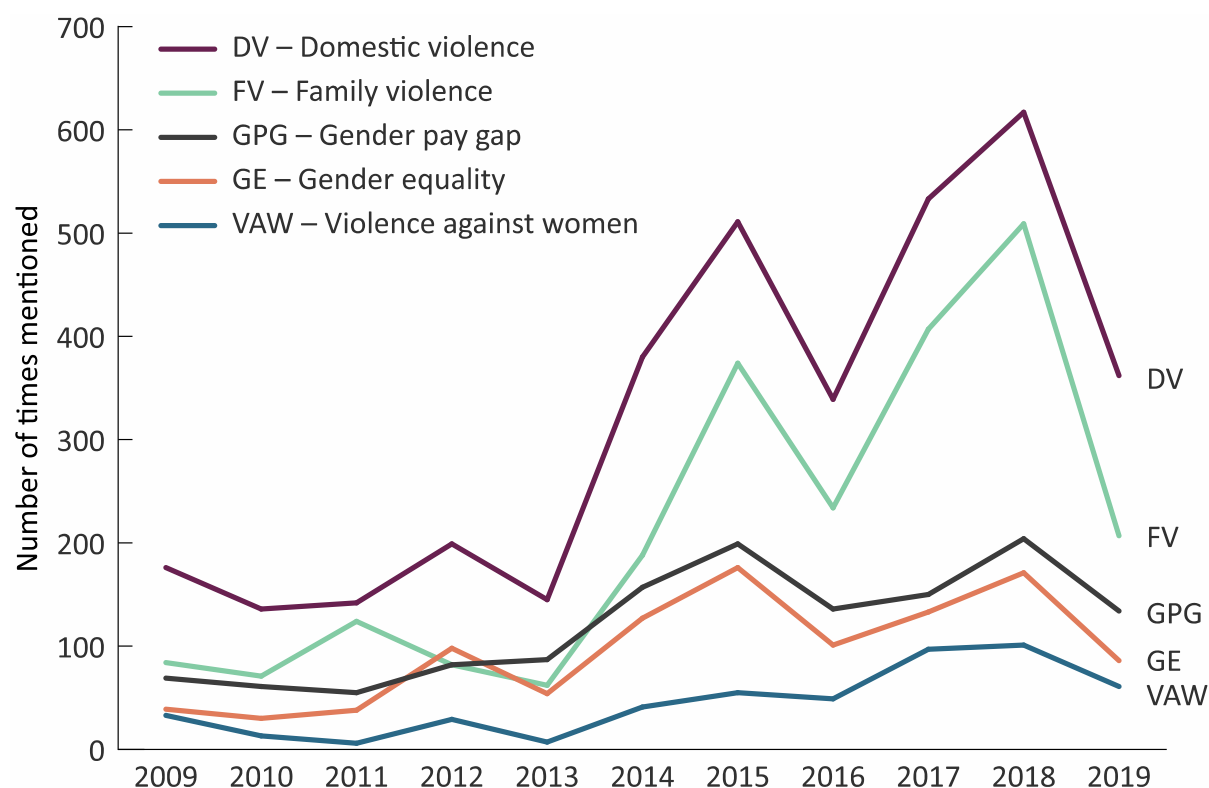
All three jurisdictions saw an increase in mentions of violence against women and primary prevention over the decade, with the lowest point being in 2009 across all jurisdictions, and the highest number of mentions occurring in 2018 in the Commonwealth Parliament (see Figure 1), 2015 in the New South Wales Parliament (see Figure 2), and 2014 in the South Australian Parliament (see Figure 3). Across the three jurisdictions, use of the term ‘domestic violence’ also increased across the decade, with New South Wales and South Australia recording the most mentions in 2016, followed by the Commonwealth in 2018. The terms ‘gender equality’ and ‘gender pay gap’ also received their highest number of mentions between 2015 and 2018 across all jurisdictions. From 2013 onwards, Commonwealth mentions of ‘family violence’ and ‘domestic violence’ track along a similar trajectory, spiking and dropping in parallel. During this time, the terms ‘violence against women’ and

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ii The new legislation changed the name of the Act to the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012*, and amended the principal objects of the Act, modified the coverage of the Act to include all employers and employees in the workplace, regardless of gender, introduced a new reporting framework in which relevant employers are required to report against gender equality indicators, provided for the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workforce Agency, to be re-titled the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (the Agency), with new advisory and educational functions, and attempted to provide further transparency in regards to compliance with the Act and the consequences of non-compliance.

‘gender equality’ also track along a similar trajectory to each other, with some peaks and troughs at the same time as mentions of domestic violence and family violence (Figure 1).<sup>19</sup>

**Figure 1: Commonwealth Parliament Hansard<sup>20</sup> mentions by year for select search terms**



Sources:

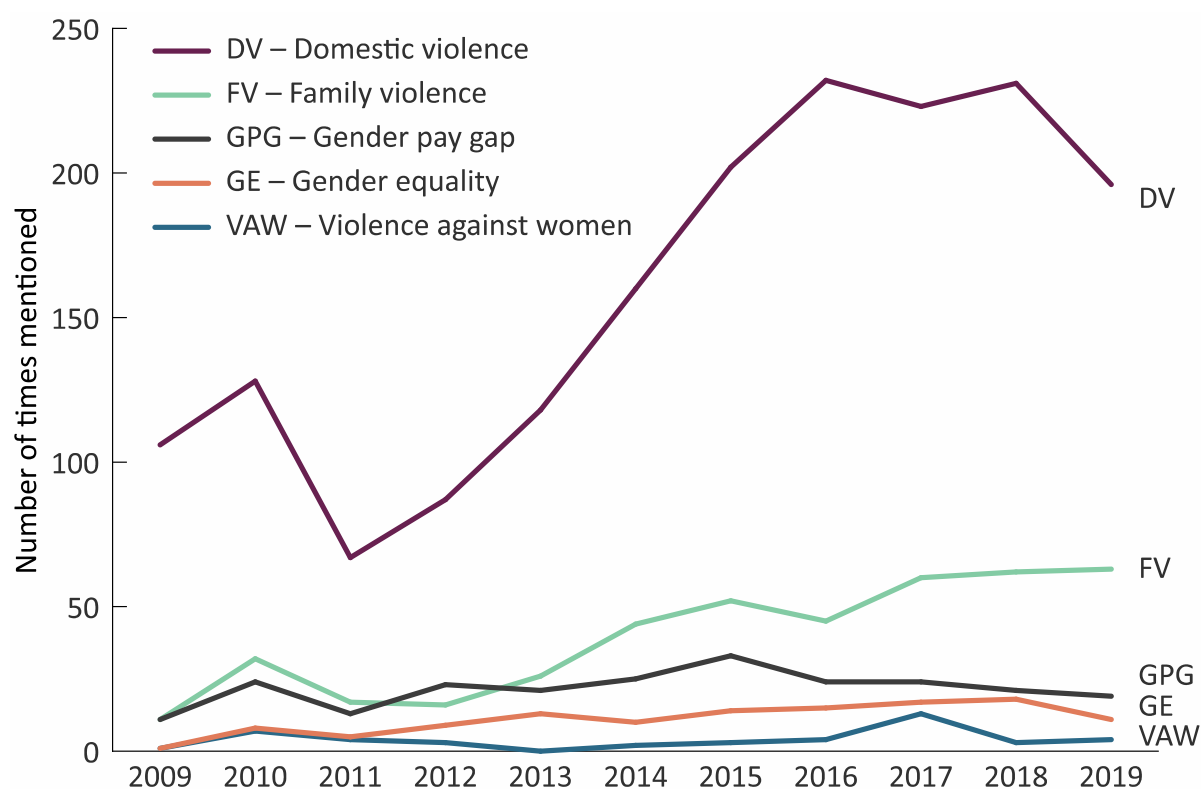
Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, records from January 1st 2009 to December 31st 2019, retrieved from [ParlInfo Search](#)

Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, records from January 1st 2009 to December 31st 2019, retrieved from [ParlInfo Search](#)

Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Inquiries*, records from January 1st 2009 to December 31st 2009, retrieved from [ParlInfo Search](#)

[Text-equivalent description of Figure 1 in Appendix E](#)

**Figure 2: NSW Parliament Hansard mentions by year for select search terms<sup>21</sup>**



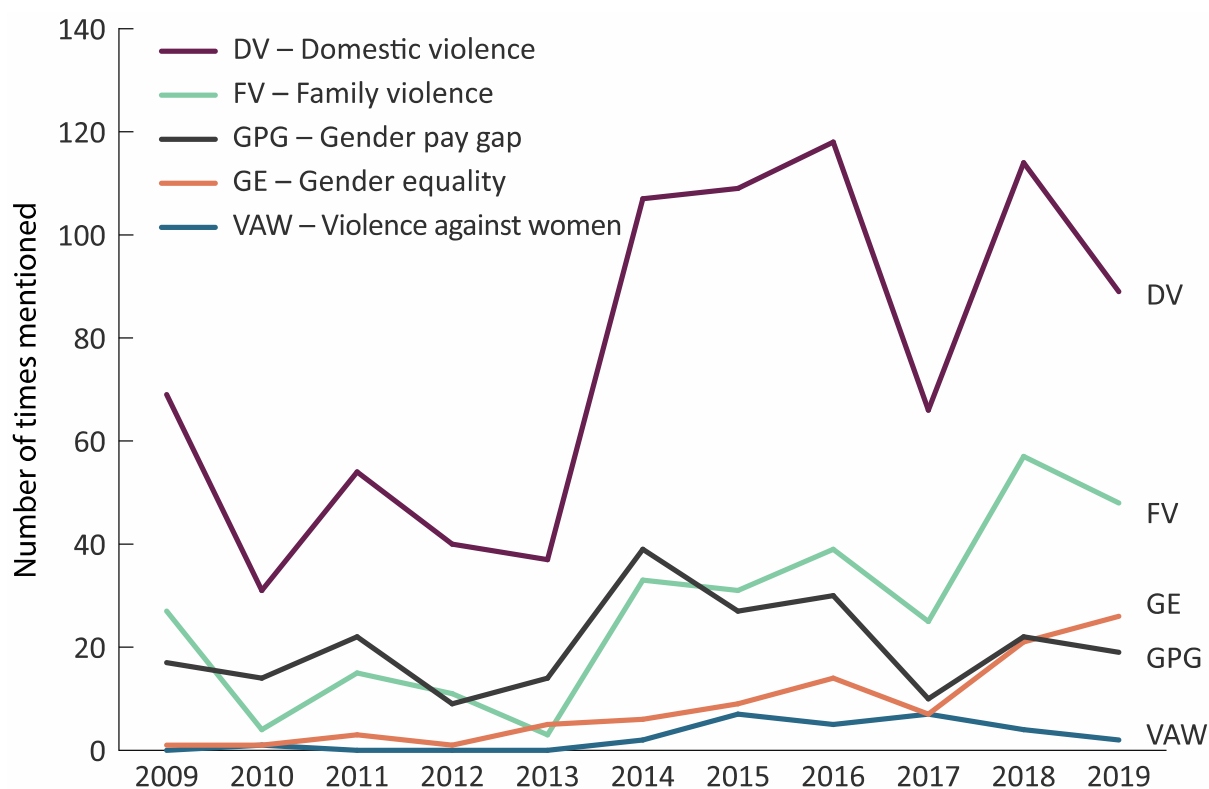
Sources:

New South Wales Government, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Assembly, records from January 1st 2019 to December 31st 2019, retrieved from [Parliament of New South Wales Search](#)

New South Wales Government, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Council, records from January 1st 2019 to December 31st 2019, retrieved from [Parliament of New South Wales Search](#)

[Text-equivalent description of Figure 2 in Appendix E](#)

**Figure 3: South Australian Parliament Hansard mentions by year for select search terms<sup>22</sup>**



Sources:

Government of South Australia, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Council, records from January 1st 2019 to December 31st 2019, retrieved from [Parliament of South Australia Search](#)

Government of South Australia, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Assembly, records from January 1st 2019 to December 31st 2019, retrieved from [Parliament of South Australia Search](#)

[Text-equivalent description of Figure 3 in Appendix E](#)



### **Case study: Public statements in Commonwealth parliament across one year**

A limitation in the analysis of public statements across multiple jurisdictions and over time was the inability to examine the contexts in which searched terms were mentioned. This rapid content analysis of Commonwealth Hansard in 2018 provides one example of a more contextual approach.

During 2018, 'domestic violence' (617 mentions) and 'family violence' (509 mentions) were the most frequently mentioned of the searched keywords, followed by 'violence against women', 'gender equality' and 'gender pay gap'. The terms 'violence against women' and 'gender equality' appeared far less frequently (28 times).

There most common contexts in which key terms appeared were:

- passage of a Bill through the lower and upper house, including public hearings or inquiries, second readings and parliamentary debate
- private members' business and motions to acknowledge a significant day or in response to a specific incident of violence against women
- questions from parliamentarians about government policy and activity
- constituency statements, grievance debates, matters of public importance or presentation of petitions.

November 2018, the month with the most mentions for all keywords, saw activity across all these areas. International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (also known as White Ribbon Day) saw statements made by sixteen parliamentarians across both houses, including a motion that domestic and family violence be prioritised as a national security crisis. November also saw second readings in the lower or upper house for various Bills, including:

- Fair Work Amendment (Family and Domestic Violence Leave) Bill 2018
- Social Services Legislation Amendment (Housing Affordability) Bill 2018
- Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia Bill 2019
- Migration Amendment (Family Violence and Other Measures) Bill 2016
- Equal Pay Standard Bill 2018
- Corporations Amendment (Strengthening Protections for Employee Entitlements) Bill 2018
- Fair Work Amendment (Restoring Penalty Rates) Bill 2018
- My Health Records Amendment (Strengthening Privacy) Bill 2018
- Sex Discrimination Amendment (Removing Discrimination Against Students) Bill 2018.

Specialist organisations and experts provided expertise to committees, including:

- Select Committee on Intergenerational Welfare Dependence.
- Legal and Constitutional Affairs Reference Committee on legislative exemptions that allow faith-based educational institutions to discriminate.
- Legal and Constitutional Affairs Reference Committee inquiry into the practice of dowry and the incidence of dowry abuse in Australia.

- Legal and Constitutional Affairs Reference Committee inquiry into the Federal Circuit and Family Court Bill.
- Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade inquiry into the strategic effectiveness and outcomes of Australia's aid program in the Indo-Pacific.

Questions were also put to the government on funding and policy, including progress of the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022* (the National Plan).

Outside November, other events prompted mention of the search terms. In March, International Women's Day saw private members' statements calling for progress towards gender equality, several of which made a link to violence against women. However not all observance days relevant to gender equality and violence against women prompted increased mentions of the search terms. Human Rights Day, which falls at the end of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence, received seven mentions, but less than half referred to women and only two linked human rights to violence against women. Ochre Ribbon Week – part of the Ochre Ribbon Campaign, which calls for action to end violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, especially women and children – was not mentioned in 2018.

There were seventy-one mentions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, and while some were by parliamentarians speaking about family violence, most were made by organisations and experts speaking at hearings and inquiries.

There were twenty-four mentions of women with disability. Some were by specialist organisations or experts at hearings or inquiries on the National Disability Insurance Scheme, intergenerational welfare dependence, and dowry-related abuse. Others were in second readings of Bills, such as the Family Law Amendment (Family Violence and Cross-examination of Parties), Fair Work Amendment (Family and Domestic Violence Leave), and Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (Promoting Sustainable Welfare). The extent to which women with disability feature in parliamentary discourse can also be measured by the number of mentions on International Day of People with Disability (3 December). Despite this being a day of celebration, learning, optimism and action, it was mentioned only five times, four of which were by a single senator, who did draw attention to the disproportionate rates of violence, abuse and neglect experienced by people with disabilities.

Of the two mentions of trans women in 2018, one of these was on Transgender Day of Remembrance (20 November). There were significantly more mentions of the term 'LGBTIQ', mostly during October and November, when specialist organisations and experts spoke at hearings and inquiries, including on constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, intergenerational welfare dependence, and legislative exemptions for faith-based institutions in the context of the Religious Freedom Bills, as well as in debate on the Discrimination Free Schools Bill 2018 and Sex Discrimination Amendment (Removing Discrimination Against Students) Bill 2018.

Most of the mentions of migrant women (eleven) or refugee women (nine) were made by specialist organisations or experts speaking at hearings on topics including stillbirth research and education, dowry and dowry-related abuse, the jobactive

program and the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Encouraging Self-sufficiency for Newly Arrived Migrants) Bill 2018.

Older women were mentioned fifty-three times. Many of these were in relation to housing and economic security. This included hearings on housing, future work and workers, quality of care in residential aged-care facilities and intergenerational welfare dependency, and debate on the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation Amendment Bill 2019, which proposed legislative amendments regarding personal income tax, superannuation, national housing and the housing agreement, housing affordability and ending the poverty trap.

Clear patterns emerged across the keyword mentions, with certain parliamentarians featuring more than others. This included those who moved multiple motions on the same issue, repeatedly urged the government to apply a gender lens to policies or activities, and contributed to debates on proposed Bills. These MPs tended to talk about the connection between ‘gender equality’ and ‘violence against women’, and the differential impact of violence among women. For instance, one senator moved a similar motion at each senate sitting over several months calling for domestic and family violence to be recognised as a national security crisis, noting the number of women who had been killed between each senate sitting, and citing figures from Destroy the Joint’s Counting Dead Women project, a public account of women killed in Australia. Hansard recorded twelve mentions of this register in 2018.

Finally, mentions of some search terms increased directly following femicides, in private members’ statements and grievance debates. Some spoke of other femicides that had not received the same level of public/media attention, suggesting a growing awareness of the ways in which racism and other kinds of bias can influence media reporting of violence against women. This may be a response to growing calls from civil society for more accountability in how violence against women is reported.

In the future, a similar case study might hope to see progress in the following areas:

- Greater observance of days such as Ochre Ribbon Week, International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Human Rights Day, Transgender Day of Remembrance, International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia, and International Day of People with Disability, including commitments towards ending all forms of discrimination and violence.
- More frequent mentions of violence against women beyond observance days, showing more sustained attention to the issue.
- More parliamentarians across the political spectrum in both houses engaging in this conversation.
- A greater focus on systemic reform across a broad range of legislation and policy to address intersecting forms of discrimination affecting women.
- Continuing and increasing opportunities for civil society organisations and experts to contribute expertise to legislative and policy reform.

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Sources:

Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, records from January 1st 2018 to December 31st 2018, retrieved from [ParlInfo Search](#)

Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, records from January 1st 2018 to December 31st 2018, retrieved from [ParlInfo Search](#)

Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Inquiries*, records from January 1st 2018 to December 31st 2018, retrieved from [ParlInfo Search](#)

## **Accompanying public commitments with commensurate investment in high-quality primary prevention activities and actions**

One way that government, private and civil society organisations can make public statements or commitments towards gender equality and the prevention of violence against women is through signing on to formal programs.<sup>iii</sup> Between 2009 and 2019, examples of these include:

- ambassador programs, such as those run by Our Watch<sup>23</sup> and White Ribbon<sup>24</sup>
- advocate or ‘champion’ programs, such as White Ribbon<sup>25</sup> and the Male Champions of Change groups<sup>26</sup>
- academic accreditation frameworks, such as the Athena SWAN Charter<sup>27</sup>
- workplace accreditation programs, such as the Rainbow Tick,<sup>28</sup> White Ribbon<sup>29</sup> or 5050 Vision<sup>30</sup> (Local Government Equity Program – no longer funded)
- formal workplace statements and commitments and non-accredited workplace programs such as Reconciliation Action Plans, Workplace Equality and Respect and whole-of-school approaches to respectful relationships education.

While the last decade has led to increased opportunities for organisations and individuals to make a public commitment to the prevention of violence against women, *Change the story* indicates that to effect change, these commitments must be supported by meaningful actions and resource redistribution. Public statements should be reviewed alongside investment in high-quality primary prevention activities and actions to determine whether the statements have led to concrete action. Some such commitments are noted in the Policy and Legislative Reform and Quality Primary Prevention Programming sections of this report. Future monitoring reports could explore what kinds of leadership actions and styles are most likely to lead to transformative change to prevent violence against women.

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iii Different programs employ different standards, obligations and accountability measures for their members. It has not been within the scope of this project to review or analyse these measures.

## Workplaces have domestic violence leave, parental leave and flexible work provisions

Alongside public statements, the commitment of public and private sector institutions to integrating gender equality and the prevention of violence against women into their core business can be measured through practical actions.

This domain draws on data from the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA),<sup>31</sup> the statutory agency created by the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012*.<sup>32</sup> This data provides insight into some of the efforts to embed gender equality actions in the daily work of non-public sector organisations with 100 or more employees. Alongside the WGEA data, information on public service entitlements gathered through a desktop scan of publicly available information from Commonwealth, state and territory employers has also been analysed.

### Domestic and family violence leave

WGEA<sup>33</sup> data demonstrates an increase in the number of organisations that have implemented domestic and family violence leave policies and/or strategies for their employees across all industries and companies of all sizes since 2014. In 2019, 60.2% of organisations reporting to WGEA indicated that they had implemented a formal policy or strategy to support employees who are experiencing family or domestic violence – an increase of 28% since 2014.<sup>34</sup> The most common measures offered by organisations to staff who are experiencing domestic and family violence in 2019 were:

- access to Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) (79.0%)
- access to any leave (78.1%)
- flexible working arrangements (73.6%).

The greatest change was seen with regard to staff being able to access leave for domestic and family violence reasons, with a 29.5% increase from 2014 to 2019 in the number of organisations offering this provision. The next most frequent change was in the number of organisations offering flexible work arrangements as a measure of support in response to domestic and family violence,<sup>35</sup> with an increase of 25% from 2016 to 2019. In 2019, the least common measures implemented by organisations were those requiring greater organisational investments (including financial investment, investment in specialised training for HR or development of new procedures). These included emergency accommodation assistance, workplace safety planning and medical services in response to staff members experiencing domestic and family violence.<sup>36</sup>

As the public sector does not report to the WGEA, the following data is not directly comparable, but it does provide some insight into the actions taken by public sector employers. The following analysis is based on enterprise bargaining agreements and human resource policy documents that were publicly available and able to be uncovered during a desktop search. The search terms limited the search to broad policies and enterprise bargaining agreements that apply to the entire public service or are recommended conditions of employment for agencies. As such, more specific agreements related to particular agencies or departments or public service employers (which may provide additional entitlements) have not been captured in the discussion below.

Across the Commonwealth, states and territories, all jurisdictions have implemented some form of domestic and family violence leave for full-time and part-time staff since 2013. Leave amounts and pay offerings varied, from five days of unpaid leave to twenty days of paid leave, with casual employees and employees who have been employed for less than 12 months less likely to have access to paid leave when compared to ongoing, fixed-term and/or permanent employees. The most common measures offered by organisations to staff experiencing domestic and family violence were flexible work arrangements and workplace safety measures.<sup>37</sup>

It is likely that the number of organisations offering family and domestic violence leave to employees will increase in coming years as a result of the *Fair Work Amendment (Family and Domestic Violence Leave) Act 2018*, which took effect in December 2018. This act resulted in amendments to the *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth), providing employees with a new entitlement of five days' unpaid family and domestic violence leave as part of the National Employment Standards.

Given that access to Employee Assistance Programs, employee leave and flexible work provisions are measures that are likely to be part of broader organisational policies and systems, it is possible that these gains have been made through the expansion of current employee entitlements, although further research is needed to confirm this. Future investigations might also analyse the extent to which these initiatives are safe and effective by investigating whether they have been accompanied by investment in training relevant staff (for example, leaders, managers, human resource practitioners) and by effective and appropriate communication strategies for staff, as well as whether Employee Assistance Program Providers are working in partnership to create pathways to specialist family violence services where required.

### **Primary and secondary carer's leave**

Data collected by WGEA across all industries and companies of all sizes in 2019 shows that 53.5% of employers had implemented a policy aimed at supporting employees with family or caring responsibilities, representing an 8.3% increase since 2014. In 2019, a further 22% of employers had a strategy for supporting employees with family or caring responsibilities, representing an 8.8% increase compared to 2014.<sup>38</sup>

Almost half of employers offered primary carer's leave, with almost no change in this figure between 2014 and 2019, and with the average number of weeks offered decreasing slightly from 10.7 to 10.6. This period also saw a 3.4% decrease in the number of employers offering lump sum payments to primary carers. In the same period, leave provisions offered to secondary carers increased slightly, although the proportion of organisations offering secondary carer's leave is less than half, at 43.8%. In 2019, the average number of weeks' leave offered to secondary carers was 1.7 weeks, a slight increase from 1.5 weeks in 2014.<sup>39</sup>

A review of state, territory and federal public sector leave provisions reveals that public sector employers had all implemented some form of parental leave for primary carers since 2014. However, there were differences in the amount of leave on offer to staff, and whether this was paid or unpaid.

In 2019, the minimum amount of paid leave offered to primary carers was 12 weeks, and the maximum 18 weeks. Six of the nine jurisdictions reviewed offered 18 weeks paid leave, five of which stipulated that access to paid leave was dependent on a minimum 12 months of



continuous service.<sup>40</sup> The amounts of unpaid leave on offer to employees who were primary carers also varied across public sector employers, with 52 weeks being the minimum across all jurisdictions.

All public sector employers included in this review also offered some form of secondary carer's leave in 2019, with differences between jurisdictions in the amount of leave on offer, and whether this was paid or unpaid. The minimum amount of paid leave provided for secondary carers was one day to attend the birth of a child/children, and the maximum amount offered was two weeks. Four jurisdictions specified that they offered Dad and Partner Pay as part of the Australian Government Paid Parental Leave scheme. This scheme provides up to two weeks' pay at the rate of the national minimum wage to eligible fathers or partners caring for a child born or adopted from 1 January 2013.<sup>41</sup> To be eligible for this type of leave, fathers or partners must be on unpaid leave or not working. Also offered were secondary carer or supporting partner paid leave entitlements, which ranged from one day to fourteen days, depending on years of continuous service. The amount of unpaid leave offered to secondary carers ranged from three weeks to twelve months.

Across the board, the amount of paid leave offered to secondary carers was notably low (in terms of both duration and income) relative to other leave allocations. This is likely to have implications for the distribution of unpaid care work in Australian homes. Internationally, where positive progress has been made in equalising the responsibility of unpaid care work, paid parental leave has been offered at income replacement levels, together with incentives for taking this leave.<sup>42</sup> Compared to other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) member countries, Australia's maternity and parental leave – and secondary carer's leave – falls below the OECD average.<sup>43</sup> The implications of this on the drivers of violence against women are explored further in Section 2 of this report.

As with domestic and family violence leave provisions, the three least common non-leave-based measures offered by organisations to support employees with family or caring responsibilities in 2019 appear to be those which require additional resources or which cannot be achieved by expanding the current offering. Further research would be useful to investigate this hypothesis and explore any other reasons why employers implement particular measures and not others, and the efficacy of such measures in enabling a more equal distribution of responsibility for unpaid care work.

Also of note is the language associated with the Commonwealth public service leave provisions. In particular, the *Maternity Leave (Commonwealth Employees) Act 1973*<sup>44</sup> specifies that maternity leave is available to female employees who have become pregnant, and parental leave is available to employees who adopt or foster (long term) a child and have responsibility for the care of that child. This creates specific limitations. It means a male employee cannot access this leave if he hasn't adopted or fostered a child long term, even if he is the primary carer. Such an employee could access Supporting Partner's Leave, but this provision doesn't have equivalent paid leave entitlements. This language may also limit access to this leave for some trans and non-binary identifying people. Another observation is that, while one jurisdiction (Western Australia) specifically provides employees with fifty-two weeks of unpaid grandparent leave, there was otherwise limited acknowledgment of care arrangements that do not follow the nuclear family model of primary and secondary care provision.<sup>45</sup>

## **Joint statements by women's organisations and those working on other areas of social policy to drive an intersectional approach to preventing violence against women**

Joint campaigns and statements such as those marking significant events or responding to gender inequality or other injustices are an example of civil society leadership and organisations working together on advocacy or awareness-raising. This section draws from data collected through a research survey conducted for this report, attracting just over 300 responses (see Appendix A: Methodology and limitations for more detail).

The survey found that just over half of those who responded to this question said their organisation had contributed to joint public statements or responses in relation to gender inequality or prevention of violence against women. Common examples of these included submissions to state and Commonwealth government royal commissions and inquiries. Those responding to this question tended to be in specialised roles, commonly working with migrant and refugee communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with disability, young people, and women and girls. A proportion (18%) of organisations who contributed to joint public statements receive limited and sometimes no funding for primary prevention. This indicates that organisations other than those that are directly funded to undertake prevention or gender equality activities are engaging in this issue and seeking to feed their perspectives and expertise into reform processes.

A desktop scan found a range of joint submissions to proposed legal and social services reform as well as pre- and post-budget responses. This included submissions on issues such as abortion decriminalisation, and consent laws in relation to sexual offences and family violence, and others that sought to highlight differential or discriminatory impacts of current or proposed policy and legislation on women. There were also joint campaigns, both short-term and sustained, advocating for legislative change and wider public awareness on particular issues. Examples included the 16 Days of Activism campaign,<sup>46</sup> the campaign to remove GST from feminine hygiene products,<sup>47</sup> the women on temporary visas campaign,<sup>48</sup> and the campaign for urgent action on workplace sexual harassment.<sup>49</sup>



## Domain 2: Policy and legislative reform

As *Change the story* states, ‘policy and legal reform helps drive societal level change by shifting social norms and supporting and reinforcing other prevention strategies.’<sup>50</sup> This domain is concerned with how and where government policy development and legislative reform supports long-term actions across settings, using the best available evidence to prevent violence against women. This domain intentionally concentrates on policy and legislative reforms that support primary prevention. However, it is of course the case that a holistic approach is required, with appropriate reform to support primary, secondary and tertiary prevention and crisis response. More broadly, all policy and legislation has the potential to either advance or hinder progress towards gender equality, so ideally a gender analysis would be applied to these reform processes as a matter of course.

The kinds of reform considered here are changes to policy and legislation that support redistribution of resources and responsibilities, and transformation of the underlying causes and structures of gender inequality. This includes explicitly attending to the differential impacts that policy and legislative reforms may have as a result of intersecting forms of oppression or privilege, although not all these aspects have been captured here and suggestions are made for enhancing this focus in future monitoring reports.

This domain is not a comprehensive analysis of all the possible policy and legislative reforms associated with the prevention of violence against women, but rather a broad overview of some reforms that have taken place between 2009 and 2019. It is also important to acknowledge that reform undertaken during this period is part of a longer social change process and in many instances was the product of decades-long civil society advocacy.

### Policy and legislative reform: summary of findings

The Australian policy landscape shows evidence of progress in some aspects of policy development in relation to the prevention of violence against women. National, state, territory and some local governments have developed policies, strategies and action plans that prioritise or include the primary prevention of violence against women. For the most part, these policy documents use shared language to refer to primary prevention and draw on (at least some aspects of) the evidence-based national framework,<sup>51</sup> thereby providing some early foundations for coordinated and mutually reinforcing reforms. However, while these overarching policy documents provide the opportunity for ongoing investment and effort in primary prevention over time, in many cases the actions and strategies they contain are funded only for short periods, which limits the potential for sustained improvement across the foundations of primary prevention. Positive legislative reform has also occurred over this time, including the introduction of the Commonwealth Paid Parental Leave scheme, the Commonwealth *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012*, and the *Prevention of Family Violence Act 2018* in Victoria, which included the establishment of a statutory prevention authority.

Our findings also indicate that policy and legislative reforms are less consistent in addressing drivers of violence against women that are associated with intersecting forms of oppression and privilege. Civil society advocates and organisations often lead in building awareness of the way other forms of discrimination intersect with gender discrimination, and in promoting intersectional approaches to the prevention of violence. However, too

often policy development and governance processes do not include funded and formal processes to ensure civil society organisations participate and collaborate in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of primary prevention policies and associated actions.

While positive reform has occurred, there is much more work to do to ensure critical contributions to policy and legislative reform occur across diverse portfolios such as health, education, justice, housing, regional development, occupational health and safety, transport and many other areas. A more consistent application of a gender lens to policy development and legislative and budgetary decisions, together with careful attention to the intersections between gender inequality and other forms of discrimination, can help identify cross-government levers that can be used to address the multiple drivers of violence against women in many areas of policy and legislative reform.

### **Policy reform to support primary prevention of violence against women**

An analysis of state, territory and federal policy strategies and a selection of local government strategies reveals promising signs of political engagement and policy progress on the primary prevention of violence against women.

Since the introduction of the National Plan,<sup>52</sup> the federal government and all states and territories have included a focus on or mention of primary prevention within a relevant policy or strategy. Most state and territory government policies on violence against women, domestic and family violence, and sexual violence identify primary prevention as a priority. Furthermore, the majority of policy documents analysed across jurisdictions refer to *Change the story: A shared framework to prevent violence against women and their children*,<sup>53</sup> take a gendered approach and refer to the gendered drivers of violence against women.

These are extremely positive developments. Increasingly primary prevention is being situated alongside early intervention and response, and policies are acknowledging the need for action across this entire spectrum. The specific inclusion of primary prevention in the framing of such policies, and the degree to which they reference the national framework, is a strong recognition of the need to undertake work to address the underlying drivers of violence against women and promote gender equality in order to create sustained, population-level change to prevalence rates.

While this project did not have the capacity to analyse all local government strategies and plans across Australia, a review of a random sample of local government plans and strategies across a number of jurisdictions revealed that at the local government level, policy reform to prevent violence against women is less consistent. Some local governments have developed policies, plans or strategies that refer to the prevention of violence against women or gender equality. However, the primary prevention focus seems unevenly distributed across the country, with the majority of local government policy reform taking place in a single jurisdiction. Even considering differing roles and responsibilities of local government (which are established by the state or territory), 'local governments are well placed to respond to local concerns and to lead primary prevention activities through existing processes and via a range of partnerships.'<sup>54</sup> Further analysis of local government activity, policy and legislative levers across Australia would support greater understanding of, and focus on, primary prevention at a local government level.

One limitation of many of the strategies analysed was their limited reference to the various intersecting forms of oppression and discrimination that drive violence against women. For example, the specific drivers of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women (as identified by experts and advocates for decades and recently articulated in *Changing the picture: A national resource to support the prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children*<sup>55</sup>) were not often referred to. Where intersecting forms of discrimination or oppression were articulated, these were more likely to be mentioned in relation to specific activities for particular groups or communities, rather than as systemic or structural actions to address the ways multiple forms of discrimination and inequality that intersect with gender inequality drive violence against women. Even within jurisdictions, there was a lack of conceptual consistency in how complementary plans and strategies articulated their approach: in some places these simply acknowledged diversity in a broad sense, while in others they referred to specific 'at risk' or 'vulnerable' population groups, with fewer acknowledging the need to consistently embed an intersectional approach. A more detailed examination of the extent to which policies take account of, and work to counteract, structural and systemic inequality and discrimination would be a useful area of focus for future monitoring reports.

Other aspects of the infrastructure required to ensure the sustained social change necessary to prevent violence against women are policy, governance and coordination mechanisms. These are needed both across different portfolios within a jurisdiction and across different levels of government. Currently, of those governance and coordination mechanisms that are publicised, strategies are frequently led by particular agencies (for example, communities, women, health) and supported by interdepartmental mechanisms such as committees (with relevant departments). Few strategies articulated any centralised interdepartmental mechanisms to lead primary prevention activity. Analysis also revealed that funded and formal mechanisms to ensure that civil society organisations participate and collaborate in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of violence against women prevention policies were not consistently employed. A number of strategies and policies made no mention of such mechanisms, while approaches in others ranged from cross-sectoral advisory bodies tasked with providing expertise and oversight, through to time-limited issue- or activity-based community consultation bodies. Future investigations could explore whether coordination mechanisms – or advisory bodies established to coordinate and inform efforts to prevent violence against women – incorporate consultation across broad social policy areas, make appropriate efforts to centre the voices of women and ensure representation across the Australian population.

While strategies addressing violence against women provide the opportunity for sustained investment in, and focus on, primary prevention over time, this research has shown that activities linked to these strategies tend to be funded in short bursts (that is, one to three years).<sup>56</sup> As a result, investment in primary prevention doesn't always take full advantage of the opportunity provided by the strategies to sustain activities and maintain focus over time. This finding echoes that of the *Process evaluation of the Third Action Plan 2016–19. Final Report*,<sup>57</sup> which noted:

'[t]he duration of funding cycles was an issue that emerged from the online consultation with stakeholders. In particular, they identified the short-term funding for most programs and initiatives associated with the Third Action Plan as a hindrance to addressing long-term and complex problems.'<sup>58</sup>

Currently, an analysis of available action plans across jurisdictions demonstrates that individual actions cover shorter periods than the strategies (ranging from one-off activities to three-year activities) and don't always prioritise the creation of primary prevention infrastructure (such as an expert workforce or mechanisms for coordination) across domains in a sustained, coordinated and strategic way. Similarly, while the longer-term strategies mostly engaged with a gendered approach, more could be done to ensure that this approach is embedded across all relevant action plans that have the capacity to deliver on these, from across a broad range of portfolios, including more explicit activity to address the intersection of gender inequality with other forms of inequality and discrimination.

The recognition of violence against women as a human rights issue is a critical element that connects national prevention efforts to broader international approaches drawing on key international human rights conventions. It is therefore encouraging that most national and state/territory strategies or plans articulate a commitment to preventing violence against women as a human rights issue. The National Plan<sup>59</sup> draws this connection by explicitly stating that the Plan demonstrates Australia's 'commitments to upholding the human rights of Australian women through the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Declaration to End Violence Against Women and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.' This is further articulated in the Fourth Action Plan,<sup>60</sup> which frames violence against women as a 'fundamental violation of human rights', linking the Fourth Action Plan to CEDAW, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>61</sup> and Australia's engagement with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals,<sup>62</sup> Human Rights Council and the Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.<sup>63</sup> At a state/territory level, a majority of strategies and action plans include some mention of human rights or a rights-based approach. The Australian Human Rights Commission has also remained focused on sex discrimination over the decade, including conducting the National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces and continuing work on sexual assault and sexual harassment at Australian universities.

Critically, there are a number of aspects of Australia's approach that need improvement and immediate attention from a human rights perspective. A 2018 report from the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences<sup>64</sup> identified that while progress had been made in Australia, there is a need for further work to meet CEDAW obligations, including policy and legislative reform to enshrine gender equality within the Australian Constitution and ensure consistent family violence and violence against women legislation across jurisdictions, as well as specific recommendations to address violence experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, women with disabilities, women who are incarcerated, women from refugee, asylum seeker and migrant backgrounds, and older women. This report made a number of policy and legislative recommendations, many of which haven't been implemented. In future tracking reports, it is suggested that recommendations from human rights commissions and relevant civil society organisations are identified, and progress towards achieving these recommended reforms tracked over time.

## **Legislative reform**

Between 2009 and 2019 across all Australian jurisdictions, a keyword search of Lawlex (see Appendix A: Methodology and limitations)<sup>65</sup> revealed that approximately 100 changes were made to legislation which had the potential to directly impact (progressively or regressively)

the drivers of violence against women or forms of discrimination that intersect with gender inequality. Our analysis explores some of the legislative changes that have occurred over the past ten years. It provides a snapshot of the current state of legislative reform, and helps us understand the extent to which this is contributing to providing the foundations for primary prevention.

The legislative change process can take many years of incremental, non-linear, progressive and regressive iterations. This report does not intend to provide in-depth analysis of each piece of legislation; nor does it provide any analysis of interpretation or implementation (that is, it is not a measurement of efficacy or unintended consequences). It also does not analyse whether each piece of legislation has considered differential impact. It does, however, acknowledge that legislation development and reform is not a neutral process, and that legislation can be designed and implemented in ways that further benefit those who already hold privilege and further oppress or discriminate against those who don't. Furthermore, calls for certain types of legislative reform can in themselves be a form of backlash, as it is not only gender equality advocates but those who seek to undermine gender equality efforts who make calls for legislative and policy reform.<sup>66</sup>

In future monitoring reports, a more in-depth assessment of progress and analysis of impact could be incorporated by analysing civil society responses to legislation, and identifying overall trends in legislative reform, to provide an overall summary of net positive or negative impacts on women's rights. Future reports could also assess whether progressive legislative reform identified in this report has been sustained or has regressed over time.

Between 2009 and 2019, examples of legislative changes which could be seen to be addressing drivers of violence against women and supporting gender equality include:

- introduction of the Commonwealth Paid Parental Leave scheme, supporting eligible parents to access taxpayer-funded income when taking time off work to care for a newborn or recently adopted child
- renamed Commonwealth *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012*<sup>67</sup> and broadened role of the Workplace Gender Equality Agency as a statutory agency
- decriminalisation of abortion and establishment of safe access zones in numerous jurisdictions
- removal of GST from feminine hygiene products
- introduction of the *Prevention of Violence Act 2018* in Victoria,<sup>68</sup> including the establishment of a statutory prevention authority enshrined in law.

Significantly, perhaps the most prolific area of legislative change between 2009 and 2019 relates to responses to domestic and family violence. Across different jurisdictions, these include, but are not limited to, amendments to the *Criminal Code Act 1995*<sup>69</sup> to include image-based abuse, amendments to tenancy acts to allow women experiencing violence to terminate their lease without penalty, the introduction of the *Modern Slavery Act 2018*<sup>70</sup> and a *Fair Work Amendment Act 2013*,<sup>71</sup> which includes provisions for minimum unpaid family and domestic violence leave. Legislative changes that address the drivers of violence against women – as part of a holistic approach including interlinked prevention, early intervention and response initiatives – will ensure 'a comprehensive and holistic approach to ending violence against women'.<sup>72</sup>

Other legislation that could be seen as addressing forms of discrimination and privilege that intersect with gender inequality include:

- the *Marriage Amendment (Definition and Religious Freedoms) Act 2017*,<sup>73</sup> to allow marriage regardless of sex or gender
- amendment of a state-based *Equal Opportunity Act*,<sup>74</sup> to include the duty to make reasonable adjustments for employees/students with disabilities
- amendment of the *Age Discrimination Act 2004*,<sup>75</sup> to create the office of Age Discrimination Commissioner
- Establishment of the National Disability Insurance Scheme, aiming to give people with disability choice and control over the support they receive and meet certain obligations under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

On the other hand, some legislative changes between 2009 and 2019 have arguably been regressive, reinforcing the drivers of violence against women. For example:

- tax reform focused on reducing tax for middle/high income brackets rather than lower-income brackets where women are overrepresented<sup>76</sup>
- welfare reform in the form of compulsory income management (BasicsCard/Cashless Debit Card), which some argue limits women's independence, and has disproportionate impacts on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities<sup>77</sup>
- migration law reform that has further excluded women on temporary visas from accessing violence response services, income support and human services, including housing<sup>78</sup>
- disability reform that saw women disproportionately impacted by 2012 changes to the Disability Support Pension when changes to eligibility criteria pushed many women onto Newstart, leading to increases in poverty and financial stress<sup>79</sup>
- implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme, which has seen fewer women than men accessing the scheme.<sup>iv</sup>

Further contributions to preventing violence against women through policy and legislative reform could be made across diverse portfolios such as:

- health (for example, access to sexual and reproductive health, and the sexual and reproductive rights of women with disability<sup>80</sup>)
- education (for example, availability of and access to respectful relationships education)
- justice (for example, implementing recommendations from the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody report<sup>81</sup> and the Human Rights Law Centre and Change the Record report into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's over-imprisonment<sup>82</sup>),
- housing (because the risk of homelessness and insecure housing increases the likelihood that women will be subjected to violence<sup>83</sup>).

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iv Advocates are calling for an NDIS Women's Strategy to be developed in consultation with women with disability and their representative organisations.



To prevent violence against women, legislative reform across a broad range of social policy areas must consider all impacts on women, identifying how the intersections of sexism and other forms of discrimination are considered in the legislation itself, and the ways in which legislation is implemented. Currently, underlying systemic discrimination leads to institutionalised forms of violence against women, for example violence perpetrated through the criminal justice system,<sup>84</sup> immigration processing system,<sup>85</sup> out-of-home care system<sup>86</sup> or specialist disability services system – violence which is often condoned through the regulatory and legislative environment attached to such institutions. The persistence of such forms of violence highlights the urgency of ensuring legislative reform priorities are established through partnerships led by those women who are most affected. It also points to the need for gender analysis across a broad range of social policy areas, to ensure that all legislation relevant to the prevention of violence against women is considered in reform agendas.

### **Gender equality goals and targets**

Various jurisdictions have identified gender equality goals and targets between 2009 and 2019. These include measures such as:

- targets for women in leadership positions
- minimum 40% or 50% representation on government bodies and boards
- minimum targets for women executive and/or senior leadership positions.

The setting of targets is a promising sign of political commitment to change. However, in most cases these are articulated as commitments or pledges, rather than embedded in legislation. A stronger approach would be to legislate these commitments.

### **Gender policy machinery of government**

Gender-responsive policy-making and budget development can identify government levers to address gender inequalities, for example by promoting women's independence and decision-making, challenging gender stereotypes, and promoting and normalising gender equality in public and private life. There have been some promising developments to support such analysis, with the launch of gender equality and women's strategies in a number of jurisdictions. However, very few of these strategies look across all areas of government.

To realise and deliver on the full potential of gender-responsive policy-making and budgeting, there is a need to strengthen the gender policy machinery of government – that is, the kinds of structures and processes within government and the bureaucracy that help ensure expert gender analysis is applied at those points in policy and budget development and implementation processes where it can have greatest effect.

Opportunities to strengthen this policy machinery include establishing:

- processes to require intersectional gender impact statements in all policy and budget proposals as part of the budget development process
- processes to enable intersectional gender analysis of Cabinet submissions, specifically involving the relevant ministers (such as Ministers for Women) and incorporating expert advice from the relevant department
- an interdepartmental mechanism to coordinate gender activities with other agencies and ensure holistic reporting
- processes to support the public service to understand and implement gender-responsive policy-making and budgeting, including ongoing training and tools, potentially with Offices for Women providing advice, and playing a supporting role to other agencies.



## Domain 3: An expert workforce

Workforce development to support the planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of primary prevention and gender equality initiatives is a critical foundation for primary prevention work.<sup>87</sup> There is currently no national mechanism to provide the coordination, collaboration and quality assurance necessary to support this emerging workforce. Therefore, work is required to significantly expand, develop and build the capacity of the prevention workforce across the country, and to provide the coordination, collaboration and quality assurance processes that will strengthen this workforce. There is a clear need for an approach that supports workforce and sector development, across all foundational domains and at multiple levels – supporting transformation in institutions, within communities and workplaces, and for individuals. At the same time, the scaling and ‘mainstreaming’ of prevention across diverse settings requires that professionals working across a variety of disciplines play a critical role by embedding prevention and gender equality efforts into their existing work and the core business of their organisations. This mainstreaming also requires leadership teams in these settings to understand prevention and commit the resources and support required for professional development, and to drive and secure whole-of-organisation support for this work.

In this domain, we explore the extent to which the current prevention infrastructure supports and enables the development of:

- a specialist workforce of prevention policy-makers and professionals who provide leadership, technical assistance, program development and policy, research, data, evaluation and communications support to diverse stakeholders.
- specialists with skills and knowledge in designing and delivering specific, evidence-informed prevention strategies, policies, programs, research, evaluations and communications for the prevention of violence against women.
- specialists with skills and knowledge in applying the techniques outlined in *Change the story*<sup>88</sup> and *Changing the picture*<sup>89</sup> to prevent violence against women in order to transform social systems, norms, structures and practices that create complex intersecting forms of oppression and privilege, and that influence patterns of perpetration as well as experiences of violence.

### An expert workforce: summary of findings

The majority of the analysis below is based on qualitative and quantitative data collected through Our Watch’s Progress in Prevention Research Survey, distributed online to stakeholders across Australia in January 2020 for which 312 responses were collected<sup>v</sup> (see Appendix A: Methodology and limitations). The survey responses indicated that the emerging prevention workforce is multiskilled, working across the domains identified in this paper and employed by a variety of organisations. The primary prevention workforce also works across a range of roles, with three-quarters of workers spending between most and a little of their time working on primary prevention or incorporating primary prevention into

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v Total numbers of responses to survey questions varied for each question; 312 represents the largest number of responses for a single question. Percentages throughout the report are based on actual response numbers for each question.

their practice. Those who specialise in primary prevention are a smaller component of the workforce; a quarter of respondents indicated that primary prevention was their focus 100% of the time.

Analysis of qualitative responses shows that the work of this emerging workforce contributes to primary prevention of violence against women in a wide range of ways, including:

- building capacity of other practitioners and organisations
- advocating for gendered approaches
- delivering respectful relationships programs
- engaging in workforce development for organisations and workplaces
- raising awareness of violence against women, the drivers of violence against women and other primary prevention concepts
- promoting empowerment, gender equality and respect.

When asked about their roles, many respondents indicated that they are:

- working in partnership with other organisations
- involved in building the knowledge of others in relation to what primary prevention is
- undertaking gender analysis/applying a gender lens to their work
- developing and delivering informal training or professional development
- building organisational capacity to embed primary prevention into everyday practice.

The majority of respondents reported that their highest formal qualification did not include any content about primary prevention of violence against women. This finding is not unsurprising considering the small (but growing) number of formal qualifications that include content about primary prevention and violence against women. At the same time the majority of respondents indicated that they considered themselves senior or expert in their knowledge of prevention of violence against women. This suggests that there is a perception of extensive knowledge in the sector, but that this is largely not formalised through qualifications.

The majority of respondents reported attending some form of training, professional development, mentoring or supervision to support their work in the prevention of violence against women in the past ten years, with most of these training, professional development and related activities taking place in a capital city or online. The emerging workforce was most likely to associate this training with positive impacts on their skills in the areas of:

- understanding primary prevention and how it can be applied to their role
- working in partnership with other organisations to prevent violence against women, and
- critical self-reflection.

However, a lesser proportion of those who have undertaken training or professional development in the past ten years reported attending training that had a positive impact on their skills and knowledge to support:

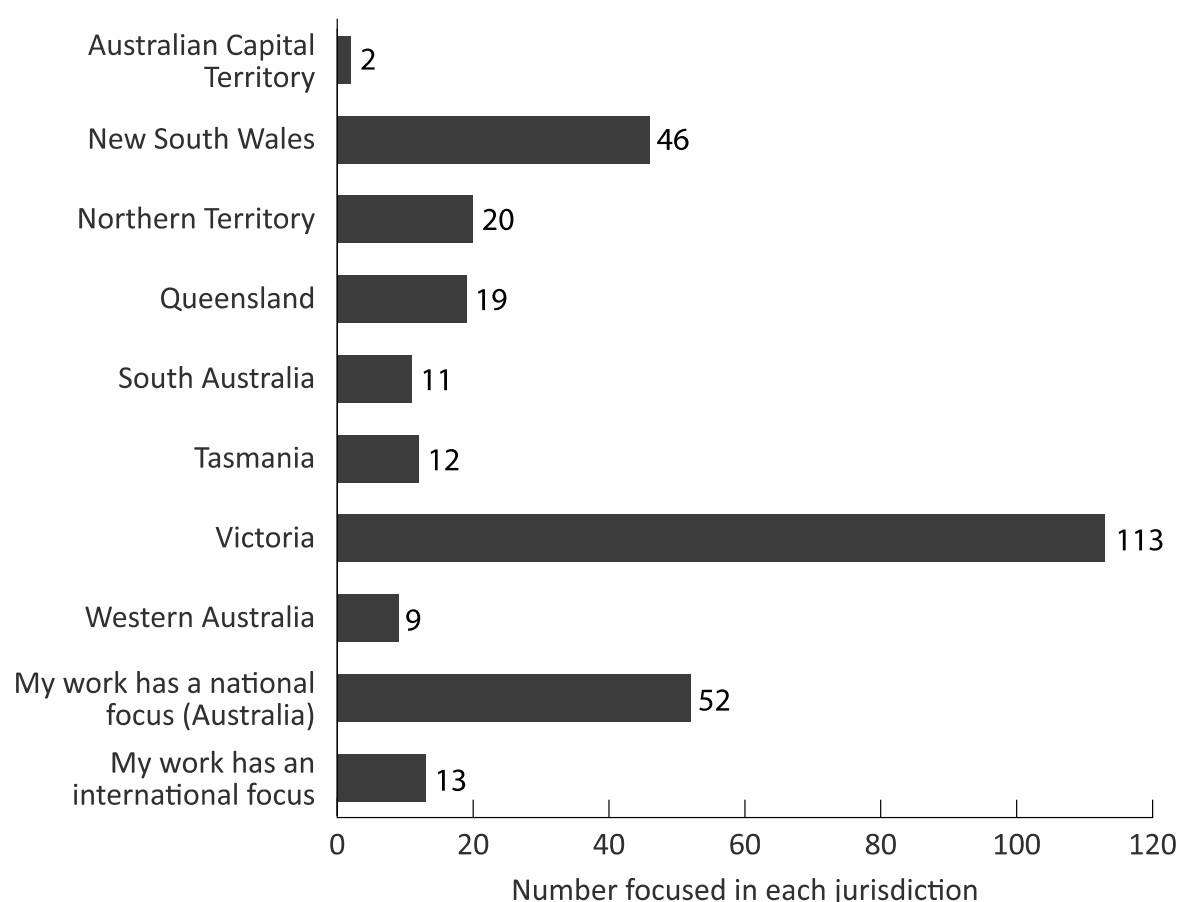
- advocacy for policy reform to amend discriminatory policies and practices
- taking a holistic approach to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in prevention programming

- designing social marketing campaigns and other communications activities to prevent violence against women and
- taking a healing focus in primary prevention work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

## Understanding the primary prevention workforce

As a starting point, our research survey aimed to better understand the primary prevention workforce, including what primary prevention roles entail, and how this workforce is distributed across Australia. Findings show the diversity of the prevention workforce in terms of location (see Figure 4, below), settings, specialisation, level of prior experience in prevention, and proportion of roles that are dedicated to primary prevention. The majority of survey respondents' work is focused in one state, but there is a subgroup whose work has either a national or international focus (or both).

**Figure 4: In what jurisdiction is your work focused? (Select all that apply)**

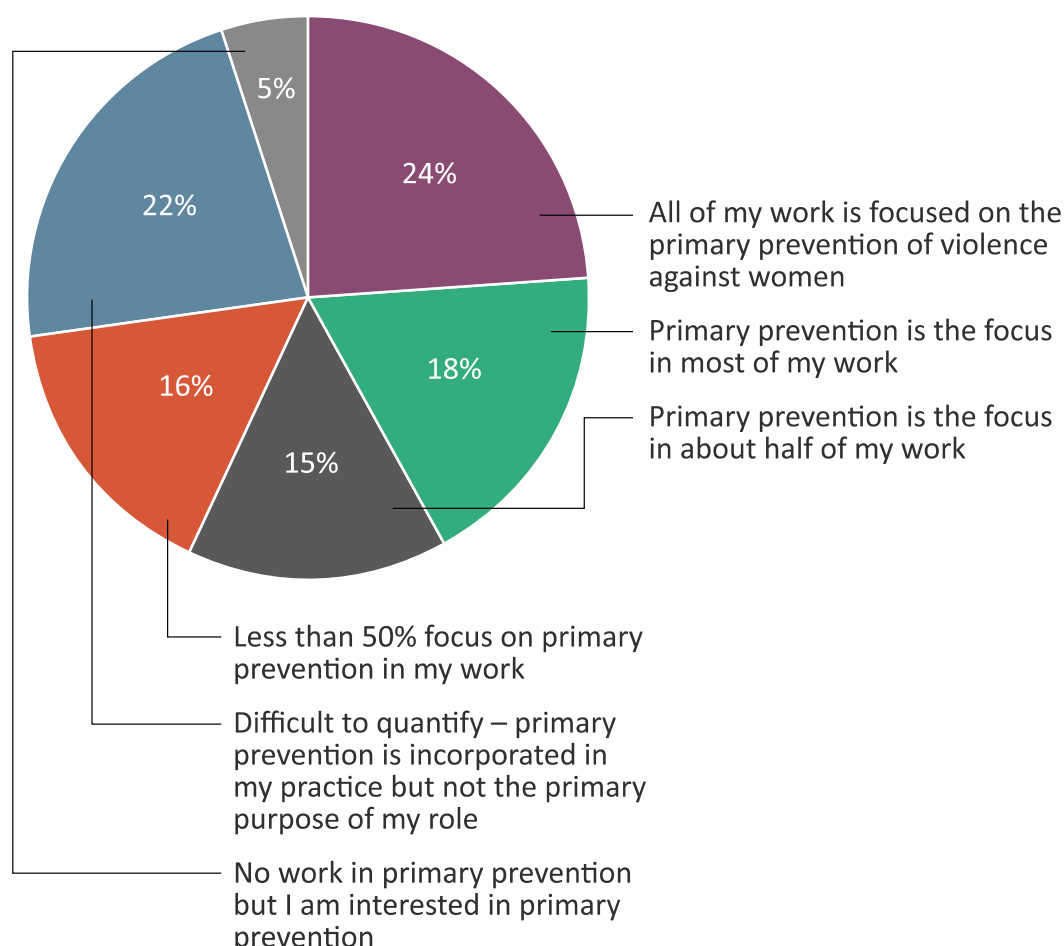


Source: Progress in Prevention Research Survey

The primary prevention workforce is multiskilled and works across a range of roles, with about a quarter of the emerging workforce indicating that their role is 100% focused on primary prevention (see Figure 5, below). A third indicated that primary prevention was the focus of most of their work or half their work, and 16% said primary prevention was less than half of their work. For others (almost a quarter) it was difficult to quantify, reflecting

that primary prevention is broadly incorporated into their work but not necessarily the main purpose of their role. Respondents working in Victoria or with a national focus were most likely to have a role which is 100% focused on primary prevention.

**Figure 5: What percentage/proportion of your work is currently focused on primary prevention of violence against women?**



Source: Progress in Prevention Research Survey

The majority of the prevention workforce are familiar or very familiar with key concepts that are central to primary prevention of violence against women. Perhaps reflecting the success of *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children*, respondents recognised the gendered drivers of violence against women, followed by primary prevention and the reinforcing factors of violence against women. Interestingly – and perhaps indicating an opportunity for further professional development focus – levels of familiarity were lower for gender transformative practice and tertiary prevention or response. Just over half of the survey respondents self-identified as either senior or expert in terms of their skills and experience in primary prevention, and the other half reported their level of skills and experience as mid-level or entry-level, implying a confident workforce.

The most common settings that respondents' organisations work was focused were 'health, family and community services' (see Table 1, below), which included family and domestic violence services and women's health services. As primary prevention originated in advocacy and activism by the family and domestic violence, gender equality and women's health sectors, it is unsurprising that a majority of primary prevention activity continues in these sectors. This is also linked to the ministries and portfolios that are driving policy and legislative reform, as outlined in Domain 2, and where programming, funding and activity is directed (Domain 6). As respondents could tick as many as applied, the table below also shows both the total number of responses for the settings and the number with work focused in just one setting.

**Table 1: In which settings and/or areas is the work of your organisation focused?  
(Select all that apply)**

Settings	Total number of respondents	Number working this setting only
Health, family and community services	152	44
Government	95	22
Workplaces, corporations, employee or employer associations	67	2
Education and care settings for children and young people	57	3
Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities	46	—
Universities, registered training organisations and other tertiary education institutions	41	3
Legal, justice and corrections contexts	41	4
Sports, recreation, social and leisure spaces	40	1
Other	39	10
Faith-based contexts	25	—
Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation	24	3
Public spaces, transport, infrastructure and facilities	24	1
Media	19	1
Popular culture, advertising and entertainment	12	—
Arts	10	—

Source: Progress in Prevention Research Survey

## Primary prevention roles

The emerging prevention workforce is multiskilled, working across the infrastructure domains for a wide variety of organisations. Typically, respondents indicated that they undertake a range of activities in relation to primary prevention of violence against women (see Table 2, below). A great many respondents are involved in partnerships with other organisations, building the knowledge of others in relation to what primary prevention is, and undertaking gender analysis/applying a gender lens to their work. A significant proportion develop and deliver informal training or professional development and build organisational capacity to embed primary prevention into everyday practice.

**Table 2: In your role, do you regularly undertake any of these activities related to the primary prevention of violence against women? (Select all that apply)**

Activities that may be part of your role	Number (n)
Work in partnership with other organisations to prevent violence against women	151
Build the knowledge of others in relation to what primary prevention is, the drivers of violence against women and actions to prevent violence	140
Undertake gender analysis or apply a gender lens to your work	136
Develop and deliver informal training, professional development and mentoring	115
Build organisational capacity to embed primary prevention into everyday practice	108
Develop and apply knowledge of the way multiple forms of discrimination and privilege intersect with gender inequality	106
Conduct research, monitor progress, evaluate programs or collect and analyse data	93
Develop and implement prevention programs for groups and individuals	92
Develop policy advice for organisations, local government, state or federal governments or regions	79
Develop practice guides, evidence summaries and resources	79
Develop and deliver campaigns and communications materials (for example, social marketing campaigns, social media, posters, infographics)	75
Write/produce content for media (TV, online, newspaper)	47
Provide administrative, financial and quality management support for an organisation delivering primary prevention projects	42
Develop and deliver formal training (TAFE, RTO, University)	36

Source: Progress in Prevention Research Survey

Respondents' descriptions of their own roles echoed the findings above and showed that many respondents are involved in training, education or capacity-building, defined broadly, a number are working in community development or community education, and others are working in program design and delivery in a range of settings. The most common techniques reflected in survey responses included organisational development, community mobilisation and strengthening, direct participation programming and civil society advocacy. Respondents draw on a wide range of skills in their work to prevent violence against women. The most common include skills in:

- facilitation, training and adult learning
- stakeholder engagement and relationships
- applying a gender lens (gender analysis)
- research and data analysis
- program design and development
- cultural awareness and cultural safety
- partnerships and collaboration
- communications, speaking and influencing
- evaluation
- understanding and applying theoretical frameworks
- analysis of gender inequality and other forms of discrimination and privilege.

The following are examples of roles (some of which have been altered to retain anonymity), as described by survey respondents. They illustrate the diversity of roles in which respondents are employed and have been grouped under headings to show how the work spans the domains measured in this report and *Counting on change*.<sup>90</sup>

### **Contributing to policy and legislative reform**

*'Strategic policy development and implementation in government agencies'*

*'Policy and advocacy leadership – focused on primary prevention and response'*

### **Strengthening the expert workforce**

*'Training workers in identifying primary drivers of VAW ...'*

*'Training workers in engaging men in conversations about VAW...'*

### **Contributing to quality primary prevention programming**

*'[gender stereotypes] in the context of parenting in Aboriginal families'*

*'...increasing the number of women and girls taking up leadership roles in sporting clubs'*

*'Delivery of respectful relationships program with refugee and migrant communities'*

*'Research and evaluation to inform prevention practice'*

## **Roles described using settings and techniques outlined in *Change the story***

Many respondents described their role in primary prevention and/or the work they do by describing specific settings or communities, and/or by describing specific techniques. In the examples below, where respondents are working across early intervention, response and primary prevention, roles are described holistically, with some descriptions including early intervention (for example, awareness-raising campaigns for women at risk) and primary prevention (education programs for young people).

### **Examples of roles with reference to settings**

*‘Creating art that opens discussions on gender and primary prevention ...’*

*‘Co-design process with service providers to adopt new strategies created to embed key messages of gender equality into their service delivery and workforce’*

### **Examples of roles with reference to techniques**

*‘Education programs for young people, training for the DFV sector, awareness raising campaigns for women at risk’*

*‘Support primary and secondary schools to implement Respectful Relationships Education’*

*‘Community education concerning forced marriage and other forms of modern slavery; community education regarding Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting [sic]; community nonviolence workshops ...’*

## **Funding for primary prevention**

To provide leadership, technical assistance, program development and policy support, the primary prevention workforce depends on workforce and organisational development that is underpinned by ongoing primary prevention investment. The survey findings indicated that just over half of the respondents work for an organisation that has received funding for the primary prevention of violence against women. Just under a quarter reported that their organisation had not received funding for this purpose. The remaining were either unsure or selected ‘not applicable’.<sup>vi</sup>

Those who specified where their organisation’s funding for primary prevention came from cited a range of state/territory and federal government departments, primarily health, communities and social services departments and women’s offices. Just under one quarter of respondents work for an organisation that is providing services to organisations or individuals that they are not funded to deliver.<sup>vii</sup>

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vi Most of those who said that this does not apply to them were working in government settings, but other responses included workplaces, legal, justice and corrections, education and care settings, ACCOs, and those working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities.

vii A large proportion of survey respondents (35%) indicated that they were unsure about whether their organisation was providing services that it wasn’t funded to deliver.



Half of the respondents whose organisation provides services without funding specialise in working with specific communities, the most common of which were:

- women and their children
- men
- people from migrant or refugee backgrounds
- people on a low income/in financial hardship/homeless
- people from LGBTIQ+ communities
- people with disability
- people experiencing violence.

Those who indicated that their organisation is delivering services they are not funded to deliver commonly referred to work that was an ‘add-on’ or something they deliver ‘in-kind’. A number of respondents in this category stated that some of their services are delivered through a ‘fee-for-service’ model, at times because funding is available to develop but not deliver training. Respondents also mentioned referral, response or responding to disclosures as activities for which they do not receive funding.

A small proportion (14%) of respondents reported that their organisation has received funding for the primary prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.<sup>viii</sup> Sources of funding for this work included:

- Commonwealth Department of Social Services
- partnering with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations
- philanthropic funding
- state government funding from a family or community service agency.

Most of the specialist organisations represented in the survey work with culturally and linguistically diverse/migrant and refugee communities, young people and women and girls. This was closely followed by organisations that specialise in working with LGBTIQ+ communities, and those who work with men who use violence.

## **Advice, support and influence on the sector**

Survey results suggest that, increasingly, a specialist and expert workforce is being enabled to provide leadership and technical assistance to others. For example, survey respondents are frequently influenced by ideas, resources and tools from the following types of organisations:

- national primary prevention of violence against women organisations funded under the National Plan
- individuals and communities with lived experience of violence against women
- academic and/or other research bodies.

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viii Just over a quarter of respondents (27%) stated that they were unsure about whether they had received funding for the primary prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family violence.

The majority of respondents indicated that their organisation provides one or more forms of advice and support to other organisations and/or individuals, most often to inform them about what they can do to prevent violence. The majority of these provide multiple types of advice and support (see Table 3, below).

**Table 3: Does your organisation provide advice and support to other organisations and individuals as outlined in any of the categories below? (Select all that apply)**

Types of advice and support	Number (n)
Informing organisations and individuals about what they can do to prevent violence against women	144
Policy and strategy advice	118
Introduction to primary prevention	11
Advice and support for knowledge translation and learning (e.g. through coordination of communities of practice, practice guides, digital tools)	110
Specialist knowledge and advice on the way multiple forms of discrimination and privilege intersect with gender inequality	97
Advice/support for prevention program design and implementation	96
Advice to researchers, evaluators and data analysts	80
Advice/support for resource and tool writers and designers	61
Advice/support for campaign developers	55
Unsure	24
None of the above	15
Other	9

Source: Progress in Prevention Research Survey

Most often these various forms of advice and support were supported by government funding (either federal, state or local government). Organisations also frequently fund their own advice and support services and/or offer these using a fee-for-service model (see Table 4, below).

Organisations that provided these services without funding, regardless of the setting, were commonly engaged in organisational capacity building, developing the knowledge of others in relation to primary prevention of violence against women, and providing informal training and mentoring to others.

**Table 4: Source of funding for types of advice and support provided by organisations  
(Select all that apply)**

Funding sources	Number of respondents
Government funding (local, state or federal)	126
Funded by the organisation but not explicitly funded through any funding or grant programs	71
Fee for service, funded by requesting organisations	57
Unsure	34
Philanthropic funding (from philanthropic organisations or through corporate philanthropic programs)	24
Other	22
Unfunded	11

Source: Progress in Prevention Research Survey

## Formal qualifications

Given that the primary prevention workforce is diverse, and exists across all settings, it was anticipated that practitioners would have a range of qualifications and professional backgrounds. In the past few years, a number of subjects and courses to increase skills and knowledge of the prevention of violence against women have emerged (see Appendix B: A selection of family violence related courses at Australian universities). Three-quarters of respondents hold a qualification at Bachelor degree level or higher, while just over half of respondents reported that their highest formal qualification did not include any content about primary prevention of violence against women or gender equality.

## Training, professional development and skills development

The survey explored the extent to which respondents have had access to pre-service and in-service gender equality and primary prevention training. It found that the majority of respondents (87%) had attended some form of training, professional development, mentoring or supervision to support their work in prevention of violence against women in the past ten years. Those who indicated that primary prevention work is interwoven into their role but not the explicit purpose of their role were less likely to have undertaken any training, professional development or other activity to support their prevention work than those whose role focuses partially or completely on prevention.

Table 5, below, indicates that a smaller proportion of those who have undertaken training or professional development in the past ten years felt this had a positive impact on their skills and knowledge in the following areas:

- advocacy for policy reform to amend discriminatory policies and practices
- taking a holistic approach to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in prevention programming
- designing social marketing campaigns and other communications activities to prevent violence against women
- taking a healing focus in primary prevention work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

**Table 5: Has this training, professional development, mentoring or professional learning programs, guided supervision or on-the-job training had any impact on your skills and knowledge in any of the following areas? (select all that apply)**

Knowledge and skill area	Number of respondents positively impacted (n)
<b>Generalist knowledge and skill areas</b>	
Understanding primary prevention and how it can be applied in your role	120
Working in partnership with other organisations to prevent violence against women	113
Critical self-reflection	108
Responding to disclosures of violence against women	107
Undertaking gender analysis/applying a gender lens to your work	104
Responding to resistance and backlash	102
Primary prevention research, monitoring, evaluation and data analysis	86
<b>Knowledge and skills related to settings or techniques</b>	
Designing and implementing primary prevention activities (e.g. direct participation programs, mobilising communities to prevent violence against women)	85
Understanding, recognising and effectively responding to the impacts of collective and individual trauma	77
Reporting on violence against women	67
Designing social marketing campaigns and other communications activities to prevent violence against women	34

Knowledge and skill area	Number of respondents positively impacted (n)
<b>Knowledge and skills in discrimination and intersectionality</b>	
Developing strategies that address intersecting forms of oppression and privilege	88
Adapting to different community, demographic and geographic contexts	72
Advocacy for policy reform to amend discriminatory policies and practices	47
<b>Knowledge and skills in working with specific communities or groups</b>	
Challenging and preventing all forms of racism, indifference, ignorance and disrespect towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and cultures	70
Preventing violence against people from lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex and queer communities	66
Preventing violence against migrant and refugee women and girls	62
Preventing violence against women and girls with disability	61
Working as allies with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in culturally safe ways	61
Use strengths-based and community strengthening approaches that support and strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families	57
Taking a holistic approach to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in prevention programming	47
Taking a healing focus in primary prevention work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities	33

Source: Progress in Prevention Research Survey

Survey respondents were asked what (if any) gaps in the available knowledge/evidence on primary prevention they would like to see addressed to support their work. The most common gaps highlighted were:

- involving men and boys
- broader systems change to enhance this work
- monitoring and evaluation tools
- evidence of what works
- gender analysis work focused on men
- data, statistics and measurement
- information informed by an intersectional lens
- appropriate tools, resources and practical strategies

- approaches informed by a LGBTIQ+ lens
- information on working with children and young people
- the need for further strengthening of the prevention workforce (under skilled, not sufficiently diverse)
- information that can guide attempts to increase and broaden reach and further influence community attitudes.

## **Resourcing and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's leadership strategies and models of leadership**

As *Changing the picture*<sup>91</sup> articulates, '[s]upport[ing] Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's participation in leadership and decision making' is an essential action that will contribute to the prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. This is achieved through strategies which 'promote [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's] right to participate equally in leadership, decision making and governance processes – at all levels, and both in their own communities and in non-Indigenous organisations'.<sup>92</sup>

Looking at the current landscape there is evidence of community-led activities that support and promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's participation in leadership and decision-making. For example, in 2018 the first National NAIDOC Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Conference in over thirty years brought hundreds of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women from across the country together to celebrate the wide-ranging achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in their communities, both now and in the past, and highlight the significant roles that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have played at the community, state and national levels. And the Australian Human Rights Commission Wiyi Yani U Thangani (Women's Voices) project is 'engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls across the country through a strength-based consultation process to better understand the issues that have the potential to effect positive change in their personal security, socioeconomic security and cultural security'.<sup>93</sup> Such an approach is not wholly supported in most national and state/territory strategies and plans, which make some reference to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, but mostly do not articulate mechanisms or processes for integrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's leadership, perspectives and voices in the development of prevention activity. Continued investment in community-controlled programs and self-determined organisations, structures and processes are required to ensure this action is fully realised.

While there are some examples of progress against this indicator, there are also developments that may undermine or hinder progress. For example, in 2019 the Australian Government announced that funding to the National Family Violence Prevention Legal Service Forum (the only national peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim-survivors of family violence and sexual assault) would be discontinued from mid-2020.<sup>94</sup> A six month extension has now been granted, however an 'adequately funded National body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at risk or experiencing family violence' remains critical.

## Domain 4: Mechanisms for coordination, collaboration and quality assurance

Preventing violence against women requires coordination of actions and approaches across all prevention activity to support an effective and mutually reinforcing approach across Australia.<sup>95</sup> This requires the deliberate development of, and investment in, quality standards, governance mechanisms to support coordination, advisory bodies and communication activities. The development of these mechanisms requires explicit consideration of how they operate and who they engage, including their ability to centre the voices of women most affected by both gender inequality and other forms of oppression.

In this context, coordination and collaboration mechanisms:

- enable mutually reinforcing activities across multiple levels and settings and alongside other social policy issues
- ensure consistency between legislative and policy reforms, programs, communications campaigns and other prevention efforts
- support the integration of gender equality and violence prevention into the work of established agencies, organisations and networks and use existing infrastructure at the national, state, regional and local levels
- support the scale-up, systematisation and embedding of approaches that are effective at preventing violence against women, and funding of grants to support evidence building.

Quality assurance mechanisms for policy and activity delivery can include:

- establishing criteria for activity funding and evaluation
- creating accredited and non-accredited training to ensure adequately skilled practitioners
- implementation and monitoring of established practice standards where they exist (such as the National Association of Services against Sexual Violence's National Standards for Sexual Assault Prevention Education)
- development of appropriate practice standards where they don't currently exist.

A strong response system is a vital foundation for effective prevention.<sup>96</sup> Strong links between prevention activities and the response system are required to ensure that activities and communications in both areas are mutually reinforcing.

### **Mechanisms for coordination, collaboration and quality assurance: summary of findings**

The National Plan,<sup>97</sup> *Change the story* (2015)<sup>98</sup> and a range of state/territory plans have been developed to support the broad aim of guiding coordinated and aligned prevention work. A number of mechanisms and time-limited advisory bodies have been established to support delivery of these national and state/territory plans and strategies. These include government advisory bodies, the six funded National Women's Alliances<sup>99</sup> and organisations established to provide national leadership in research and practice to prevent violence against women.

The survey data indicates that these organisations, alongside peak bodies, women's health and gender equality organisations and individuals with lived experience, are playing a key role in shaping primary prevention work across Australia. At an organisational level, coordination and collaboration between organisations has taken the form of partnerships, mutual capacity-building and expertise sharing as well as the issuing of joint statements or co-delivery of activities. Often these are unfunded activities, creating an ongoing resourcing challenge for partnering organisations.

Taken all together, these are promising developments. However, to support increased coordination and long-term sustainability across Australia, it is necessary to ensure:

- increased attention to the creation of dedicated mechanisms to coordinate intra- and inter-governmental work
- more formal and transparent opportunities for effective civil society engagement, and
- increased funding to support collaboration and partnerships.

## Supporting coordination

The last ten years has seen the establishment of some mechanisms to support coordination across different levels of government, designed to ensure consistency between legislative and policy reforms, programs, communications, campaigns, and other prevention efforts. These are encouraging signs of steps towards building this element of prevention infrastructure.

However, there is more work required to ensure that these mechanisms are able to coordinate and manage the complex work of undertaking the multi-level staged systems reforms required for sustained, long-term prevention. This point has been articulated within several reports, including the 2015 Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee report to parliament that included recommendations for the Commonwealth government to lead on improving coordination mechanisms, including that it:

‘investigate ways to improve consultation with the domestic and family violence sector, particularly in relation to the evaluation of the National Plan and Action Plans and to inform the development of future Action Plans.’<sup>100</sup>

The report went on to recommend that:

‘in light of the strong evidence pointing to the crucial need to prioritise primary prevention, [the Commonwealth Government] take responsibility to lead and coordinate the delivery of these essential programs.’<sup>101</sup>

Similarly, a report from Victoria's Family Violence Implementation Reform Monitor tabled in May 2018<sup>102</sup> noted foundational issues with the implementation of reforms in Victoria. These included a tendency to focus too much on acquitting reforms rather than on the complex system reform required to embed long-term change. A second report identified a need to map dependencies at a ‘whole-of-reform level’ in order to understand how key reforms relate to and influence one another, and a specific need for a governance body coordinating and managing prevention activities as a whole.<sup>103</sup>

Finally, a 2019 report conducted by the Australian National Audit Office found that while National Plan governance arrangements had been established to implement the Plan, the effectiveness of implementation was ‘reduced by a lack of attention to implementation



planning and performance measurement', including the lack of an implementation plan for the Third Action Plan.<sup>104</sup> As a result, an Implementation Plan has been developed for the Fourth Action Plan.

At the national level, several time-limited advisory groups have been convened to support quality primary prevention policy and activity through development and delivery of the National Plan. While these groups are inconsistently referenced in governance documents and action plans, it is apparent that over time there have been multiple advisory groups providing advice over relatively short time periods. Over time, these advisory groups appear to have become less likely to include civil society representatives providing expertise in their areas, and more likely to include only government representatives across jurisdictions (for more details, see Appendix C: Time-limited advisory groups linked to the National Plan).

These various findings reinforce the need for improved coordination mechanisms to oversee a systematic, staged delivery of primary prevention activities that is conscious of the necessary dependencies and nuances required to achieve meaningful transformation for all women, across all jurisdictions and within all settings.

### **Supporting mutually reinforcing activity**

Between 2009 and 2019, several key documents were developed with the intention of both coordinating and guiding primary prevention work in Australia. These include the National Plan, *Change the story* (2015),<sup>105</sup> and *Changing the picture* (2018),<sup>106</sup> which focuses on the prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. These documents provide a framework and guide respectively for promoting consistency between prevention efforts at a national, state/territory and local level. Data from our survey indicated that respondents, who are part of the emerging prevention workforce, commonly engage in work that is linked to a state or territory government primary prevention strategy or plan, and to shared national frameworks or guides and that these documents also commonly guide their work. The semi-structured interview participants also reflected on the role of *Change the story* in catalysing increased knowledge of primary prevention and more specifically a shared language and ways of talking about primary prevention.

In addition to government coordination mechanisms, a range of national and state/territory organisations and alliances, statutory bodies and commissions play a role in promoting consistency in evidence, practice and policy across tertiary, secondary and primary prevention. The National Plan included establishment of several key national organisations. One of these is Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety, or ANROWS, a national research organisation established to produce, disseminate and assist in applying evidence for policy and practice addressing violence against women and their children.<sup>107</sup> The second is Our Watch, an independent organisation with a specific focus on primary prevention, established to create nationwide change in the culture, behaviours and power imbalances that drive violence against women and their children. Under the National Plan, funding was also provided to six National Women's Alliances representing over 180 women's organisations across Australia. This includes three 'issues-based' alliances: Australian Women Against Violence Alliance (AWAVA), Economic Security for Women (eS4W), and the Equality Rights Alliance (ERA), as well as three 'sector-based' alliances advocating for the rights of specific communities: Harmony Alliance (migrant and refugee women), the National

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance (NATSIWA), and the National Rural Women's Coalition (NRWC).

Other organisations also play a role in promoting consistency and coordination, including Women with Disabilities Australia (or WWDA), which receives operational funding through the Commonwealth Department of Social Services and the National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Forum, which was established in 2012 and provides collaboration across the thirteen services it represents, as well as 'advice and input to Government and ensuring a unified FVPLS response to addressing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family violence'.<sup>108</sup> Other organisations contribute to coordination across social policy areas where their work intersects with or includes violence prevention activity, for example the national LGBTI Health Alliance, which is funded from various government jurisdictions, and Elder Abuse Action Australia (EAAA), a peak body to respond to and prevent elder abuse, established in 2018 with funding through the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department.

Results of the survey show that the organisations most likely to shape and determine the specific kinds of primary prevention activities undertaken by respondents' organisations were women's health and gender equality organisations, peak bodies and government funding bodies. With respect to respondents developing their overall approach to primary prevention, national organisations funded under the National Plan and individuals with lived experience of violence against women were the most influential. When combined, these findings demonstrate that the consistency of approach across women's health and gender equality organisations, peak bodies and government bodies will influence the extent to which prevention activities and efforts are working together across Australia. The fact that national organisations funded under the National Plan and individuals with lived experience are widely referred to as influential in the development of approaches to primary prevention demonstrates the important role of these organisations and individuals in supporting and enabling coordination and collaboration. Survey respondents indicated that their work was most commonly linked to state/territory governments' prevention strategies or plans, *Change the story*, and/or the National Plan/Fourth Action Plan. Further research could investigate the extent to which these plans and strategies reinforce each other and support consistency across the wide range of prevention efforts captured in this survey and beyond.

Beyond government and organisational coordination mechanisms, partnerships provided another mechanism for collaboration and coordination. A majority of organisations that responded to the survey noted that they regularly partnered with other organisations or alliances working to prevent violence against women (80%). While a wide variety of partners were identified, common partners included family violence/violence against women organisations, community organisations, women's health organisations, advocacy organisations and state and local government.<sup>ix</sup> Just over half (55%) of the survey respondents regularly partnered with other organisations or alliances working on any forms of injustice and discrimination. Partner organisations included those with a focus on law and justice or human rights and discrimination, as well as organisations working with migrant

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ix Examples cited included (but aren't limited to) other government agencies, universities, local government, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, health services and hospitals, international NGOs, sporting codes, women's health organisations, child and family services, and national women's alliances.

and refugee communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, children and young people, LGBTIQ people and people with disability. Partnerships led by groups affected by intersecting drivers of violence (other forms of oppression and discrimination) will continue to be needed in both whole-of-population activities and those targeted at the norms, practices and structures that create complex and intersecting forms of discrimination and privilege. These partnerships can work towards shared goals by recognising the relevance of other social policy issues to violence against women and gender equality, as well as the importance of a gendered analysis in order to better address (and avoid reinforcing) the drivers of violence against women across all social policy areas.

## **Resourcing and capacity**

As noted in other sections of this report, capacity and resourcing are an ongoing challenge for organisations in this field. A third (31%) of those survey respondents whose organisations do partner with other organisations and alliances to prevent violence against women reported providing services that they are not funded to deliver. This most commonly includes add-on or in-kind work, which often focuses on building the capacity of others outside their own organisations in relation to primary prevention and gender equality. Organisations reporting this include those with specialist expertise, which often experience higher demand than they are able to meet for partnerships, capacity-building and expert review. Of respondents whose organisations are partnering to address any form of injustice and discrimination, 58% receive funding for primary prevention of violence against women, and 32% provide services they are not funded to deliver. Just over half (53%) of those whose organisations are involved in some kind of partnership in relation to primary prevention indicated that their organisation provides ‘specialist knowledge and advice on the way multiple forms of discrimination and privilege intersect with gender inequality’, as well as other more generalist forms of advice and support. Similarly, of those engaged in prevention partnerships of some kind, 60% regularly undertake, as part of their role, activities that develop and apply knowledge of the way multiple forms of discrimination and privilege intersect with gender inequality.

While a majority of respondents (70%) use strategies to address forms of inequality other than gender inequality in their primary prevention work, only a small number explicitly mentioned how this occurred in their partnership work. Examples included building relationships and developing partnerships with specialist organisations and partnering with communities to design community-led primary prevention activities. Notably, respondents were more likely to say they draw on skills in cultural awareness and safety in their work if their organisation partnered with others in relation to injustice and discrimination, suggesting the value of such partnerships and the importance of funding this work.

## **Tools, resources and guides to support the design, implementation and evaluation of primary prevention**

The 2009–2019 period saw the development of many tools, resources and guides to support the design, implementation and evaluation of primary prevention activity; the volume and scope of tools being developed has increased. This is evidenced by the Action to Prevent Violence Against Women website run by GEN VIC,<sup>109</sup> which has a resource library of primary prevention tools containing 100 resources developed in Australia since 2009, and the

Women's Health Victoria (WHV) Library,<sup>110</sup> which added 110 Australian-developed resources under 'violence prevention' over the same period. A number of practitioner hubs have also been launched in this period, including Level Playground,<sup>111</sup> Workplace Equality and Respect,<sup>112</sup> Respectful Relationships Education,<sup>113</sup> Municipal Association of Victoria Promising Practice Portal<sup>114</sup> and Media Making Change.<sup>115</sup> While only a quarter of respondents to the survey had developed tools, resources or guides, a majority reported providing a range of advice and support functions to other organisations and individuals to support effective, coordinated primary prevention practice, as outlined in Domain 3.

## Domain 5: Monitoring, reporting and evaluation frameworks

Building, consolidating and further developing the primary prevention evidence base has been recognised as critical to the effective prevention of violence against women in Australia. As stated in *Change the story*:<sup>116</sup>

‘A national approach to prevention requires a comprehensive, coordinated system for monitoring, accountability, reporting and evaluation.’<sup>117</sup>

Principles to guide the development of effective prevention infrastructure include:

- Comprehensive and coordinated systems exist for data collection and analysis, monitoring, accountability, reporting and evaluation at all levels.
- All partners implementing prevention activity (governments, civil society, public and private sector institutions and organisations) report on progress, and evaluate their efforts against shared short-, mid- and long-term objectives.
- Measures and targets are developed using an intersectional approach and reflect those outlined in *Counting on change* where appropriate. Additional measures and targets reflect the specific context and objectives of the activity/policy in question.

The National Plan<sup>118</sup> also identifies evidence building as a key focus, stating that ‘(a)ll governments recognise that outcomes for women and their children could be improved by governments working more collaboratively through building the evidence base, sharing information and tracking performance. A key priority of the National Plan is to build a strong and lasting evidence base.’<sup>119</sup>

Three critical priorities for evidence building have emerged from overarching primary prevention frameworks and plans such as *Change the story* and the National Plan:

1. investment in monitoring, evaluation, learning and reporting, including shared frameworks, in order to understand, learn from and account for our progress, effectiveness, learning and strategies
2. ethical and strategic research, data collection and data analysis into emerging issues, critical knowledge gaps and population-level or cohort trends to further our understanding of violence against women, the drivers, and how and why social change is occurring, and
3. development of appropriate infrastructure to support evidence building and evidence use for the prevention of violence against women.

In order to get a sense of how Australia is tracking in building an evidence base and monitoring and evaluating change in primary prevention, this domain explores whether there are any discernible trends in the building and use of the primary prevention evidence base in the last ten years.

### Monitoring, reporting and evaluation frameworks: summary of findings

There has been important investment in the development of a national guide to monitoring, *Counting on change*, a national research agenda (ANROWS), and the development of data platforms and tools (such as the ABS Gender Indicators.). There is also evidence of

commitment to national data collection, management and dissemination strategies, with clear efforts being made to continually refine shared datasets at the population level. However, this work could be further supported through the establishment of a coordinating body or mechanism for measuring progress at the national level. Until some form of ongoing commitment exists it cannot be concluded that there is a shared, coordinated approach to data and measuring progress, based on a shared understanding of the evidence.

Governance mechanisms for overseeing implementation and monitoring of primary prevention activities are largely the responsibility of the jurisdiction funding that activity. This means general monitoring activities are being informed by whatever processes and platforms each jurisdiction has in place for monitoring and reporting on funded programs. As such, it is critical that primary prevention monitoring, reporting and evaluation frameworks draw on the best available evidence and shared national frameworks.

An emerging gap in the infrastructure is the relatively limited investment in evaluation frameworks and strategies to evaluate collective and coordinated primary prevention impact more broadly. Primary prevention activities are typically designed and funded in a way that only enables process evaluation, or evaluation of short-term impact of individual activities or interventions. This means that most of the evaluation work being done and published is not suitable or sufficient to inform strong coordinated and reinforcing activity design and strategic investment. We know change is a long-term, multifaceted, and complex endeavour, and that:

‘while power structures may appear to change, ultimately deeper transformations in the status quo do not necessarily occur. And in some cases, a strategy that has worked in the past may not work again even in the same context, given the prior change that has been achieved.’<sup>120</sup>

Future tracking reports could investigate how our evaluation approaches can avoid confusing or conflating short-term appearance of change with sustainable change by identifying how we can best describe and take into account successes along the way, while remaining focused on the need for long-term transformation.

In terms of evaluation and learning, there are currently no agreed or shared evaluation frameworks that are widely adhered to. However, several evaluation frameworks have been developed, some by health organisations and universities<sup>121 122 123</sup> and others to support evaluative approaches to state or regional prevention strategies.<sup>124</sup> There are also a range of best-practice guides, briefly explored below, which provide guidance on evaluating primary prevention activities. However, the extent to which monitoring and evaluation practices are informed by rigorous research principles and are ethical and fit-for-purpose, depends on the support, resources and capability of those designing and implementing the activity and evaluation. Therefore, the skills of the prevention workforce and the quality of supporting national frameworks and plans are critical elements of monitoring and evaluation.

While evidence generation through research and syntheses to inform the emerging field of primary prevention has been developing, researchers and organisations<sup>125</sup> have been advocating for greater attention and recognition to be paid to the dimensions of power that privilege particular epistemological and methodological approaches to primary prevention planning, monitoring and evaluation. As such, there is a need for a much deeper and broader understanding of what constitutes research and evidence, who defines this, and how it will be collected and reported on. Evidence generation through research and data collection is



not a neutral exercise. To be effective, choices about evidence generation need to be strategic and include discussions about the need for, and use of, evidence. Evidence building choices need to be guided and interrogated by considerations of power and privilege, asking questions such as: what is the purpose of this research and data collection? Who will guide the process? How will the data be used? Who will own it? Which forms of knowledge are being privileged and which are not? What are the assumptions, silences and invisibilities in the process? The next monitoring report could investigate how this analysis is being supported in monitoring and evaluative approaches, including evaluation of strategy and framework design, guides and tools, and skill development activities.

## Monitoring and evaluation frameworks

*Counting on change* is a significant global advancement in relation to the monitoring of population-level change. Alongside *Counting on change*, there has been some increase in the development of monitoring and reporting frameworks, most of which sit alongside jurisdictional plans and strategies with accountabilities largely articulated at the jurisdictional level and primarily related to data collection. The forms that these frameworks take is linked to the approach of the jurisdiction and ranges from outcomes frameworks (with anticipated monitoring, evaluation, and reporting frameworks), to evaluation frameworks linked to specific strategies. Accountabilities relating to the use of shared monitoring and/or evaluation frameworks are also largely articulated at the jurisdictional level.

Below the jurisdictional level, there is a general lack of transparency about how monitoring, evaluation and reporting on process, outputs and outcomes occurs, including in terms of implementation partners. This is also complicated by the fact that accountabilities for implementing partners are rarely articulated in the public domain beyond high-level references to what outcomes frameworks are in place and how these relate to existing and available data repositories. Unsurprisingly, expected and desired outcomes are more likely to be published and publicly referred to where there is an outcomes framework accompanying a particular jurisdictional strategy. Targets are rarely articulated, potentially because of the variety of indicators in use, many of which do not lend themselves to simple quantification. Evaluation of individual activities has received investment to varying extents through allocations in activity budgets, albeit without any consistency of approach. There has been relatively less investment in evaluation frameworks and strategies for primary prevention efforts and demonstrating collective impact more broadly.

A number of data projects responding to limitations and gaps in current data collection platforms and approaches have led to new projects, such as a project examining the extent of violence against people with disability in Australia led by the Disability and Health Unit and the Melbourne Disability Institute at the University of Melbourne with the Centre of Research Excellence in Disability and Health<sup>126</sup> (see page 283 for more details). Further exploration of other fields of research and practice which could yield useful evidence about what works, for whom, and in what circumstances should be investigated and incorporated into national and state/territory frameworks and plans, primary prevention activity and workforce development activities. Section 2 of this report, which considers population-level outcomes, paints a picture of what some of these interconnecting sources of evidence may be.

## National evaluation efforts

The evaluation of the National Plan is informed by an evaluation plan<sup>127</sup> published in 2014, the purpose of which is to:

‘determine its effectiveness as an overarching policy on an ongoing basis, to inform the focus of future directions of the National Plan and remain responsive to emerging priorities.’<sup>128</sup>

Also at the national level, the Productivity Commission has been asked by the Australian Government to develop a whole-of-government evaluation strategy for policies and programs affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, to be used by all Australian Government agencies.<sup>129</sup>

In terms of evaluation and learning, there are currently no agreed evaluation frameworks that are shared and widely adhered to. However, a desktop search revealed several evaluation frameworks developed to evaluate primary prevention activities between 2013 and 2017. These were primarily developed by health organisations and universities to guide evaluation linked to state government strategies, such as the Victorian Government’s Free From Violence Outcomes Framework<sup>130</sup> and the Queensland Government’s evaluation framework for the *Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy 2016–2026*,<sup>131</sup> and/or evaluations of primary prevention activities coordinated by regional networks.<sup>132 133</sup>

In addition to these frameworks, and reflecting the widespread recognition of the importance of evaluating primary prevention activity and the need for support with evaluation capacity building, there are a range of best-practice guides on the evaluation of activities aimed at the primary prevention of violence against women.<sup>134</sup> These vary in audience and approach, and include compendiums of measures,<sup>135</sup> guides to evaluating interventions related to violence against women,<sup>136 137 138</sup> practitioner fact sheets for evaluating projects working to prevent violence against women,<sup>139</sup> and websites such as Maïam nayri Wingara Indigenous Data Sovereignty Collective,<sup>140</sup> which outlines key principles of Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Indigenous Data Governance and provides links to publications. Other evaluation guides can be found in national and international primary prevention activity design and implementation guides which include a section on evaluation.<sup>141</sup>

At the individual activity level, survey data indicates that many respondents typically create their own evaluation plans and frameworks, with tailored or adapted outcome measures and indicators. Almost half (45%) of the survey respondents indicated that the organisation they worked for conducted formal evaluations. Of these, 25% reported that all their programs had funding allocated to evaluation, 50% said that some programs did, and 11% reported that their evaluation work is not funded. The survey found that only a limited number of evaluations and outcomes are published, with only 36% of respondents reporting that their organisation has publicly available evaluations, case studies, learning papers and/or other relevant publications. Only 17% reported that their reports, evaluations, and reflections in primary prevention are always or mostly publicly available. The majority (53%) reported that they are publicly available half the time or less, with a further 29% unsure. This was reiterated in the semi-structured interviews, with one participant stating that ‘a lot of the work gets done [but] the only people who know about the evaluation findings are the people who fund it and the people who implement it. So I think more work can be done to share the knowledge, not only with the rest of the sector but with the community as well.’



The desktop scan revealed that evaluations and outcomes that were most likely to be published or made publicly available were those that linked to a jurisdictional outcomes framework or that had a clear reference to the National Plan and/or its Action Plans, or where an activity specific evaluation framework had been created.

The complexity of the interrelated but distinct layers of change inherent in this work has been widely recognised to create challenges with respect to collecting and presenting reliable data. So far, efforts to present reliable data have led to additional datasets, such as the ABS Gender Indicators,<sup>142</sup> the Directory of Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Statistics<sup>143</sup> and the Victorian Women's Health Atlas,<sup>144</sup> as well as having supported the continuation of the Personal Safety Survey<sup>145</sup> as a key prevalence survey instrument. These activities suggest a recent proliferation of effort to consolidate datasets in single places, but strategic application and incorporation of the data in the reports flowing from such datasets is, for the most part, yet to be realised. As part of the National Plan, the Australian Bureau of Statistics is currently working on a national data collection and reporting framework, and a coordinated and consolidated approach to data collection. A shared understanding of data priorities is one of many goals this work seeks to foster and make possible. Broadening and consolidating national data management is receiving ongoing investment under the Fourth Action Plan.<sup>146</sup> While the sequencing and coordination of monitoring reports continues to evolve, efforts could be enhanced and greater gender equality for all women achieved if the data limitations highlighted in Section 2 are addressed.

## Domain 6: Quality primary prevention programming

Quality primary prevention programming requires attention to the effectiveness of interventions designed to prevent violence against women and promote gender equality. Best-practice primary prevention programming is about taking a long-term view and seeing programs as part of a holistic strategy spanning the socio-ecological model. To achieve this, programs and activities must be supported to adapt, improve, expand and, crucially, to make key learnings available as part of a shared and accessible evidence base. This is a shared responsibility that must be recognised as a foundation of progress in primary prevention.

This domain provides some insights into the range of primary prevention activities being undertaken in Australia, and broadly how this work is incorporating available evidence, what the evidence tells us about effective primary prevention and the opportunities to build on progress made to date.

### Quality primary prevention programming: summary of findings

Prevention programming in Australia appears to be growing in complexity of approach and there is evidence of a range of combinations of settings and techniques. Though some of the eleven settings recommended in *Change the story*<sup>147</sup> have been less of a focus than others, this is to be expected, as the framework, launched in 2015, is gradually incorporated into policy and practice. *Change the story* makes it clear that prevention work is needed across all levels of the socio-ecological model and its adoption as the national framework is a significant achievement in supporting coordinated programming across Australia. However, current funded activity tends to be skewed towards the individual and community levels, with the aim of achieving attitudinal change, rather than supporting actions that will drive institutional, systemic and structural change, as outlined in the [case study](#) on page 63. This is a significant gap as evidence points to the need for mutually reinforcing multidimensional approaches for primary prevention to be effective.

The strength of prevention programming depends upon the development of infrastructure across domains, including mechanisms that generate and support the publication of evidence-based guidance on best-practice principles and proven or promising techniques. This has been progressing over the past ten years, but there continues to be a sizeable gap between the number of activities being implemented and the number that produce publicly accessible evaluations.

Over time, prevention programming has become increasingly informed by the work of specialist organisations and advocates who have developed numerous guiding documents to support intersectional approaches to prevention work. A key aspect common to several guiding documents is the importance of community-led, designed and initiated activities, and the importance of building genuine trusting reciprocal relationships.<sup>148</sup> While there is evidence of increasing awareness of the need for prevention activities to emerge from community-led design processes and approaches that articulate and respond to multiple forms of discrimination alongside gender inequality, this awareness is not yet being consistently translated into practice. In addition, there is evidence of effective community designed and initiated activities running without the necessary funding to sustain and scale

them up, and it appears that specialist organisations are increasingly bearing the cost of upskilling prevention practitioners.

As noted in *Change the story three years on*, 'A whole-of-population approach requires allocating time to understand complexity, difference, and nuance across the population.'<sup>149</sup> It also requires focus on the social systems, structures, norms and practices that create complex intersecting forms of discrimination and privilege, and that influence patterns of perpetration as well as experiences of violence. In the context of quality primary prevention programming, this means explicitly redistributing power and resources so that people affected by multiple forms of inequality and oppression, and organisations representing them, are directing decisions about both *what* and *how* primary prevention programming occurs, and are funded to lead this work. It is suggested that future monitoring reports focus more closely on such analysis by identifying where this approach has been successful and what infrastructure was in place to support it.

Primary prevention programming requires a supportive context, including policy levers to drive structural change, and sources of funding that support longer-term, interrelated prevention activity, where collective impact is the reference point for quality and accountability. Structural changes to support greater investment and longer-term funding for primary prevention, and increased policy focus on coordinated and strategic workforce investment, would support greater progress in prevention activity overall. However, short-term funding cycles, coupled with competition for funding, are cited by many working in this sector as constraints that hinder quality programming.<sup>150</sup>

## Primary prevention programming

Primary prevention efforts in Australia reflect ambitious and ground breaking work led by a range of stakeholders including governments, non-government organisations, those working in key settings and sectors, and local communities. *Change the story* is a significant development from the latter half of this period, as it provides a clear framework for shared national prevention effort.

Primary prevention programming is a development cycle that needs consistent funding and accountability measures, to ensure new knowledge is both shared and used to support the continuous improvement of existing efforts and the development of new activities. Short-term funding cycles, coupled with competition for funding, are cited by many working in this sector as constraints that hinder quality programming.<sup>151</sup> Strong prevention programming depends upon resourcing that generates and supports the publication of evidence-based guidance on best-practice principles and proven or promising techniques in different settings.

There is evidence of greater use of shared frameworks, particularly over the past five years, with survey data showing evidence of widespread adoption and reference to *Change the story*, and some references to *Changing the picture*.<sup>152</sup> The findings of both the research survey and a similar 2019 survey of the prevention workforce carried out by the Australian Women Against Violence Alliance showed clear evidence of an appetite for shared guidelines, tools and resources and a readiness to adopt and use these to guide prevention planning and implementation.<sup>153</sup> However, there continues to be a gap between the number of activities being implemented and the number that produce publicly accessible evaluations.

The diverse funding sources for primary prevention activities, and the tendency for funding to be one-off and relatively short-term, results in the constant emergence of new activities and the disappearance of old ones, regardless of their effectiveness. At various points in time, there have been attempts to collate and distil information on a range of actions across the country,<sup>154</sup> but in general this tendency for short-term approaches makes creating a reliable snapshot of primary prevention activity challenging.

In recognition of a need for improved information sharing and knowledge translation to inform primary prevention planning and implementation, several prevention hubs are now emerging – including those mentioned previously (p. 53). Online since 2017, the GEN VIC Action to Prevent Violence Against Women resource hub<sup>155</sup> aims to promote strategic and collaborative prevention efforts, while also building ‘the skills and knowledge of professionals to deliver effective violence prevention initiatives’.<sup>156</sup> This site contains links to information about training, resources, policy guidance, and locations and activities of various regional partnerships across Victoria. Through its library of resources, this site shares information and connects prevention practitioners, with the ultimate aim of influencing policy, reducing social inequities, and promoting health. The emergence of such hubs demonstrates that there is movement towards sharing and communicating published information broadly. The next step may be to synthesise and draw this together in ways that can inform primary prevention programming and efforts across the domains. An analysis of such resources may also allow for gaps and opportunities to be identified and acted upon.

### **Case study: Implementation of primary prevention activity in the past decade – primary prevention activities in the National Plan and four Action Plans**

The implementation of national primary prevention efforts began in earnest following the publication of the National Plan.<sup>157</sup> The four Action Plans that have been published under the National Plan to date show the evolution of the national priorities for implementation efforts across Australia. By tracing this evolution over the past ten years, and the guiding documents that have influenced these priorities, we can also begin to chart the influence of the shared national framework *Change the story*<sup>158</sup> in shaping and informing national implementation efforts. This can also help us to critically reflect on the progress of primary prevention activity as a whole.

As the primary document guiding prevention activity in Australia over the past decade, the National Plan identifies the need to engage a range of communities and priority population groups experiencing intersecting forms of discrimination. However, it does not provide a roadmap for addressing the structural and systemic inequalities that drive disproportionate rates of violence experienced by women.

National priority 1 in the First Action Plan (2010–2013)<sup>159</sup> was ‘building primary prevention capacity’. Primary prevention activities at this point were informed by the Victorian Framework, VicHealth’s Preventing Violence Before it Occurs,<sup>160</sup> which outlined a series of ‘promising strategies’ or priority approaches for policymakers to consider. Noting this was pre-*Change the story*,<sup>161</sup> the activities reported on in the 2010–12 Annual Progress Report on the First Action Plan under this priority reflect a range of funded initiatives, which include several social marketing campaigns, resources aimed at young people, several activities in sports settings, and several workplace-focused activities.

Under the Second Action Plan (2013–2016),<sup>162</sup> primary prevention fell under national priority 1, which became, ‘drive whole-of-community action to prevent violence’.

There was further investment in social marketing campaigns and school settings, and a range of initiatives aimed at specific communities, such as committees, grants and awards programs. Workplaces and sports settings also continue to receive attention. This period also sees the establishment of Our Watch – a significant contribution to the development of prevention infrastructure and ANROWS, a national research organisation established to produce, disseminate and assist in applying evidence for policy and practice addressing violence against women and their children.

Meanwhile, evidence on what works in primary prevention was being collated by a number of organisations, researchers and institutions. New publications meant that policymakers and activity designers could develop prevention activities based on evidence for what does and doesn’t work<sup>163 164</sup> and principles for effective prevention techniques.<sup>165 166</sup> However, the evidence to inform activity planning was still limited by the lack of published evaluations with a focus on effectiveness, and the lack of meta-analyses of the effectiveness of activities when used in combination.<sup>167</sup>

During this time, prevention guides and resources were largely developed by civil society and not-for-profit organisations. For instance, in 2011 the Multicultural

Centre for Women's Health published *On Her Way: Primary prevention of violence against immigrant and refugee women in Australia*.<sup>168</sup> This advocated for prevention approaches that recognise diversity among women and suggested that effective prevention requires long-term commitment to drive 'major cultural and social change'.<sup>169</sup>

By the Third Action Plan,<sup>170</sup> prevention was one of six national priorities and was framed as 'prevention and early intervention'. In the 2017–18 Annual Progress Report<sup>171</sup> under the Third Action Plan, we start to see a wider range of funded activities in terms of both techniques and settings. Jurisdictions were supporting a range of activities under special funding arrangements tailored to the local context and targeting a range of communities. A number of jurisdictions were committing to forms of respectful relationships education. Primary prevention was still perhaps not sufficiently well defined, however, because activity examples cited in this report under the national priority of 'prevention and early intervention' include some that are better understood as response or early intervention rather than primary prevention.

Meanwhile, a number of more specialised tools and resources to guide the design and implementation of more inclusive primary prevention activity became available. Touching on many of the limitations suggested in the evaluation of the Third Action Plan, Women with Disabilities Victoria published the Inclusive Planning Guidelines for the Prevention of Violence Against Women with Disabilities<sup>172</sup> in 2017. This reflected the investment of prevention funds in Victoria towards:

'resources on best practice inclusive approaches to PVAW and gender equity and advice on strategic engagement of CALD, disability and LGBTI organisations.'<sup>173</sup>

With the same funding, the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health developed *Intersectionality Matters: A guide to engaging immigrant and refugee communities to prevent violence against women*,<sup>174</sup> which gave activity designers and policymakers a comprehensive overview of practical ways to embed intersectionality as a marker of quality activity. This guide challenges racialised representations of violence, while outlining the essential components of effective intersectional prevention approaches. Guiding documents for more nuanced primary prevention approaches continue to emerge. One example of this is a report published by the Australian National University in 2019 titled *Hopeful, Together, Strong*.<sup>175</sup>

Under the current, Fourth Action Plan,<sup>176</sup> prevention is the first of five national priorities and is entitled 'Primary prevention is key'. The Fourth Action Plan acknowledges diversity among Australian women in its principles, national priorities and actions, but does not go into depth about what a nationally coordinated intersectional prevention approach might look like.

The Fourth Action Plan has an accompanying Implementation Plan,<sup>177</sup> in response to a recommendation of the Auditor-General in the 2019 report on Coordinating and Targeting of Domestic Violence Funding and Actions addressing the role of the Department of Social Services.<sup>178</sup> The publication of an overarching national implementation plan is an important step towards a more coordinated approach.

The National Plan website<sup>179</sup> lists a total of 164 initiatives funded under the Fourth Action Plan (see Appendix D: Number of initiatives tagged under Fourth Key Action Plan primary prevention priority actions). Of these, forty-four (27%) have tagged one of the five actions under the primary prevention national priority. Of these forty-four primary prevention initiatives, twelve are identified on the plan website as being initiatives designed by and/or tailored for specific communities.

The number of initiatives tagged under each of the primary prevention national priority actions is outlined in Appendix D. The most common action being addressed is advancing gender equality and respect for women, and the least common action is to address intergenerational trauma for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through primary prevention including holistic healing strategies, and by strengthening connections to culture, language, knowledge and identity. While a detailed analysis hasn't been undertaken, the initiatives tagged as primary prevention under the Third and Fourth Action Plans may account for roughly around 20% of Commonwealth funding packages.

A number of the initiatives that are tagged under the primary prevention national priority are also tagged under a range of other national priority areas, indicating perhaps that a combination of primary prevention, early intervention and response is being undertaken. Under the Fourth Action Plan, all jurisdictions have indicated that they are implementing respectful relationships education to some degree, with great variation in content, delivery and audience between jurisdictions. Workplace activities are being targeted across a range of industries, including the public and corporate sectors. Flagship campaigns and media projects have a national focus. There is further investment in some elements of prevention infrastructure, including better data platforms and monitoring mechanisms, and community-focused/regional activities focused on building capacity and partnership approaches.

## Conclusion

In summary, the foundations or infrastructure to promote gender equality and prevent violence against women have been building steadily during the past ten years, with much activity happening in the latter five years in this time period. More sustained effort is now required to consolidate the progress that has been made and ensure the foundations are robust enough to drive and sustain long-term change. As a matter of urgency, primary prevention foundation development must focus on embedding an intersectional approach, to ensure primary prevention benefits all women. Following this, infrastructure building should focus on identifying and addressing dependencies and sequencing and promoting a multifaceted approach in order to ensure efficacy and long-term transformation.

Understanding and measuring progress in the development of, and investment in, prevention infrastructure and programming is a critically important piece of the puzzle that tells us whether Australia is heading in the right direction to ultimately reduce the prevalence of violence against women. The findings discussed above provide important context for understanding how and where our foundational efforts are supporting medium- and long-term change to prevent violence against women. An assessment of progress against medium- to long-term change measures is the focus of Section 2, below.



# Section 2 Part A: Medium- to long-term outcomes: Change to the gendered drivers, intersecting drivers and reinforcing factors

To paint a picture of progress in the primary prevention of violence against women, this section interprets quantitative findings, drawing on our qualitatively generated evidence base for what drives and prevents violence against women.

Section 2 Part A analyses a wide range of primarily population-level, publicly available, quantitative datasets against a sophisticated framework of indicators. These indicators were designed to align with the multiple facets of population-level change we expect to see along the journey to large-scale prevention of violence against women.

Each domain begins with an outline of the indicators, followed by a description of the domain and a qualitative summary of the findings drawn from the entire 'suite' of indicators. A detailed descriptive analysis of evidence against each individual indicator is then provided.

# Gendered driver: Condoning of violence against women

## Monitoring domain 1: Condoning of violence against women

Indicator 1.1	Community attitudes towards violence against women (justifying, excusing, trivialising or minimising violence; blame-shifting and rape myth acceptance)
Indicator 1.2	Community's (self-reported) willingness to intervene in violence and sexual harassment against women
Indicator 1.3	Proportion of victims of violence against women who sought help from someone
Indicator 1.4	Growth in help sought from telephone helplines and specialist services
Indicator 1.5	Proportions of women who have experienced violence reporting police contact was made

When societies, institutions, communities or individuals support or condone violence against women, the prevalence of such violence are higher.<sup>180</sup> Men who hold such beliefs are more likely to perpetrate violence against women, and both women and men who hold such beliefs are less likely to support victims and hold perpetrators to account.<sup>181</sup>

Violence against women can be *condoned* or excused through social attitudes and norms, practices or structures.<sup>182</sup> This driver includes:

- the justification of violence against women on the basis that it is acceptable for men to use violence in certain circumstances;
- the excusing of violence by attributing it to external factors or implying that men cannot be held fully responsible for their own behaviour;
- trivialising violence based on the view that its impacts are not adequately serious to warrant action;
- downplaying violence by denying its seriousness, denying that it occurs or denying that certain behaviours constitute violence at all; and
- shifting blame for the violence from the perpetrator to the victim.

As discussed in *Changing the picture: A national resource to support the prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children* (2018) and *Changing the picture, Background paper: Understanding violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women* (2018), as well as *Primary prevention of family violence against people from LGBTI communities* (2017), and *Change the story three years on* (2019), both gendered factors and other intersecting forms of systemic social, political and economic oppression and discrimination that characterise our society (such as racism, ableism, homophobia and transphobia) drive and shape the condoning of violence against women in specific ways.<sup>183</sup> For example, violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women is typically legitimised, trivialised, downplayed and rendered less visible as a

consequence of the intersection of racist and sexist attitudes, norms and practices, and the ongoing impacts of colonisation. The intersection of these factors affects the perceived place and value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in contemporary Australia, such that First Nations women's lives are rendered more apparently disposable and 'out of sight, out of mind'.<sup>184</sup> Racism, colonisation and sexism create a climate of 'othering', indifference, victim-blaming and stereotyping contributing to insufficient accountability for violence perpetrated against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

Certain indicators under Monitoring domain 1: Condoning of violence against women reflect individual attitudes associated with the condoning of violence against women (justifying, excusing, trivialising, downplaying and victim-blaming) and assess how much such condoning attitudes have changed over recent years. One indicator measures attitudes towards 'bystander action', or the extent to which individuals intervene, or display attitudinal willingness to intervene, when witnessing violence, including sexual harassment, enacted towards someone in a public setting. Other indicators in this domain consider the extent of progress (or perceived progress) towards the creation of an enabling environment to address and challenge violence against women. Help-seeking behaviours by women who have experienced violence are taken as proxy measures of progress in this regard, on the assumption that an increase in women disclosing violence and seeking help and support reflects increased confidence in recognising their own experiences as violence and in recognising that they deserve assistance. These measures also reflect the extent to which women who are subject to violence believe they will be supported by individuals, systems and institutions when they seek help for themselves and accountability for perpetrators.

### **Challenging the condoning of violence against women: summary of change over time for Monitoring domain 1**

As the data outlined in the coming section shows, in general there have been positive trends in attitudes associated with condoning of violence against women (as measured by the National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey or NCAS). Community understanding of violence against women has improved at an overall level, while the prevalence of community attitudes supportive of violence against women has declined. Notably, little to no change to these attitudes was evident between the 2009 and 2013 waves of the NCAS; however, significant gains in attitudinal progress were realised between the 2013 and 2017 survey waves. This change trajectory suggests that progress on community attitudes related to condoning of violence against women has been possible in a relatively short period of time (within the decade examined in this report). However, the time lag between investment and notable change also indicates the importance of sustaining primary prevention efforts over time.

While overall there is a positive picture of change to attitudes associated with condoning of violence against women, some important nuances should be noted:

- **Difference between men's and women's attitudes:** While overall men's attitudes have improved since 2013, men continue to display a lower level of understanding of violence against women, and a higher level of attitudinal support for violence against women, than women do.

- **Thematic unevenness:** While community understanding of the multiple forms of violence against women has improved across the board, and there has been an overall reduction in violence-supportive attitudes, there is also inconsistency between different themes. For example, Australians continue to be less likely to be aware of non-physical forms of violence than physical forms. In addition, a considerable proportion of individuals continue to falsely believe that women going through custody disputes often make up or exaggerate claims of domestic violence in order to improve their case, a perception that suggests widespread mistrust in women's reports of violence. Further, the persistence of attitudes that disregard the need for consent in sexual relations between men and women is highly concerning.
- **Backlash:** A lessening proportion of individuals understand that men are more likely than women to perpetrate domestic violence, and women are more likely than men to be victims. This result may reflect the backlash against the recognition of the gendered nature of violence against women that continues to occur in some parts of the public and political conversation.
- **Association between violence-condoning attitudes, lower subscription to gender equitable attitudes, and higher subscription to other discriminatory attitudes:** The 2017 NCAS results revealed that the strongest predictors of attitudes supportive of violence against women are people having a low level of support for gender equality and a low level of understanding of the multiple forms of violence against women. The results also demonstrated a strong correlation between people holding attitudes supportive of violence against women, and other forms of discriminatory attitudes, which speaks to the need for an approach to changing all discriminatory attitudes and social norms.

These results should inform the development and refinement of primary prevention efforts that are focused on shifting the kinds of attitudes and norms that condone violence against women.

The breadth of data consolidated in this report demonstrates that it is critical to monitor not only changes to attitudes and prevalence rates of violence against women, but also the norms, behaviours and structural factors that are driving and reinforcing this violence. The data in this monitoring domain shows while we have seen some positive shifts to attitudes associated with condoning of violence against women, other forms of challenge to this driver, specifically behavioural shifts, have not been as evident.

For example, the data demonstrates that while at a population level, individuals indicate a high attitudinal willingness to undertake bystander action, these attitudes have not translated to a greater propensity to actually undertake such action. Indeed, results from Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) surveys on sexual harassment show that there has been a statistically significant decline between 2012 and 2018 in the proportion of witnesses to workplace sexual harassment who reported taking some form of action.

Moreover, in *Counting on change: A guide to prevention monitoring* we anticipated that as there is greater public awareness and a social environment which is increasingly challenging the condoning of violence against women, we would see a corresponding increase in help-seeking and justice-seeking behaviours among women experiencing violence. However, the data reveals a mixed picture of progress related to help-seeking behaviour among women who have experienced violence in the monitoring time period. There is a lack of publicly-

available data looking at recent help-seeking behaviours and police contact rates, which makes it difficult to determine whether and how help-seeking behaviour is changing.<sup>x</sup> However, the Australian Human Rights Commission's data on workplace sexual harassment indicates we may be seeing a reduction in women's propensity to seek help.

Evidence from the response sector indicates a growing demand on helplines and specialist services from male victims of violence. PSS data reveals that among the women who have experienced sexual violence and/or physical violence and have sought advice or support, a higher proportion reported seeking advice or support from a counsellor, support worker or telephone helpline in 2016 than in 2012. Anecdotal evidence from specialist service providers suggests that demand from female victim-survivors has increased during the time period under consideration. Moreover, anecdotal evidence from smaller service providers suggests a tendency for women with greater socioeconomic privilege to access Employee Assistance Programs and other forms of support such as private counsellors, while women facing more complex circumstances are now more likely to access specialist service providers than prior to 2009.<sup>xi</sup> This trend toward complex case management has been reinforced by recent reports of demand upon 1800RESPECT, whereby one quarter of 1800RESPECT interactions in 2019 were from people who called more than once – something the funding model is not set up to properly account for.<sup>185</sup> These cases tend to require more attention and multiple forms of support, which limits the numbers of clients who can be supported by a given service. For these reasons, service providers caution that intake numbers should not be the sole metric for monitoring demand.

Overall, this data related to service providers indicates a growing demand upon services, and suggests a demand that is increasing in complexity. This is in line with predictions made in *Counting on change* that, over time, successful challenges to the condoning of violence against women will result in increased disclosures and greater demand upon service providers by women who are experiencing violence. This underlines the need for both prevention and response to be appropriately resourced and working in tandem to address the immediate needs of women and generate long-term change.

At this point in time, from the data available, it is difficult to make conclusive statements about whether and how women who are currently experiencing (or have recently experienced) violence perceive the social environment to be less condoning of violence against women than it has been in the past. Future waves of population-level surveys will be telling, but further research, including practitioner consultation, is also needed.

Beyond the data analysed in this monitoring domain, it is relevant to note that the global phenomenon of the #MeToo movement occurred in the time period analysed in this report, a development that represents a significant and perhaps unexpectedly influential challenge to social norms condoning violence against women. #MeToo has seen widespread social media and media-based disclosures of sexual harassment and sexual violence by women

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x It is difficult to ascertain from police and administrative data any national picture of the growth in reporting to police and/or contacts with the court system. This is a result of data discrepancies between jurisdictions and significant changes to the way data is captured within jurisdictions in the time period under investigation.

xi Service provider organisational data is limited due to resource constraints and the monitoring requirements of funders. This analysis is based on conversations with service providers and warrants further research.

across the world. This wave of disclosure has begun to be reflected in the latest Australian sexual harassment prevalence data (examined in Section 2 Part B of this report, as well as in Monitoring domain 3: Men’s control of decision-making and limits to women’s independence in public life). It has been suggested in some literature that these patterns of non-system disclosure reflect victim–survivors’ distrust in formal state systems such as police and judiciaries and in workplace processes.<sup>186</sup> The next waves of population survey data – especially the PSS and the AHRC sexual harassment surveys – will be critical for monitoring ongoing changes in disclosure and help-seeking behaviours among women as a result of the #MeToo movement.

In summary, in relation to challenging the condoning of violence against women, improvements are noted in associated attitudes. However, other indicators related to bystander and victim–survivor behaviours suggest an environment still in great flux regarding condoning of violence against women. This points strongly to the need for increased, deepened and sustained primary prevention efforts to challenge this driver of violence against women. In addition, increased investment in systems response and in resources for specialist response services available to diverse cohorts of women are necessary in order to enable appropriate responses to increased demand on these systems and services.<sup>xii</sup>

### **Indicator 1.1: Community attitudes towards violence against women (justifying, excusing, trivialising or minimising violence; blame-shifting and rape myth acceptance)**

What does this indicator tell us about Monitoring domain 1: Condoning of violence against women?	The extent of individuals’ attitudes which justify, excuse, trivialise or downplay violence or shift blame to the victim is a reflection of social condoning or excusing of violence against women.
Expected change if high-quality programs and infrastructure for prevention of violence against women and gender equality are implemented	Short- and medium-term: proportion of the population who hold positive attitudes (i.e. attitudes which do not condone violence against women) will increase.  Long-term: proportion of the population who hold positive attitudes will peak and plateau.
Data source(s)	1. National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS) 2009, 2013 and 2017, Australia’s National Research Organisation for Women’s Safety (ANROWS) (previously auspiced by VicHealth) <sup>187</sup>

xii Response services also need resources to elicit better data on the patterns of victim–survivor support being required of them as help-seeking trends shift.

Change over time summary: short-term change revealed by the data	Overall, community understanding of violence against women has improved between 2013 and 2017.  Overall, community attitudes supportive of violence against women have decreased between 2013 and 2017.
Does the change confirm or run contrary to expected change?	Confirms expected change
Gaps in existing data	To date, the NCAS has been focused on measuring the prevalence of certain kinds of individual attitudes associated with violence against women or its prevention. We know that individual attitudes can differ from prevailing social norms, and yet social norms can still affect individual behavioural choices, <i>even when</i> an individual's attitude may differ from the norm. Measuring social norms (as distinct from attitudes) is an important next step, and one that is currently being explored by the NCAS team for the next survey wave.

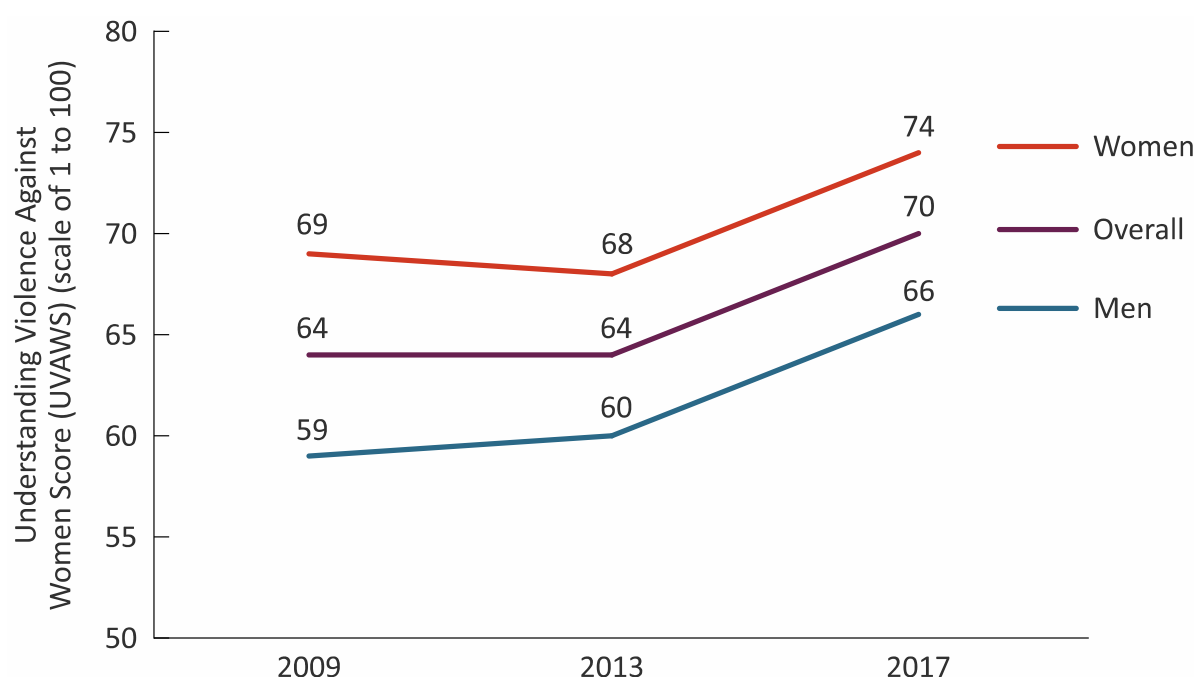
## Community understanding of violence against women

A key focus for the NCAS is on measuring community understanding of violence against women. **Overall, measured through a composite score across a number of questions, Australians' understanding of what constitutes violence against women and its impacts and antecedents improved between 2013 and 2017**, after being consistent between 2009 and 2013. In 2013, the national average for understanding violence against women stood at 64 out of 100; in 2017, the national average stood at 70, six points higher.<sup>188</sup>

In each of the years the survey has been conducted, however, women on average have demonstrated a higher understanding than men of what constitutes violence against women. In 2017, women's mean score was 74, compared with 66 for men – a considerable 8-point difference (see Figure 6, below).<sup>189</sup>



**Figure 6: Understanding of violence against women by gender, 2009, 2013 and 2017**



Source: NCAS 2017, p. 44

### **Recognition of the different forms of violence against women**

A key trend in terms of community understanding of violence against women is that, overall, Australians are less likely to recognise non-physical forms of violence than physical forms. However, recognition of non-physical forms of violence has improved in the 2013 to 2017 period, particularly with regard to financial control, repeated criticism, and controlling a partner's social life (a form of coercive control). While there were not significant differences between women and men in relation to recognition of physical violence (which is very high across the board), men are less likely than women to recognise most forms of non-physical violence as a form of violence.<sup>190</sup>

Australians' recognition of financial abuse ('Tries to control by denying partner money') has improved by 11 points between 2013 and 2017 (70 to 81). A 6-point positive difference between these years is also apparent for the non-physical form of violence described as 'repeatedly criticises to make partner feel bad or useless' (86 in 2013 to 92 in 2017). Control of social life also saw a 6-point upswing between 2013 and 2017 (85 to 91). Smaller positive gains are evident on all other non-physical violence items which have been asked in successive waves.<sup>191</sup>

### **Recognition of the prevalence of violence against women and the gendered nature of partner violence**

Several questions asked in the NCAS pertain to knowledge about prevalence of violence against women and the gendered nature of violence, both in terms of perpetration and victimisation. This data suggests some areas of concern. For example, the proportion of Australians who agree that violence against women is a prevalent problem has remained fairly consistent between 2009 and 2017, with a decline of 2 percentage points from 74% in 2009 to 72% in 2017. This has been accompanied by an increase in the proportion of

Australians (from 15% to 20%, or one in five in 2017) that disagrees that violence against women is a common problem.<sup>192</sup>

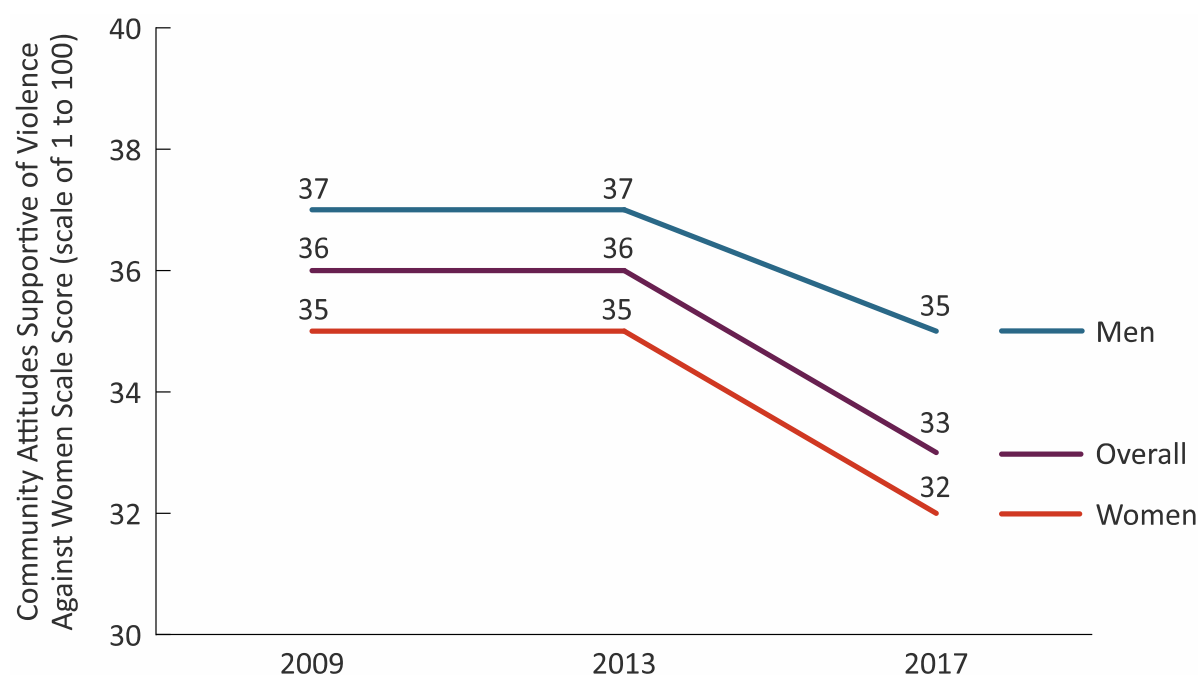
The data also reveals a decline in Australians' understanding or recognition of the gendered nature of intimate partner violence – that men are far more likely than women to perpetrate such violence, and that the prevalence and impacts of victimisation for women are far higher and more serious than for men. Between the years 2009 and 2017 there has been a 10% decline in people's understanding or recognition that men are more likely than women to be perpetrators of domestic violence, from nearly three-quarters (74%) of Australians in 2009 to under two-thirds (64%) in 2017. There has also been an 8% decline in the proportion of Australians who understand that women suffer greater physical impacts than men from domestic violence, from 89% in 2009 to 81% in 2017. Perhaps most disturbingly, in 2017 less than half (49%) believed that women experience greater fear of domestic violence than men, and almost half (48%) believed that the level of fear is equal for women and men. This represents a drop of 6 percentage points in the proportion of Australians who recognise the gendered nature of fear of domestic violence since 2009.<sup>193</sup>

### **Community attitudes supportive of violence against women**

While results were consistent in 2009 and 2013, **between 2013 and 2017 there was a decrease in attitudinal support for violence against women across the Australian population.** Again, women are more likely than men to demonstrate lower attitudinal support for violence against women.

In 2009 and 2013, the overall population average for the Community Attitudes Supportive of Violence Against Women Scale score was 36 out of 100, which then dropped by 3 percentage points in 2017 to 33. Men's average scores have skewed slightly higher than the population averages and women's slightly lower than the population averages in all years. In 2017, this means that there is a 3 percentage point difference between men's and women's scores (35% and 32% respectively) (see Figure 7, below).<sup>194</sup>

**Figure 7: Community attitudes supportive of violence against women score by gender, 2009, 2013 and 2017**



Source: NCAS 2017, p. 93

The NCAS tests different themes clustered under ‘community attitudes supportive of violence against women’. The survey results have found different levels of attitudinal support for violence against women per theme. There has been, for example, a higher degree of support for ‘mistrusting women’s reports of violence’ and ‘disregarding the need to gain sexual consent’ than for the other two themes (‘minimising violence against women’ and ‘excusing the perpetrator and holding women to account’).<sup>xiii</sup>

### **Predictors of community members’ understanding of violence against women and community attitudes supportive of violence against women**

The 2017 NCAS analysis reveals that gender and age are the strongest demographic factors predictive of respondents’ understanding of violence against women and endorsement of attitudes supportive of violence against women. That is, women are more likely than men to better understand violence against women and less likely to endorse attitudes supportive of violence against women. Older people are less likely than other age groups to demonstrate good understanding of violence against women and are more likely to endorse violence-supportive attitudes. Other demographic factors have a weaker association, and certain demographic factors such as Indigenous status or disability have no association whatsoever with respondents’ understanding of violence against women and endorsement of attitudes supportive of violence against women. What is far more predictive of violence-supportive

<sup>xiii</sup> Please see the NCAS results report for the 2017 wave for excellent, comprehensive analysis of results and trends over time for these individual themes: K. Webster et al. (2018), *Australians’ attitudes to violence against women and gender equality: Findings from the 2017 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS)* (Research report, 03/2018), ANROWS, Sydney, NSW.

attitudes and a lower understanding of violence against women is the degree to which respondents hold sexist attitudes and other prejudicial attitudes (such as those based on ethnicity, disability or sexuality).<sup>195</sup>

These associations are further discussed in Monitoring domain 6: Intersecting drivers of drivers of violence (other forms of oppression and discrimination), and Monitoring domain 10: Backlash factors.

## Indicator 1.2: Community's (self-reported) willingness to intervene in violence and sexual harassment against women

What does this indicator tell us about Monitoring domain 1: Condoning of violence against women?	The interventions people make when they are witness to violence-supportive and sexist attitudes, or incidents of violence or sexual harassment against women, are known as 'bystander actions'. The extent to which individuals are willing to undertake bystander action reflects the extent to which they recognise violence or its antecedents, see violence against women as a problem, are willing to take responsibility to address it, are confident about what action to take, and feel they will receive support from others when they do so. In this sense, individuals' willingness to undertake bystander action is a reflection of the extent to which the social norm of condoning of violence against women is being challenged.
Expected change if high-quality programs and infrastructure for prevention of violence against women and gender equality are implemented	Short- and medium-term: proportion of the population who say they would intervene will increase.  Long-term: proportion of the population who say they will intervene will peak and plateau.
Data source(s)	1. National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS) 2017, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS)  2. National Workplace Sexual Harassment Surveys 2012 and 2018, Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) <sup>196</sup>
Change over time summary: short-term change revealed by the data	Only baseline data is available from the NCAS, due to the addition of new questions in the 2017 survey. This data indicates a high level of willingness by individuals to undertake bystander action.  The AHRC's data on actual reported bystander action shows a considerable decrease in the proportion of the adult population that has witnessed workplace sexual harassment and actually taken action in response.

Does the change confirm or run contrary to expected change?	<p>The AHRC's data on a decreased propensity for witnesses to workplace sexual harassment to undertake bystander action runs contrary to the expected increase in bystander action.</p> <p>The next wave of the NCAS will reveal the extent of any change over time in relation to willingness to undertake bystander action.</p>
Gaps in existing data	It is unclear at this point why there is a disjuncture between individuals' attitudinal willingness to undertake bystander action, and a decline in actual bystander action.

## Attitudinal willingness to undertake bystander action

The most recent NCAS wave (2017) revised the bystander questions to focus on scenarios of witnessing sexism, discrimination and abuse in the public sphere. Of relevance to this indicator, respondents were asked how they would feel, whether they would be willing to act, whether they would know what to do, and whether they think they would have the support of their peers in intervening, in relation to a verbal abuse scenario.

Respondents were asked about a scenario in which they witness a man insulting or verbally abusing a female partner. For this bystander scenario, there was no significant difference in how women and men responded. Almost all Australians say that they would feel bothered by witnessing this scenario (98%).<sup>197,198</sup> Of those who indicated they would feel bothered by witnessing a man verbally abusing a woman, seven out of ten (70%) said that they would act, 22% said they would like to act but wouldn't know how, and 5% said they would feel uncomfortable but would not know what to do.<sup>199</sup> The results indicate a reasonably high level of confidence in undertaking bystander action, though there is a considerable minority of individuals who indicate they would like to act but lack the knowledge or confidence to take bystander action.

In response to being asked whether they feel they would be supported by their peers in taking action, seven out of ten (69%) said that they would have the support of all or most of their friends. A further 22% said they would have the support of only some of their friends, while 7% said they would have the support of few, if any, of their friends in taking bystander action.<sup>200</sup>

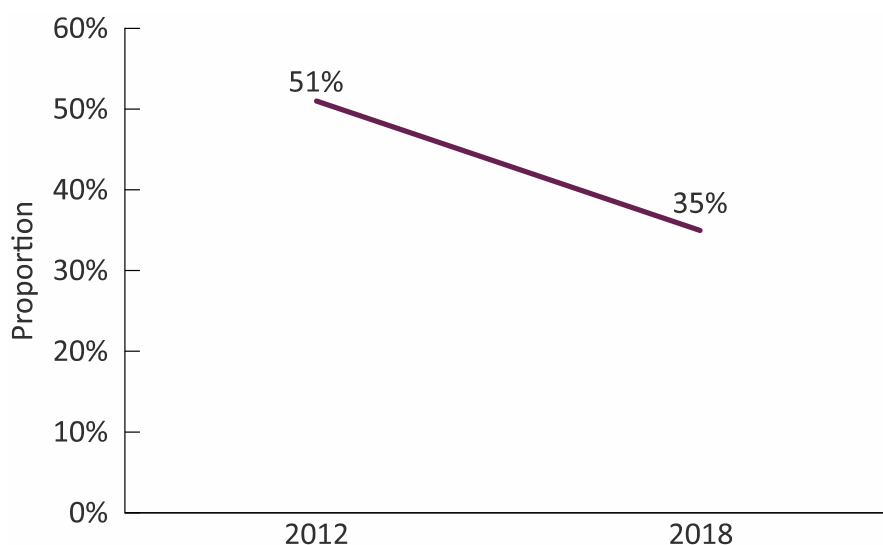
While there were no significant gender differences, other demographic factors did have an influence on how individuals said they would respond to witnessing a man's verbal abuse of a woman. Older people (65 years and over) indicated that they were less likely to act and more likely to not know how to act. The one exception to this is older people with disability (compared to other older Australians aged 65 years and over), who say they would have the support of at least some of their friends in acting. Workers from certain blue-collar occupational categories (machinery operators and drivers) indicated that they were unlikely to have support from their friends to act, while labourers were more likely than workers from other occupations to say that they would not act. Employed people were more willing to act, and to expect to receive support for action. People living in remote areas were less likely to act, even if they felt uncomfortable about what they had witnessed. People living

in circumstances aligning with the ‘most disadvantaged area’<sup>xiv</sup> category were more likely to say they would have the support of few, if any, of their friends if they were to take action.<sup>201</sup>

### Reported instances of bystander action on workplace sexual harassment

Whereas the NCAS results indicate a high level of willingness to intervene in violence against women based on hypothetical scenarios, results from successive Australian Human Rights Commission surveys provide a more sobering picture of the level of bystander action actually taken by Australians who have witnessed or heard about workplace sexual harassment. In 2012, 13% of Australians reported that they had witnessed or heard about sexual harassment in their workplace in the previous five years. In 2018, this had increased threefold to 38%. While witnessed incidence has increased markedly, people’s willingness to take action on workplace sexual harassment has decreased very significantly across the same time period. In 2012, half (51%) of those who reported witnessing or hearing about workplace sexual harassment in the previous five years said they took some form of action. This figure decreased by 16 percentage points in 2018 to 35% (see Figure 8, below). That is, in 2018, only one in three Australians who witnessed workplace sexual harassment in the past five years reported taking some form of action.<sup>202</sup>

**Figure 8: Of surveyed Australians who reported they had witnessed or heard about sexual harassment in their workplace in the previous five years, proportion who said they took some form of action**



Source: AHRC National Workplace Sexual Harassment Survey 2018, p. 94

xiv The NCAS defines ‘most disadvantaged area’ using an ABS classification which “categorises postcode areas based on their distance from facilities and services” (Webster, K., Diemer, K., Honey, N., Mannix, S., Mickle, J., Morgan, J., Parkes, A., Politoff, V., Powell, A., Stubbs, J., & Ward, A. (2018). *Australians’ attitudes to violence against women and gender equality. Findings from the 2017 National Community Attitudes towards Violence Against Women Survey (NCAS)*. Sydney, Australia: ANROWS, p. 122)

Of the actions taken, the most common response was to provide support to the victim, rather than to interrupt the perpetrator's actions or hold the perpetrator publicly accountable. Seven in ten people (71%) who acted upon witnessing or hearing about sexual harassment in the five years prior to 2018 said that they talked with or listened to the victim. Over half (59%) of women and half (50%) of men said they offered advice to the victim. Less than half spoke with the perpetrator (46% of men and 31% of women). In addition, less than half (47%) of witnessed cases were reported to the employer by the bystander.<sup>203</sup>

The AHRC survey is also instructive in terms of understanding why people do not take bystander action when witnessing violence against women. Of the majority of people who witnessed such incidents and did not take action, the most common reasons selected in 2018 were as follows:

- 41% said there were already other people supporting the victim.
- 25% said they didn't want to make things worse for the victim.
- 21% said the victim asked the bystander not to act.
- 21% said they didn't think it was serious enough to warrant intervention.
- 20% said they didn't want to get involved.
- 17% said they didn't think it was their responsibility.
- 16% said they didn't know what to do.
- 12% indicated they were worried about negative consequences for themselves if they were to act.
- 11% said that action had already been taken.<sup>204</sup>

The results from the AHRC surveys on bystander behaviour stand in contrast to the attitudinal results from the NCAS. Together, the surveys provide an inconclusive picture of how bystander attitudes and actions are reflecting any broader normative challenges to the condoning of violence against women in Australia. However, the AHRC survey results indicate a concerning trend away from individuals' willingness to undertake bystander action.



### Indicator 1.3: Proportion of victims of violence against women who sought help from someone<sup>xv</sup>

What does this indicator tell us about Monitoring domain 1: Condoning of violence against women?	<p>This indicator relates to the condoning of violence against women by measuring the extent to which women subject to violence recognise their experience as violence, believe they can safely disclose their experience to someone, and feel able and willing to seek help.</p> <p>The data presented here is primarily baseline data, due to the limitations of publicly available data being long-term in nature and therefore restricting the ability to compare to ascertain change over time in the short-term.</p>
Expected change if high-quality programs and infrastructure for prevention of violence against women and gender equality are implemented	<p>Short- and medium-term: proportion of women who have experienced violence and have sought help will increase as people in the community become more supportive of survivors of violence and less condoning of violence against women.</p> <p>Long-term: proportion of victims seeking help will plateau.</p>
Data source(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Personal Safety Survey (PSS)<sup>xvi</sup> 2012 and 2016, ABS<sup>205</sup></li> <li>2. National Workplace Sexual Harassment Surveys 2012 and 2018, AHRC</li> </ol>

xv The wording of this indicator has been changed since the publication of *Counting on change* to reflect more accurately what the available data can measure. The original wording of this indicator was 'Proportion of victims of violence against women who disclosed their experience to someone'.

xvi The PSS allows analysis of respondents' most recent incident of violence across the categories of sexual assault, sexual threat, physical assault, and physical threat. A comparison of the results from the 2012 and 2016 waves of the PSS regarding the most recent incident is not possible as the time periods under consideration are quite long-term: 10 and 20 years. As such, only 2016 data is provided here as baseline. For most recent incident analysis, data is provided on 'help-seeking behaviours' – that is, whether victims sought advice or help, and through which specific channels. It distinguishes this from simply telling someone about the incident – that is, the figures presented here relate to victims who specifically sought advice or help rather than those who just told someone.

The PSS also looks at experiences of partner violence (current and previous) since the age of 15, and whether victims sought advice or support about those experiences. Again, given that this data is lifetime experiences, only a single data point is presented here.

Both sets of data (most recent incident and partner violence) are presented here to build a picture of the extent and types of disclosure by women who experience violence.

Change over time summary: short-term change revealed by the data	<p>Due to the nature of the PSS data being long-term or lifetime, an analysis of change over time cannot be performed for this indicator. As such, only baseline PSS data is provided.</p> <p>AHRC workplace sexual harassment data suggests that there has been a decline in the proportion of women who have experienced workplace sexual harassment who have subsequently sought help or advice.</p>
Does the change confirm or run contrary to expected change?	Not applicable as mostly baseline data is presented here and no conclusive analysis of change over time is yet available.
Gaps in existing data	The longer-term nature of publicly-available data for this indicator does not allow for an analysis of change over time. For this reason it is unclear whether there has been any change in help-seeking rates.

## Sexual and physical violence against women by all male perpetrators: help-seeking rates

### Sexual violence against women by a male perpetrator<sup>xvii</sup>

The 2016 PSS results show that nearly half (49.6%) of those women who experienced sexual assault by a male perpetrator in the past ten years sought advice or support for their most recent incident, and two in five women (40.6%) who experienced sexual threat sought advice or support.<sup>206</sup>

**Table 6: Whether female victims sought support or advice for sexual assault, most recent incident, 2016, proportion (%) of women who experience sexual assault**

Whether sought advice or support	Sexual assault 2016
Sought advice or support	49.6%
Did not seek advice or support	51.2%

Source: ABS, PSS 2016

### Physical violence against women by a male perpetrator

In 2016, approximately six in ten female victims of male-perpetrated physical assault (61.9%) and male-perpetrated physical threat (60.3%) reported seeking some form of advice or support following their most recent experience of violence (see Table 7, below).<sup>207</sup>

xvii The 2016 PSS's most recent incident data on women's experiences of sexual violence (sexual assault and sexual threat) in the last ten years did not detect any female perpetrators of sexual violence towards women in the sample; however, it cannot be extrapolated that such incidents do not ever occur.

**Table 7: Whether female victims sought support or advice for male-perpetrated physical violence by type of violence (assault or threat), most recent incident, 2016, proportion (%) of women who have experienced physical assault and physical threat**

Whether sought advice or support	Physical assault 2016	Physical threat 2016
Sought advice or support	61.9%	60.3%
Did not seek advice or support	37.9%	40.1%

Sources: ABS, PSS 2016

### **Cohabiting partner physical and/or sexual violence against women: help-seeking rates<sup>xviii</sup>**

In the PSS, data is also collected on women's help-seeking behaviours following violence perpetrated by current and previous cohabiting partners.<sup>xix</sup> In 2016, of the women who had ever experienced physical and/or sexual violence perpetrated by a current partner, 54.4% sought advice or support from someone. Less than two-thirds (62.9%) of women who reported having experienced violence from a previous partner sought advice or help from someone (see Table 8, below).

**Table 8: Women's experiences of cohabiting violence by proportion of women victims who sought advice or support, 2016**

Whether sought advice or support from someone	Current partner 2016	Previous partner 2016
Sought advice or support	54.4%	62.9%
Did not seek advice or support	56.1%	36.9%

Source: ABS, PSS 2016

### **Insights into why substantial proportions of women who have experienced partner violence do not seek help**

The 2016 PSS data gives us insights into the reasons why substantial proportions of women do *not* seek help for partner violence. On the basis of the options provided in the survey, Table 9 (see below) lists the most common reasons cited by women who have experienced partner violence and have not sought help. For both current and previous partner violence, approximately half (49.7% and 47.0%) of the women said they 'felt they could deal with it themselves', and significant proportions also said that they 'did not want or need help'

xviii This data does not include intimate partners who have not cohabited. Includes male and female cohabiting partners.

xix In the PSS, 'current partner' refers to a cohabiting partner with whom the respondent is in a relationship at the point of the survey being undertaken. 'Previous partner' refers to an ex-partner with whom the respondent has cohabited. If a respondent has experienced violence from more than one previous partner, she is asked about the most recently violent previous partner.

(23.6% for current partner violence and 10.1% for previous partner violence).<sup>208</sup>

Considerable proportions of women also said they believed it 'to be not serious enough to seek help' (36.2% for current partner violence and 17.5% for previous partner violence).

These reasons all suggest that many women continue to minimise or dismiss their own experiences of partner violence, and/or feel alone in this experience, reflecting the persistence of social norms that condone or normalise male partner violence against women.

**Table 9: Reasons why women who experienced partner violence did not seek help, 2016<sup>xx</sup>**

Most commonly cited reasons	% of women citing this reason
<b>Current partner violence</b>	
1. Felt they could deal with it themselves	49.7%
2. Believed it to be not serious enough to seek help	36.2%
3. Felt they did not want or need help	23.6%
4. Shame or embarrassment	11.0%
5. Did not think they could help	3.2%
6. Other (including: did not know of any services, no access to transport/distance too far, fear of not being believed, bad experience of service(s) in the past, do not trust services, waiting time too long or not available at the time, cultural/language reasons, fear of perpetrator, too busy)	10.8%
<b>Previous partner violence</b>	
7. Felt they could deal with it themselves	47.0%
8. Shame or embarrassment	24.7%
9. Believed it to be not serious enough to seek help	17.5%
10. Fear of perpetrator	11.5%
11. Did not think they could help	10.2%
12. Did not want or need help	10.1%
13. Did not know of any services	7.1%

Source: ABS, PSS 2016

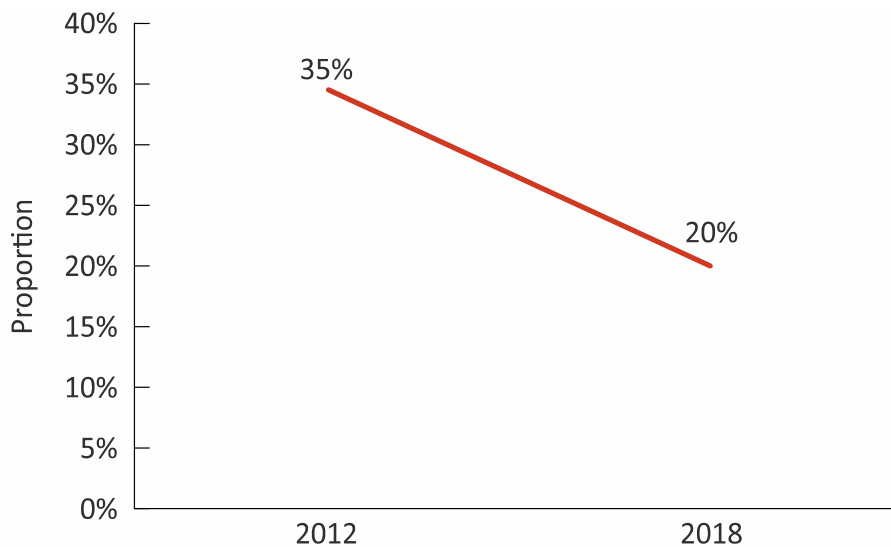
xx More than one reason may have been provided by an individual respondent.

## Workplace sexual harassment: help-seeking rates

The AHRC's national workplace sexual harassment surveys provide insight into the help-seeking behaviours of people who have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace.

**The proportion of women who experienced sexual harassment in the workplace in the five years prior who then sought support or advice has declined.** In 2012, over one-third (35%) of women who had experienced sexual harassment in the workplace in the five years prior sought support or advice. This proportion declined to just one in five (20%) in the 2018 survey (see Figure 9, below).

**Figure 9: Proportion of women who reported experiencing workplace sexual harassment in the past five years who sought support or advice, 2012 and 2018**



Source: AHRC National Workplace Sexual Harassment Survey 2018

## Indicator 1.4: Growth in help sought from telephone helplines and specialist services<sup>xxi</sup>

What does this indicator tell us about Monitoring domain 1: Condoning of violence against women?	This indicator reflects condoning of violence against women by measuring the extent to which women recognise their experiences as violence, feel willing and able to disclose their experience and seek help from a specialist service, and are confident that there will be effective institutional response.
Expected change if high-quality programs and infrastructure for prevention of violence against women and gender equality are implemented	Short- and medium-term: increase in calls and contact made with specialist services as awareness grows and services improve and are adequately resourced. Changes in the medium term will be highly dependent on resourcing of helplines and specialist services.  Long-term: stabilisation then reduction in demand upon specialist services.
Data source(s)	1. 1800RESPECT helpline data 2. Personal Safety Survey (PSS) 2012 and 2016, ABS
Change over time summary: short-term change revealed by the data	An increase to contact made with specialist hotlines and other specialist services by women who have experienced violence, both in terms of real numbers and proportions of victims.
Does the change confirm or run contrary to expected change?	Confirms expected change

<sup>xxi</sup> The wording of this indicator has been changed slightly to reflect how data is captured by 1800RESPECT.

Gaps in existing data	<p>As the national service, 1800RESPECT helpline data has been used here as a proxy for demand upon services. However, 1800RESPECT data is currently challenging to compare over time.</p> <p>We recognise that besides 1800 RESPECT, there are many other specialist telephone helplines and services, including those with expertise for particular communities. In future monitoring waves, using data from such services will provide further insight into help-seeking behaviour.</p> <p>As advised by specialist services, caution should be noted in using growth in numbers of first contact made with services as an indicator of service performance. Anecdotally, specialist services note a rise in complex cases requiring case management and repeated contact over time. These cases tend to reflect complex needs arising from intersecting factors relating to multiple forms of inequality and disadvantage. Media reports suggest that 1800RESPECT is also experiencing a tension between a funding and monitoring model that is predicated on numbers of single callers, and the reality of the complex needs of many women who experience violence who require more than one point of contact or call to the service.<sup>209</sup></p> <p>In this report, service demand is not being offered as a measure of service performance, but rather an indication of changing social norms which see victims feeling more able and willing to seek help.</p> <p>Further research is required to help interpret findings that show growth in demand upon specialist services, but overall declines in help-seeking behaviours among female victims.</p>
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## Growth in demand on 1800RESPECT

1800RESPECT, the national sexual assault, domestic and family violence counselling and information referral service, was established in 2010 as part of the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022* (the National Plan) and is funded by the Department of Social Services. **Between 2016–17 and 2017–18, 1800RESPECT reported a 54% increase in answering first response telephone and online contact**, and a 102% increase in answers to contact by trauma specialist counsellors.<sup>210</sup> As reported in the *Fourth Action Plan – National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022*, first response counsellors answering contact grew 66% from the previous year (n=163,000 contacts in 2018–19).<sup>211</sup>

1800RESPECT is currently working on improving its data capture and reporting systems and processes. This will support the tracking of comparable data over time for future primary prevention monitoring waves.



## Sources of help sought by women who have experienced sexual or physical violence

The PSS asks women (aged 18 years and over) who have experienced physical or sexual violence (since the age of 15, and perpetrated by a partner or non-partner) not only *whether* they sought advice or help, but *where* they sought help from. This allows assessment of the extent to which women's help-seeking behaviour is being directed towards specialist services, and how this behaviour is changing over time.

**PSS data shows that growing proportions of women who have experienced physical and/or sexual violence have sought help from telephone helplines, support workers or counsellors for the most recent incident of violence.**

In 2012, 21.8% of women who had experienced male perpetrated sexual assault since the age of 15 and sought help after the most recent incident, pursued advice or support from counsellors. This proportion increased by 4.8 percentage points to 26.6% in 2016.<sup>xxii</sup> Of the women who had experienced male-perpetrated physical assault since age 15 and sought help for the most recent incident of physical assault, in 2012 18.5% sought advice or support from a counsellor, support worker or telephone helpline. This proportion had increased by a considerable 9.8 percentage points to 28.3% in 2016 (see Table 10, below).

**Table 10: Women who have experienced male-perpetrated sexual or physical violence since age 15 and have sought help for their most recent incident of violence, proportion (%) who sought advice or support from counsellor, support worker or telephone helpline**

Type of male-perpetrated violence		2012 <sup>xxiii</sup>	2016 <sup>xxiv</sup>
Sexual violence	Sexual assault	21.8%	26.6%
	Sexual threat	13.3%	18.3%
Physical violence	Physical assault	18.5%	28.3%
	Physical threat	12.1%	17.0%

Sources: ABS, PSS 2016; ANROWS, PSS 2012 additional analysis, Table A9<sup>212</sup>

Based on PSS data, while there is a growing demand on specialist services including telephone helplines, women's most common source of advice or support, across all types of physical or sexual violence, continues to be a friend or family member. For example, in 2016 nearly half (49.6%) of all women who had experienced male-perpetrated sexual assault since age 15 and sought help for their most recent incident turned to a friend or family

xxii Note however, that when asking about the most recent incident, the 2012 survey asked about a timeframe of the last 20 years, while the 2016 survey asked about the last ten years.

xxiii 2012 Survey asked about the characteristics of the most recent incident of each type of violence experienced in the last 20 years.

xxiv 2016 Survey asked about the characteristics of the most recent incident of each type of violence experienced in the last ten years.

member.<sup>213</sup> Considerable proportions of women also seek support from GPs or other health professionals and police.<sup>xxv</sup>

**Specialist help demand is growing, but help-seeking behaviour is on the decline**

A note of caution should be sounded on these findings. While the PSS data suggests that more women are seeking help or advice from specialist services, the overall proportions of female victims seeking advice or support declined between 2012 and 2016. For example, in 2012, of the women who reported having experienced male-perpetrated sexual assault since the age of 15, 59.3% had sought advice or support from some source after the most recent incident of violence. This proportion had declined to 49.6% in 2016. Such declines in help-seeking behaviour among female victims were noted for all forms of male-perpetrated violence (see Table 11, below).

**Table 11: Women who have experienced male-perpetrated sexual or physical violence since age 15, proportion (%) of women who sought advice or support from anyone, by type of violence**

Type of male-perpetrated violence		2012	2016
Sexual violence	Sexual assault	59.3%	49.6%
	Sexual threat	61.0%	40.6%
Physical violence	Physical assault	68.9%	61.9%
	Physical threat	67.3%	60.3%

Sources: ABS, PSS 2012 and PSS 2016

**Indicator 1.5: Proportions of women who have experienced violence reporting police contact was made**

What does this indicator tell us about Monitoring domain 1: Condoning of violence against women?	This indicator reflects condoning of violence against women by measuring the extent to which women recognise their experience as violence and as criminal in nature, feel willing and able to disclose their experience of violence and seek police help for themselves and accountability for the perpetrator, and are confident in an effective institutional response from the police.
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xxv It should be noted that women could nominate more than one source of help sought for their most recent incident of violence.

Expected change if high-quality programs and infrastructure for prevention of violence against women and gender equality are implemented	<p>Short- and medium-term: increase in police callouts for incidents of violence against women as awareness grows and trust in the police/system improves. Callout rates are expected to plateau in the medium-term.</p> <p>Long-term: callouts will fall as rates of intimate partner violence fall.</p>
Data source(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Personal Safety Survey (PSS) 2012 and 2016, ABS</li> <li>2. National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS) 2008 and 2014–15, ABS<sup>214</sup></li> </ol>
Change over time summary: short-term change revealed by the data	<p>Overall population changes for women in Australia (PSS):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minor decline in police contact made for most recent incidents of sexual assault experienced in the last 12 months, perpetrated by a man of any relationship to the female victim.</li> <li>• Minor increase in police contact made for most recent incidents of physical assault experienced in the last 12 months, perpetrated by a man of any relationship to the female victim.</li> </ul> <p>Changes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who have experienced violence (NATSISS):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficult to ascertain change due to issues with comparability of publicly available data. However, the data suggests a decline in the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who have experienced physical violence in the past 12 months making contact with police regarding the most recent incident of violence they experienced.</li> </ul>
Does the change confirm or run contrary to expected change?	<p>Little change has been noted in the data, which is contrary to expectations of a significant increase in people contacting police.</p>

Gaps in existing data	There are currently significant limitations to the comparability of police data from different jurisdictions as it is currently being collected and shared. Hence police data has not been used here, although it is noted that strong efforts are being made to strengthen, and make commensurable and public, police data related to violence against women or 'family and domestic violence'. <sup>xxvi</sup> While those data efforts are still underway, PSS data is used for this indicator.
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The PSS asks respondents about their experiences of sexual and physical violence, and whether police were contacted. PSS figures for police contact include instances where they were directly contacted by a victim, as well as instances where another person contacted police. From this data we can gain an indication of whether there has been an increase in the likelihood of police being contacted when women experience violent incidents. It is important to note that this data only shows *contact* made, and not further police action.<sup>xxvii</sup> This measurement, therefore, is not of police *call-outs*, as the indicator was framed in *Counting on change*.

### Police contact made for most recent incidents of male-perpetrated sexual and physical assault of women in the last 12 months

In order to assess whether there has been an increase in the proportions of women experiencing violence who subsequently contact police (or have another person contact police), it is best to look at the most recent incident data in the 12 months prior to the survey. In each of the PSS years, women were asked about any experiences of sexual assault by a male and physical assault by a male in the 12 months prior. This data concerns violence perpetrated by men of any relationship to the female victim (that is, any stranger or known person, including partners).

**There has been a minor decline in the proportion of women who had experienced sexual assault in the past 12 months who reported that the police were contacted about the most recent incident.** In 2012, 16.8% of women who experienced sexual assault in the past 12 months reported that police were contacted about the incident. This proportion declined by 1.6 percentage points to 15.2% in 2016. While this decline is not statistically significant, it is an area to continue to monitor into the future.

xxvi Police data on contact made and response to incidents of violence against women currently varies greatly between different state and territory jurisdictions, and has also evolved over time. There are, therefore, issues in comparability, both between jurisdictions, and over time. As such, while *Counting on change* recommended the use of police data to measure progress against this indicator, until such time as there is comparable cross-jurisdictional police data and the ability to do meaningful timeseries analysis, the Personal Safety Survey is the strongest and most consistent source of data on police contact made following incidents of violence against women at an overall Australian population level.

xxvii Personal Safety Survey respondents who reported that police contact was made following violence they experienced are also asked about whether the perpetrator was charged and whether the matter proceeded to court. This data is not reported on here. For further useful discussion of the police component of the PSS, please see Cox, 2016.

Women who experience male-perpetrated physical assault are more likely to contact police (or have another person contact police on their behalf) than women who experience sexual assault. On the basis of 2016 PSS data, women who experienced male-perpetrated physical assault in the last 12 months were twice as likely to contact police or have someone else contact police than women who experienced sexual assault in the last 12 months. **Between 2012 and 2016, there was a minor increase in the proportion of women subject to male-perpetrated physical assault who reported that police were contacted about the incident (28.3% in 2012 and 29.2% in 2016) (see Table 12, below).**

**Table 12: Women's most recent incident of male-perpetrated sexual assault and physical assault in the last 12 months by proportion of women reporting that police contact was made, 2012 and 2016**

Police contact for women who experienced violence in the last 12 months, most recent incident, per type of violence	2012	2016
Sexual assault by all male perpetrators*	16.8%	15.2%
Physical assault by all male perpetrators	28.3%	29.2%

Source: ABS, PSS 2016

\* Note: 98% of sexual assaults against women registered through the PSS are perpetrated by men; only male-perpetrated physical assault against women has been included here.

### Police contact made for incidents of cohabiting partner violence against women

The data under consideration here refers to current and previous incidents of partner violence since the age of 15, rather than in the last 12 months. As such, it is not meaningful to compare 2012 and 2016 lifetime experiences data. However, the latest data gives us an insight into patterns in police contact made following incidents of partner violence.

In 2016, 17.4% of women who reported having experienced violence from a current partner said that police contact had been made about one or more incidents of violence from this partner. Over one-third (35.4%) who reported having experienced violence from a previous partner since the age of 15 reported that police contact had been made about one or more incidents of violence from that partner (see Table 13, below).

**Table 13: Proportion of women who experienced cohabiting partner violence since age 15 who ever contacted police**

Type of partner violence	2016
Current partner violence	17.4%
Previous partner violence	35.4%

Source: ABS, PSS 2016

## Insights into why women do not contact police about experiences of male violence

Data from the PSS 2016 gives us some understanding of why the majority of women who experience male violence do not contact police about their experiences. In 2016, women were asked about their most recent incident experiences of male-perpetrated sexual assault and male-perpetrated physical assault in the last ten years. Only 13.4% of women who had experienced male-perpetrated sexual assault and 30.8% of women who experienced male-perpetrated physical assault in the last ten years reported that police had been contacted with regard to the most recent incident. That is, approximately nine out of ten female victims of male-perpetrated sexual assault and seven out of ten female victims of male-perpetrated physical assault did not report the most recent incident to the police.<sup>215</sup>

Women who had experienced sexual or physical violence and had not contacted police were asked to nominate a reason or reasons as to why, based on the options given in the survey. In 2016, large proportions of women who experienced sexual assault cited reasons related to minimising their experiences or internalising shame and blame as the top four most common reasons for not contacting police. Fear of the perpetrator or desire to protect the perpetrator, fear of not being believed, fear or mistrust in police and legal systems, and cultural or language barriers also registered responses of proportional value (see Table 14, below).

The reasons women gave for not contacting police about their most recent incident of male-perpetrated physical assault were similar in some ways to the reasons for not contacting police about sexual assault. However, there were also some key differences. While the top two reasons for not contacting police about physical assault ('felt they could deal with it themselves' – 37.9%; 'did not regard incident as a serious offence' – 31.7%) were the same as for sexual assault, concerns about the perpetrator registered higher for physical assault incidents than sexual assault incidents. Feelings of shame or embarrassment and lack of knowledge about the criminal nature of the incident registered lower on the list of most common reasons cited for physical assaults. For example, one-quarter (25.8%) of women who experienced sexual assault and did not contact police cited feelings of shame or embarrassment as a reason why, compared with 17.8% of women who experienced physical assault and did not contact police. Women who experienced sexual assault and did not report were approximately 2.5 times more likely to report 'fear of not being believed' (16.1%) than women who experienced physical assault (6.5%) (see Table 14, below).

**Table 14: Most common reasons nominated by women for not contacting the police following their most recent incident of male-perpetrated sexual assault and physical assault in the past 10 years, by proportion of women who experienced violence and did not contact police**

Reasons why police were not contacted by women who experienced male-perpetrated assault, most recent incident of violence	Proportion (%) of women who experienced male-perpetrated sexual assault	Proportion (%) of women who experienced male-perpetrated physical assault
1. Felt they could deal with it themselves	34.2%	37.9%
2. Did not regard incident as serious offence	33.8%	31.7%
3. Felt ashamed or embarrassed	25.8%	17.8%
4. Did not know or think incident was a crime	21.5%	13.6%
5. Fear of person responsible	18.4%	18.6%
6. Did not want person arrested	16.6%	20.3%
7. Felt would not be believed	16.1%	6.5%
8. Did not think police would do anything	14.5%	11.1%
9. Fear of legal processes	9.8%	7.1%
10. Did not want to ask for help	8.9%	10.5%
11. Cultural/language reasons	3.3%	2.2%
12. Workplace/on-job incident – internal reporting procedures followed	1.9%	5.1%

Source: ABS, PSS 2016

These insights help contextualise current data about the high proportions of women who have experienced male violence but have not contacted police about their most recent experience. Importantly, factors related to the condoning of violence against women – minimisation of women’s experiences, failure to identify experiences as criminal in nature, victim-blaming and associated feelings of shame and responsibility on the part of victims, a lack of confidence in the responsiveness of the police and legal systems, and other important barriers related to the intersection of disadvantage such as cultural or language reasons – continue to inhibit women who experience violence from making contact with police. This finding suggests that a specific focus on challenging the condoning of violence against women in a range of settings, including investment in primary prevention in legal and justice settings, and with different policy, programmatic and campaigning strategies, remains essential.



## Police contact made following Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's experiences of violent incidents

While the PSS does not provide data on police contact made following Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's experiences of violent incidents, because reported results are not disaggregated by Indigenous status, the results of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS) waves of 2008 and 2014–15 give some indication of this.<sup>xxviii</sup>

In 2008, one-quarter (25%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women aged 15 years and over reported having experienced physical violence (assault and/or threat) in the 12 months prior to the survey. This prevalence figure decreased somewhat to 21.7% in the 2014–15 survey results. In both waves of the survey, the vast majority of women's most recent incidents of physical violence were perpetrated by intimate partners or other persons classified within a 'family and domestic' relationship to the victim. For example, the 2014–15 data shows that of the women who had experienced physical violence in the previous 12 months, for 72.4% of women the most recent incident was perpetrated by a family or domestic member, including intimate partners (37.3% of most recent incidents were perpetrated by a current or previous intimate partner).<sup>216</sup>

While not directly comparable figures,<sup>xxix</sup> **data would suggest that similar though possibly declining proportions of women who experience physical violence are reporting to police over time.** For example, in 2008, 69% of women who had been physically harmed in the

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xxviii Some important limitations to this data must be noted:

- NATSISS data is not directly comparable to PSS data in terms of methodology and survey design. Therefore, it is not possible to make conclusive statements comparing the experiences of violence of First Nations women on the one hand and non-Indigenous women, or the overall female Australian population, on the other hand on the basis of these two datasets.
- With regard to specific issues on the comparability of data on police contact, one example is that the NATSISS asks respondents *only* whether they reported their own most recent incident of violence to the police, while the PSS also asks whether contact was made by someone else other than the victim.
- The NATSISS also measures only the most recent incident of physical violence (assault or threat), and only within a defined short-term period (12 months prior to the survey). There is no longer-term data on the most recent incident of violence (such as the ten-year period of the PSS), nor is there lifetime data.
- Unlike in the PSS, sexual violence is not directly measured in the NATSISS. This means that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's experiences of sexual violence are likely to be both masked under overall figures of physical violence, and substantially under-reported within this survey.
- The data and findings on physical violence experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in the 12 months prior to the survey are presented and reported somewhat differently between the survey waves of 2008 and 2014–15. Therefore, based on the publicly released data, most NATSISS figures on police contact cannot be compared for assessment of progress.

xxix For the 2014–15 survey, data on police reporting is only available for women who experienced violence perpetrated by a person they are in a family or domestic relationship with, including current or previous partners (comprising 72.4% of most recent incidents), whereas 2008 data provides overall figures for police reporting of physical violence. On the basis of publicly released data, it is difficult to assess whether Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who experience physical violence are reporting to police in higher proportions over time.

most recent incidents of assault reported to police; in 2014–15, 60% of women who reported being physically harmed in their most recent incident of family and domestic violence reported to the police (see Table 15, below).

**Table 15: Summary of NATSISS findings, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women aged 15 years and over who experienced physical violence in the previous 12 months by proportion who reported most recent incident to police, 2008 and 2014–15**

2008 data – all physical violence experienced <sup>xxx</sup>	2014–15 data – physical violence experienced in the context of family and domestic relationships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 60% of women who experienced physical assault in the 12 months prior had reported their most recent incident of assault. (This represents twice the rate of reporting for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men who had experienced assault by any perpetrator – 30%.)</li> <li>• 40% of women who experienced physical threat in the 12 months prior had reported their most recent incident of threat.</li> <li>• Women were more likely to report their most recent incident of assault when injury was sustained (69% of women who had been physically harmed reported to police, compared with 46% who said they were not physically harmed in their most recent incident of assault).</li> <li>• Women who experienced physical assault in the last 12 months were more likely to report the most recent incident when perpetrated by a current or previous partner than when perpetrated by another family member or someone they only knew by sight. 69% of women whose most recent incident of violence experienced was perpetrated by a current or previous partner reported to the police, compared to 48% of women whose experience of assault was perpetrated by a family member and 41% of women whose assault was perpetrated by someone they knew by sight only.</li> <li>• Young women aged 15 to 24 years were significantly less likely to report their most recent incident of assault (52% reported) than women aged 35 to 44 years (72% reported).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 57% of women who experienced physical family and domestic violence in the prior 12 months reported being physically injured in their most recent incident of violence experienced.</li> <li>• Of these women, 60% reported this incident to the police.</li> <li>• 44% of women who experienced physical and domestic violence in the prior 12 months reported that they did not sustain physical injury in their most recent incident of violence experienced.</li> <li>• Of these women, 42% reported this incident to the police.</li> </ul>

xxx Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2013). [‘Feature Article: Experiences of Physical Violence, 2008’](#). National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2008. Cat. no. 4714.0. Canberra, Australia: ABS.

While the data would suggest relatively high police reporting rates among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who experience violence as compared with the general female population figures in the PSS, and as compared with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men, it is important to note that the consequences of violence tend to be far graver among First Nations women than the overall Australian female population. The physical injuries Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experience due to assault are frequently more severe than those experienced by non-Indigenous women.<sup>217</sup> NATSISS data shows that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who have sustained injuries in their most recent experience of physical violence are more likely to report to police. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women also appear more likely to report partner violence than violence perpetrated by other persons.

This data on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's police reporting rates needs to be tempered by NATSISS findings on women's feelings of trust in local police. The 2014–15 data shows that women who experienced family and domestic violence in the 12 months prior to the survey were less likely to feel trust in their local police than women who did not experience any physical violence in the past year. For example, 62.1% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who did not experience any physical violence in the past 12 months strongly agreed or agreed that they 'feel that local police can be trusted', compared with only 44.2% of women who experienced family and domestic violence (including partner violence) in the past year. It is not possible to draw definitive conclusions from this finding, but potential inferences include that mistrust of the police continues to be a barrier to more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women reporting their experiences to police, and/or that women who have reported experiences of violence have found the police response unsatisfactory.

# Gendered driver: Rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity

## Monitoring domain 2: Rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity<sup>xxxi</sup>

Indicator 2.1	Population-level attitudes that support traditional gender roles
Indicator 2.2	Percentage of parental leave uptake by birth parent/primary carer at birth versus non-birth parent/other parent
Indicator 2.3	Gender composition of the workforce by industry and employment status
Indicator 2.4	Proportion of time women spend in unpaid care and housework labour compared to men
Indicator 2.5	Recognition of women's equal contribution to the arts and media
Indicator 2.6	Community norms that support the idea that to be a man you need to dominate women, be in control and/or use violence to assert status and resolve disputes
Indicator 2.7	Attitudes related to male sexual entitlement

Significantly higher levels of violence against women are found in societies, communities and relationships where traditional and hierarchical interpretations of gender roles, responsibilities and relations exist.<sup>218</sup> Research has consistently found that men who hold traditional, hierarchical views about gender roles and relationships are more likely to perpetrate violence against women.<sup>219</sup> For example, men who use violence report a greater sense of ownership of or entitlement to female partners, more rigid ideas on acceptable female behaviour in relationships,<sup>220</sup> and a sense of superiority over women on the basis of adherence to a certain form of masculine gender role. Rigid gender roles may influence the perpetration of violence against women in a number of ways, including:

- the sense of entitlement associated with the traditional masculine gender role resulting in the use of force (including forced sex) by some men, particularly in intimate relationships<sup>221</sup>
- the use of violence to reinforce role divisions or 'punish' women and gender diverse people when they do not conform to expected gender roles<sup>222</sup>

xxxi Please note that in the *Counting on change* framework, this domain was split into two: Rigid gender roles, and Stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity. However, in preparing this report we decided to re-merge these two domains, to maintain greater fidelity with the relevant driver articulated in *Change the story*.

- the gendered division between the public world of work and the private world of the home, which can isolate women and make them dependent on men.<sup>223</sup>

Rigid constructions of gendered personal identities or strong beliefs about what it means to be 'masculine' or 'feminine' are key drivers of violence against women. People who see men and women as having specific and distinct gendered characteristics are more likely to condone, tolerate or excuse such violence.<sup>224</sup> Moreover, individuals who subscribe to such gendered beliefs and attitudes, notions of femininity which objectify women, and beliefs and attitudes which associate femininity with 'moral' standards of behaviour, are more likely to condone the use of violence against women.<sup>225</sup>

Sexist and stereotypical ideas about masculinity and femininity may increase the probability of violence against women because they:<sup>226</sup>

- define masculinity as callous and insensitive, or suggest that men are 'naturally' more violent than women and are driven by uncontrollable sexual urges<sup>227</sup>
- play a role in socialising men and boys, establishing expectations or even pressures for men to live up to these ideas about masculinity, including through the expression of aggression and violence towards women<sup>228</sup>
- contribute to gender hierarchies based on men having power over women, supporting male entitlement to sex and control in relationships
- may valorise male violence in general, and sexual aggression towards women in particular
- can cast women as targets for exploitation,<sup>229</sup> based on the idea that women are 'naturally' passive and submissive, combined with objectified and sexualised identities
- can support disrespect and violence towards women through the representation of women as inherently deceitful and unfaithful, and needing to be controlled.<sup>230</sup>

The indicators selected as proxy measures for Monitoring domain 2: Rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity include:

- attitudinal adherence to traditional gender roles and relations
- gendered patterns of practice by parents in Australia in relation to early caregiving measured through parental leave uptake
- structural patterns in workplaces and the Australian paid labour force with regard to careers and patterns of employment mirroring rigid gender roles and stereotypes
- gender divisions of unpaid care and domestic labour within households and families (typically associated with traditional notions of a role to be fulfilled by women)
- attitudes and practices associated with dominant expressions of masculinity.

Our Watch's work since *Change the story* shows how other forms of oppression and discrimination can intersect and interact with gender inequality to shape specific experiences and expressions of rigid gender roles and stereotypical constructions of masculinity and femininity, and subsequently drive violence against women in certain ways. For example, *Changing the picture, Background paper* (2018) acknowledges the destruction (or attempted destruction) of traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures as part of the colonisation process, which specifically disrupted the social roles and responsibilities of men and women,<sup>231</sup> and displaced traditional laws, practices and norms that defined appropriate relationships between women and men. This process of 'colonial

patriarchy' subordinated and disempowered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.<sup>232</sup> It also disempowered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men by undermining their traditional roles, while depriving them of the power, status and opportunities that other men in Australia are afforded. This intergenerational trauma experienced by First Nations men can sometimes be outwardly directed as violence against others, including women and children.<sup>233</sup> As *Changing the picture* stresses, however, violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women is perpetrated by men of all backgrounds, not only First Nations men. In this respect, patterns of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are influenced by their subordination through 'colonial patriarchy' and by the broader rendering of rigid gender roles and relations across Australian society.

As documented in *Changing the picture, Background paper* (2018), specific stereotypes about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – such as those regarding alcohol and drug use, or their being 'more violent' – run counter to dominant narratives about 'appropriately feminine' victims of violence and consequently work to shift blame for violence onto Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.<sup>234</sup> Some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men may adopt the kinds of patriarchal attitudes, behaviours and notions of masculinity which were introduced with colonisation. Non-Indigenous men may adhere to rigid and harmful forms of masculinity as well as subscribe to racist and gendered stereotypes that dehumanise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. Together, these racialised gender expressions work to drive violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women by men of all backgrounds.

Our Watch's work in *Primary prevention of family violence against people in LGBTI communities* (2017) and in *Men in focus: Unpacking masculinity and engaging men in the prevention of violence against women* (2019) provides further insight into the impacts of rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity. This work shows how rigid gender roles and relations not only drive violence against cisgendered and heterosexual women, but also violence against lesbian, bisexual and trans women, intersex people and gender-diverse people. This occurs through the social policing of rigid and binary gender roles and associated heteronormative norms, and the dominance of heterosexist social structures. Gender role socialisation and messages continue to determine the 'right' and 'wrong' ways to be 'a man' and 'a woman' and reinforce a limited and rigid binary between these roles. Strict adherence to social constructs of binary notions of sex and gender often motivates punishment and victimisation of women of diverse sexual orientations and gender-diverse people, and renders their experiences of violence less visible. Homosociality as a practice of male peer bonding may place women of diverse sexual orientations and people of diverse gender identities at greater risk of disrespect, objectification and violence.<sup>235</sup> Challenging rigid gender roles and heterosexist, binary and hierarchical gender relations is therefore critical to prevent violence not only against cisgender, heterosexual women but against *all* women and non-binary people.

Existing research also suggests that there is a strong correlation between traditional masculine ideals, violence against women, *and* violence against LGBTI people. The very existence of people of diverse gender identities and sexual orientations challenges not only traditional and patriarchal constructions of gender, but also the deeply held, but often unacknowledged, links between sex, gender and sexuality. Rigid constructions of gender are built on the assumption that 'real' men and 'real' women are necessarily heterosexual. But the existence of people of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities makes it clear



that individuals do not always behave in stereotypically masculine and feminine ways, and can be attracted to people across a spectrum of sexualities and genders. Dominant constructions of gender can therefore drive violence against people of all gender identities and sexual orientations.

### **Challenging rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity: Summary of change over time**

Based on the indicator data that follows, overall this domain demonstrates some progress on community attitudes. Yet there is a strong persistence of behaviours and structural patterns which reflect rigid gender roles, stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity, and, ultimately, gender inequality. Multiple types of data – individual attitudinal, such as the National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey, household, such as the Household Income and Labour Dynamics Australia survey, labour force, such as the ABS's Labour Force Survey or the Workplace Gender Equality Agency's data – show that gains have been made in relation to acceptance of women in the workforce. This acceptance is reflected in the increase in women's paid hours (with now full-time labour force participation parity) and, to some degree, in the increased employment of women in occupations traditionally understood to reflect a stereotyped construction of masculinity, or 'men's work'. This can be understood as reflecting a growing societal acceptance of the full breadth of work that women can do.

However, while there has been greater acceptance of women undertaking different roles, workforce change toward greater equality should not be overstated. Industry continues to be highly gender-segregated and women dominate the ranks of part-time workers. As analysis in Monitoring domain 3 (Men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in public life) also shows, men also continue to dominate leadership positions, and women experience multiple forms of structural economic inequality including a gender pay gap and superannuation gap.

Perhaps most significantly, commensurate shifts have not been achieved in relation to men undertaking forms of work traditionally seen as 'feminine' responsibilities. Women continue to shoulder the burden of unpaid work involved in caring for children, people with disability in their families, other family members including older people, and tending to the home. We have seen no meaningful increase in the time men spend on unpaid labour at home. When it comes to paid work, neither have we seen an influx of men into 'feminine' occupations or female-dominated industries (which tend to be paid less than masculinised or male-dominated occupations and industries), at least at the lower and middle ranks. Even in feminised industries, men continue to be represented in management at least at par with women, with the exception of two industries: healthcare and social assistance, and education and training.<sup>236</sup>

Overall, then, there has been little increase in the value placed on traditionally 'feminine' care work, whether paid or unpaid, and correspondingly limited shifts in norms of masculinity related to work. This lack of value placed on traditionally feminine forms of work is even reflected in the architecture of our national data itself. The ABS's Time Use Survey, considered to be a vastly superior instrument to the Census and the Household Income Labour Dynamics Australia survey for undertaking gendered comparisons of unpaid labour time and for making visible the extent of work women undertake including that which is not



renumerated, was not run after 2006 due to a lack of funding.<sup>237</sup> Happily this important instrument has been recently reinstated, in part propelled by the need to report against Sustainable Development Goal indicators related to unpaid care gender gaps, and new data has been recently collected.<sup>238</sup> Workplace gender equality data tends to measure changes to labour force segregation by emphasising the movement of women into ‘masculine’ sectors and occupations, rather than by considering whether men are moving into roles (especially below managerial ranks) in traditional feminised industries.

Further, changes to rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of gender are not yet suitably supported by policy and infrastructure. For example, based on policy restrictions, parental leave uptake patterns continue to be highly gendered, with men largely taking up the highly limited secondary carer’s leave entitlement and women the more extended primary carer’s leave. This sets in train and reinforces a gendered division of childcaring labour in homes where there is a female and a male parent, which, as the Household Income and Labour Dynamics Australia (HILDA) data shows, persists over time. While many workplaces are now compelled to report on their gender pay gap and other gender equality measures, this is a recent development. Reporting has not yet translated into substantial shifts in the gender segregation of industries, in the proportion of men taking on flexible and part-time roles, or in gender pay gaps within organisations and industries.

In sum, the considerable changes in gender dynamics seen in the public realm have not been mirrored (or indeed facilitated) by shifts in the domestic or private realm towards less rigid gender roles and more equal divisions of unpaid labour between female and male partners (or ex-partners). Without significant movement – at the levels of behaviour, infrastructure and policy – to shift patterns of domestic labour and caring responsibilities in the private realm, we are nearing the limits of what can be achieved towards gender equality in the public realm and economic equality between women and men.

## Indicator 2.1: Population-level attitudes that support traditional gender roles

What does this indicator tell us about Monitoring domain 2: Rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity?	This indicator gives us some insight into the extent to which individuals in Australia attitudinally subscribe to traditional gender roles, and whether this has changed over time. The data used to measure this indicator looks particularly at gender roles in terms of parenting, paid work, marriage, and other forms of intimate relationships.
Expected change if high-quality programs and infrastructure for prevention of violence against women and gender equality are implemented	Short- and medium-term: proportion of the population who hold positive attitudes (i.e. rejecting traditional roles) will increase.  Long-term: proportion of the population who hold positive attitudes will peak and plateau.

Data source(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS) 2009, 2013 and 2017, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) (previously auspiced by VicHealth)</li> <li>2. Household Income and Labour Dynamics Australia (HILDA) survey 2008 and 2015, Melbourne Institute, University of Melbourne<sup>239</sup></li> </ol>
Change over time summary: short-term change revealed by the data	<p>Decrease in the proportion of Australians who believe that a woman needs to have a child to be fulfilled (NCAS).</p> <p>Decrease in the extent to which Australians subscribe to traditional gender roles in terms of parenting and paid work, though men's attitudes are more traditional than women's (HILDA).</p>
Does the change confirm or run contrary to expected change?	Confirms expected change
Gaps in existing data	<p>The data in these surveys is attitudinal in nature and does not explain on its own the disjuncture between attitudes which indicate flexible thinking on gender roles and persistent patterns of rigid gender roles within female–male relationships.</p> <p>Framing of survey questions tends to conform with normative assumptions about female–male (cisgender, heterosexual) exclusive partnerships as the locus of the family; in this sense, the surveys themselves can be regarded as perpetuating traditional assumptions about gender, sex and sexuality.</p>

The 2017 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS) results reveal that overall, attitudinally, individuals in Australia reject rigid gender roles to a reasonably high degree. Coupled with rigid gender expressions, the overall average ranking of this theme was 79 out of 100, a score that indicates that **people are largely rejecting attitudes 'agreeing with the idea that men and women are naturally suited to "do" different tasks and responsibilities'**.<sup>240</sup> This is a heartening result. The importance of progressing towards attitudes supporting less rigid gender roles is underlined further by the NCAS finding that attitudes which support rigid gender roles are one of the strongest predictors of attitudes supportive of violence against women.<sup>241</sup>

Three specific questions were asked in 2017 to interrogate attitudinal support for rigid gender roles, including two questions new to this wave of the survey. One new statement asked respondents about traditionally gendered careers: 'I think it is embarrassing for a man to have a job that is usually filled by a woman.' Only 6% agreed with this statement. A second new statement referred to pay differentials between female and male partners in

a heterosexual relationship: 'If a woman earns more than her male partner, it is not good for the relationship.' Again, a low proportion (8%) of Australians agreed with this statement.<sup>242</sup>

A third statement, 'A woman has to have children to be fulfilled', was also previously asked in the 2009 and 2013 NCAS waves. This statement clearly refers to the idea that parenthood is a more natural role for women than men and that women's value is tied to motherhood (whereas that is not the case for men). While the average result in 2017 for this statement also revealed low agreement with this statement – only 8% of Australians agreed with it – this question did elicit different average responses from women and men, unlike the other questions. Women were significantly more likely to disagree with this statement than men, with 93% of women disagreeing as compared to 86% of men.<sup>243</sup>

Importantly, however, there was a decrease of 4 percentage points between 2013 and 2017 in the proportion of Australians agreeing that women need to have children to be fulfilled, from 12% in 2013 to 8% in 2017.

### **Gender roles and management of gender norms among Aboriginal people in South Australia: Snapshot of findings from *The Aboriginal Study* (2019)**

The Aboriginal Health Council of South Australia conducted a recent qualitative study of gender attitudes, norms and practices among Aboriginal people in South Australia.

Findings from this study pertinent to this indicator include:

- That women and men both identify strongly with nurturing of children, but there are gendered patterns in how this nurturing role is expressed – for women, it tends to be that motherhood and 'growing up of children' is 'an important aspect of their womanhood', while men tended to express their role as teachers of children, as well as protectors and providers for the family (p. 41). Importantly, a key point of difference arises from other population-level surveys: there is a far wider definition of family which is expressed by study participants than is assumed in population-level surveys (which tend to presume a nuclear, normative family unit). Women's and men's nurturing roles extended beyond biological children to wider kin networks.
- Women talked about careful management of gender norms – some about a reluctant acceptance of gender norms and role divisions (seen to be greatly influenced by Western culture), others about the difficulty of challenging gender role norms, others still (particularly LGBTQ women and single mothers) about challenging and rejecting rigid gender role norms. For some women, this challenging of gender norms carried with it greater risk and other negative consequences; others drew attention to changing culture with greater flexibility of gender role norms (pp. 45–47).

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Source: Aboriginal Health Council of South Australia Ltd, *The Aboriginal Gender Study*, Final Report, AHCSA, Adelaide, 2019, pp. 45–47.

The annual longitudinal survey of Australian households, Household Income and Labour Dynamics Australia (HILDA), is another source of credible population-level data yielding important insights into the gendered attitudes of Australians.

### **Changes over time: attitudes towards parenting and paid work**

HILDA measures the traditionalism of attitudes on gender roles in relation to two topics: parenting and paid work, and marriage and children. The survey does this by asking several questions on each topic, and then determining a score between 1 (least traditional) and 7 (most traditional) for each individual respondent on a composite basis of their responses.<sup>244</sup> Data against these measures has only been collected and reported on in certain waves of HILDA (i.e. not every year). The relevant HILDA years for these themes that align with the approximate period under consideration in this report are 2008 and 2015.

The HILDA statements on parenting and paid work are as follows:

2. 'Many working mothers seem to care more about being successful at work than meeting the needs of their children.'
3. 'If both partners in a couple work, they should share equally in the housework and care of children.'
4. 'Whatever career a woman may have, her most important role in life is still that of being a mother.'
5. 'Mothers who don't really need money shouldn't work.'
6. 'Children do just as well if the mother earns the money and the father cares for the home and the children.'
7. 'It is better for everyone involved if the man earns the money and the woman takes care of the home and the children.'
8. 'As long as the care is good, it is fine for children under three years of age to be placed in childcare all day for five days a week.'
9. 'A working mother can establish just as good a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work for pay.'
10. 'A father should be as heavily involved in the care of the children as the mother.'
11. 'It is not good for a relationship if the woman earns more than the man.'
12. 'On the whole, men make better political leaders than women do.'
13. 'A pre-school child is likely to suffer if his/her mother works full-time.'
14. 'Children often suffer because their fathers concentrate too much on their work.'
15. 'If parents divorce it is usually better for the child to stay with the mother than the father.'<sup>245</sup>

Overall, HILDA data reveals that men and women, with and without dependent children, display reasonably low levels of rigidity and conservatism, or 'traditionalism' as it is termed in the HILDA reports, regarding attitudes toward gender roles in relation to parenting and paid work. All groups – women without children, women with children, men without children, men with children – achieved a score of less than four out of seven in both 2008 and 2015. Additionally, all groups have become slightly less traditional over time. That being said, some differences between men and women, and men and women with and without children, are apparent and outlined in Table 16, below. Men are more traditional in their

gender attitudes towards parenting and paid work than women. The presence of dependent children does not alter this result.

**Table 16: Average mean extent to which persons aged 15 to 64 hold traditional attitudes towards parenting and paid work, by gender and presence of dependent children, scale of 1 to 7**

Gender and presence of dependent children	2008	2015	Change 2008 to 2015
Women – without children	3.2	3.0	-0.2
Women – with children	3.3	3.1	-0.2
Men – without children	3.5	3.3	-0.2
Men – with children	3.5	3.3	-0.2

Source: Wilkins and Lass, 2018, p. 80

These results should be treated with some caution. Attitudes do not necessarily translate into gender-fair divisions of labour and non-traditional gender roles.<sup>246</sup> As explored under Indicator 2.4, a highly gendered division of labour is still apparent among surveyed female–male couples, particularly when dependent children are present. Further analysis of the HILDA data disaggregated by gender, presence of children and relationship type reveals that married men most strongly agree with traditional attitudes on parenting and paid work, compared to any other group.<sup>247</sup>

### Current state: attitudes towards marriage and children

With regard to parents' attitudes about marriage and children, the HILDA report presents pooled data for the period 2005 to 2015. Therefore, what is presented here is a baseline result on gendered attitudes regarding marriage and children.

The HILDA statements on marriage and children are as follows:

1. 'It is alright for an unmarried couple to live together even if they have no intention of marrying.'
2. 'Marriage is a lifetime relationship and should never be ended.'
3. 'Marriage is an outdated institution.'
4. 'It is alright for a married couple to get a divorce even if they have children.'
5. 'A woman has to have children in order to be fulfilled.'
6. 'Children will usually grow up happier if they have a home with both a father and a mother.'
7. 'It is alright for a woman to have a child as a single parent even if she doesn't want to have a stable relationship with a man.'
8. 'When children turn about 18 to 20 years old, they should start living independently.'
9. 'Homosexual couples should have the same rights as heterosexual couples do.'<sup>248</sup>

While attitudinal differences between different groups about parenting and paid work are relatively slight, more significant differences between groups are apparent in relation to views about marriage and children. Fathers in couples with large families most strongly subscribe to traditional gender views about marriage and children. Mothers in large families also have relatively high subscription to such traditional attitudes, but to a lesser extent than men. Single parents tend to hold less traditional views on marriage and children than coupled parents, and the views of single mothers are particularly progressive. Among fathers, single fathers of one child are the least traditional in their views on marriage and children. Across the board within each category of family and relationship type, mothers hold less traditional views on marriage and children than fathers.

## Indicator 2.2: Percentage of parental leave uptake by birth parent/primary carer at birth versus non-birth parent/other parent

What does this indicator tell us about Monitoring domain 2: Rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity?	This indicator provides some insight into the practices of gendered divisions of care labour by families with children in the early childhood years in Australia. Research shows that when fathers and other non-birth parents take up more leave during the early childhood years, it is more likely that equitable sharing of unpaid care labour continues into the long term. Conversely, where children are born to or adopted by female–male couples and the woman takes on the primary care role at birth, a more gendered division of unpaid labour is likely to remain, resulting in significant flow-on effects (such as limits to women’s economic independence and children being socialised in a context of rigid and traditional gender roles). This can be the case even among couples who attitudinally subscribe to less traditional gender roles, meaning it is important to look not only at attitudes, but also behaviours.
Expected change if high-quality programs and infrastructure for prevention of violence against women and gender equality are implemented	Short- and medium-term: increased uptake of some (paid or unpaid) parental leave by partners of birth parents/primary carer at birth. This will not take the place of parental leave uptake by birth parents, and it is expected that this will remain the same. However, the length of parental leave and reliance on unpaid leave by birth parents may decrease slightly.  Long-term: the gap between birth parents/primary parent and non-birth parents/other parents taking up parental leave at birth will close and eventually reach parity.

Data source(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pregnancy and Employment Transitions Survey (PaETS), supplement to the Labour Force Survey 2011 and 2017, ABS<sup>249</sup></li> <li>2. Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) reporting data (self-reports by reporting agencies), 2016–17 and 2018–19, WGEA<sup>250</sup></li> </ol>
Change over time summary: short-term change revealed by the data	<p>Almost all primary carer's leave continues to be utilised by women, though there is a slight upswing in men taking primary carer's leave.</p> <p>Increase in the uptake of secondary carer's leave, though the duration of this leave continues to be very limited (i.e. two weeks).</p>
Does the change confirm or run contrary to expected change?	Confirms expected change
Gaps in existing data	<p>Available data tells us little about the demographics of people taking up parental leave, other than that they are employed persons.</p> <p>The data is not applicable to those who are not in employment; therefore, we do not have an indication of how gender roles are undertaken with regard to early parenting for those who aren't in the workforce or who are experiencing unemployment and socioeconomic disadvantage.</p> <p>The data also tends to be structured on the assumption that parents are in a couple relationship and are (cisgender) female–male couples; often the terms 'fathers' and 'mothers' are used in the data. We have chosen to broaden the terminology to acknowledge more gender diversity of parent couples.</p>

The 2011 and 2017 Pregnancy and Employment Transitions Surveys (PaETS) (ABS) present trends of leave-taking among birth mothers and their partners who had a job while pregnant and who have a child under two years of age, across the Australian labour force.<sup>xxxii</sup> As well as parental leave policies and provisions by employers (analysed in the Process Measures), the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) analyses uptake of employer-provided

xxxii We note that not all birth parents identify as women or mothers; however, the PaETS only identifies mothers or women. Sex/gender disaggregation of partners data is not publicly available; however, it is assumed that the vast majority of partners data refers to men. This presumption is borne out through WGEA data which showed that in 2016 to 2017, on the basis of WGEA's own reporting data, women utilised 95.3% of primary carer's leave, while men utilised 94.8% of all secondary carer's leave. See: WGEA, *Australia's gender equality scorecard: Key findings from the Workplace Gender Equality Agency's 2016–17 reporting data*, November 2017, p. 7.



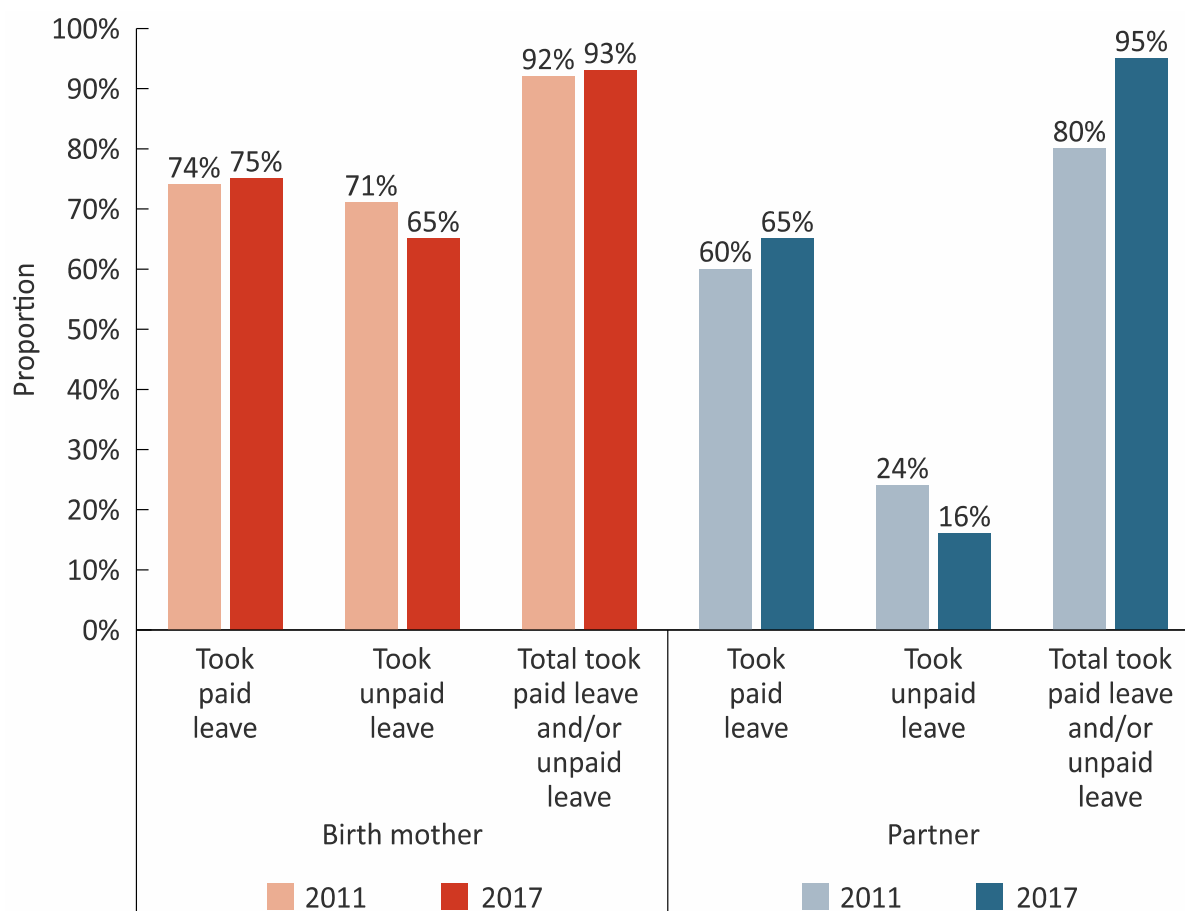
parental leave by female and male employees of non-public sector organisations of 100 or more employees. Data from 2016–17 and 2018–19 (most recent) is presented here.

## Change over time: parental leave uptake between 2011 and 2019

On the basis of the PaETS data, overall, for birth parents who worked as employees while pregnant, the percentage who took some kind of leave (paid and/or unpaid) has remained both consistent and high – 93% in 2017 as compared with 92% in 2011. The percentage of birth mothers who took unpaid leave decreased from 71% in 2011 to 65% in 2017 (see Figure 10, below).

Greater change in leave-taking patterns is noted among partners following the birth of their child. In 2011, just 80% of the non-birth parents took leave (paid and/or unpaid) following the birth of their child. This increased markedly to 95% in 2017.

**Figure 10: Proportion of birth mothers and their partners (who had a child under two years and had been employed during the pregnancy) who took paid and unpaid parental leave, 2011 and 2017**



Source: ABS, Pregnancy and Employment Transitions Survey 2017

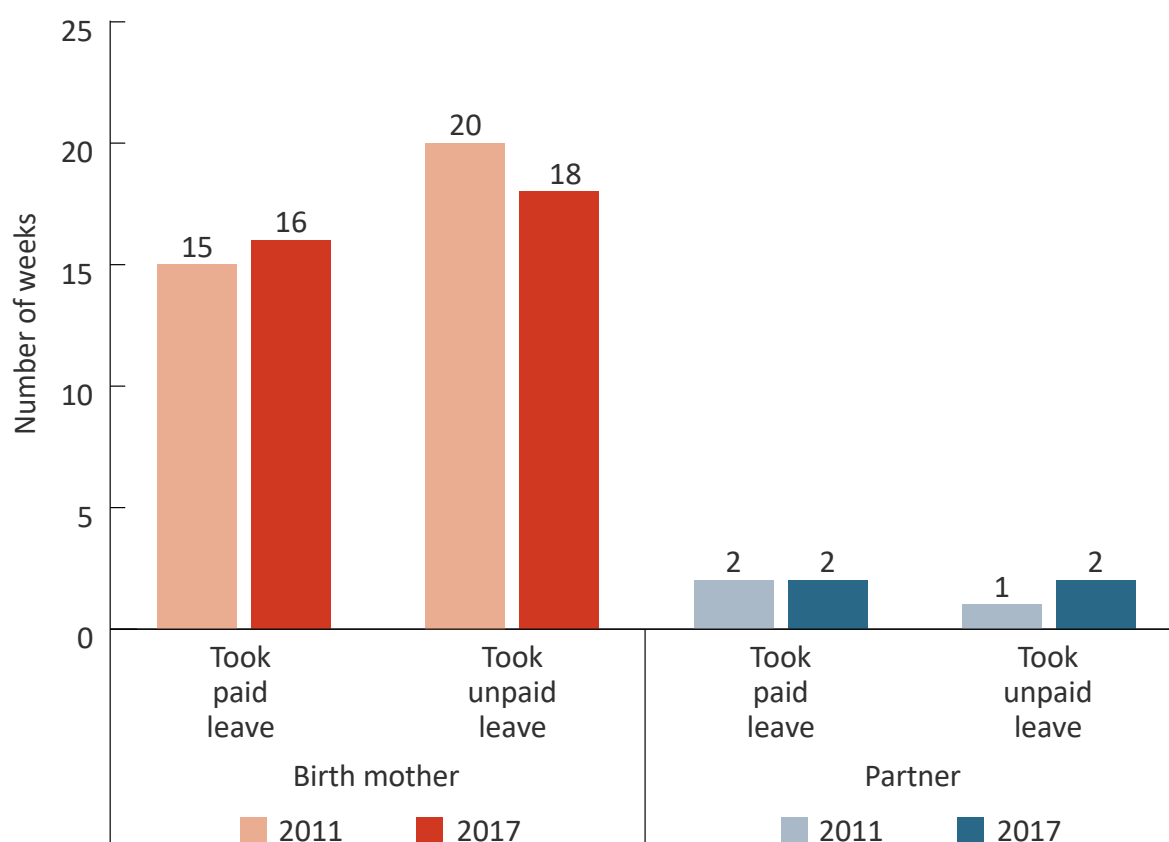
However, this pleasing increase in the percentage of partners taking up leave following the birth of their child needs to be tempered with a closer look at the data. Fewer partners are opting to take unpaid leave (16% in 2017 as compared with 24% in 2011).

More revealing still are the differentials in duration of leave taken between birth parents and their partners. For birth mothers who took paid leave, the median duration of this leave increased from 14.7 weeks in 2011 to 16.0 weeks in 2017. For birth mothers who took up unpaid leave, the median duration of leave taken decreased to 18.0 weeks in 2017 from 20.0 weeks in 2011. These changes may be linked to increases in the duration of paid leave and increases in the number of partners taking leave, and the introduction of the Australian Government's Paid Parental Leave scheme in January 2011. Overall, birth mothers' duration of leave (paid and/or unpaid) decreased from 29.0 weeks in 2011 to 26.0 weeks in 2017.

While partners' uptake of leave increased substantially between 2011 and 2017, the duration of leave remained both consistent and limited. For those partners who took up paid leave, the median duration of this leave remained at two weeks in 2011 and 2017. A small increase in the median duration of unpaid leave among those partners who took unpaid leave is noted (from one week in 2011 to two weeks in 2017); however, there was an overall drop in the percentage of partners who took unpaid leave (see Figure 11, below).

A very considerable gender gap is still evident in the parental leave patterns of birth mothers and partners (predominantly men), with women who give birth taking far more parental leave following the birth of children than their (mostly male) partners.

**Figure 11: Median duration of leave taken for birth by birth mothers and their partners who had a child under two years and had been employed during the pregnancy, 2011 and 2017**



Recent analysis of data from non-public sector employees through the WGEA is consistent with the PaETS data, in that it shows that almost all primary carer's leave is utilised by women. Between 2016–17 and 2018–19 there has been a slight upswing of men taking primary carer's leave. In 2016–17, women utilised 95.3% of primary carer's leave, as compared with 93.5% in 2018–19. In 2016–17, men accounted for 4.7% of primary carer's leave; this had increased to 6.5% in 2018–19. In 2016–17, men accounted for 94.8% of users of secondary carer's leave.<sup>251</sup>

This gendered pattern in leave uptake has longer term implications for the gendered division of household labour. For female-male partnerships into which children are born, if men are mostly taking up secondary carer's leave, and government policy supports only a meagre allocation of secondary carer's leave, then this sets in train a gendered division of child care within families. As will be seen in Indicator 2.4, in female-male partnered families, women tend to undertake the lion's share of unpaid child care, and maintain reduced time in formal employment on an ongoing basis as their children grow up. In this way, gender differences in parental leave provisions and uptake reinforce and perpetuate the gendered division of child care labour between women and men.

### Indicator 2.3: Gender composition of the workforce by industry and employment status

What does this indicator tell us about Monitoring domain 2: Rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity?	This indicator looks at the degree to which the Australian labour force reflects traditional gender roles and stereotypes in terms of the types and status of jobs women and men are undertaking, and what has changed in the period under consideration.
Expected change if high-quality programs and infrastructure for prevention of violence against women and gender equality are implemented	Short- and medium-term: limited change in the gender composition of industries, with a high degree of gender segregation apparent. A lesser proportion of female full-time employees than male, and higher proportion of part-time and casual female employees than male.  Long-term: gender composition of industries to become more balanced. More gender equity expected in the proportion of female and male full-time, part-time and casual employees.
Data source(s)	1. Workplace Gender Equality Agency reporting data, 2013–14 to 2018–19, WGEA 2. Workplace Gender Equality Agency analysis of the ABS's Labour Force Survey 2015, WGEA <sup>252</sup>

Change over time summary: short-term change revealed by the data	<p>Very limited and inconsistent change in gender composition of industry, with the labour force still highly gender-segregated in terms of who is working in which kind of sector.</p> <p>A modest increase in the proportion of women undertaking full-time work; otherwise, very little change in the gender composition of the labour force by employment status.</p>
Does the change confirm or run contrary to expected change?	Confirms expected change
Gaps in existing data	<p>Data is skewed toward reporting the movement of women into male-dominated industries, rather than men's movement into female-dominated industries (which also challenges gender norms and therefore is an important part of the picture).</p> <p>WGEA data is not disaggregated by any other demographic factor than (binary) gender. It would be useful to have workforce/labour force and employment data that is disaggregated by multiple demographic factors.</p>

## Gender composition of Australian industries, 2013 to 2019

**Both WGEA private sector reporting data and ABS Labour Force Survey data reveal that Australia's contemporary workforce is strongly gender segregated.** In terms of employee numbers, certain industries (particularly healthcare and social assistance, education and training, and retail trade) are heavily female dominated. Other industries typically associated with masculine stereotypes (e.g. mining, construction, public administration and safety, electricity, gas, water and waste services) are heavily male dominated. Yet even where women far outweigh men in terms of employee numbers, this only translates into a greater proportion of female managers than male in two instances: in education and training, and healthcare and social assistance.

In terms of the workforce which the WGEA measures (non-public sector employees of organisations of 100 or more employees), overall female participation in the Australian workforce has increased by 1.7 percentage points from 2013–14 to 2018–19, from 48.5% to 50.2%.<sup>253</sup> In terms of labour force participation, gender parity of the workforce, as measured by the WGEA, was achieved in 2016–17 for the first time. This is an exciting achievement in Australian history. However, any excitement needs to be tempered by a careful look at industry composition and a gender analysis of employment types.

The ABS's Labour Force Survey 2015 demonstrates that women dominate the employee ranks of two industries: healthcare and social assistance, and education and training (see Table 17, below). Women comprise about half of the workforce in the retail trade, accommodation and food services, financial and insurance services, rental, hiring and real estate services, administration and support services, public administration and safety, and

arts and recreation services industries. Women are significantly under-represented in terms of employment in construction, mining, electricity, gas, water and waste services, transport, postal and warehousing, manufacturing, wholesale trade, and agriculture, forestry and fishing.

**Table 17: Proportion of female employees per industry, 2015**

Industry	% female employees
Healthcare and social assistance	79.2%
Education and training	70.6%
Retail trade	54.5%
Accommodation and food services	53.1%
Financial and insurance services	51.1%
Rental, hiring and real estate services	50.1%
Administration and support services	49.2%
Public administration and safety	49.1%
Arts and recreation services	46.1%
Information media and telecommunications	44.5%
Other services	41.4%
Professional, scientific and technical services	40.4%
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	33.7%
Wholesale trade	31.1%
Manufacturing	27.9%
Transport, postal and warehousing	23.4%
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	20.8%
Mining	12.9%
Construction	12.0%

Source: ABS, *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, Quarterly, May 2016*, reported in WGEA, 'Gender segregation in Australia's workforce', August 2016, p. 5

The WGEA's reporting data allows for industry comparison of workforce composition for large non-public sector organisations, from 2013–14 to 2018–19 (see Figure 12, below).<sup>xxxiii</sup>

**Over the six years of availability of WGEA data, there has been limited movement with regard to gender composition of most industries.** Most Australians continue to work in industries that are dominated by men or by women, and this division aligns with rigid and stereotyped gender norms regarding the capabilities of women and men. Approximately one-quarter of Australians (25.9%) work in female-dominated industries and over one-quarter (27.9%) in male-dominated industries.<sup>254</sup> As noted in the WGEA's annual scorecard for 2018–19,

'[w]omen's workforce participation is concentrated in a few large industries. Health Care and Social Assistance is by far the largest employer of women, followed by Education and Training and Retail Trade. Men are more evenly spread across the workforce than women, although they have low representation in the highly feminised industry of Health Care and Social Assistance.'<sup>255</sup>

Some male-dominated industries have registered small gains in improving female employment between 2013–14 and 2018–19:

- Professional, scientific and technical services increased female employment by 2.4%.
- Mining increased female employment by 1.3%.
- Construction increased female employment by 2.1%.

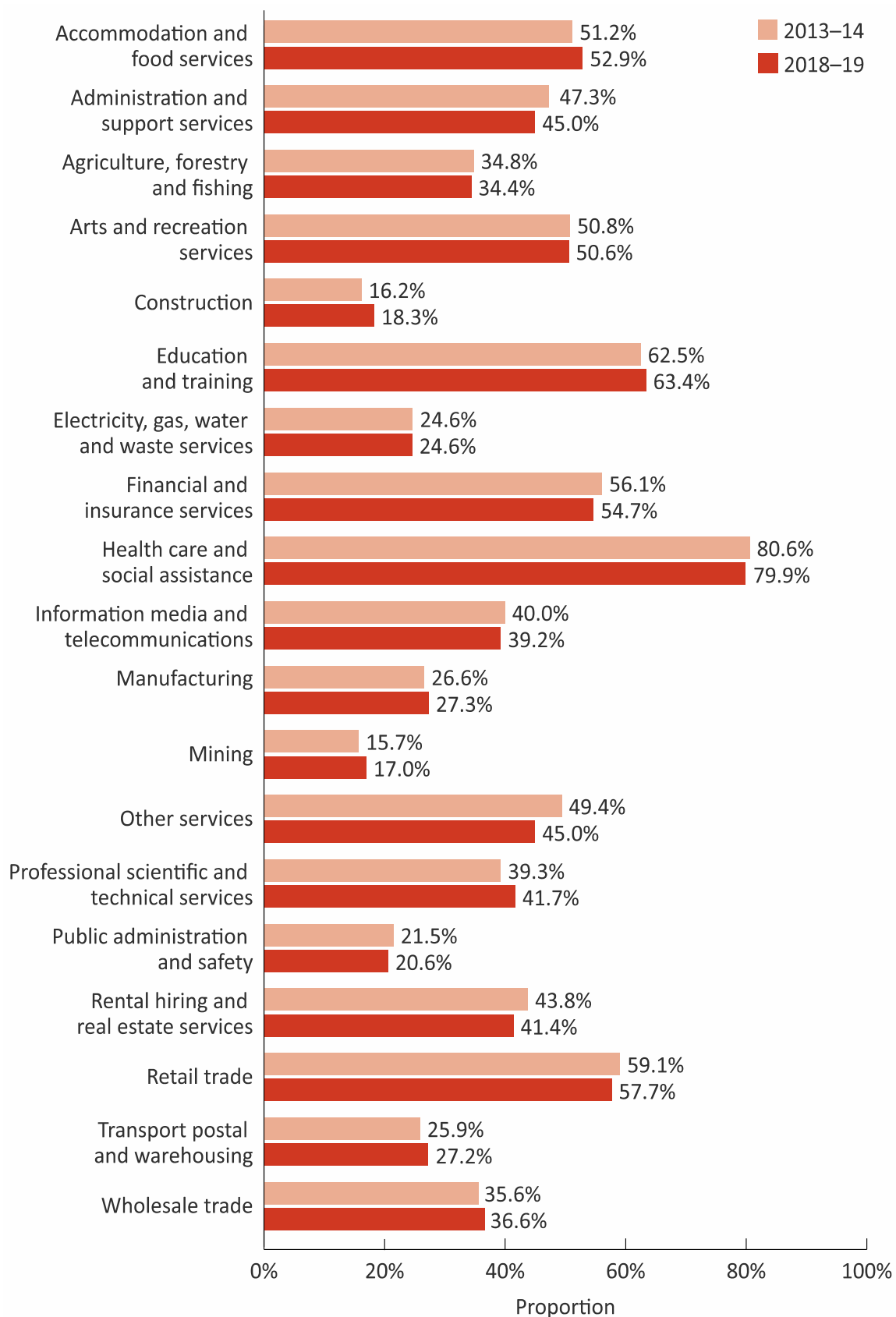
However, there has not been a consistent trend with regard to increasing the proportions of women in the ranks of male-dominated industries. Other male-dominated industries have registered little to no change or small backslides over this six-year period. Overall, therefore, there has been a concerning lack of movement in terms of shifting industry gender segregation over a six-year period.

While women comprised 50.2% of the Australian non-public sector in 2019, they only occupied 39.4% of managerial positions (see Indicators 3.1 and 3.2 for a gender analysis of managerial positions). Some industries which have achieved gender parity, or almost parity, in terms of employee numbers are still marked by significant under-representation of female managers. For example, women comprise 50.6% of the arts and recreation services workforce, and yet only 36.8% of managerial positions. Women make up 54.7% of the financial and insurance services workforce, and yet only 41.0% of managerial positions. Other industries such as agriculture, forestry and fishing have a significant gap between female employee numbers (34.4%) and female managers (17.2%). Other male-dominated industries such as mining, construction, public administration and safety, electricity, gas, water and waste services, transport, postal and warehousing, and manufacturing are marked by both low female employee numbers and significant under-representation of women at managerial levels. Only in two industries, both of which are heavily female-dominated in terms of employee numbers – Health Care and Social Assistance, and Education and Training – do women occupy more than half of the managerial positions (70.1% and 52.2% respectively).<sup>256</sup>

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xxxiii Where there are differences between the WGEA and ABS data on gender composition of industries – for example, the WGEA data shows that women are significantly under-employed in Public Administration and Safety, while the ABS data shows that women are almost half of that industry's workforce – this can be accounted for the inclusion of the public sector in the ABS's data.

**Figure 12: Proportion of women employees by industry, 2013–14 and 2018–19**



Source: WGEA Data Explorer, retrieved 14 February 2020

[Text-equivalent description of Figure 12 in Appendix E](#)



## Gender composition of the Australian workforce by employment status, 2013 to 2019

When looking at the Australian workforce, gender is also segregated according to employment status. With reference to the WGEA's own reporting data, while women now comprise over half the workforce, they make up only 37.7% of all female employees who were employed full-time in 2018–19, with 62.3% of all male employees employed full-time. The proportion of women employed on a part-time basis is also far higher than the proportion of male part-time employees – 74.8% compared to 25.2% (see Table 18, below).

**Over a six-year period, there has been limited movement in gender composition of the workforce by employment type.** Most notably, women's proportion of the full-time workforce has risen by 1.9 percentage points from 35.8% to 37.7%, with a corresponding decrease in male full-time employment. Women's proportion of the casual workforce has also decreased by 1.3 percentage points from 57.2% to 55.9%. However, the part-time workforce gender composition has remained fairly static over a six-year period. Overall, men continue to dominate the full-time workforce by a considerable proportion, while women continue to outweigh men in the part-time workforce by almost 3:1.

**Table 18: Proportion of females and males by employment status**

Employment status	Female/Male	2013–14	2018–19
Full-time	F	35.8%	37.7%
	M	64.2%	62.3%
Part-time	F	75.4%	74.8%
	M	24.6%	25.2%
Casual	F	57.2%	55.9%
	M	42.8%	44.1%

Source: WGEA Data Explorer, retrieved 14 February 2020

Women's overrepresentation in part-time employment is directly linked to gender divisions of labour within households, with women bearing a much higher load of unpaid housework and care work (as explored at Indicators 2.2 and 2.4). Gender segregation of the workforce according to employment status, with women more likely than men to work part-time, also contributes to gender inequity in superannuation and retirement (see Indicator 3.8).

**Beyond gender disaggregation of workforce and employment data: women with disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, and recently migrated women**

The primary data sources used for this indicator are not able to be disaggregated beyond binary gender, in order to inform us about how composition of the Australian workforce by industry and employment is affected by other demographic factors and intersecting forms of discrimination.

There are some limited data sources on labour force participation of particular communities who tend to experience intersecting forms of discrimination. These tend to focus on labour force participation and employment status, and are disaggregated typically by just the demographic group (sometimes comparing to whole-of-population rate or rate of the remainder of the population who are not of that demographic status), or by the particular demographic variable of focus *and* sex/gender.

For example:

- the ABS's Disability, ageing and carers survey reveals that in 2018 (latest data), 45.9% of women aged 15 to 64 years with reported disability living in households in Australia were employed, compared with 75.7% of women without reported disability.
- Researchers at ANU's Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research have analysed the 2011 and 2016 waves of ABS Census data and found that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's employment is growing, but there is still a large employment gap between the employment of First Nations women and non-Indigenous women, and between First Nations women living in non-remote areas and First Nations women living in remote areas. Moreover, the employment rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women living in remote areas has dropped between 2011 and 2016 (Venn and Biddle, 2018). The ABS's last detailed analysis of the Labour Force Survey for Labour force characteristics of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians was undertaken in 2011, and found that 43.7% of First Nations women were employed (in some capacity), compared with 57.3% of non-Indigenous women.
- The ABS's last available release of Characteristics of recent migrants, Australia survey was 2016 and revealed that 57% of recently migrated women were employed in some capacity, compared with 83% of recently migrated men.

Gender disaggregation of labour force, workforce and employment data is an essential step toward understanding how composition of the labour force reflects and further compounds gender stereotypes and rigid gender roles. It would also be useful to have data which reveals how such gendered composition is further structured by and further perpetuates other stereotypes and structured inequalities related to, for example, racism, colonisation, ableism, homophobia, transphobia and socioeconomic disadvantage. This could be facilitated through demographic analysis which goes beyond gender.

Sources:

- ABS, *Disability, ageing and carers, Australia, 2018*, 2019.
- ABS, *Characteristics of recent migrants, Australia, November 2016*, 2017.
- ABS, *Labour force characteristics of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, Estimates from the Labour Force Survey, 2011, 2012*.
- Venn and Biddle, 2018

## Indicator 2.4: Proportion of time women spend in unpaid care and housework labour compared to men

What does this indicator tell us about Monitoring domain 2: Rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity?	<p>This indicator looks at gender equity in private lives in relation to sharing of unpaid care and housework labour, and how this practice has changed over time.</p> <p>‘With women’s rising employment participation, the division of labour between men and women has become a topic of high and persistent public and policy interest. The disproportionate involvement of women in unpaid work arguably limits their labour market availability and career options and contributes to a persistent gender pay gap.’<sup>257</sup></p>
Expected change if high-quality programs and infrastructure for prevention of violence against women and gender equality are implemented	<p>Short- and medium-term: evidence of increased uptake of some unpaid care and housework labour by men, although in the short-term women will continue to do most of the unpaid work. In the medium-term, increased uptake of unpaid work by men with evidence that this is more readily accepted.</p> <p>Long-term: increase in uptake of unpaid work among men, eventually reaching parity.</p>
Data source(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Household Income and Labour Dynamics Australia (HILDA) survey 2002 and 2016, Melbourne Institute, University of Melbourne<sup>258</sup></li> <li>2. Disability, Ageing and Carers survey 2009, 2012 and 2018, ABS (with more detailed analysis presented in the ABS Gender Indicators 2018)<sup>259</sup></li> <li>3. Census of Population and Housing, ABS, 2016<sup>260</sup></li> </ol> <p>The ABS undertook a Time Use Survey in 1992, 1997 and 2006, which is a detailed survey designed to focus on Australians’ use of daily time. When available, the new 2019–20 wave of the Time Use Survey will provide a much-needed updated data source for tracking change in gendered patterns of unpaid labour.</p>

Change over time summary: short-term change revealed by the data	<p>Gendered division of unpaid labour remains entrenched, with women continuing to undertake significantly more unpaid labour (care including for people with disability and housework) than men.</p> <p>Men's unpaid labour has increased only marginally over time.</p> <p>Women are spending more time on paid work, and yet their time on unpaid labour has not decreased.</p> <p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are more likely to be primary carers for people with disability than non-Indigenous women, and First Nations men. Women with disability are more likely to be primary carers for people with disability than women without disability, and men with disability.</p>
Does the change confirm or run contrary to expected change?	Change has been slower than expected.
Gaps in existing data	<p>The HILDA survey focuses on many different topics and use of time is not analysed for public release every year. Moreover, beyond gender disaggregation and disaggregation by relationship type and presence of children, HILDA survey data (at least, what is publicly available) does not allow us to know how a gender division of time use is affected by other demographic variables, for example Indigenous status.</p> <p>The ABS's reinstated Time Use Survey will be a much-needed data source and should be undertaken on a regular basis. It would be useful to understand how time use differs for different groups of women, on the basis of the interaction of gender with other demographic factors and forms of disadvantage.</p> <p>The Time Use Survey is a superior instrument in measuring and comparing use of time to the current alternatives (Census and HILDA) because: 1) it focuses solely on use of time, and therefore can be a deep exploration of the topic and 2) it does not rely on people's memory, 'guesstimates' or skewed self-perception of their use of time, but rather asks people to fill out detailed time log diaries at regular short intervals. In this respect it is a far more accurate methodology for making visible unpaid care and housework burdens and gendered differences in division of labour.<sup>261</sup></p>

Publicly available HILDA analysis of gender division of labour focuses primarily on couples in female–male relationships (which HILDA refers to as ‘heterosexual couples’) among persons of working age (15 to 64).<sup>262</sup> HILDA collects information on actual time spent on paid and unpaid work, how people feel about the division of labour in their relationships, and attitudes towards gender roles with regard to the division of labour where a couple has children.

### **Divisions of paid and unpaid labour, 2002 and 2016**

While HILDA collects data on a wide array of activities by minutes and hours per week, analysis in the 2018 annual report<sup>263</sup> was grouped into three categories for the purposes of examining gendered divisions of labour:

1. employment (paid employment time as well as commuting time)
2. housework (including housework tasks, household errands and outdoor tasks)
3. care work (looking after one’s own children, caring for elderly parents or parents-in-law, caring for adult spouses or family members living with disabilities).<sup>xxxiv</sup>

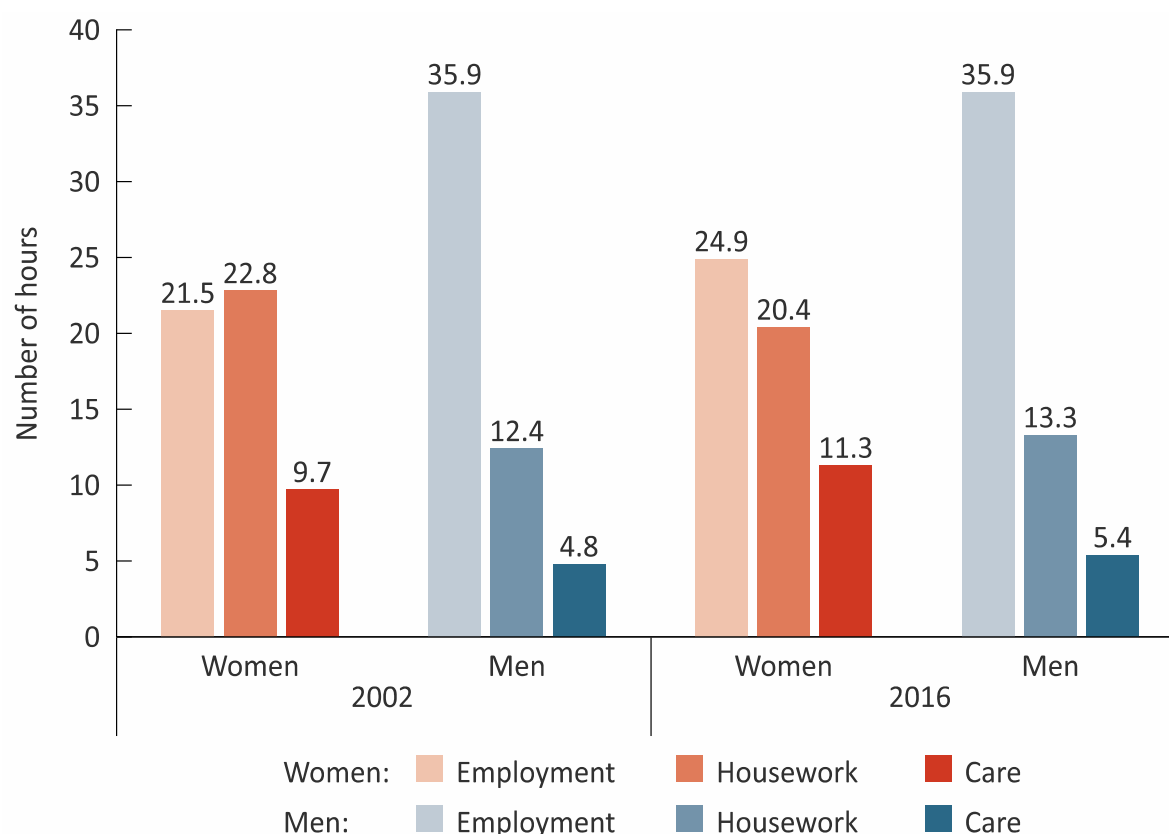
Comparing 2002 and 2016, the HILDA survey reveals a gendered division of labour across the population. On average, women split their time more evenly than men across the three categories of employment, housework and care work, spending less time than men in paid employment and more time undertaking the unpaid labour of housework and care for children and family members. Men’s time usage has remained relatively stable between 2002 and 2016, with men spending the most time (35.9 mean hours per week) in employment in both years. In 2016, men undertook marginally more housework than in 2002 (from 12.4 mean hours per week to 13.3), and care work, from 4.8 mean hours per week in 2002 to 5.4 hours in 2016.

In contrast, we have seen more significant shifts in women’s time usage over this 14-year period. In 2016, Australian women of working age were engaged in an average of 24.9 hours per week of employment, compared with 21.5 hours in 2002. In 2002, on average women undertook 22.8 hours of housework per week, which decreased in 2016 to 20.4 hours per week. However, women’s hours spent on care labour has increased, from 9.7 hours in 2002 to 11.3 hours in 2016 (see Figure 13, below).

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xxxiv Comparable data on the division of paid and unpaid labour has been collected since 2002; however, it is only in the most recent HILDA report (2018) that this analysis of gendered division of labour within households has been presented. HILDA 2018 compares 2016 data to 2002. As such, here we are utilising 2002 as our baselining point and 2016 as our Progress Point 1.

**Figure 13: Average hours per week spent on employment, housework and care labour by gender, 2002 and 2016**



Source: Wilkins and Lass, 2018, pp. 82–83

The above figures represent the average hours per week at a population level for all women and all men. When the data from 2002 and 2016 is combined, further detail about the gendered division of labour across men and women, with and without partners and with and without children, becomes apparent. Table 19 (below) demonstrates that even when children are not present, the time spent on all types of labour differs according to gender. Women with no live-in partner, in de facto relationships or in married relationships without children tend to spend less time on employment and more time on housework and care than men. However, the gender differentials in time usage on different forms of labour increase considerably with the presence of children.

With children to care for, there are notable decreases in women's employment engagement and substantial increases in their time spent on housework and care. While men's time on housework and care also increases with the presence of children, it is far less than women's. For example, men in de facto relationships with dependent children spend on average 16.9 hours on housework per week, as compared with 27.7 hours by women. Women in de facto relationships with children spend on average 28.6 hours per week on care labour, compared to 13.6 hours by men in de facto relationships with children. That is, women's care burden is more than double men's in this (de facto) relationship setting.

**Table 19: Average hours spent on employment, housework and care labour per week, by gender, relationship, and presence of children, persons aged 15 to 64, 2002 to 2016 (pooled)**

	Men – employment	Men – housework	Men – care	Men – total	Women – employment	Women – housework	Women – care	Women – total
<b>No partner in household</b>								
Without dependent children	28.1	9.6	1.9	38.3	23.5	11.1	1.9	35.4
With dependent children	33.6	21.1	14.7	68.3	21.6	27.1	22.2	69.5
<b>De facto</b>								
Without dependent children	41.7	13.2	1.6	55.7	34.8	16.2	1.2	51.5
With dependent children	42.2	16.9	13.6	72.0	20.7	27.7	28.6	76.0
<b>Married</b>								
Without dependent children	37.0	15.9	2.4	54.2	24.0	25.3	3.3	51.0
With dependent children	46.7	15.5	11.0	72.5	22.2	29.6	23.3	74.0

Source: Wilkins and Lass, 2018, pp. 82–83



### **What about time usage among First Nations people?: The inability of Household Income and Labour Dynamics Australia (HILDA) survey to allow accurate inferences**

In *Indigenous data sovereignty: Toward an agenda* (2016), Maggie Walters critiques the HILDA survey for not having a large enough sample of First Nations people to allow for a robust and accurate analysis of how time use is organised in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island households. She discusses how Ting et al. (2015) undertook an analysis of the HILDA data and found that time and labour division was more accurate among the First Nations HILDA subsample than the wider population; however, the First Nations sample size was not large enough to draw convincing findings from this analysis (p. 81).

Walters suggests that this lack of First Nations sufficient sample size in the HILDA survey reflects a wider problem with Australian statistical datasets: the lack of attention given to First Nations people in survey instruments which are not geared toward measuring deficit and disparity:

‘Why, for example, did the federal government initiators and funders of the (very expensive) HILDA survey project, and the research consortium that conducts the project, not feel it necessary to generate an Indigenous sample that was large enough to yield robust statistics regarding their separate circumstances? In the early 2000s, the very wide range of household, income and labour fields, including data on household division of labour, collected in the HILDA survey were considered so important by policymakers that a large-scale national longitudinal study was established to collect and collate data on them. Yet, it seems there is no similar urgency, or perhaps even interest, in gathering such data about Indigenous Australians.’ (p. 82)

#### Sources:

- S. Ting, *Gender, ethnicity and the division of household labour with heterosexual couples in Australia*, 2015.
- M. Walter, *Data politics and Indigenous representation in Australian statistics*, 2016.

HILDA analysis of longitudinal female–male couple patterns confirms that with the ‘presence of children’, couples develop a ‘specialised division of labour’, with men focusing time on paid employment, and women on care for children and housework.<sup>264</sup> This ‘gender-specialised division of labour’ begins with the birth of the first child and does not substantially change over time as the first child ages. As a result, a long-term gendered division of labour becomes entrenched, where ‘women’s share of housework remains on a high level, still amounting to 62%, ten years after the first birth.’<sup>265</sup>

The gendered division of housework and care in female–male couples exists regardless of employment arrangements. For example, where both partners are employed full-time, women still do more housework than men.<sup>266</sup> Even in the most ‘non-traditional’ model (where the female is employed full-time and the male is not employed), with dependent children present, women do almost half the housework and care labour (demonstrated in Table 20, below).

**Table 20: Mean share of housework and care labour, by employment arrangement and presence of dependent children, for partnered women in female–male relationships, persons aged 15 to 64, 2002 to 2016, % (pooled)**

Categorisation of relationship by (paid) employment status	Housework – without children	Housework – with children	Care – without children	Care – with children
Both employed full-time	54.6	57.8	43.8	58.8
Female employed part-time, male employed full-time	63.2	66.0	54.9	64.2
Female not employed, male employed full-time	69.3	72.8	49.0	70.0
Female employed, male not employed	49.0	46.9	61.5	49.7
Other arrangements	56.8	60.3	52.1	58.8

Source: Wilkins and Lass, 2018, p. 87

In 2016, the Census of Population and Housing ('the Census') included a question about how many hours of 'unpaid domestic work' employed persons had undertaken in the past week. Noting the methodological limitations of asking people to recall and estimate their unpaid labour hours, the Census returned data which confirms the gendered division of labour found through the HILDA survey. At the lower end of unpaid domestic work burden, almost one-quarter (24%) of employed men reporting having undertaken no unpaid domestic labour in the past week, compared with 13% of women. Approximately 1 in 5 women (22%) reported undertaking less than 5 hours of unpaid domestic work, compared with more than one-third (36%) of men. The middle range of unpaid domestic work – 5–14 hours in the week – was more equitable, with 31% of men and 36% of women having undertaken these hours. At the high end of unpaid domestic work time use, the gender differential was most stark: 17% of women and only 6% of men reported having undertaken 15–29 hours of unpaid domestic labour, while 9% of women and less than 2% of men undertook 30 hours or more.<sup>267</sup>

The gendered division of primary care work noted in both the HILDA and Census data is also reflected in the ABS Disability, Ageing and Carers survey.<sup>268</sup> In both 2009 and 2018, about one in 20 women in Australia were primary carers – i.e. the person providing the most care – to a person with disability (4.8% and 5.0% respectively). Male primary carers were, comparatively, 2.3% of the male population in 2009 and 2.0% in 2018.<sup>269</sup> The rate of women caring for people with disability also increases with age to 65 years.<sup>270</sup> This result should be read in conjunction with Indicator 3.8, which notes that around retirement age, women listed caring for ageing parents or other family members as a key reason for retiring.

In 2018, women comprised seven in ten (71.8%) of all primary carers of people with disability, and over one-third (35.0%) of female primary carers also had disability themselves. Almost nine in ten (88.1%) of carers providing care to a child with disability were female.

The ABS Gender Indicators published in September 2018 presented some further analysis of 2009 and 2012 waves of the Disability, Ageing and Carers survey.<sup>271</sup> This data analysis reveals that in 2012, women with disability are more than twice as likely as women without disability to provide primary care for people with disability, and over 1.6 times as likely as men with disability to be primary carers of people with disability. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are more likely than First Nations men and non-Indigenous women to be primary carers of people with disability. These results show that provision of primary care to people with disability is structured by the intersection of gender inequality and other forms of disadvantage and discrimination. Similar proportions of women born overseas and women born in Australia are primary carers to people with disability, and in both populations provide primary care at far higher rates than men (see Table 21, below).

**Table 21: Provision of primary care to persons with disability, 2012, % women and men by Indigenous status, disability status, and born overseas/in Australia**

Carer	Female	Male
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	7.9%*	1.8%*
Non-Indigenous	5.7%	2.4%
With disability	9.3%	5.8%
Without disability	4.6%	1.8%
Born overseas	5.3%	2.8%
Born in Australia	6.0%	2.5%

Source: ABS Gender Indicators, September 2018, extended analysis of Disability, Ageing and Carers survey

\* Estimate has a relative standard error of 25–50% and should be used with caution

#### **PwC analysis of Australia's unpaid economy, 2017**

Based on an analysis of multiple ABS sources (including the Census, Employee Hours and Earnings, Voluntary Work, and the Time Use survey), PwC undertook an analysis which showed that '(w)omen are significantly overrepresented in the unpaid economy, accounting for almost three-quarters of all unpaid work' in Australia (p. 1). Further, PwC stated that 'women conduct 76% of childcare, 67% of domestic work, 69% of care of adults and 57% of volunteering. The percentage of unpaid work which is done by females is not affected at all by the average income, education or relative advantage of the location in which the work is occurring, showing that regardless of personal circumstances, men are conducting less unpaid work' (p. 2).

Source: PwC, '[Understanding the Unpaid Economy](#)', 2017.

## Indicator 2.5: Recognition of women's equal contribution to the arts and media<sup>xxxv</sup>

What does this indicator tell us about Monitoring domain 2: Rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity?	Women's contributions to the arts and media have been recognised as gaining less industry and public recognition, often as a result of an unconscious bias shaped by the gender norm that men are more serious thought leaders and men's work holds more weight than women's in the public domain. This indicator looks at the level to which women's contribution to the arts and media have been recognised.
Expected change if high-quality programs and infrastructure for prevention of violence against women and gender equality are implemented	<p>Short- and medium-term: increased representation of female artists in major Australian newspapers including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• book reviews</li> <li>• performance art reviews</li> <li>• visual art reviews.</li> </ul> <p>Long-term: artists of all genders are equally represented in major Australian newspapers reviews and awarded equal prize monies within their industries.</p>
Data source(s)	The Stella Count, 2012 to 2018, The Stella Prize <sup>272</sup>
Change over time summary: short-term change revealed by the data	The overall proportion of books by female authors profiled in Australian reviews has increased by 9 percentage points to near-parity over six years.
Does the change confirm or run contrary to expected change?	Confirms expected change
Gaps in existing data	The Stella Count is currently focused on disaggregation by a binary categorisation of gender only; however, it has been flagged that the Stella Count survey may work toward disaggregation by a range of gender identities and other demographic factors, acknowledging that books by gender-diverse people, women of diverse sexual orientations, First Nations women, women of colour and women with disability may be less likely to have their work reviewed and profiled than women of relative privilege. There is currently limited data on this.

<sup>xxxv</sup> This indicator is an addition to the original published *Counting on change* framework.

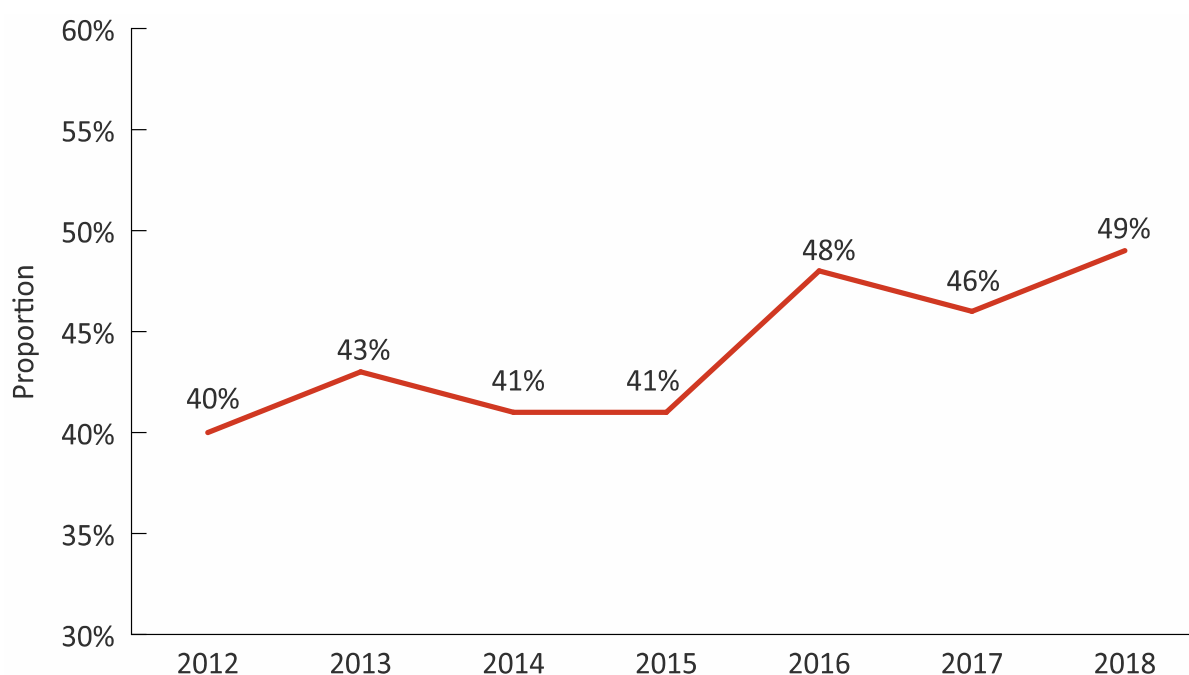
The arts and media are the domains in which our stories are told, and our language is shaped. Women's contributions to the arts and media have been recognised as garnering less industry and public recognition, often as a result of an unconscious bias shaped by the gender norm that men are more serious thought leaders and men's work holds more weight than women's in the public domain. This unconscious bias against women and their arts and media work leads to under-representation and less critical acclaim in the public domain. Alongside gender, the lack of diversity in publications has been increasingly highlighted and challenged internationally and in Australia.<sup>273</sup>

The Stella Prize was launched in 2013 after it was recognised by women writers and women in the literary industry that women's work and women writers were severely under-represented in the literary pages of Australian newspapers. Men were predominantly reviewing men's work. Women's books were also far less likely to be longlisted, shortlisted and awarded existing Australian literary awards.<sup>274</sup> The Stella Prize recognises the best fiction and non-fiction books written by Australian women each year, providing financial support to the winner and generating further public and industry interest in the longlisted books. It also supports works that challenge rigid gender norms and stereotypes. In addition to the prize itself, however, the Stella Prize undertakes a count of major national, metropolitan and regional publications (newspapers and journals) and 'assesses the extent of gender biases in the field of book reviewing in Australia'.<sup>275</sup> The Stella Count has been undertaken since 2012.

### Change over time: 2012 to 2018

In 2012, the inaugural year of the Stella Count, the overall proportion of books by female authors profiled in Australian literary review pages was 40%. By 2018 this had increased by 9 percentage points to near-parity (49%) (see Figure 14, below).<sup>276</sup>

**Figure 14: Proportion of women authors represented in Australian review pages**



Source: Stella Count 2017 and 2018

Likely linked to the conscious attempts to rectify gender disparities in book reviews following the introduction of the Stella Count, most surveyed publications have improved their gender parity over time. In 2018, nine of 12 surveyed publications containing literary journalism reached or surpassed parity in publishing reviews of books by women.<sup>277</sup>

In 2015, the Stella Count developed the Stella Count Survey.<sup>278</sup> The survey was designed to collect data about the authors who are reviewed in relation to race, disability, non-binary gender identification and sexual orientation. Response rates were too low in this survey to draw any firm conclusions; however, preliminary data did show that female authors of colour comprised a small percentage of writers who were being reviewed in Australia. In 2018, the Stella Count researchers note that while '(g)ender parity is (now) the rule, not the exception ... (m)uch more work is left to be done to enable the Stella Count to reflect the diversity of literary production and reception in Australia: to acknowledge gender identities beyond the gender binary, and also register gender's intersection with race, ethnicity, sexuality and disability.'<sup>279</sup>

## **Indicator 2.6: Community norms that support the idea that to be a man you need to dominate women, be in control and/or use violence to assert status and resolve disputes**

What does this indicator tell us about Monitoring domain 2: Rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity?	This indicator focuses on measuring the extent to which community members hold attitudes and norms that reflect dominant and harmful expressions of masculinity.
Expected change if high-quality programs and infrastructure for prevention of violence against women and gender equality are implemented	Short- to medium-term: evidence of shifting norms around men's dominance of women. In the medium-term, reduction in men's use of dominance and violence to assert status over women.  Long-term: men and women view each other as equals and gender-based dominance in all facets of life declines.
Data source(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Men's Project and M. Flood, <i>The Man Box: A study on being a young man in Australia</i>, 2018, The Man Project and Jesuit Social Services<sup>280</sup></li> <li>2. National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS) 2017, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS)</li> </ol>

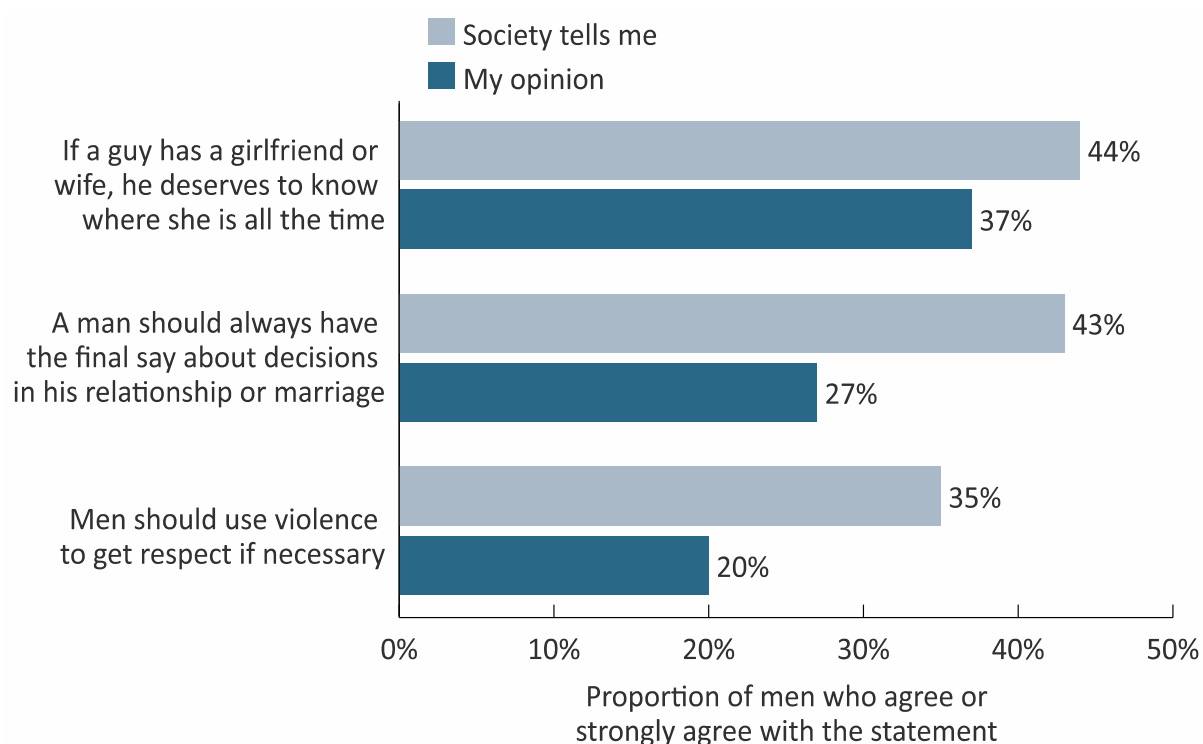
Change over time summary: short-term change revealed by the data	Only baseline data available at this point; no assessment of change possible.
Does the change confirm or run contrary to expected change?	Not yet able to assess change
Gaps in existing data	We have no data available to assess change over time at this point.  While another Man Box survey has been piloted with younger boys and men (aged 12 to 17), it is unknown whether any of these Man Box studies will be repeated in the future to allow tracking of data over time. Moreover, the data available on norms of masculinity is very limited.

There is a large gap in Australian-based data on community norms regarding masculinity, with no available data assessing how these norms have shifted over time, and some of the existing data focused on individual attitudes rather than norms. However, a recent report led by Jesuit Social Services, entitled *The Man Box: A study on being a young man in Australia* (2018), offers an indication of young Australian men's (aged 18 to 30) views on what society tells them a man 'should' be. This kind of survey design is useful (and not very common) in that it allows us to distinguish between what individuals feel that society tells them (i.e. norms), and the extent of individual adherence to those norms (i.e. attitudes).

In the 2018 Man Box study, over a third (35%) of young men in Australia agreed or strongly agreed that society as a whole tells them that men should use violence to get respect, with even more (43%) agreeing that society tells them to be in control in romantic relationships (see Figure 15, below). Interestingly, men believe society tells them to display aggression and control more than they personally think men should, suggesting that the community norms surrounding what it is to be a man are more ingrained than men would like them to be. This finding illustrates the important distinction between individual attitudes and community norms. **While individual attitudes may suggest a low adherence to stereotypical masculine expressions, prevention efforts need to recognise and address the pervasiveness and power of dominant societal norms.** In the end, norms may still influence behaviour *even where* the individual may not subscribe to these norms, because they may not feel comfortable or equipped to challenge a dominant social expectation.



**Figure 15: Men's views of what society tells them men should be like in the domains of aggression and control compared with their own personal endorsement of these views**



Source: The Men's Project and M. Flood, *The Man Box*, 2018

The latest National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS) (2017) asked Australians to respond to the statement 'A man should never admit when others have hurt his feelings.'<sup>281</sup> This is significant for this indicator in that the statement seeks to understand Australians' attitudes as to how men should respond to interpersonal conflict and emotional pain. A stereotypical and harmful masculine response would prioritise aggression, be quick to violence, deny emotional pain, or blame others, especially women, and to control interactions with women such as to prevent vulnerability. Admitting to feeling hurt, on the other hand, is suggestive of emotional self-awareness and a willingness to being vulnerable and communicative – non-stereotypical expressions of masculinity. Only 6% of Australians agreed with the statement 'A man should never admit when others have hurt his feelings', indicating a **low attitudinal adherence to the idea that men can't be emotional and vulnerable**.<sup>282</sup> There was no difference in how women and men responded to this question.

Two further sub-population sample analyses of the 2017 NCAS have been undertaken, one focused on young people (aged 16 to 24), and another on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Only 4% of young people agreed with the statement 'A man should never admit when others have hurt his feelings', a lower proportion than the whole-of-population result (6%). Young men's subscription to this belief is one percentage point higher (5%) than young women's (4%).<sup>283</sup>

There was a higher rate of agreement with the statement among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents, with 11% agreeing that 'A man should never admit when others have hurt his feelings'. Notably, a statistically significant difference exists between the agreement

response rate of First Nations men (18%) as compared with First Nations women (5%).<sup>284</sup> Based on this finding, attitudes toward men’s vulnerability and emotion by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are comparable to whole-of-population results. There may be several reasons why a higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men agreed that men should not admit when feelings have been hurt, as compared with whole-of-population results. As discussed in *Changing the picture, Background paper* (2018), one possible explanation is that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men are, as an effect of racism and colonisation, denied the power, resources and opportunities afforded to other men, stripped of traditional expressions of manhood as well as deprived of access to dominant expressions of masculinity. The effect of this may be, for some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men, to cause stress and to support a more rigid attachment to forms of manhood under threat.<sup>285</sup>

**On men and emotion: *The Aboriginal Gender Study, 2019***

‘Most participants reported that they considered the expression of emotions as gendered ... Some men reported that they often had limited places and times where emotions are acceptable ... The stigma around emotion was tied to the Westernised ideas around men’s stoicism ...

Aboriginal men’s reflections of their experiences around expressing emotions suggests an alignment with Western patriarchal influences, as they felt particularly scrutinised and stigmatised around emotions that could be perceived as weaknesses such as sadness, crying and grief. Many female participants discussed how the limitations men experienced around emotional expression resulted in the ‘bottling up’ of their emotions which participants named as unhealthy and [as contributing] to poor social and emotional wellbeing of men ... It was thought that men who reserved their emotions were more susceptible to problematic outbursts of emotions, resulting in anger and sometimes violence.’

Source: Aboriginal Health Council of South Australia Ltd, *The Aboriginal Gender Study*, Final Report, AHCSA, Adelaide, 2019, p. 42.

**Indicator 2.7: Attitudes related to male sexual entitlement**

What does this indicator tell us about Monitoring domain 2: Rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity?	The idea that men are naturally hypersexual, entitled to sex and women’s bodies, and should be sexually dominant and aggressive, is linked to violence against women (particularly sexual violence). This indicator assesses the extent of attitudinal adherence to this harmful social norm, and tracks change to attitudes related to male sexual entitlement over time.
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Expected change if high-quality programs and infrastructure for prevention of violence against women and gender equality are implemented	Short- to medium-term: evidence of shifting norms around men's sexual entitlement over women. Increasingly, men and women reject these 'ideals'.  Long-term: men's expectations of sexual relationships with women are based on mutual pleasure, respect and consent.
Data source(s)	1. Doing Nothing Does Harm campaign baseline data, 2018, Our Watch (unpublished) <sup>286</sup>  2. National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey 2017, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS)
Change over time summary: short-term change revealed by the data	Only baseline data available at this point; no assessment of change possible.
Does the change confirm or run contrary to expected change?	Not yet able to assess change
Gaps in existing data	We have very little available dedicated data on male sexual entitlement. There is a real need to develop dedicated instruments which track attitudes and norms of masculinity, including those related to male sexual entitlement. Studies which also ask men about perpetration of violence would be helpful in correlating certain attitudes and norms with perpetration.

The concept of male sexual entitlement has received little attention in the research literature. No national database currently provides a measure of entitled attitudes. However, Our Watch's baseline data for the Doing Nothing Does Harm campaign (unpublished, n=1002 males and females) provides an indication of men's entitled attitudes as of October 2018.<sup>287</sup> While there is only one data point for these attitudes at present, future tracking research will be available to monitor shifts over time.

Based on the Doing Nothing Does Harm data, one in seven men (14%) somewhat or strongly agree they 'are a great catch and thus deserving of an attractive romantic partner'. Further, 10% of men somewhat or strongly agree that they 'deserve an attractive romantic partner if they're successful', and 8% think that if they 'put in the hard yards with someone, they should be able to claim them as their prize'. **This data suggests that there is a small but still concerning proportion of men who have a highly problematic sense of sexual entitlement toward women.**

One question in the 2017 NCAS relates to stereotyped expressions of masculinity and femininity in terms of sexuality. Australians were asked to respond to the statement 'When a couple start dating, the woman should not be the one to initiate sex' (the statement presuming an intimate relationship between a woman and a man).<sup>288</sup> As

compared with other questions on rigid gender roles and expressions, a relatively higher proportion of all Australians – 10%, or one in ten – agreed with the idea that women should not initiate sex early in relationships with men. There was no significant difference between women and men in terms of how they responded to this statement. Young people were less likely to agree with the idea, with only 7% of young people agreeing with this statement. Notably, though, young men were more likely to agree with this statement (9%) than young women (5%).<sup>289</sup>

In contrast, the results from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's sample records a higher rate of subscription to the notion that women should not initiate sex early in a relationship with a man, compared with whole-of-population results. Approximately one in seven (14%) First Nations respondents agreed with this notion. Interestingly, the rate of agreement was higher among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women (17%) than men (10%).<sup>290</sup> Understanding the underlying reasons for this result requires further research.

The coupling of femininity with sexual passivity and masculinity with sexual assertiveness and aggression has significance for the perpetration of male sexual violence against women (and other men and people of diverse gender identities). **Combined with changes in terms of Australians' understanding and prioritisation of consent in sexual relations, the 2017 NCAS results reveal some disturbing patterns of gendered attitudes toward heterosexual intimate relationships, male sexual entitlement to women and their bodies, and a rejection of women's sexual agency and rights.** The prevalence of male sexual violence and sexual harassment against women remains disturbingly high, as explored in Section 2 Part B of this report.

# Gendered driver: Men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in public life and relationships

**Monitoring domain 3: Men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in public life (including economic, social and political independence)<sup>xxxvi</sup>**

Indicator 3.1	Percentage of CEOs who are women
Indicator 3.2	Percentage of managerial positions occupied by women
Indicator 3.3	Percentage of political representatives who are women
Indicator 3.4	Percentage of Ministers and/or Cabinet who are women
Indicator 3.5	Proportion of community and cultural leaders who are women
Indicator 3.6	Percentage of female employees surveyed who have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace
Indicator 3.7	Gender pay gap
Indicator 3.8	Retirement gap and superannuation gap
Indicator 3.9	Percentage of women who report feeling unsafe in public spaces
Indicator 3.10	Attitudes about women's independence in public life

Research indicates that violence is more common in families and relationships where men control decision-making.<sup>291</sup> In addition, men who adhere to notions of masculinity that involve male control and dominance are more likely to perpetrate non-partner sexual assault.<sup>292</sup> Stereotypical portrayals of masculinity often represent male control and dominance as a normal or inevitable part of heterosexual intimate relationships, and these behaviours are widely normalised in popular culture as well as learned in peer groups and the family.<sup>293</sup>

Norms that promote male control of decision-making as right and proper are reflected not only in intimate relationships but also in broader society, meaning men dominate decision-making roles in both public and private life. As noted in the findings report for the 2017 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS):

xxxvi This domain appeared as Domains 3 and 4 in *Counting on change*. In preparing this report we decided to merge certain monitoring domains to ensure greater fidelity to the original *Change the story* gendered drivers.

‘Women’s equal participation in institutions of public life – such as government, employment, and within the community – is a recognised international indicator of gender equality ... The lack of representation of women in such public positions, including as CEOs, board members and in parliament, is not simply a reflection of women’s lack of interest or capability in performing such decision-making roles ... In effect, decisions about who is the right person for the job can reflect an unconscious bias, or attitude, that men make better leaders, decision-makers or are more suited to holding positions of responsibility.’<sup>294</sup>

Men’s control of decision-making in public and private life does not simply reflect discriminatory attitudes and social norms that assume men make better leaders and should be in control, or that women are unsuited for leadership or decision-making roles. It is also an outcome of the many forms of structural gender inequality discussed elsewhere in this report. These include, for example, the burden of domestic and other unpaid labour being shouldered by women and limiting women’s participation in diverse forms of paid work, and gender-blind policy and organisational practices which fail to ensure equal pay for equal work, safe workplaces for women, support for women experiencing violence, and access to flexible (and family-friendly) work arrangements.<sup>295</sup>

As noted in *Change the story* (2015), there are several potential ways in which male dominance and control of decision-making, along with other limits to women’s autonomy or independence in public life, can contribute to violence against women:

- By sending a message to both men and women that women have a lower social value, are less worthy of respect, and are therefore more legitimate targets of violence. As acknowledged in other resources such as *Changing the picture* (2018) and *Primary prevention of family violence against people in LGBTI communities* (2017), this is further exacerbated for women experiencing other forms of discrimination that impact on their perceived worth or the social and economic power they hold, such as women with disability, First Nations women, and for women and people of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.
- By making women economically dependent on men, such that men may believe they can perpetrate violence with social or legal impunity, and women, especially those with responsibility for children, may find it difficult to leave violent relationships.
- By undermining women’s participation in the public sphere, particularly in formal decision-making and civic action, which has a compounding impact because women in positions of power are more likely than men to act to secure women’s freedom from violence. Inequality between women in the public sphere, too, can mean that women affected by multiple inequalities are less likely to be supported to secure freedom from violence.

The intersection of this driver with other forms of discrimination and structural disadvantage, such as racism, migration-related factors, ableism, transphobia, biphobia, homophobia, and poverty, creates various contexts in which men can exploit power imbalances and exercise particular forms of control over specific groups of women, with a higher level of impunity for violence enacted in such contexts.

Some of the indicators selected as proxy measures for this domain relate to gender equity in the representation of decision-making positions in public life. Other than attitudes, norms and practices which preference men’s control of decision-making, limits to women’s independence or autonomy are also determined through gendered social and structural

factors such as unequal access to economic resources and insufficient levels of safety for women in public life.<sup>296</sup> These factors increase the probability of violence against women, including by constraining opportunities for women to form strong relationships with other women and isolating them from the emotional and practical support that would strengthen their autonomy and help them recognise the early signs of violence. A number of the indicators in this domain relate to these social and structural factors that limit women's independence in public life. They measure women's safety in the public domain (in workplaces and in public spaces) and markers of economic equity and financial security, including the gender pay gap, the superannuation gap and the retirement age gap.

The effects of structural limits to women's independence in public life and the resultant risk of experiencing violence are exacerbated for women who are subjected to intersecting forms of disadvantage and discrimination. For example, women with disability, refugee and migrant women, women of culturally diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, women of diverse sexual orientations and gender-diverse people may experience:

- higher safety risks in navigating public spaces and workplaces
- specific and heightened barriers to accessing economic resources
- discrimination and institutional violence in engaging with public services and organisations in the process of seeking support.

There are limitations to the data used to measure the indicators below due to the inability to disaggregate against additional demographic characteristics. Moreover, the data in these indicators themselves tend to reflect a more privileged access to public life not available to all women, presuming, for example, employment and certain forms of engagement with the formal labour force. For instance, the gender pay gap is premised on women's full-time earnings, whereas many women are not able to access full-time work for many reasons, including discrimination and responsibility for unpaid caring roles.

In this regard, it is useful to read this domain alongside Monitoring domain 6: Intersecting drivers of violence (other forms of oppression and discrimination), which builds a more complete and diverse picture of the effects of intersecting forms of structural inequality in limiting women's independence and exacerbating their risk of experiencing violence.

### **Challenging men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in public life (economic, social and political independence): Summary of change over time**

The data in the indicators that follow reveals limited change to men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in public life in the past decade. Between the 2013 and 2017 waves of the NCAS, there has been a significant decrease in the proportion of Australians who agree that 'Men make better political leaders than women'. Yet while attitudes towards women's engagement in public life may be shifting, and we see some visible examples of women's leadership such as female Premiers and Chief Health Officers leading responses to the COVID-19 crisis, there is limited change in the actual representation of women in leadership positions. There have been only modest improvements in the gender composition of CEOs and middle managers in Australia between 2014 and 2019. Little increase is noted in the representation of women as political representatives across



jurisdictions in Australia, with women continuing to be vastly under-represented in most instances. In industries such as education, sports and recreation, women make up at least half of all employees, and in some instances heavily dominate the workforce, and yet they are substantially under-represented in CEO or head of business positions. It should also be noted that in 2018, the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) found that 95% of senior leaders in Australia have an Anglo-Celtic or European background.<sup>297</sup> While not disaggregated by gender, we can confidently surmise that the representation of women of non-Anglo-Celtic or European backgrounds in senior leadership positions, including First Nations women, is extremely small.

### **Beyond men and women: Understanding diversity and the impact of intersecting forms of discrimination upon equality in public life**

While Australia has made substantial gains with regard to data on gender representation in public leadership positions in recent years, there continues to be a dearth of data on other forms of demographic diversity, such as cultural diversity, sexual orientation and gender identity diversity, disability status, age, whether individuals in leadership positions have children and partners, and so on. As the Australian Human Rights Commission articulated in the 2018 *Leading for change* report on cultural diversity within senior leadership ranks of Australian organisations and institutions, it ‘remains difficult to get data on cultural diversity. Unlike on gender, where federal legislation compels all companies with 100 or more staff to collect and report on gender equality data, there is no legal obligation for organisations to collect cultural diversity data’ (p. 18), and yet the ‘experience of gender equality has demonstrated the power of having data and reporting on gender’ (p. 1) in terms of supporting equality and diversity in public life. The Australian Human Rights Commission’s own data shows that 95% of senior leadership positions in Australia are occupied by individuals from Anglo-Celtic or European backgrounds, with very significant under-representation of people from non-European backgrounds and First Nations people.

Intersecting forms of privilege and oppression are masked in data systems measuring formal markers of equality that are currently focused on a ‘men vs women’ model of gender equality measurement. The risk here is that any gains may be celebrated as being representative of gains for all women, whereas triangulating existing evidence suggests that it is likely to be women who inhabit other forms of privilege (such as wealth or whiteness) who are experiencing these gains. Analyses of other forms of diversity and equity in public life suggest that it is not only gender inequality but a range of other forms of discrimination and disadvantage that are responsible for unequal outcomes in the public sphere. Without acknowledging this, the models that are being used to support gender equality gains in the formal sphere may at best hide, or at worst reinforce existing hierarchies of power and privilege between different groups of women.

It is essential then that in challenging men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in public life, efforts are focused on understanding and addressing multiple and intersecting forms of privilege and oppression are masked. For example, the Australian Human Rights Commission says that '[g]etting serious about responding to the under-representation of cultural diversity [in senior leadership positions] requires getting serious about the barriers posed by prejudice and discrimination' (p. 14). Better data systems, designed to be meaningful and to uphold Indigenous data sovereignty principles, are one critical building block to supporting future efforts at transforming inequality and power in public life. With stronger data on public life comes the ability to enable greater illumination of inequality and privilege, and establish accountability for deep, significant change. As the Australian Human Rights Commission warns, efforts at workplace equality and diversity cannot be limited to gender alone without further analysis of intersecting forms of discrimination and inequality:

'One common deflection within organisations concerns priorities. There remains a perception that, on diversity and inclusion, priority may need to be given to gender equality. While gender equality is important, senior leaders must ensure that efforts on cultural diversity are not deferred. Too often, organisations are prepared to lament that there is not enough 'bandwidth' to handle cultural diversity ... It may amount to saying that they and their organisation do not regard the professional development and opportunities for those from culturally diverse backgrounds as important.' (p. 29)

Critically, by bringing an analysis of gender inequality and, for example, racism together, we can understand how certain groups of women stand to gain and others may be left behind by efforts at change.

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Source: Australian Human Rights Commission, *Leading for change*, 2018.

Gender parity in leadership positions which control significant facets of public decision-making is shifting, but slowly and in very limited ways, and largely only for more privileged women. The picture of limited change to men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in public life is further reinforced by the data on women's experiences of workplace sexual harassment, the gender pay gap, the retirement gap and superannuation gap, women's feelings of lack of safety in public spaces, and community attitudes about women's independence in public life. For example:

- Between 2012 and 2018 waves of the AHRC National Workplace Sexual Harassment Surveys, there was a marked increase in women's reporting of five-year experiences of workplace sexual harassment, with even greater prevalence for women experiencing intersecting forms of discrimination.
- While the gender pay gap has declined over the six years, it remains substantial and change over a longer period of time has been uneven and slow. Moreover, analyses suggest that the decline in recent years has been due to lower incomes and fewer jobs for men, rather than any substantial gains for women.<sup>298</sup> Little change has been effected to the identified drivers of the gender pay gap – discrimination against women in the

workplace, inequality in the division of unpaid care labour in the private sphere, and strong gender segregation in many occupations and industries. Other analyses of income inequality – including between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous people, and people with and without disability – suggest that income differentials are far starker for women who experience intersectional forms of structural discrimination.

- As a reflection of the gender disparity in lifetime earnings, women are retiring with far less superannuation on average than men, and are retiring earlier, often for gendered reasons related to caring responsibilities or health concerns.<sup>299</sup> While superannuation and retirement wealth data allowing assessment of change over time is limited, it is clear that there is a tremendous gender disparity with regard to retirement wealth and superannuation income, reflective of gendered economic inequality and structural marginalisation from public life across the lifespan, with the cumulative economic impacts acutely affecting older women.<sup>300</sup>
- Data on women's feelings of safety in public shows a mixed picture with regard to change. Personal Safety Survey (PSS) data from 2012 and 2016 shows some increase in the proportion of women feeling safe using public transport and waiting for public transport after dark, but little change in the proportion who report feeling safe walking alone in their local area after dark. Other site-specific research, particularly focused on young women, reveals a high proportion of young women feeling unsafe or experiencing sexual harassment in public spaces and on public transport. This pattern of lack of safety in public domains is higher still for young women and non-binary people who experience intersectional forms of discrimination.

Overall, the data in this domain reveals multiple facets of men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in public life, and the limited change to gender equality in public life that has been effected in the time period under consideration. While currently obscured by data limitations, the evidence available suggests that any small gains have been experienced mostly by those women who are already more privileged in society. We need to be conscious of how dominant models of promotion of workplace gender equality, for example, may in fact come at the expense of addressing intersectional forms of discrimination and disadvantage that would enable change to public life for all women and non-binary people (as well as less privileged men).

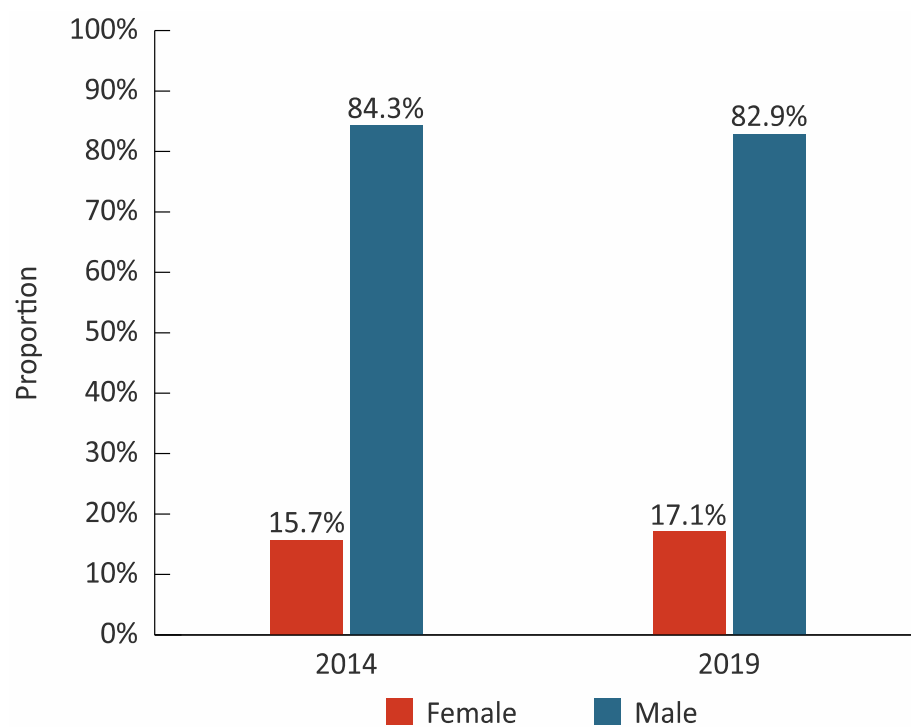
Moreover, the data across the domains in this report illustrates how there is unlikely to be substantial change to women's level of control and independence in public life until we meaningfully address inequality in private lives and also understand the economy as including the unpaid and informal domains.

### Indicator 3.1: Percentage of CEOs who are women

What does this indicator tell us about Monitoring domain 3: Men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in public life?	This indicator reflects the extent to which men's control over decision-making is reflected in public life by measuring the proportion of female-occupied CEO positions in the private sector in Australia.
Expected change if high-quality programs and infrastructure for prevention of violence against women and gender equality are implemented	Short- and medium-term: some increase in the percentage of female CEOs as awareness of gender equality grows.  Long-term: parity in gender composition of CEOs in Australia.
Data source(s)	Workplace Gender Equality Agency reporting data, 2014 and 2019, WGEA
Change over time summary: short-term change revealed by the data	There has been a minimal increase of 1.4% in the proportion of women who are Australian CEOs.
Does the change confirm or run contrary to expected change?	Slower than expected
Gaps in existing data	The publicly available data linked to this data source cannot be disaggregated for any additional demographic characteristics (e.g. race and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, disability, age, sexuality, gender identity/trans status, whether or not women are partnered, whether the women in the dataset have children). Therefore, it should be noted that this section can't report on or present a more nuanced analysis of the evidence regarding the percentage of CEOs who are women.

There is a considerable gender disparity in CEO positions in the Australian private sector. While slight progress has been made between 2014 and 2019, there is a very long way to go until gender parity is achieved. In 2014, women comprised 15.7% of Australian CEOs; by 2019 this had only improved by 1.4 percentage points to 17.1% (see Figure 16, below). That is, currently only one in six of Australian CEOs are women. The proportion of female CEOs did not increase at all between 2018 and 2019.

**Figure 16: Proportions of female and male private-sector CEOs, 2014 and 2019**



Source: WGEA Data Explorer

### **Cultural diversity in CEO and equivalent ranks: 2018**

Designed to illuminate and fill a data gap, given that 'Australia does not yet officially collect comprehensive data on cultural diversity within organisations and institutions', the Australian Human Rights Commission has undertaken research into cultural diversity in senior leadership ranks of ASX 200 companies, federal ministers, state and federal government departments, and universities (AHRC 2018, *Leading for change*, p. 1). The 2018 data shows that Australia's 'cultural diversity is significantly under-represented among senior leaders', including representation of First Nations people (p. 1).

The study shows that in 2018, of the 372 chief executives or equivalent ranks, 97% of CEOs have an Anglo-Celtic or European background. This means there is a very significant under-representation of people of any other background. More specifically:

- 76.9% have an Anglo-Celtic background (compared to 58% of the general Australian population having an Anglo-Celtic background)
- 20.1% have a European background (compared with 18% of the general population)
- 2.7% have a non-European background (compared with 21% of the population)
- 0.3% have a First Nations background (compared with 3% of the population) (p.1).

This study's data is unfortunately not disaggregated by gender. However, if women as a whole are still significantly under-represented in CEO ranks, and First Nations people and people of other non-Anglo-Celtic or European backgrounds are also highly under-represented, it can be inferred that representation of First Nations women and women of other culturally diverse backgrounds in chief executive ranks is likely to be very low.

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Source: Australian Human Rights Commission, *Leading for change*, 2018.

## Indicator 3.2: Percentage of managerial positions occupied by women<sup>xxxvii</sup>

What does this indicator tell us about Monitoring domain 3: Men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in public life?	This indicator reflects the extent to which men's control over decision-making is reflected in public life by measuring the proportion of women who hold managerial positions in Australia.
Expected change if high-quality programs and infrastructure for prevention of violence against women and gender equality are implemented	Short- and medium-term: some increase in the percentage of managerial positions occupied by women as awareness of gender equality grows.  Long-term: parity in gender composition of managerial positions in Australia.
Data source(s)	1. Workplace Gender Equality Agency reporting data, 2014 and 2010, WGEA  2. Australian Public Service, <i>APS Statistical bulletin – Employment data</i> , 2009, 2014 and 2019, Australian Public Service Commission, reported in the ABS Gender Indicators, ABS <sup>301</sup>
Change over time summary: short-term change revealed by the data	Overall, there have been modest improvements in the representation of women in both the private and public sector, with the most significant gains in the middle management level of the public sector. Gender parity has now been reached at Australian public service middle management.
Does the change confirm or run contrary to expected change?	Confirms expected change

<sup>xxxvii</sup> In *Counting on change*, this indicator specified private sector. This was because the primary source of data – the WGEA – does not collect data on the public sector. However, a data source for managerial positions in the Australian Public Service was subsequently identified, so this indicator no longer needed to be limited to the private sector.



Gaps in existing data	<p>Publicly available data is limited in terms of reporting on additional demographic characteristics of managers (e.g. by Indigenous status, disability status, diverse gender identities/trans status, sexual orientation, cultural diversity). Therefore, we have limited insights into the extent to which the proportion of women in middle management reflects existing patterns of power and privilege defined along axes other than gender.</p> <p>As this report focuses on the national level, state and territory level public service data has not been assessed. However, where available, this data could be useful for primary prevention monitoring at state and territory levels.</p>
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**Overall, there have been modest improvements in the representation of women in management in both the private and public sector, with the most significant gains in the middle management level of the public sector, which now sees gender parity.**

### **Private sector**

In 2014, 35.9% of all managers in large private sector organisations were women. This has increased by 3.5 percentage points to 39.4%, or two in five managers, in 2019.<sup>302</sup> This is still considerably below gender parity.

The proportion of women in management positions decreases in the more senior ranks of management. In 2019, less than one-third (31.5%) of key management personnel and general managers/other managers (32.2%) are women. Still, these proportions represent growth on the 2014 figure of 26.1% female key management personnel and 27.8% female general managers/other executives.<sup>303</sup>

### **Cultural diversity in senior executive management ranks: 2018**

The Australian Human Rights Commission's 2018 analysis of senior executive management ranks of ASX 200 companies, state and federal government departments, and universities shows that 95% of senior executive management ranks (below chief executive level) are occupied by people of Anglo-Celtic and European backgrounds. While people of non-Anglo Celtic and non-European backgrounds comprise over 20% of Australia's general population, they occupy only 5% of senior executive positions. Only 0.4% of senior executives are First Nations people (AHRC 2018, *Leading for change*, p. 11).

While this data is not gender-disaggregated, it can be surmised from gender equality data and cultural diversity data that the representation of women from diverse cultural backgrounds including First Nations women is very low.

Interestingly, while on a gender analysis, the public sector is doing better at gender parity in senior management than the private sector. The Australian Human Rights Commission found that the senior leadership ranks of government departments and Australian universities are faring particularly poorly with regard to cultural diversity (as compared with ASX 200 companies).

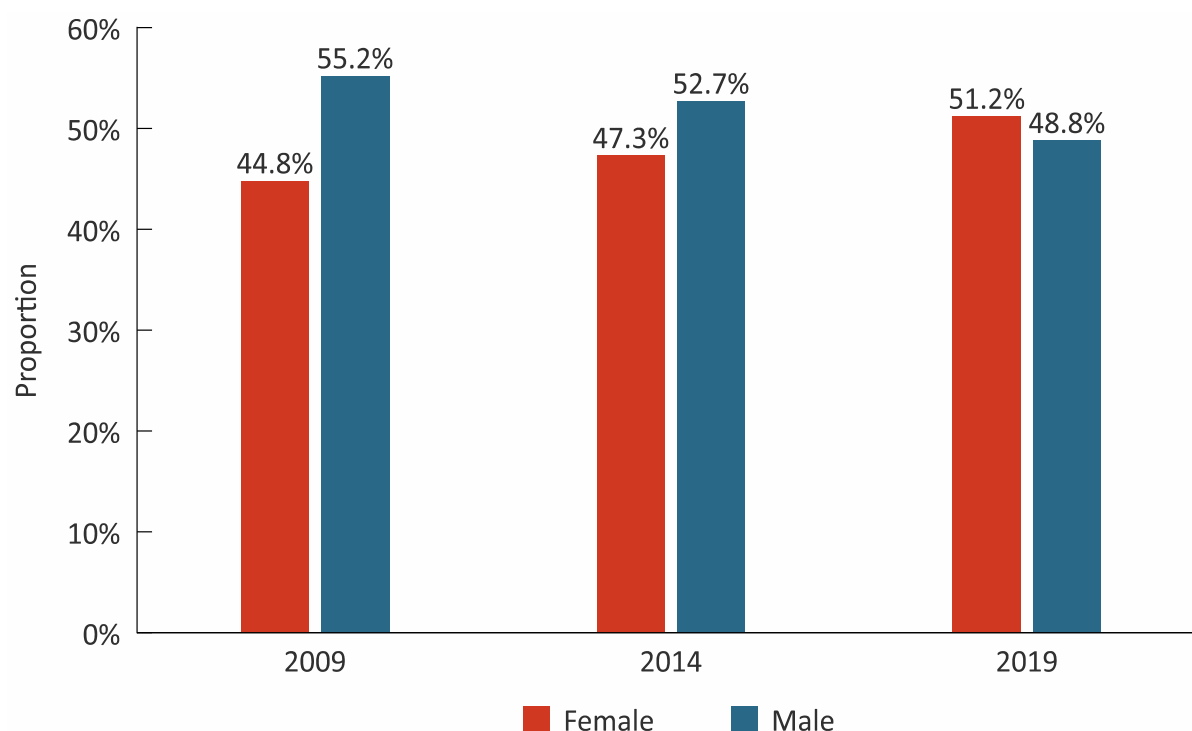
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Source: Australian Human Rights Commission, *Leading for change*, 2018.

### **Australian public sector (Commonwealth)**

Proportions of women in management positions are significantly higher in the Australian public sector (APS) than the private sector. By 30 June 2019, gender parity at the Executive Level has been achieved, with women comprising 51.2% of Executive Level 1 and 2 positions combined (see Figure 17, below). This represents a growth in the proportion of women in middle management of 6.4% over the past decade. However, it should be noted that in 2019, women comprised 47.7% of Executive 2 positions; the proportion of women in Australian public service leadership positions is just below parity in Executive 2 and Senior Executive Service ranks. In 2019, women comprise 46.3% of Senior Executive Service management (ongoing positions) in the public service (see Figure 18, below), an increase of 10.2% over ten years.

**Figure 17: Proportions of female and male public service middle management (Executive Levels 1 and 2), 2009, 2014 and 2019**



Source: APS Statistical Bulletin, published in ABS Gender Indicators 2019

**Figure 18: Proportions of female and male public service senior management, 2009, 2014 and 2019**



Source: APS Statistical Bulletin, published in ABS Gender Indicators 2019

### Other employee diversity data: the Australian public service

The Australian public service data is making efforts to collect and report on other employee diversity metrics, with data collected (voluntarily, on all demographics other than gender) through the Employment Database, and also the Employee Census. The Employment Database collects information on gender, Indigenous status, disability status, and cultural diversity. The Employee Census collects similar demographic information, with the addition of LGBTI data.

Clear and comparative data on diversity and leadership is not yet available in the same way it is for (binary female/male) gender employment data, nor is it disaggregated by two or more categories (such as, for example, gender and Indigenous status). However, at 30 June 2019, the APS published some limited though helpful diversity information, which revealed that:

- the proportion of First Nations employees (at any level) had grown from 2.6% in 2013 to 3.5% in 2019, and importantly, that First Nations employees were concentrated at lower job classification levels rather than management and senior leadership
- the proportion of employees with ongoing disability increased from 3.3% in 2013 to 3.7% in 2019
- as of 30 June 2019, 14.5% of Australian public service employees were from non-English-speaking backgrounds, either having been born overseas, arrived after the age of 5 and from a non-English-speaking country, or were the children of migrants from non-English-speaking countries.

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Source: Australian Public Service Commission, *APS Employment Data*, 30 June 2019.

### Indicator 3.3: Percentage of political representatives who are women; and Indicator 3.4: Percentage of Ministers and/or Cabinet who are women

What do these indicators tell us about Monitoring domain 3: Men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in public life?	Political representatives make decisions that impact everyone in Australia. This indicator tells us the extent to which women are political representatives at Commonwealth, state and territory levels, and are Ministers and/or Cabinet members.
Expected change if high-quality programs and infrastructure for prevention of violence against women and gender equality are implemented	Short- and medium-term: increases in the number of women as political representatives. Women will assume more ministerial positions in government, with greater gender parity in the Cabinet.  Long-term: gender parity
Data source(s)	ABS Gender Indicators 2009 and 2019

Change over time summary: short-term change revealed by the data	Very small change recorded over the past ten years.
Does the change confirm or run contrary to expected change?	Slower than expected
Gaps in existing data	Reported data is not disaggregated by any other demographic factor than (binary) gender.  Local government data for states has not been reported on here; however, this data could be included in future national or jurisdictional monitoring.

The ABS's Gender Indicators takes a snapshot of elected Australian political representatives at Federal and cumulative state/territory levels as of 1 January each year, with data published in September of the same year.

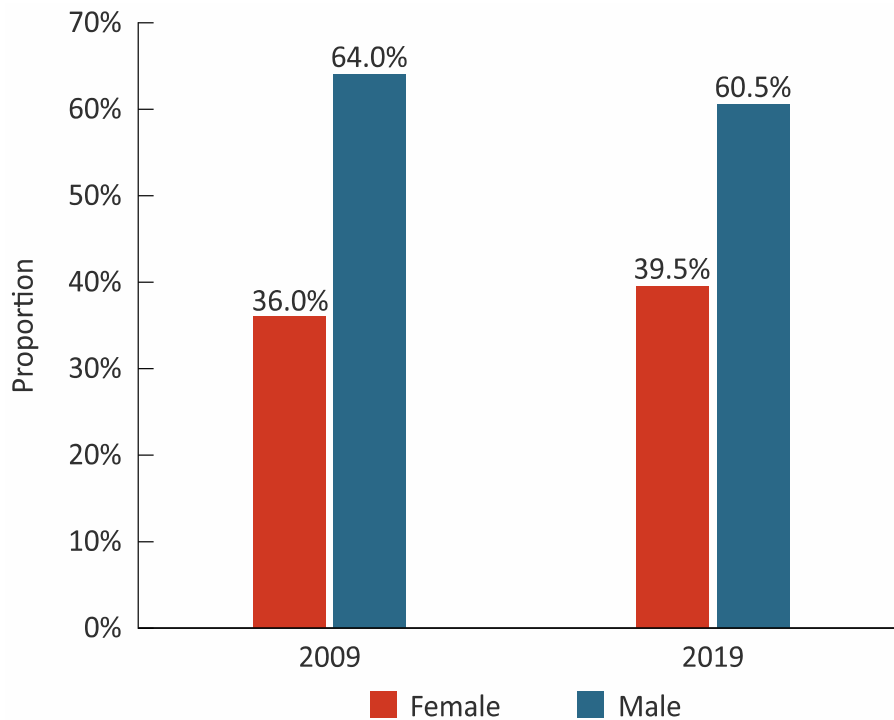
Figures 19 and 20, below, show the numbers and percentage proportions of the federal female and male parliamentarians. As the data shows, **while there has been some increase in female representation, this increase has been slight for the ten-year period.** At federal and state/territory levels, women remain vastly under-represented in Australian parliament, outnumbered by male parliamentarians almost 2:1 in most instances, with limited change from 2009 to 2019 (see Figures 19, 20 and 21, below). Significant work is required to increase the representation of women in Australian politics before gender parity can be achieved.

**Figure 19: Proportions of female and male parliamentarians in Federal House of Representatives, 2009 and 2019**



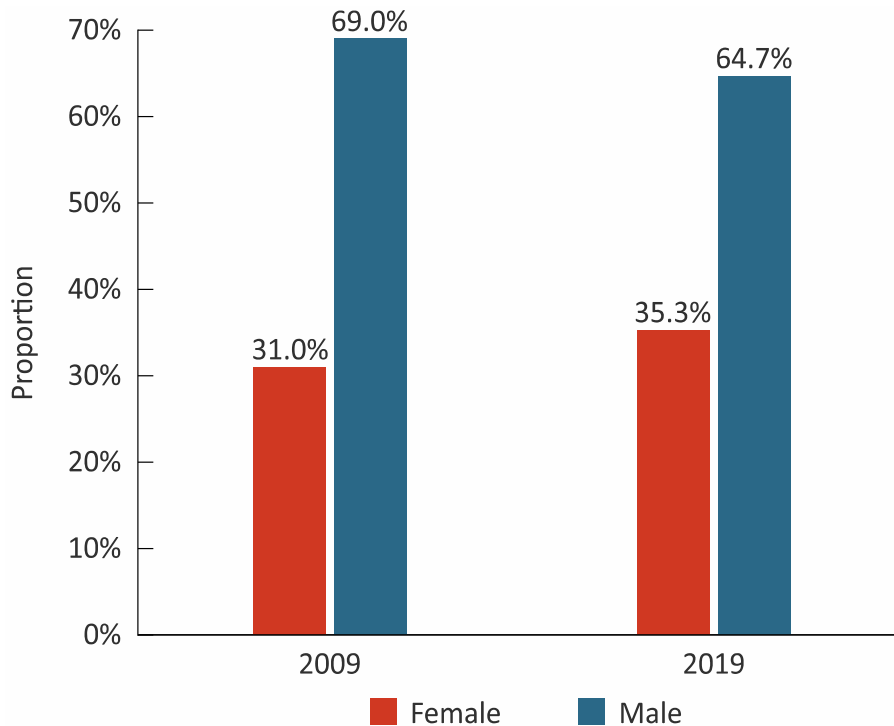
Source: ABS Gender Indicators 2019

**Figure 20: Proportions of female and male parliamentarians in the Federal Senate, 2009 and 2019**



Source: ABS Gender Indicators 2019

**Figure 21: Proportions of female and male state/territory parliamentarians, 2009 and 2019**



Source: ABS Gender Indicators 2019

As per Table 22, below, there has been a decline in female representation occupying federal ministerial positions between 2009 and 2019 by over 3 percentage points to 20.0% in 2019, and an increase in female cabinet ministers from 20.0% in 2009 to 26.1% in 2019. A more positive story can be told at a state/territory jurisdictional level. In 2009, women comprised 28.4% of all ministerial positions across the jurisdictions, and this has increased by almost 10 percentage points in 2018 to 38.3%. Still, this figure sits well below a 50/50 parity.

**Table 22: Proportion of female and male federal and state/territory ministers and cabinet ministers, 2009 and 2019**

	2009	2019
<b>Federal government ministers</b>		
Females	23.3%	20.0%
Males	76.7%	80.0%
<b>Federal government cabinet ministers</b>		
Females	20.0%	26.1%
Males	80.0%	73.9%
<b>State/territory government ministers, total all jurisdictions</b>		
Females	28.4%	38.3%
Males	71.6%	61.7%

Source: ABS Gender Indicators 2019

### **Cultural diversity in the Commonwealth Parliament: 2018**

The Australian Human Right Commission's 2018 analysis of federal parliamentary representation shows that 94.4% of ministerial or senate positions are occupied by people from Anglo-Celtic (78.1%) or European (16.3%) backgrounds, while First Nations people comprise 1.5% of parliamentarians and people of other non-European backgrounds 4.1%. That is, there is a significant under-representation of cultural diversity in Federal Parliament.

Source: Australian Human Rights Commission, *Leading for change*, 2018, p. 12.



### Indicator 3.5: Proportion of community and cultural leaders who are women

What does this indicator tell us about Monitoring domain 3: Men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in public life?	The dominance of men in key decision-making roles, including community and cultural leadership (for example, sports coaches/umpires, faith leaders, newspaper editors, directors of theatre/art companies) underlines the persistent gender inequality at all levels of society. As there is currently no instrument to measure women's community and cultural leadership, this data takes indicators from two datasets to provide some insight into women's participation in political and civic groups and women's formal leadership roles in community and cultural industries.
Expected change if high-quality programs and infrastructure for prevention of violence against women and gender equality are implemented	Short- and medium-term: women will assume more leadership positions in community and cultural sectors. Long-term: gender parity.
Data source(s)	No ideal source of data is available. The data sources used are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Workplace Gender Equality Agency reporting data, 2013–14 and 2018–19, WGEA</li> <li>2. ABS General Social Survey 2014, presented in the ABS Gender Indicators, ABS<sup>304</sup></li> </ol>
Change over time summary: short-term change revealed by the data	Slow growth reported over the past ten years, with gains in some areas, offset by backslides in others.
Does the change confirm or run contrary to expected change?	Slower than expected
Gaps in existing data	There is no ideal source of data currently available for this indicator. A new instrument should be developed to measure gender parity of community and cultural leaders, drawing on a representative collection of sectors and groups.

## Women in leadership in community and cultural sectors, 2014 to 2019

Currently, no one instrument exists to measure this indicator in a way which encompasses informal groups and smaller organisations. The ABS Gender Indicators collates data from the General Social Survey on involvement in civic, political or community groups during the previous 12 months. General Social Survey data from 2014 revealed that the involvement of women and men in civic or political groups was relatively at parity (14.4% of all surveyed men and 13.2% of all surveyed women). Women's involvement in community groups in the last 12 months prior to the 2014 survey was higher than men's (37.4% of surveyed women compared with 27.9% of surveyed men).<sup>305</sup> This dataset does not tell us anything of the representation of women in leadership positions within these groups.

The WGEA collates industry-specific data for non-public sector organisations of 100 or more employees (that is, relatively large, formal private sector or not-for-profit organisations). A number of the WGEA's industry and sub-industry categorisations are relevant for this indicator. Table 23, below, presents data on women in leadership positions in the creative and performing arts, sports and recreation services, healthcare and social assistance services, preschool education and school education.

While the figures differ per industry, what is striking is that **women make up at least half of each industry and in some instances heavily dominate the workforce, and yet are substantially under-represented in almost all instances in relation to occupying CEO or head of business positions.** For example, in sports and recreation services, in 2018–19 women held just 9.3% of CEO positions, while comprising 54.6% of the overall workforce. In preschool education, women comprise nearly nine in ten employees (86.7%), and yet only one-third (33.3%) of CEO positions. Overall, women are better represented in managerial positions than in top CEO positions, but yet again the proportions of women in managerial positions are lesser than overall employee percentages. For example, in school education, women comprise 72.0% of the overall workforce in 2018–19, and yet only hold 55.5% of managerial positions (and 36.9% of CEO positions).

**Most industries have seen some modest growth in the proportions of women occupying managerial and CEO positions between 2014 and 2019.**

**Table 23: Representation of women in overall workforce and leadership positions for each creative and performing arts, sports and recreation services, healthcare and social assistance services, preschool education and school education, 2013–14 and 2018–19**

Industry	Workforce composition	2013–14		2018–19	
		Female	Male	Female	Male
Creative and performing arts	All employees	53.2%	46.8%	56.3%	43.7%
	All managers	45.0%	55.0%	50.3%	49.7%
	CEOs/heads of business	25.0%	75.0%	37.5%	62.5%
Sports and recreation services	All employees	54.6%	45.4%	54.6%	45.4%
	All managers	32.6%	67.4%	37.7%	62.5%
	CEOs/heads of business	3.9%	96.1%	9.3%	90.7%
Healthcare and social assistance	All employees	80.6%	19.4%	79.9%	20.1%
	All managers	69.7%	30.3%	70.1%	29.9%
	CEOs/heads of business	36.6%	63.4%	41.4%	58.6%
Preschool education	All employees	88.1%	11.9%	86.7%	13.3%
	All managers	73.0%	27.0%	67.7%	32.3%
	CEOs/heads of business	40.0%	60.0%	33.3%	66.7%
School education	All employees	71.7%	28.3%	72.0%	28.0%
	All managers	52.6%	47.4%	55.5%	44.5%
	CEOs/heads of business	38.6%	61.4%	36.9%	63.1%

Source: WGEA Data Explorer

### Indicator 3.6: Percentage of female employees surveyed who have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace

What does this indicator tell us about Monitoring domain 3: Men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in public life?	<p>While we consider sexual harassment to be a form of violence against women, this indicator is included here against Monitoring domain 3 because workplace sexual harassment is a structural limitation to women's independence in public life and is a means by which men exert control over women's engagement in public life.</p> <p>This indicator should be read alongside Indicators 11.4 and 11.9, which focus on the prevalence of sexual harassment (in any setting) as a form of violence against women.</p>
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Expected change if high-quality programs and infrastructure for prevention of violence against women and gender equality are implemented	Short- and medium-term: expected increase in the proportion of women who report experiencing sexual harassment in the workplace, with a growing public focus on sexual harassment.  Long-term: a decline in the proportion of women experiencing sexual harassment in the workplace.
Data source(s)	National Workplace Sexual Harassment Surveys 2008, 2012 and 2018, Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC)
Change over time summary: short-term change revealed by the data	A marked increase in the proportion of women reporting 5-year experiences of workplace sexual harassment.
Does the change confirm or run contrary to expected change?	Confirms expected change
Gaps in existing data	The latest AHRC workplace sexual harassment data is helpfully disaggregated by other demographic categories. This practice should continue to allow comparability over time of prevalence and experiences of workplace sexual harassment of women who experience intersecting forms of inequality and discrimination.

## Sexual harassment in Australian workplaces: Prevalence and who is most affected

The 2008, 2012 and 2018 AHRC surveys all report on the incidence of workplace sexual harassment in the five years prior to the survey among the Australian population who have been engaged in the workforce during this period of time. The 2018 survey also reports on the prevalence of workplace sexual harassment during the past 12 months for the Australian population who have been in the workforce in the past five years (unfortunately, 12-month prevalence is not available prior to 2018).

The 2018 survey found that 20% of all people who were in the workforce in the past five years experienced sexual harassment at least once during the previous 12 months. This figure was higher for women (23%) than men (16%).<sup>306</sup> Almost two in three (60%) of women who had experienced workplace sexual harassment in the past 12 months had been subjected to more than one form of harassment.<sup>307</sup>

Looking at the five-year prevalence data for workplace sexual harassment and comparing the results from three survey waves, there has been a significant increase in the rates of working Australians reporting workplace sexual harassment. The overall percentage of working Australians who reported experiencing workplace sexual harassment in the past

five years has increased from one in five (21%) in 2012 to one in three (33%) in 2018 (see Table 24, below).

There are some cautions and complications with comparing waves of survey data on workplace sexual harassment prevalence. Measurement and reporting of results have been conducted slightly differently in certain waves. In 2008, respondents were asked to report against the legal definition, and then to report behaviours. These figures were not combined to provide a total of working Australians who had experienced sexual harassment in the prior five years. In 2012, these figures were able to be combined. The 2018 report only gives the total proportion of Australians who have experienced workplace sexual harassment rather than disaggregating by who reported against the legal definition and who reported workplace sexual harassment behaviours.

**Table 24: Workplace sexual harassment prevalence in the five years prior to the survey, by percentage of overall working population (women, men, gender non-binary people combined)**

	2008	2012	2018
As per legal and behavioural definitions, combined figure	Figures not able to be combined	21%	33%
As per legal definition only	4%	3%	Not reported
As per behavioural definition only	22%	18%	Not reported

Sources: AHRC, Workplace Sexual Harassment reports 2008, 2012, 2018

## Women's experiences of workplace sexual harassment

The proportion of working women who reported experiencing workplace sexual harassment in the past five years increased markedly from one in four (25%) in 2012 to nearly two in five (39%) in 2018. Results from the 2012 and 2018 surveys demonstrate that women are significantly more likely than men to experience workplace sexual harassment (see Table 25, below).

**Table 25: Proportion who reported experiencing sexual harassment in the workplace during the previous five years, disaggregated by gender**

	2008	2012	2018
Total (women and men)	4%*	21%	33%
Women	Not reported	25%	39%
Men	Not reported	16%	26%

Source: AHRC, Workplace Sexual Harassment report 2018

\* On the basis of the legal definition only – no combined legal and behavioural figure available

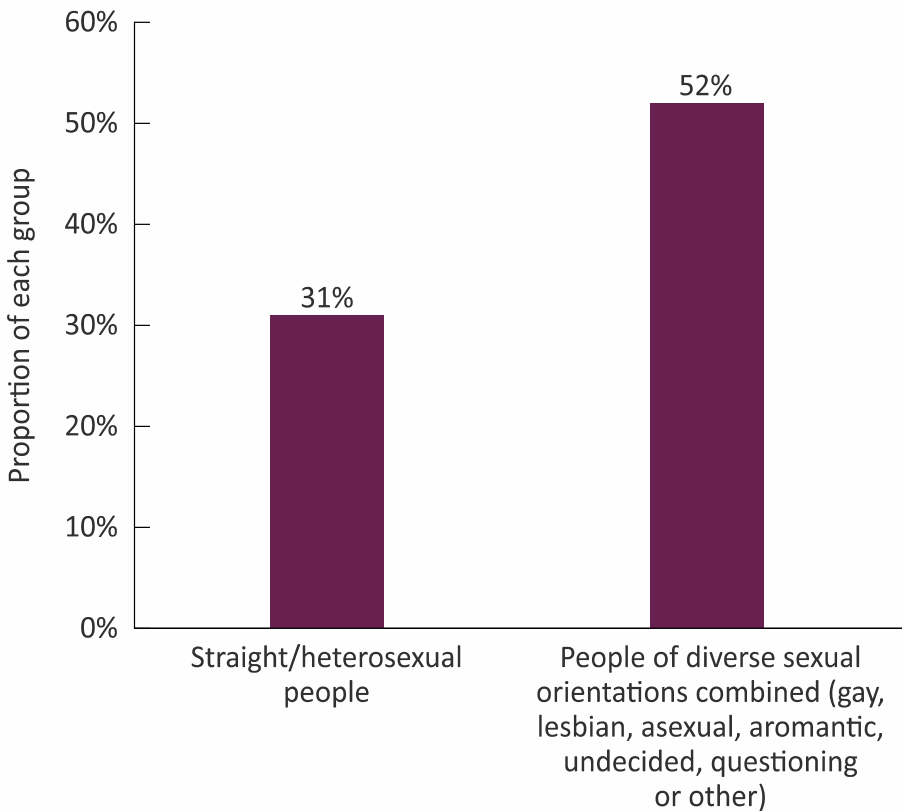
In 2018, women made up over half (58%) of victims of workplace sexual harassment during the previous five years.<sup>308</sup> Women who have been sexually harassed in the workplace in the past five years are also more likely than men to experience more than one form of harassment. Over two-thirds (69%) of women who, in 2018, reported workplace sexual harassment during the past five years experienced more than one form of harassment as compared with 58% of men who had experienced workplace sexual harassment.<sup>309</sup>

**People of diverse sexual orientations**

The 2018 AHRC Workplace Sexual Harassment survey findings provide evidence that workplace sexual harassment is a gendered experience of violence. The findings also show that workplace sexual harassment is linked to heterosexism, i.e. it is more likely to be experienced by people of sexual orientations other than straight or heterosexual.

As Figure 22, below, shows, 31% of straight or heterosexual people experienced workplace sexual harassment in the previous five years, compared with over half (52%) of gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, queer, asexual, aromantic, undecided, not sure, questioning or other people.<sup>310</sup>

**Figure 22: Proportion of people by sexual orientation who experienced workplace sexual harassment in the past five years, 2018**



Source: AHRC, Workplace Sexual Harassment report 2018, p. 28

Further disaggregating these figures, out of people who identify with a sexual orientation other than heterosexual, bisexual people (57%) were most likely to experience workplace sexual harassment during the past five years, and almost half (47%) of gay or lesbian people experienced workplace sexual harassment in the past five years.<sup>311</sup>

### **Intersex status**

Intersex people (77%) are far more likely than others without an intersex variation (32%) to have experienced workplace sexual harassment in the past five years.<sup>312</sup>

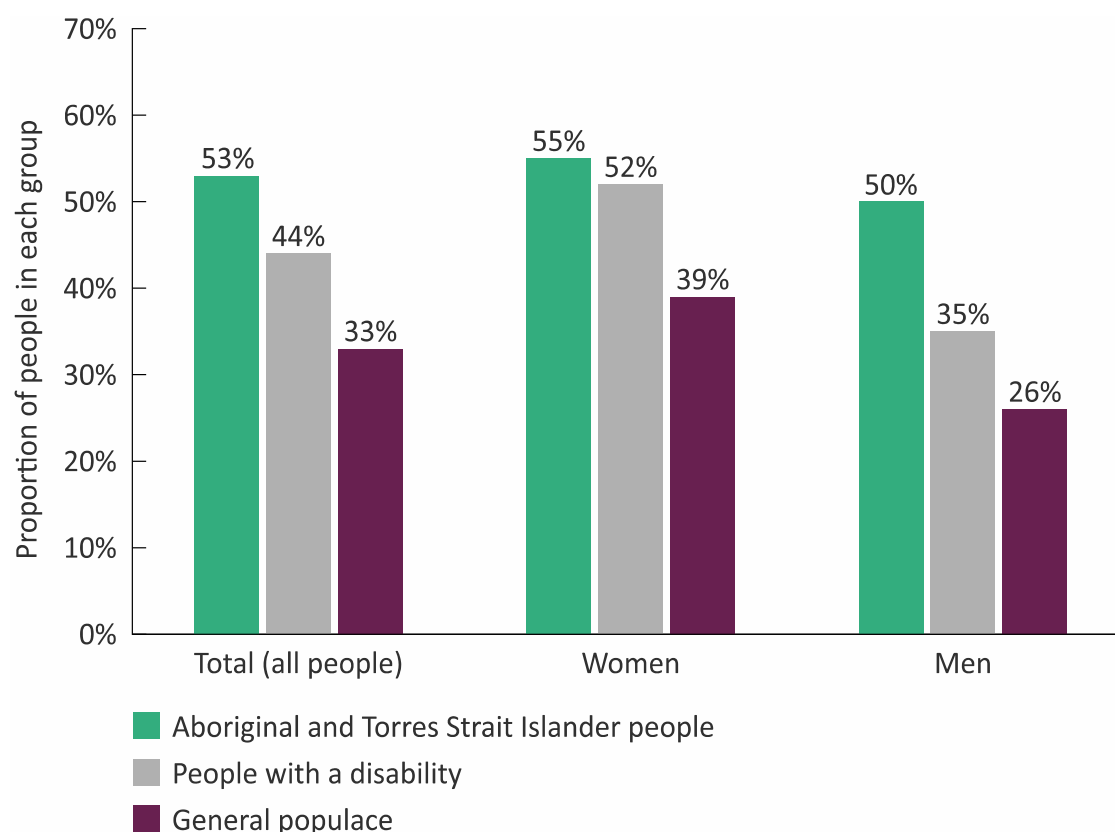
### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people**

The 2018 survey reveals that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (53%) were substantially more likely to have experienced workplace sexual harassment in the past five years than non-Indigenous people (32%). Over half (55%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and half (50%) of men had experienced workplace sexual harassment during the past five-year period. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experience much higher prevalence of workplace sexual harassment than Australian women overall (see Figure 23, below).

### **People with disability**

People with disability are also far more likely than the general populace to have experienced sexual harassment in the five years prior to the 2018 survey. Women with disability in particular experienced high prevalence rates (52% as compared with 39% of all women) (see Figure 23, below).

**Figure 23: Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with disability and general populace who experienced workplace sexual harassment in the past five years, 2018, broken down by gender**



Source: AHRC, Workplace Sexual Harassment report 2018, pp. 27–28

## Age

Nearly two-thirds (62%) of those who had experienced workplace sexual harassment in the five years prior to the 2018 survey were under 40 years old at the most recent incident.<sup>313</sup>

## People of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

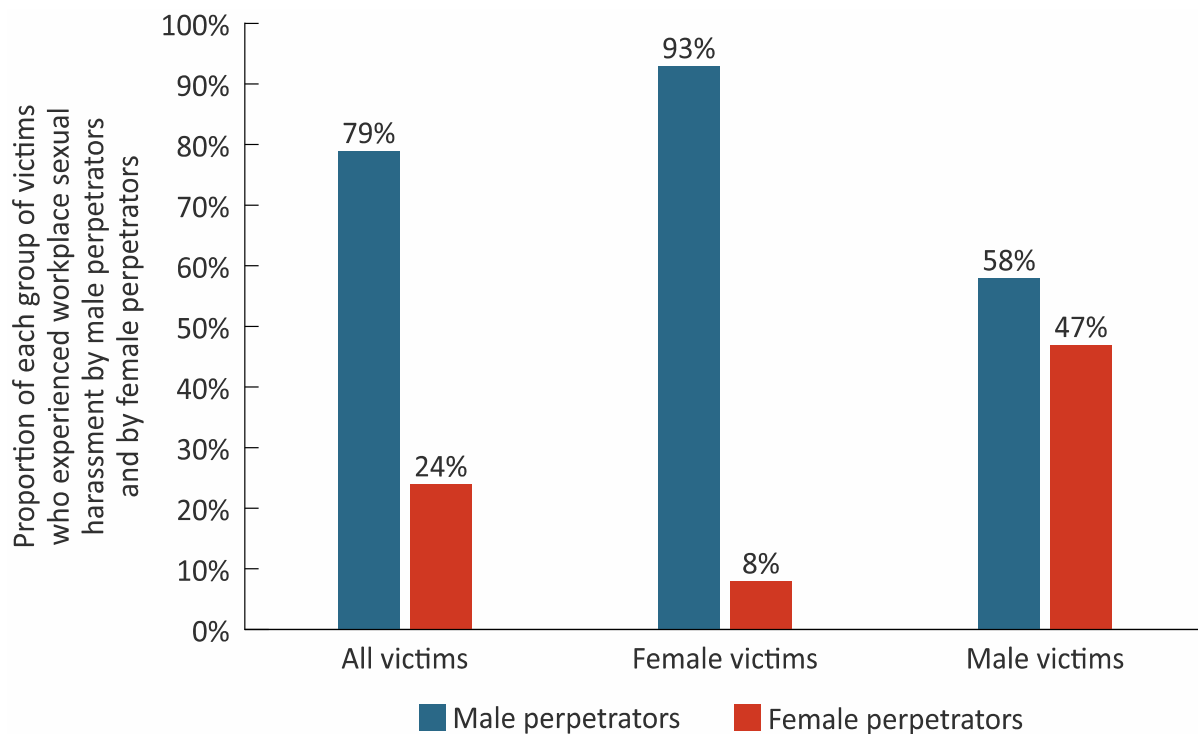
The AHRC Workplace Sexual Harassment survey defines cultural and linguistic diversity by whether respondents mostly speak English or another language at home. This is a limited definition (for example, respondents are not asked about country of birth or cultural or ethnic background other than Indigenous status). The AHRC also notes that mode of survey implementation (delivery in English only) likely affects the results of the survey with regard to disaggregation by linguistic diversity. The 2018 survey results showed no significant difference in the prevalence of workplace sexual harassment for people who mostly speak a language other than English at home. However, given the above caveats, further investigation into the workplace sexual harassment experiences of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds should be undertaken.



## Perpetrators of sexual harassment by gender

While there are strong gendered patterns in terms of workplace sexual harassment victimisation, perpetration of workplace sexual harassment is even more starkly gendered. A vast majority (79%) of workplace sexual harassment victims in the five years prior to the 2018 survey were harassed by men. An overwhelming majority (93%) of female victims had been sexually harassed in the workplace by one or more male perpetrators. Male victims' experience of workplace sexual harassment perpetration was more divided, with 58% of male victims sexually harassed by one or more male perpetrators and 47% sexually harassed by one or more female perpetrators (see Figure 24, below).

**Figure 24: Proportion of all men and all women who experienced workplace sexual harassment in past five years, 2018, who experienced harassment by male perpetrators and by female perpetrators**



Source: AHRC, Workplace Sexual Harassment report 2018, p. 33

### Indicator 3.7: Gender pay gap

What does this indicator tell us about Monitoring domain 3: Men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in public life?	<p>The gender pay gap is 'the difference between women's and men's average weekly full-time equivalent earnings, expressed as a percentage of men's earnings'.<sup>314</sup> The gender pay gap exists for a number of reasons, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Discrimination and bias in hiring and pay decisions [gender bias].</li> <li>• Women and men working in different industries and different jobs, with female-dominated industries and jobs attracting lower wages [industry and occupation segregation].</li> <li>• Women's disproportionate share of unpaid caring and domestic work.</li> <li>• Lack of workplace flexibility to accommodate caring and other responsibilities, especially in senior roles.</li> <li>• Women's greater time out of the workforce impacting career progression and opportunities.'<sup>315</sup></li> </ul> <p>The gender pay gap is an internationally recognised marker of women's position in the economy. It is an expression of, and based in, gender inequality.</p>
Expected change if high-quality programs and infrastructure for prevention of violence against women and gender equality are implemented	<p>Short- to medium-term: small advances towards reducing the gender pay gap across industries and occupations.</p> <p>Long-term: gender pay parity in the very long-term.</p>
Data source(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) reporting data, 2014 to 2019</li> <li>2. ABS Full-Time Adult Average Weekly Earnings Trend data and Employee Earnings and Hours Survey, analysed by WGEA, 2014 to 2019<sup>xxxviii</sup></li> </ol>
Change over time summary: short-term change revealed by the data	<p>The gender pay gap is substantial, though it has declined since 2014. However, long-term trends in the gender pay gap have not been linear; it appears to be somewhat unstable.</p>

xxxviii The WGEA provides calculations on the gender pay gap nationally, per state/territory jurisdiction, and also per industry. To reach these calculations, the WGEA uses ABS data (Full-Time Adult Average Weekly Earnings Trend series and the Employee Earnings and Hours Survey) and also its own data. For further information on how the gender pay gap is calculated, please refer to WGEA, ['Australia's gender pay gap statistics'](#), Factsheet Series, WGEA, August 2018.

Does the change confirm or run contrary to expected change?	Confirms expected change, though, as noted, long-term trends have not revealed a linear decline to date, but rather peaks and troughs.
Gaps in existing data	<p>Gender pay gap data reporting is focused on the difference between women's and men's full-time earnings. In this sense, it reflects the inequality as experienced by women who are still relatively economically privileged in the sense of holding full-time jobs, rather than women who are unemployed or holding casual or part-time jobs.</p> <p>Gender pay gap data does not tell us about pay gap inequality experienced by women who experience intersecting forms of discrimination, e.g. women with disability or First Nations women. For this reason, we have identified other income differentials and pay gap analyses for inclusion here.</p>

### National pay gap: 2013–14 to 2018–19

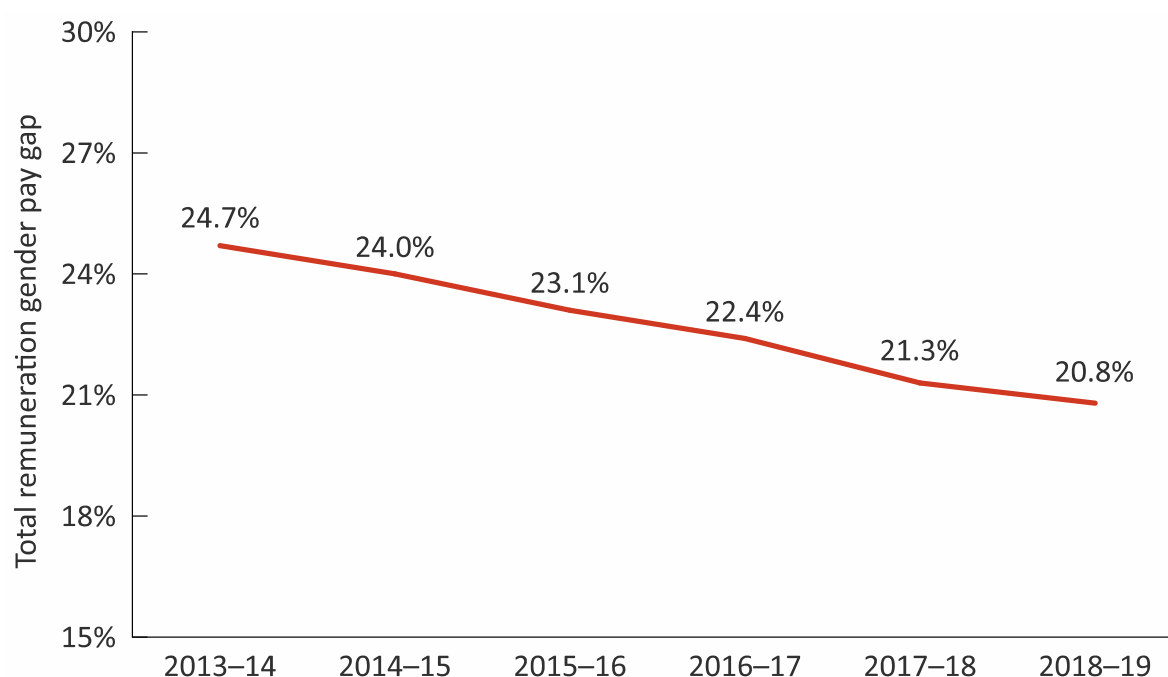
Based on ABS Average Weekly Earnings data (analysed by the WGEA), the gender pay gap as of May 2019 stands at 14.0%.<sup>316</sup> While this is the lowest point in 20 years, it has not been a linear decline. The gender pay gap peaked in November 2014 at 18.5% and reached a previous low of 14.6% in May 2018.<sup>317</sup>

The WGEA also calculates the gender pay gap based on their own data, which includes pay data (encompassing superannuation, bonuses and any additional payments) from non-public sector organisations with 100 or more employees. This sample size is very significant, at over 4 million employees. As of 2019, the total remuneration gender pay gap, on the basis of the WGEA's own data, was even higher than the gap calculated on the basis of ABS data, standing at 20.8%. This means that in the financial year of 2018–19, men working full-time earned on average \$25,679 more than women working full-time.<sup>318</sup>

While the gender pay gap as recorded by the WGEA is significant, it has slowly yet steadily declined over the past six years. Over the course of six years, it has declined by 3.9 percentage points. In 2013–14, the WGEA gender pay gap stood at 24.7% (see Figure 25, below). That being said, change needs to occur at a faster rate. As it stands, if it was to steadily decline at the same rate, the gender pay gap will take decades more to close. More intentional efforts are required to hasten progress.

While the past six years has seen a decline in the national gender pay gap, industry profiles show a much more mixed picture, e.g. certain industries which have been traditionally male-dominated (such as mining and construction) have seen a considerable narrowing of their gender pay gaps (although the gaps are still higher than the national average), while other industries have seen a considerable widening of their gender pay gaps.

**Figure 25: Total remuneration gender pay gap, 2013–14 to 2018–19, based on WGEA data**



Source: WGEA, '[Australia's gender pay gap statistics](#)', Factsheet Series, WGEA, August 2018.

The public and private sectors, too, vary significantly in their respective gender pay gaps, though both have displayed some narrowing of the gender pay gap since November 2013. The WGEA has established that a contributor to the difference in the gender pay gap between the public and private sectors is the main method of setting pay. The private sector predominantly uses an individual bargaining arrangement for establishing remuneration packages, while the public sector predominantly uses collective bargaining.<sup>319</sup> That is, it is better for women when pay scales are transparent and consistent.

## Drivers of the gender pay gap

In 2019, KPMG worked with the Diversity Council of Australia and the WGEA to use statistical methodologies to determine the drivers of the gender pay gap in Australia, and how these have changed over time with regard to their relative contribution to the overall gender pay gap.<sup>320</sup>

The study found that the top five drivers of the gender pay gap as of 2017 were:

1. Gender discrimination (i.e. discriminatory 'practices such as workplace culture, hiring, promotion and access to training ... systemic or overt'<sup>321</sup>) (39%)
2. Years not working due to interruptions (25%)
3. Occupational and industrial segregation (17%)
4. Part-time employment (7%)
5. Unpaid care work (7%)<sup>322</sup>

Importantly, KPMG found that between 2014 and 2017, gender discrimination increased in relative contribution to the gender pay gap by 10 percentage points, from 29% to 39%.<sup>323</sup> This gender pay gap analysis shows that while the gender pay gap may be on an overall slow decline, the stickiest underlying gendered drivers such as 'gender discrimination' are increasing in severity. In order to reduce the gender pay gap in a way which is significant and sustainable, attention needs to be given to gender inequalities in the workplace, at home and in broader society.

#### **Pay gap analyses beyond gender: Indigenous pay gap and disability pay gap**

While the gender pay gap shows continuing economic inequality between men and women in Australia, rooted in and compounding other forms of gender inequality (such as discrimination in the workplace and unequal division of unpaid labour), gender pay gap data as it is currently formulated only tells us so much about men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in public life.

The gender pay gap is calculated on the basis of comparison of full-time earnings. In this sense, it does not capture the experience of women with more precarious positions in the formal economy, such as unemployed women, part-time workers and casual workers. And we know that women are more likely than men not to be employed full-time (see Indicator 2.3: Gender composition of the workforce by industry and employment status).

The other major limitation to the gender pay gap data which masks intersecting forms of privilege and oppression is that it is not disaggregated by any other demographic factor than gender. Nor is gender pay gap data therefore analysed in terms of other forms of discrimination which could drive pay gap inequality between different groups of women. If we know that discrimination on the basis of gender is a key (and growing) contributor to the gender pay gap, it stands to reason that other forms of discrimination (such as ableism, racism and the impacts of colonisation) are likely to impact on pay gaps experienced by women who experience intersecting forms of structural discrimination.

**Emerging data indicates that the gender pay gap is far wider for women who experience intersecting forms of discrimination, and that there are considerable differences between groups of women in the Australian population.**

Other pay gap analysis projects in Australia have identified or are in the process of identifying substantial differentials based on axes of inequality other than gender. For example:

- **Indigenous pay gap:** Researchers at the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research at the Australian National University analyse census and other data sources (such as the Household Income and Labour Dynamics Australia) to understand and track over time income inequality between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous people. On the basis of a number of metrics and data sources, this analysis has identified that there is very considerable income inequality between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous people, though the gap is very gradually narrowing over time (with this narrowing driven by growth in incomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at the higher end of income distribution and based in urban areas). For example, on the basis of median gross income data, the pay gap between First Nations people and non-Indigenous Australians was 38% in 2016 and 34% in 2011. However, this gap is particularly exacerbated (and widening) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in remote areas, who tend to be at the lower end of income distribution, i.e. there is a great deal of geographic variation in income inequality between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Moreover, while the median personal weekly incomes of men and women were at a very similar point in 2006, the median personal income of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women has grown by 5% less than that of First Nations men between 2006 and 2016 (Markham and Biddle, 2018).
- **Disability pay gap:** Researchers at the Centre of Research Excellence in Disability and Health at the University of Melbourne are currently engaged in analysing the pay gap between people with disability and people without disability ([The Disability Pay Gap: Mythbusting and Numbercrunching](#)). One of the researchers, George Disney, writes: 'People with disability in Australia face not only disadvantages in accessing employment such as discrimination in hiring practices but also in even securing minimum wage pay to which non-disabled Australians are entitled. Currently paying people with disability below the minimum wage is legal in Australia, yet illegal for a non-disabled person' ([Disability, employment and inequity – it's time to do more than the bare minimum](#)). It is likely then that the disability pay gap is very substantial.

**Data recommendation:** We recommend explorations of pay gap analysis data sources and methodologies which would allow for comparison and disaggregation by multiple demographic factors (i.e. gender and disability, gender and Indigenous status, gender, disability and Indigenous status), and analyses of pay gap data that take into account multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.

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Sources: Markham and Biddle, 2018; Disney, 'Disability Employment and Inequity', 2019; ['The Disability Pay Gap'](#).

### Indicator 3.8: Retirement gap and superannuation gap

What does this indicator tell us about Monitoring domain 3: Men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in public life?	Women tend to experience much greater economic insecurity than men in retirement or later life. This is due to a number of factors, including the gender pay gap, different workforce participation patterns and the gender pay gap creating significant differences in superannuation savings, a superannuation system which tends to amplify gender gaps in superannuation, and differences in women's and men's retirement patterns. Very significant gender disparities in superannuation and retirement exist, and these disparities are projected to continue into the long-term future, unless substantial policy and programmatic action is taken. This indicator measures progress in reducing retirement and superannuation gender gaps as key markers of structural economic expressions of gender inequality.
Expected change if high-quality programs and infrastructure for prevention of violence against women and gender equality are implemented	Short- to medium-term: small advances towards reducing the retirement and superannuation gender gaps. Long-term: superannuation and retirement parity.
Data source(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. ABS Household Income and Wealth 2017–18, presented in the ABS Gender Indicators 2018</li> <li>2. ABS Survey of Employment Arrangements, Retirement and Superannuation (SEARS) 2007, ABS<sup>xxxix, 324</sup></li> <li>3. Industry Super Australia's analysis of the Australian Tax Office Statistics 2013–14<sup>325</sup></li> </ol>
Change over time summary: short-term change revealed by the data	Only baseline data available on retirement gender gap and superannuation gender gap. Change not able to be assessed.
Does the change confirm or run contrary to expected change?	Change not able to be assessed.

xxxix The latest publicly available ABS data on retirement is the 2007 Survey of Employment Arrangements, Retirement and Superannuation (SEARS). While this is quite dated, for the purposes of this report it stands as a baseline for future measurement of progress.

Gaps in existing data	<p>Retirement gap data has not been recently released to allow for tracking over time.</p> <p>Superannuation gap data is presented in different ways which make a consistent metric difficult to determine. No superannuation data disaggregated by Indigenous status is currently available.</p>
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## Retirement gap

In 2007, on average Australian women retired 11 years earlier than their male counterparts, with the average age of retirement for women being 47 years and men 58 years. Over one-quarter (28%) of retired men had retired prior to 55 years, compared with three-fifths (60%) of women.<sup>326</sup> Only half (48%) of women aged 45 years or over were in the labour force, as compared with three in five men (61%). Half (48%) of women aged 45 years and over had retired, compared with just over one-third (37%) of men (see Table 26, below).

**Table 26: Employment and retirement status of Australians aged 45 years or over, 2007\***

	Men	Women
In labour force	61%	48%
Retired	37%	48%
Not in labour force but not yet retired	3%	4%

Source: ABS, *Employment Arrangements, Retirement and Superannuation, Australia, April to July 2007*

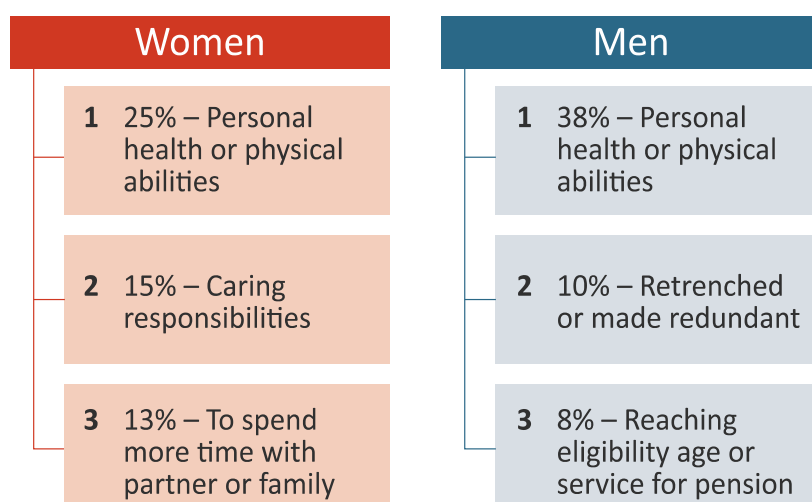
\* Who had at some time worked for two weeks or more and for whom a retirement status was able to be determined

The most common reasons given for retiring by retired persons were highly gendered. The most common reason given by both men and women was related to personal health or physical abilities (Figure 26, below). However, women's other most common reasons were linked to caring responsibilities. Men's reasons were financial or linked to employment status. That is, they were not driven by family caring (unpaid) responsibilities.

Gendered patterns in retirement – women retiring far earlier than men, and in many instances being driven by unpaid caring responsibilities – illustrates how gender divisions of labour and rigid gender roles are apparent not only in child-bearing years but also stay persistent across lifetimes. At retirement, women are often picking up other forms of unpaid caring responsibilities – grandchildren, ageing parents, relatives with illness or disability. On the other hand, the centrality for men of their role as breadwinner continues until late in life – until their health or age prevents them from participating or competing in the workforce. A pattern of men choosing to take on more caring responsibilities later in life, and perhaps supporting a female partner to remain in the workforce later in life to boost her superannuation savings, is not apparent.



**Figure 26: Most common reasons cited for retiring by retired women and men, 2007**



Source: ABS, *Employment Arrangements, Retirement and Superannuation, Australia, April to July 2007, Reissue*

[Text-equivalent description of Figure 26 in Appendix E](#)

## Superannuation gap

The various data indicate that on average, men are more likely both to have superannuation and to have a higher account balance.<sup>327</sup>

Not only are women retiring earlier and living longer on average than men, meaning a longer period of time to cover without paid salary earnings, women are retiring with far less superannuation savings than men. As of 2015, the superannuation gender gap was 44%.<sup>328</sup> ABS Household Income and Wealth 2017–18 data, collated in the ABS Gender Indicators 2018, shows that in 2017–18, women’s superannuation balance at or approaching preservation age was \$245,126, compared with men’s at \$332,662; that is, \$87,536 less.<sup>329</sup>

Industry Super Australia conducted an analysis of the Australian Taxation Office’s (ATO) superannuation data from their taxation statistics (2013–14, published in 2016).<sup>330</sup> As Industry Super Australia analysis reveals, the superannuation gap peaks at different points in life consistent with gendered paid working patterns of women and men. The gap begins very early in life, reflecting a pattern of earlier workforce entry for men. Men younger than 18 have average super balances 43% higher than women of the same age. Across the twenties, the gap narrows somewhat, then widens again after 30 (reflecting patterns consistent with many women carrying the burden of unpaid family labour and breaking full-time working patterns during that period). By the age of 50 to 55 – by which time a majority of women have retired, according to 2007 ABS data – the superannuation gap hits a pinnacle of 51%.<sup>331</sup> This gap in superannuation is a direct reflection of the gender pay gap, as well as time out of the workforce or in part-time employment, that marks women’s workforce participation patterns.<sup>332</sup>

Superannuation gaps are also revealed not only in terms of balances, but in relation to the proportion of women and men covered by and primarily utilising superannuation. As explored in the previous section, a higher proportion of women than men subsist in retirement on the aged pension, rather than living on superannuation savings. Based on

the ABS's Household Income and Wealth survey, in 2009–10, only 10.2% of women not in the labour force aged 65 years and over said their main source of income was superannuation or annuities (compared with 17.3% of men). This proportion had increased to 15.5% of women and 24.4% of men in 2017–18.<sup>333</sup>

Further analysis of the ABS's Household Income and Wealth survey, presented in the ABS Gender Indicators 2019, reveals that women who are born overseas and women with disability are less likely to quote superannuation and annuities as their primary source of income than women born in Australia, women without disability *and* their male counterparts (see Table 27, below). No data disaggregated by Indigenous status is available.

**Table 27: Persons not in the labour force aged 65 years and over, proportion (%) superannuation or annuities as primary source of income, disaggregated by gender, country of birth and disability status, 2013–14**

	Male	Female
Overall population	17.7%	10.9%
Born overseas	13.9%	7.3%
Born in Australia	20.5%	12.9%
With disability	13.1%	9.0%
Without disability	22.1%	13.4%

Source: ABS Income and Wealth Survey 2013–14, presented in ABS Gender Indicators 2019

The proportion of women who have no superannuation coverage has dropped by 6.9 percentage points between 2009–10 (30.4%) and 2017–18 (23.5%). In 2017–18, the proportion of men without superannuation coverage was 20.5%.<sup>334</sup>

**Why is there a superannuation gender gap? Analysis from *The future face of poverty is female: Stories behind Australian women's superannuation poverty in retirement* 2018**

Researchers from Monash University conducted a study analysing secondary statistical data (including from the ABS and the Household Income and Labour Dynamics Australia survey) with new interview data and identified the following barriers to women accumulating an equivalent amount of superannuation to men:

- 'Women from households where priority has been given to the man's earning potential and careers, often limiting their own careers and affecting the potential to accumulate superannuation.
- Women whose caring responsibilities are often multiple and spread right across the life course (from children, to ageing parents, to partner), providing no 'good time' to invest in themselves and their own financial security.
- Women who change career paths (different sectors), hours worked (full, part or flexitime), type of contract (fixed, casual, cash-in-hand), and types of employment relationship (employer, self-employed) a number of times, resulting in fractured superannuation accumulation patterns.
- Women who have experienced family breakdowns, separation or divorce, with sole custody of children and are on the precipice of (or firmly situated in) poverty for a majority of their adult lives, and thus unable to afford considering financially investing in their future.
- Women who have faced or continue to face age and/or gender-based discrimination, harassment or bias that prevent re-entry, advancement or development, limiting the ability to accumulate ... superannuation contributions.'

Source: K. Riach et al., *The future face of poverty is female: Stories behind Australian women's superannuation poverty in retirement*, 2018, p. 28.

### Indicator 3.9: Percentage of women who report feeling unsafe in public spaces

What does this indicator tell us about Monitoring domain 3: Men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in public life?	Women feeling unsafe in public spaces (outdoors, public transport, workplaces) is a key limitation to women's independence in public life. This indicator measures any change to women's feelings of lack of safety in public spaces.
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Expected change if high-quality programs and infrastructure for prevention of violence against women and gender equality are implemented	It is difficult to predict the short- and medium-term changes to this indicator. The proportion of women reporting fearfulness in public spaces will be an outcome of not only the real level of safety in public spaces for women, but also the way public safety is reported in the media.
Data source(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Personal Safety Survey (PSS) 2012 and 2016, ABS</li> <li>2. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Better Life Index Safety data 2017, OECD<sup>335</sup></li> <li>3. <i>Free to Be: Sydney</i>, 2018, Plan International and Monash University<sup>336</sup></li> </ol>
Change over time summary: short-term change revealed by the data	<p>There is an increase in women feeling safe with regard to public transport usage and waiting for public transport, and a corresponding decline in women feeling unsafe with regard to public transport usage and waiting for public transport after dark.</p> <p>However, the PSS data also reveals that there is little change in the proportions of women who report feeling either safe or unsafe walking alone in their local area after dark. There is some marginal positive change but it is not statistically significant.</p>
Does the change confirm or run contrary to expected change?	Change was not predicted in <i>Counting on change</i> .
Gaps in existing data	The PSS data and the Better Life Index Safety data provide limited insights as to why women's perceptions of public safety change over time. This data needs to be supplemented by insights from other qualitative or smaller and more in-depth quantitative studies.

## Women's feelings of safety walking alone at night in their local area

One PSS measure of women's feelings of safety in public spaces is elicited through asking respondents about whether they walk alone at night in their local area, and how safe they feel in doing so.

**Women's feelings of fear walking alone at night in their local area have remained fairly consistent between the 2012 and 2016 waves of the PSS; there has been no statistically significant change.** In 2012, 7.7% of women reported that they had walked alone in their local area after dark and felt unsafe in the previous 12 months; this remained almost the same at 7.8% in 2016. In both 2012 and 2016, approximately one in four women reported

that in the past 12 months they had not walked alone in their local area at night because they felt unsafe doing so (see Table 28, below).

**Table 28: Women's feelings of safety walking in their local area alone after dark in the last 12 months, proportion of women (%)**

	2012	2016
Walked alone and felt safe	30.2%	31.1%
Walked alone and felt unsafe	7.7%	7.8%
Did not walk alone because felt unsafe	26.5%	25.6%

Source: ABS, PSS 2016

International data on whether people feel safe walking alone at night is also collected through the Gallop World Poll and reported at a country level in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Better Life Index.<sup>337</sup> As summarised in the second Community Council of Australia's *The Australia We Want* report (2019), in 2017 only 49% of Australian women reported feeling safe when walking alone at night, compared with 79% of Australian men.<sup>338</sup> This finding means that Australia has the highest gender differential in terms of feelings of safety of all the OECD countries. Australian women's feelings of public safety also ranked far lower than the OECD average for women, at 61%.<sup>339</sup>

## Women's feelings of safety in and around public transport

On the basis of PSS data, **there has been some improvement in women's feelings of safety using public transport after dark, and in waiting to use public transport after dark.** The proportion of women who used public transport after dark in the previous 12 months and felt unsafe doing so remained fairly consistent between 2012 (6.6%) and 2016 (6.3%). However, there was a statistically significant increase in the proportion of women who reported using public transport after dark in the previous 12 months and feeling safe (15.1% in 2012 and 20.7% in 2016), and a statistically significant decrease in the proportion of women who did not use public transport after dark because they felt unsafe doing so (18.2% in 2012 to 14.3% in 2016) (see Table 29, below). There was also a statistically significant increase in the proportion of women who waited for public transport after dark and felt safe, and a statistically significant decrease in the proportion of women who waited and felt unsafe (see Table 30).

**Table 29: Women's feelings of safety using public transport after dark in the last 12 months, proportion of women (%)**

	2012	2016
Used public transport after dark and felt safe	15.1%	20.7%*
Used public transport after dark and felt unsafe	6.6%	6.3%
Did not use public transport after dark because felt unsafe	18.2%	14.3%*

Source: ABS, PSS 2016

\* denotes a statistically significant change between survey years.

**Table 30: Women's feelings of safety waiting for public transport after dark in the last 12 months, proportion of women (%)**

	2012	2016
Waiting for public transport after dark and felt safe	11.8%	18.4%*
Waiting for public transport after dark and felt unsafe	9.9%	8.6%*

Source: ABS, PSS 2016

\* denotes a statistically significant change between survey years.

## Young women's experiences and feelings of safety in Sydney's public spaces

While it cannot measure change over time and is not a population-representative sample as it only focuses on one Australian city, it is also worth drawing on a recent study by Plan International and Monash University's XYX Lab (2018) of young women's (up to 30 years old) and girls' experiences and feelings of safety in public spaces in Sydney.<sup>340</sup> The study found that 90% of young women do not feel safe after dark, and that young women's and girls' feelings of a lack of safety moving around the city are directly related to their experiences of sexual harassment, sexual assault, gender-based discrimination, and discrimination related to other factors. For example, 10% of young women reported experiencing discrimination based on ethnicity in Sydney public spaces; four out of five of these women also reported experiencing gender-based discrimination. A further 5% of female and non-binary participants reported having experienced LGBTIQA-based discrimination.<sup>xl</sup> These findings suggest that the prevalence of bad experiences in public spaces in Sydney are higher for young women and non-binary people who experience intersectional forms of discrimination.<sup>341</sup> The study also found that young women's experiences of a lack of safety and of harassment, assault and discrimination in public spaces starts at a very young age,

xl 'LGBTIQA' (lesbian, gay, bisexual trans, intersex, queer, asexual) is the terminology that was used in this study.

and that women are managing their fear through curtailing their own freedom and independence of movement, and their participation in education, the economy and social life, because they feel there is no other way:

‘The critical message ... is that the majority of the young women and girls who participated experienced many forms of sexual harassment, mostly non-physical but also including some severe forms of physical assault. This was spread across the city, concentrated in public transport hubs, and consequently affected the ability of young women and girls to move around the city and access education and employment. In some instances the young women and girls stopped their study, quit work or moved house as a result of their experiences. The data suggests that harassment is endemic, and embedded in the very fabric of the city.’<sup>342</sup>

Not only do women’s feelings of safety in public spaces reflect societal condoning and personal experiences of violence against women, but this fear also has a profound impact on women’s and girls’ engagement and independence in public life.

### Indicator 3.10: Attitudes about women’s independence in public life<sup>xli</sup>

What does this indicator tell us about Monitoring domain 3: Men’s control of decision-making and limits to women’s independence in public life?	Attitudes may shape the often unconscious discrimination against women’s appointments to leadership positions. Attitudes which fail to recognise women’s capacities and authority may also deter women from pushing for equal participation in public settings (NCAS 2017 p. 67). As well as structural outcomes and experiences, then, attitudes are also another way to measure progress in women’s independence in public life.
Expected change if high-quality programs and infrastructure for prevention of violence against women and gender equality are implemented	Short- and medium-term: some decrease in attitudes undermining women’s independence and decision-making in public life.  Long-term: public attitudes reflect support for women’s independence and decision-making in public life.
Data source(s)	National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS) 2009, 2013 and 2017, Australia’s National Research Organisation for Women’s Safety (ANROWS)
Change over time summary: short-term change revealed by the data	Only one question pertaining to attitudes to women’s independence and gender equality in public life has been asked in multiple waves of the NCAS. Results from this question show a considerable decline in the proportion of individuals subscribing to the notion that men are better suited to political leadership than women.

xli This is an additional indicator published in the *Counting on change* framework.

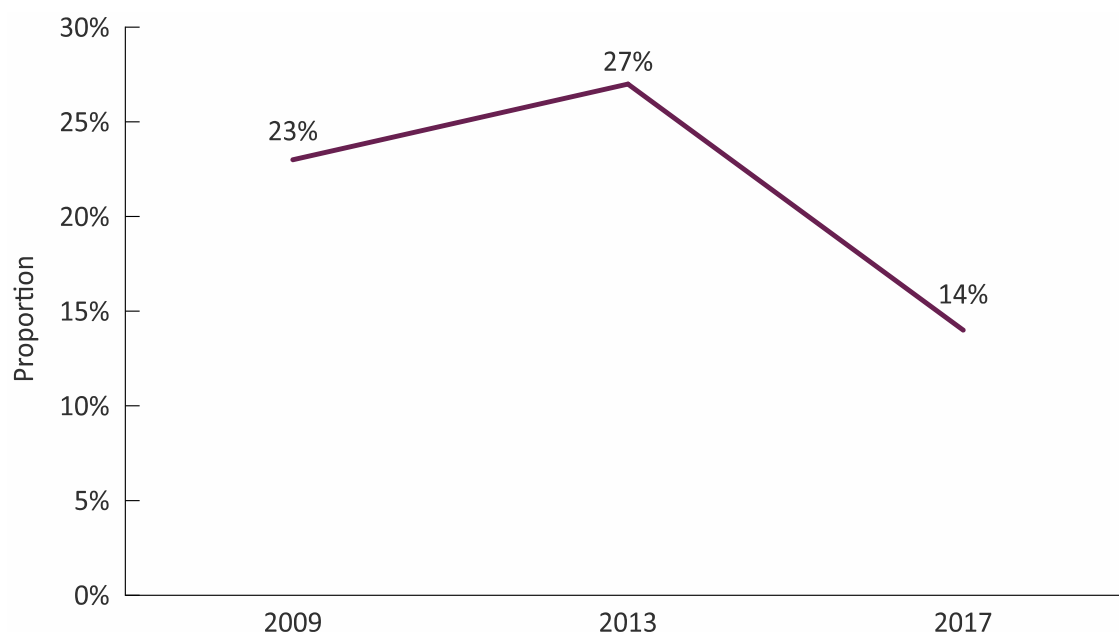
Does the change confirm or run contrary to expected change?	Confirms expected change.
Gaps in existing data	We do not yet have sufficient data to assess change over time to attitudes about women's independence in public life.

In the 2017 NCAS, there were four statements pertaining to attitudes undermining women's independence and decision-making in public life. The overall average score for attitudes supporting gender equality in public life was relatively high, at 79 out of 100 – higher than the support for gender equality in intimate relationships or private life.<sup>343</sup> However, it is worth taking a closer look at responses to the individual questions. Only 6% of Australians agreed with the statement that 'Women are less capable than men of thinking logically'.<sup>344</sup>

However, the other statements elicited higher subscription to attitudes undermining women's independence in public life. One in seven (14%) of Australians agreed that 'In the workplace, men generally make more capable bosses than women.'<sup>345</sup> One in ten (10%) agreed that 'Men, rather than women, should hold positions of responsibility in the community.'<sup>346</sup> A further one in seven (14%) agreed that 'On the whole, men make better political leaders than women.'<sup>347</sup>

This final statement was asked in the previous 2009 and 2013 NCAS waves. Hearteningly, there has been a significant decrease in the proportion of individuals subscribing to the notion that men are better suited to political leadership than women. In 2009, nearly one-quarter (23%) of Australians agreed with this notion; this increased to 27% in 2013. Between 2013 and 2017, there was a significant 13% decrease in agreement with this idea, down to 14% agreeing that men are preferable to women as political leaders (see Figure 27, below).

**Figure 27: Proportion of Australians agreeing that men are better suited to political leadership than women, 2009, 2013 and 2017**



Sources: NCAS 2009, NCAS 2013 and NCAS 2017



# Gendered driver: Men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in public life and relationships

## Monitoring domain 4: Men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in relationships and private life

Indicator 4.1	Percentage of women who report controlling behaviour in a relationship (men's control over women)
Indicator 4.2	Attitudes associated with men's control and women's dependence and lack of decision-making power in private life

Male control and dominance is frequently represented through what have been called 'heterosexual social scripts' as a normal or inevitable part of sexual and romantic relationships with women, and is widely normalised in popular culture as well as learned in peer groups and the family.<sup>348</sup> Particular norms, attitudes and practices associated with dominant forms of masculinity that men feel pressure to conform to and support, including autonomy, dominance and control, can be exhibited in men's intimate relationships with women.<sup>349</sup>

As discussed in *Men in focus: An evidence review* (2019), norms associated with dominant forms of masculinity centre on autonomy: the expectation that men should be independent and self-sufficient in all aspects of their lives. In particular, research has focused on the expectations for men to be financially independent and to provide for and protect their partners and families.<sup>350</sup> Importantly, some studies suggest that this expectation to be the breadwinner sets up an inequitable partnership, where men are in control and take charge and women are expected to take a supportive, passive role.<sup>351</sup> More broadly, men are expected to lead and influence rather than follow. As Dahl et al. note, this emphasis on the male role as being an autonomous protector and provider is underpinned by the notion that men are better leaders and should have control and power over their affairs with others, especially women.<sup>352</sup> There is, then, a great deal of overlap between this domain and Monitoring domain 2: Rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity.

Men limiting or controlling women's social and financial independence in relationships directly undermines women's independence and decision-making, and increases the probability of violence against women.<sup>353</sup> Violence is more common in families and relationships in which men control decision-making and less so in relationships in which women have a greater level of independence.<sup>354</sup> Recent research has found direct links between these controlling behaviours and violence against women. A review of studies conducted between 2000 and 2015 showed that, overall, masculine norms and behaviours involving dominance and control were associated with higher levels of intimate partner violence.<sup>355</sup> In a study of male perpetrators, it was shown that the expectations and pressures on men to be in control meant that violence was often employed as a means of achieving control in their intimate relationships.<sup>356</sup>

Isolating women from support networks of family and friends is a recognised form of controlling behaviour and psychological abuse. Women, especially those with responsibility for children, may find it difficult to leave violent relationships if they are economically dependent on men,<sup>357</sup> and if they are socially isolated from other family members, independent friendships and support networks that would provide emotional, financial and logistical support.

It is critical to note that certain behaviours associated with male control and dominance in relationships with women in themselves constitute forms of violence. Often less recognised than physical or sexual violence, they include financial, emotional, psychological, social or technologically facilitated abuse, stalking, and reproductive coercion. These can be experienced as just as harmful in their impacts as physical violence. As such, this domain should be read alongside the partner violence prevalence data outlined in Monitoring domain 11 of this report (Prevalence of violence against women), which includes some of the same data from the 'emotional abuse' module of the Personal Safety Survey (PSS).

Men's sense of social or legal impunity to enact controlling behaviours against female partners is further reinforced where there are other axes of power and privilege within the relationship (such as those associated with race, class, ability for example), because the broader cultural environment is less likely to recognise and validate the experiences of women who are subjected to multiple, intersecting forms of discrimination. Intersecting forms of disadvantage experienced by women may also reinforce dependence on male partners and be exploited for control by those partners. For example, recent Australian research shows that recently migrated and refugee women are particularly susceptible to certain forms of intimate partner control such as financial abuse, immigration status-related violence and reproductive coercion. This is due to the intersection between male partners' attitudes and exertions of power and structural forms of disadvantage such as insecurity within official migration systems, social isolation, barriers to accessing services, and economic adversity.<sup>358</sup>

Moreover, as noted in *Men in focus*, some research demonstrates that when men find it difficult to attain ideals of manhood such as being the breadwinner, possibly because they experience other structural forms of disadvantage, there is a higher likelihood they may use violence against their partners to reassert their masculinity and dominance.<sup>359</sup> Conversely however, recent research on Australian domestic violence offenders shows that non-physical forms of violence, including controlling behaviours, are more common among men with forms of socioeconomic privilege, particularly higher education status and well-paid employment.<sup>360</sup>

It is also important to note that patterns of male partner control and dominance of female partners are not necessarily limited to the period of a relationship. Control, dominance and violence by male former or ex-partners to female ex-partners is also a common pattern. The PSS, for example, includes data on current and former partners, which is included within this report.

The significance of male coercive control towards women in relationships cannot be understated. Controlling behaviours exhibited by male partners towards female partners are often found in co-existence with physical forms of violence. A review of Australian coronial homicide data from 2010 to 2014 shows that emotional abuse is the most common form of abuse prior to intimate partner homicide (present in 80% of cases), and controlling

behaviours the third most common form (present in 61% of cases), as known through official records of domestic violence.<sup>361</sup> That is, there is a strong association between controlling behaviours and emotional abuse, and partner homicide. Further, men who adhere to notions of masculinity that involve male control and dominance of women in relationships are also more likely to sexually assault women outside the family and relationship context.<sup>362</sup>

In *Counting on change* (2018), a single proxy indicator was identified for this domain, focusing on women's reporting of controlling behaviour enacted by male current or former partners. Based on available data and our growing understanding of the norms of dominant forms of masculinity associated with men's control and limits to women's independence in relationships, a further indicator has been added about attitudes regarding men's control of intimate relationships with women.

### **Challenging men's control and promoting women's independence and decision-making in relationships and private life: Summary of change over time**

The data in this domain reveals only small improvements in community attitudes regarding male control in relationships, and an apparent increase in women's actual experiences of male control in relationships.

At the attitudinal level, between the 2009 and 2017 waves of the National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS), there was a small decrease in the proportion of Australians who believe that men should take control in relationships with women, and that women preference male control in relationships. At the same time, the proportion of men in particular who agreed with these statements remains high, with a third of men in 2017 agreeing that 'Women prefer a man to be in charge of the relationship' (32% compared with 19% of women).

In terms of prevalence, between the 2012 and 2016 waves of the PSS, there has been consistency in the proportion of women (approximately 1 in 20) reporting 12-month experiences of partner emotional abuse (which covers a wide array of controlling behaviours). Moreover, this data should be read alongside Section 2 Part B, which shows that the prevalence of (multiple forms of) partner violence against women remained high and reasonably consistent over the time period under consideration.

As noted at Indicator 3.10, more positive attitudinal change has been realised in relation to women's engagement in public life. However, results from successive waves of the NCAS suggest that Australians are less likely to attitudinally subscribe to gender equality in relation to intimate/private (male/female) relationships than they are to support gender equality in public life. Coupled with other indicators of inequality in private life outlined in Domains 2 and 3 (unequal division of unpaid labour, unequal superannuation and retirement income, rigid and stereotypical notions of sexuality and gender roles), these attitudes show that gender inequality in private life has a persistent hold in contemporary Australia. While insights from population-representative datasets are very limited with regard to the differentiated experiences of women, additional datasets drawn upon in this domain suggest that the impacts of rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of gender are particularly significant, and take on particular expressions, for women who experience intersecting forms of discrimination.

The effects of gender inequality in private life are grave. Not only does male control over women in intimate relationships restrict women's independence in public life, but (as this section and Section 2 Part B of this report show) it reflects and drives physical and non-physical forms of partner violence.

### **What don't we know about men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in relationships? Data gaps and recommendations**

There is a great deal we do not know about men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in intimate relationships on the basis of existing quantitative data. There is a lack of data on the dynamics of household or family decision-making between partners (or ex-partners). There is also an absence of publicly available data on controlling behaviours in relationships other than cisgender female–male partnerships, and data disaggregated below whole-of-population level. As such, current population-level quantitative data sources cannot tell us, for example, if and how experiences of partner emotional abuse differ for women who experience intersecting forms of structural inequality, compared to other women. For example, no quantitative data currently exists on women with disability or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's experiences of emotional abuse or non-physical forms of violence in relationships. However, research suggests other forms of structural disadvantage and inequality intersect with gender inequality to specifically shape the nature of partner control experienced by certain groups of women.

Moreover, datasets such as the Personal Safety Survey currently only measure partner controlling behaviours where partners have been or are living together (cohabiting partners), rather between intimate partners who have not lived together. This precludes many intimate relationships, including dating relationships between many young people. Finally, current datasets focus only on certain forms of controlling behaviour or non-physical forms of violence – they are not entirely comprehensive.

There is a significant opportunity to improve and further develop national data that could help measure men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in private lives. Data developments could include:

- Additional questions on decision-making dynamics and controlling and coercive behaviours in existing surveys (such as the Household Income and Labour Dynamics Australia survey, the Personal Safety Survey, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey and National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey). For example, Marie Stopes Australia (2018) has recommended the inclusion of questions about reproductive coercion in the Personal Safety Survey.
- Improved ability to disaggregate other datasets such as the Personal Safety Survey (specifically in terms of the emotional abuse module).

Resourcing more specific repeated studies, e.g. exploring violence and decision-making control between partners experienced by certain sub-population groups (such as LGBTIQ communities, women with disability, or young people), and surveys which focus on specific forms of controlling and coercive behaviour (e.g. reproductive coercion).

#### Indicator 4.1: Percentage of women who report controlling behaviour in a relationship (men's control over women)

What does this indicator tell us about Monitoring domain 4: Men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in relationships and private life?	This indicator looks at what women themselves are reporting via survey instruments about experiencing controlling behaviour from an intimate partner (current or former). Change to the proportion of women who report controlling behaviour by a partner is measured.
Expected change if high-quality programs and infrastructure for prevention of violence against women and gender equality are implemented	Short- and medium-term: increased rates of women reporting controlling behaviour in relationships as it becomes more socially acceptable to report such behaviour. Long-term: these rates plateau.
Data source(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Personal Safety Survey (PSS) 2012 and 2016, ABS</li> <li>2. National Survey of Secondary Students and Sexual Health 2008 and 2018, Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society (ARCSHS)<sup>363</sup></li> <li>3. First and Second Australian Studies of Health and Relationships 2002 and 2013, UNSW, The University of Sydney, University of Sussex, La Trobe University<sup>364</sup></li> </ol>

<p>Change over time summary: short-term change revealed by the data</p>	<p><i>Emotional abuse:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Twelve-month rates of experiences of partner emotional abuse from a current or former partner have remained consistent between survey waves (noting that additional emotional abuse behaviours were added in the 2016 wave).</li> </ul> <p><i>Sexual coercion, pressure and unwanted sexual experiences:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Available data suggests a considerable prevalence of experiences of sexual coercion and unwanted sexual experiences among women, including young women, and limited change over time to these prevalence rates.</li> </ul>
<p>Does the change confirm or run contrary to expected change?</p>	<p><i>Emotional abuse:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12-month prevalence has remained consistent, contrary to expected change.</li> </ul> <p><i>Sexual coercion, pressure and unwanted sexual experiences:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timeseries data is limited but where it exists it suggests limited to no change over time to prevalence rates of sexual coercion and unwanted sexual experiences among women.</li> </ul>

Gaps in existing data	<p>While it is a rich source of data, the PSS data on emotional abuse is limited by a number of factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is not published in a form that allows disaggregation by demographic factors other than gender. Therefore, we do not whether and how the prevalence rates (and impacts) of partner emotional abuse against women who experience one or more intersecting forms of structural inequality (such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, migrant or refugee women, LGBTIQ women, women with disability, women who inhabit more than one of the above demographic categories) differs from whole-of-female-population figures.</li> <li>• It only measures partner controlling behaviours experienced where partners have resided together, and as such prevalence rates of partner emotional abuse do not represent the full range of intimate relationships.</li> <li>• While numerous, the controlling behaviours measured by the PSS are not exhaustive. For example, they do not encompass non-physical, interpersonal forms of reproductive coercion that could be enacted by an intimate partner (such as pressuring into a pregnancy or controlling the outcome of a pregnancy).<sup>365</sup></li> <li>• It should be noted that the next wave of the PSS (2020) will include some new additions to ‘emotional abuse behaviours’, particularly focused on financial forms of abuse.</li> </ul> <p>Data on sexual coercion, sexual pressure and unwanted sexual experiences as well as reproductive coercion is limited and in most instances not disaggregated beyond gender.</p>
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## Emotional abuse

The PSS measures a range of controlling behaviours or non-physical violence in current or previous cohabiting partner relationships under what is termed in the survey 'emotional abuse'.<sup>xlii</sup> This includes a range of non-physical behaviours (detailed below) that are undertaken with the intent to control a partner or ex-partner and have caused harm or fear. While not completely comprehensive – for example, the PSS does not measure reproductive coercion – the range of behaviours measured is extensive.

The 2016 PSS results show that approximately one in four women (24.5% in 2012 and 23.0% in 2016) reported having experienced emotional abuse by a current or previous cohabiting partner since the age of 15. That is, **the lifetime prevalence of controlling behaviours experienced by women from intimate partners is high.**<sup>xliii</sup>

### Which controlling behaviours by partners are measured in the Personal Safety Survey?

The Personal Safety Survey 'Emotional abuse module' measures a range of controlling behaviours from current or previous partners with whom a respondent has lived/is living. The Survey defines emotional abuse as occurring 'when a person is subjected to certain behaviours or actions that are aimed at preventing or controlling their behaviour, causing them emotional harm or fear. These behaviours are characterised in nature by their intent to manipulate, control, isolate or intimidate the person they are aimed at. They are generally repeated behaviours and include psychological, social, economic or verbal abuse.'

Personal Safety Survey respondents are asked about the following controlling behaviours enacted by a partner:

- Controlled or tried to control them from contacting family, friends or community.
- Controlled or tried to control them from using the telephone, internet or family car.
- Controlled or tried to control where they went or who they saw.

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xlii It should be noted that this data does not then include controlling behaviours in relationships where people have not resided with one another. Please note that data from the Personal Safety Survey's emotional abuse module is also reported against Indicators 11.1 and 11.6 in Section 2 Part B of this report, as a form of non-physical intimate partner violence. On the basis of publicly available data, it is not possible to disaggregate partners by sex/gender; however, the overwhelming majority of women are in relationships with men. Nor does the publicly available data allow for disaggregation of the women who have experienced partner emotional abuse by any other demographic factor.

xliii Lifetime prevalence figures for women who have experienced emotional abuse includes women who do not have a current partner and/or have never had a previous partner. These figures also do not include intimate relationships where partners have not resided together. In these respects, the true prevalence of partner controlling behaviours experienced by women who have ever had any kind of intimate relationship is likely higher.



- Kept track of where they were and who they were with (for example, monitoring social media).
- Controlled or tried to control them from knowing, accessing or deciding about household money.
- Controlled or tried to control them from working or earning money.
- Controlled or tried to control their income or assets.
- Controlled or tried to control them from studying.
- Deprived them of basic needs such as food, shelter, sleep or assistive aids.
- Damaged, destroyed or stole any of their property.
- Constantly insulted them to make them feel ashamed, belittled or humiliated (for example, put-downs).
- Shouted, yelled or verbally abused them to intimidate them.
- Lied to their child/ren with the intent of turning them against them.
- Lied to other family members or friends with the intent of turning them against them.
- Threatened to take their child/ren away from them.
- Threatened to harm their child/ren.
- Threatened to harm their other family members or friends.
- Threatened to harm any of their pets.
- Harmed any of their pets.
- Threatened or tried to commit suicide.

A Personal Safety Survey respondent who indicates they have experienced one or more of the above behaviours is considered only to have experienced emotional abuse when the behaviours caused emotional harm or fear, and were repeated, with intent to control. Where a respondent has experienced emotional abuse from more than one previous partner, they are asked to respond in relation to the most recent emotionally abusive relationship they have experienced.

The next wave of the Personal Safety Survey (2020) will include some measurement of some additional controlling behaviours, in particular those related to financial abuse.

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Source: ABS (2017), *Personal Safety Survey, Australia: User Guide, 2016*.

### Partner control of migrant and refugee women

Various studies and meta-reviews have identified that migrant and refugee women experience specific forms of partner-perpetrated non-physical control, such as immigration status-related abuse, financial abuse, reproductive coercion, control of mobility and forced marriage, and that these experiences have a tremendous impact. These studies show that for such women, multiple forms of gender inequality, including both male attitudes and structural forms of disadvantage (such as financial adversity and poverty, insecurity and inequality within official systems of welfare and migration, social isolation and barriers to service access) combine to increase and reinforce dependency and the ability of male partners to exert power and control over female partners (El Murr, 2019; Ragusa, 2017; Segrave, 2017; Shabbar, 2012; Vaughan et al, 2016; Cortis and Bullen, 2015; Bhuyan, 2012; Ghafournia, 2011; Thronson, 2012; Metusela et al., 2017; Lyneham and Bricknell, 2018).

### Sexual coercion, sexual pressure, and unwanted sex

Some limited data is available on Australians' experiences of sexual coercion, pressure for sex by intimate partners, and unwanted sex. There is significant crossover here with regard to the prevalence rates of violence against women (as reported in Monitoring domain 11), given that these experiences in themselves may, in many instances, indicate, constitute or result in sexual assault or sexual harassment. However, they are also pertinent to this domain with regard to the dynamics of male sexual control and dominance, and women's sexual and bodily autonomy.

Analysis of results from the population-representative Second Australian Study of Health and Relationships (2012–13) shows that **more than one in five women (22.3%) reported having experienced at least one incident of being 'forced or frightened into doing something sexual'** across their lifetime (including during childhood).<sup>366</sup> Approximately half of these (10% of all women) had experienced sexual coercion during childhood (before age 16).<sup>xliv</sup> Comparatively, fewer than one in 20 men reported having experienced sexual coercion during their lifetime, in both survey waves.<sup>367</sup>

Results from the repeated National Survey of Secondary Students and Sexual Health shows in 2008 and 2018 nearly two in five (38% in 2008 and 36.8% in 2018) surveyed female students reported experiencing unwanted sex (that is, having sex when they did not want to).<sup>368</sup> The most commonly cited reason for this in 2018 was 'my partner thought I should' (51.5% of female students who reported experiencing unwanted sex), followed by 'I was too drunk at the time' (34.3%) and 'I was frightened' (32.3%), with these results suggesting considerable patterns of sexual coercion.<sup>369</sup> Most female students' (97.4%) most recent sexual encounter had been with a male partner.<sup>370</sup> Moreover, in 2018 two in five female students reported having experienced pressure to have vaginal or anal sex from a male partner.<sup>371</sup>

xliv This data is indicative of the likely prevalence of sexual coercion perpetrated by men against women. However, as perpetrator data is currently unavailable, it is not possible to confirm the proportion of incidents of sexual coercion that are perpetrated by men.

### **Data case study: Reproductive control and coercion**

*(prepared with assistance from Marie Stopes Australia)*

The Australian Women's Health Strategy identified 'a reduction in the rate of reproductive coercion' as a key measure of success in addressing the health impacts of violence against women and girls. Marie Stopes Australia (2018) has recommended that the Personal Safety Survey be adapted to include questions about interpersonal forms of reproductive coercion, to promote greater understanding of the prevalence of reproductive coercion across the Australian population.

Marie Stopes Australia's 2018 counselling data shows that 32% of counselling clients were living in coercive contexts.\* This rate was higher for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, 50% of whom were living in coercive contexts. Clients were more likely to identify that they were living in coercive contexts between weeks 10 and 17 of gestation. This pattern was consistent regardless of whether it was the first or a subsequent counselling appointment (Corbin 2019).

A recent analysis of five waves of the Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health, focused on examining the relative strength of different factors associated with abortion over time, demonstrates a strong association between Australian women's experience of intimate partner violence, and abortion. The study authors conclude that partner violence has a considerable 'effect on a woman's ability to control her fertility' and that 'abortion remains strongly associated with factors affecting women's control over reproductive health such as partner violence' (Taft et al., 2019).

A recent review of intimate partner violence experienced by refugee women identified that many refugee women feel unable to say no to sex, seek support for their sexual and reproductive health, and exert control over their reproduction (El-Murr, 2019; Metusela et al., 2017). Moreover, other research has found that Australian health care professionals who provide services routinely observe reproductive coercion experienced by refugee women and women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (Mengesha et al., 2017).

Another study of Aboriginal women living in remote communities found that study participants expressed concerns about reproductive coercion, specifically with regard to pressure to become pregnant (Griffiths et al., 2019).

\* A total of 965 women and pregnant people accessed pregnancy options counselling at Marie Stopes in 2018. In this data coercive contexts included when a person was pregnant due to sexual violence, when they had a partner who was unsupportive of pregnancy options counselling, and/or who identified that they were being coerced towards an abortion, adoption or parenting option that they would not choose themselves.

## Indicator 4.2: Attitudes associated with men's control and women's dependence and limited decision-making power in private life<sup>xlv</sup>

What does this indicator tell us about Monitoring domain 4: Men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in relationships and private life?	This indicator looks at the degree to which individuals in Australia attitudinally subscribe to norms reflecting men's control of intimate relationships with women. It differs from Indicator 4.1 which measured women's experiences of controlling behaviours by partners.
Expected change if high-quality programs and infrastructure for prevention of violence against women and gender equality are implemented	Short- and medium-term: some reduction in attitudinal subscription to ideas about the rightfulness and preferability of men's control of intimate relationships with women.  Long-term: the majority of individuals in Australia hold attitudes which support women's independence and equality in intimate relationships with men.
Data source(s)	1. National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS) 2009 and 2017, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS)  2. The Men's Project and M. Flood, <i>The Man Box: A study on being a young man in Australia</i> , 2018, Jesuit Social Services
Change over time summary: short-term change revealed by the data	On the basis of the NCAS results, between 2009 and 2017 there was a small decrease in the proportion of Australians who believe that men should take control in relationships with women and that women preference male control in relationships.  Man Box data is baseline only but shows a considerable influence of social norms among young men regarding male dominance and control in relationships with women.
Does the change confirm or run contrary to expected change?	Confirms expected change.
Gaps in existing data	There is currently very limited data, especially any allowing for analysis of change over time, on the kinds of attitudes and norms related to masculinity that are subscribed to by men and boys. This is an area in which there is a significant need for data development.

<sup>xlv</sup> This indicator did not appear in *Counting on change*; however, it has been added here due to the availability of NCAS data.

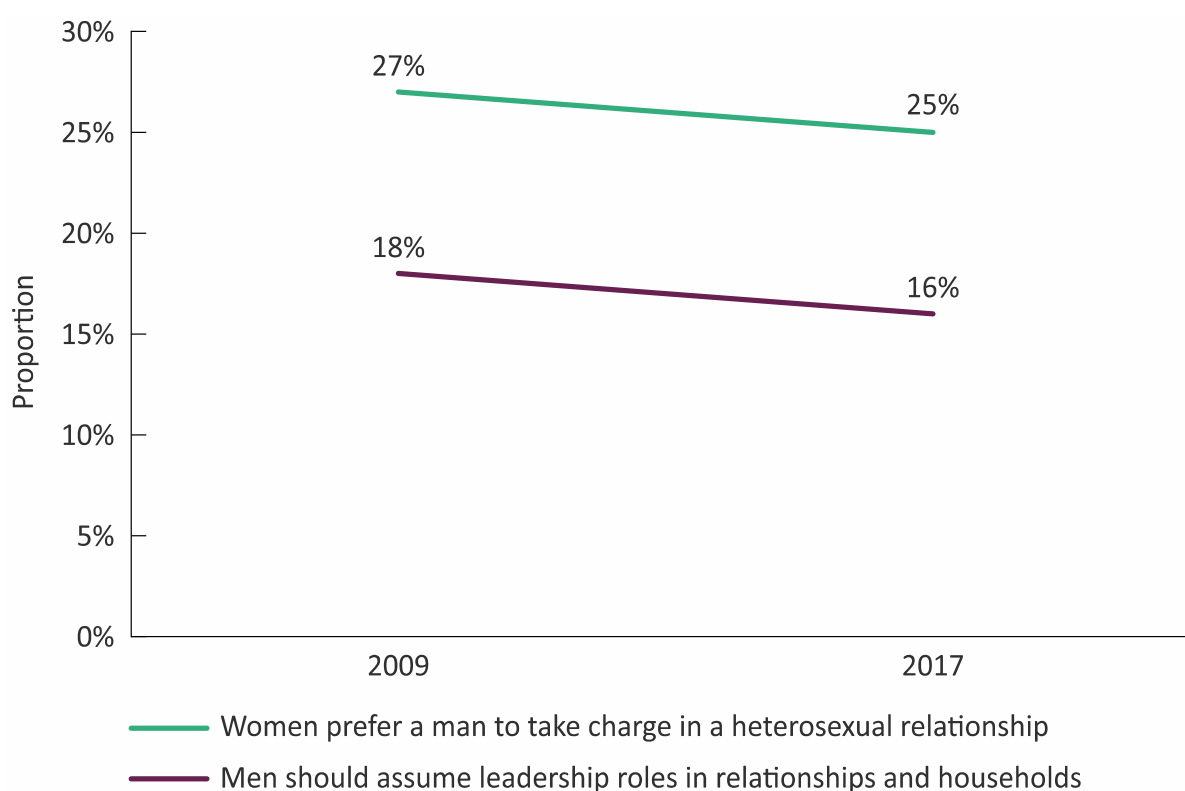
Since the 2009 wave, the NCAS has asked for responses to the following statements relevant to considering limits to women's independence in relationships:

1. 'Men should take control in relationships and be the head of the household.'
2. 'Women prefer a man to be in charge of the relationship.'<sup>372</sup>

In 2009, 18% of Australians agreed that men should assume a leadership role in relationships and households; this increased by 1 percentage point in 2013, and decreased slightly to 16% in 2017. This means that in 2017, approximately one in six Australians thought that men should take control in relationships with women.

In 2017, one-quarter (25%) of Australians thought that women prefer a man to take charge in a female–male relationship. This result is down by 2 percentage points since 2009 (see Figure 28, below).<sup>373</sup>

**Figure 28: Proportion of people who agreed with statements about relationship roles, 2009 and 2017**



Sources: NCAS 2009 and NCAS 2017

### **Disaggregating 2017 data: how do women, men, young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and people born in non-main English-speaking countries respond to these questions on male control and dominance of intimate relationships with women?**

It is in this realm of gender equality in private life that differences are revealed between the attitudes of women and men. Based on the 2017 NCAS data, only one in five women (19%) agreed that 'Women prefer a man to be in charge of the relationship', while one-third of men (32%) agreed with this statement. The proportion of men who agreed that 'Men should

take control in relationships and be the head of the household' was significantly higher than the proportion of women who agreed – 21% as compared with 12%.<sup>374</sup> It would seem, then, that women and men have quite different views and aspirations with regard to gender equality in female–male or heterosexual relationships. This is consistent with the findings of other surveys such as the Household Income and Labour Dynamics Australia (HILDA) survey.

The results from the young people's sample in the NCAS 2017 are similar overall to the whole-of-population results, and also reveal considerable differences in how young women and young men respond to these two questions. Overall, 17% of young people agreed that 'Men should take control in relationships and be the head of the household', down by 5 percentage points from the 2013 result (22%). However, only 12% of young women agreed with this statement, as compared with 22% of young men.<sup>375</sup> Overall, 31% of young people agreed that 'Women prefer a man to be in charge in the relationship' (higher than the whole-of-population agreement rate of 25%). However, young men were more likely to subscribe to this idea, with 36% agreeing, compared to 26% of young women (a statistically significant difference in how young men and young women responded) (see Table 31, below).<sup>376</sup>

The responses of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to these two questions are reasonably similar to the whole-of-population results. One in five (20%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people agree that 'Men should take control in relationships and be head of the household'. However, there is a statistically significant difference in how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women answered this question, with an agreement rate of 27% among men as compared with only 13% of women. A gender difference in response rates was less stark for the statement 'Women prefer a man to be in charge of the relationship', with 29% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men agreeing to this, as compared with 26% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. The overall agreement response rate to this statement among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was 28%.<sup>377</sup>

Overall, the agreement response rates to these two questions from the cohort of people born in non-main English-speaking countries is statistically significantly different to the overall population agreement rate. Over one-quarter (26%) of people from non-main English-speaking countries agreed that 'Men should take control in relationships and be head of the household' (as compared with 16% whole-of-population agreement rate). Nearly two in five (37%) of people from non-main English-speaking countries agreed that 'Women prefer a man to be in charge of the relationship' (while the whole-of-population agreement rate was 25%). However, on both questions, there were considerable differences in the agreement response rates of women and men. In response to the statement 'Women prefer a man to be in charge of the relationship', 30% of women agreed, as compared with 43% of men (a statistically significant difference). In response to 'Men should take control in relationships and be head of the household', 30% of men agreed, as compared with only 21% of women.<sup>378</sup>

**Table 31: Attitudes to men's control and women's independence in relationships, proportion agreement to statement, 2017 results disaggregated**

Sub-population group results	Statement 1: Men should take control in relationships and be head of the household	Statement 2: Women prefer a man to be in charge of the relationship
Whole-of-population agreement rate	16%	25%
Women's agreement rate	12%	19%
Men's agreement rate	21%	32%
Young people's agreement rate	17%	31%
Young women's agreement rate	12%	26%
Young men's agreement rate	22%	36%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's agreement rate	20%	28%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's agreement rate	13%*	26%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men's agreement rate	27%*	29%
People born in non-main English-speaking countries' agreement rate	26%^	37%^
Women born in non-main English-speaking countries' agreement rate	21	30*
Men born in non-main English-speaking countries' agreement rate	30	43*

Source: NCAS 2017

\* denotes a statistically significant difference between the responses of women and men of the particular demographic group

^ denotes a statistically significant difference to the whole-of-population result

The inaugural Man Box study in Australia (2018) examines the perceptions of young men (aged 18 to 30) with regard to attitudes and norms around manhood and masculinity.<sup>379</sup> While only baseline data at this stage, it is a pertinent study for inclusion here. Three statements put to respondents are of relevance to men's control and dominance and limitations to women's independence in relationships:

1. Men should really be the ones to bring money home to provide for their families, not women.
2. A man should always have the final say about decisions in his relationships or marriage.
3. If a guy has a girlfriend or wife, he deserves to know where she is at all times.

Across each of these questions, a considerable proportion of young men perceived a social norm telling them men should be financial providers and decision-makers in relationships with women, and also be controlling with regard to a female partner's whereabouts. Moreover, a considerable proportion of young men not only perceived the existence of a social norm, but personally endorsed these norms through their individual attitudes. For example, over half (56%) of young men agreed that 'Society tells me that men should really be the ones to bring money home to provide for their families, not women.' More than one-third (35%) personally agreed that 'Men should really be the ones to bring money to provide for their families, not women' (see Table 32, below). In sum, **responses to these statements suggest that young men continue to be strongly influenced by social norms with regard to male control and limits to women's independence and decision-making in relationships.**

**Table 32: Young men's perceptions of attitudes and norms regarding men's control and decision-making in relationships with women, 2018**

Statement	Social message/ norm: % agree that 'Society tells me that ...'	Personal endorsement/ individual attitude: % agree that 'In my opinion ...'	Gap between social norm and individual attitude: %
Men should really be the ones to bring money home to provide for their families, not women	56%	35%	21%
A man should always have the final say about decisions in his relationships or marriage	43%	27%	16%
If a guy has a girlfriend or wife, he deserves to know where she is at all times	44%	37%	7%

Source: The Men's Project and M. Flood, *The Man Box*, 2018, p. 7



# Gendered driver: Male peer relations that emphasise aggression and disrespect towards women

## Monitoring domain 5: Male peer relations emphasising aggression and disrespect towards women<sup>xlvi</sup>

Indicator 5.1	Men's reluctance to intervene in sexism and disrespect
Indicator 5.2	Male peer relationships that emphasise disrespect and control over women

Literature on masculinity shows that '[d]ominant ideas or norms of masculinity are often central to male peer relationships (men's friendships and interactions with other men). These norms can influence the ways in which men relate to each other, and can be seen in the way some men and boys use sexist, homophobic or aggressive behaviours to assert their masculinity, "prove" their manhood and gain approval from male peers.'<sup>380</sup>

Dominant patterns of male peer relationships, i.e. those that reinforce stereotypical and aggressive forms of masculinity, can also promote a clear distinction between men and women, where women might become the 'collateral damage' that results from men needing to constantly seek approval from other men.<sup>381</sup>

These dominant patterns in male peer relations are associated with higher probability of violence against women because:

- an emphasis on aggression and sexual conquest in socialisation of men through peer relationships may lead to a greater tendency for some men to use or support violence<sup>382</sup>
- when men are encouraged to privilege their relationships with other men over those with women, they may be more likely to excuse other men's violent and disrespectful behaviour towards women<sup>383</sup>
- men may be reluctant to take a stand against their peers' disrespect of women, or even use of violence itself, because they fear rejection from their peers.

For men who experience structural inequality and discrimination, attachment to dominant forms of masculinity can sometimes be more rigid, as part of in-group protective mechanisms which in turn defend and uphold impunity for men's violence across the group. These patterns in male peer relations can also be further exacerbated in the context of any male-dominated setting or institution with particularly strong attachments to hegemonic masculinity. There is also emerging evidence that extremist, right-wing and backlash movements (such as Men's Rights Activists and white supremacist movements) reflect

<sup>xlvi</sup> The indicators listed under this domain 7 are an adaptation of those in the original published *Counting on change* framework. The research team determined that it was important to be more specific about the different dimensions of male peer relations that emphasise aggression and disrespect.

male peer cultures that are at once highly gendered in their subscription to aggressive and violent masculine norms, and hostile to difference across a range of fronts.<sup>384</sup>

The indicators identified to measure progress in Monitoring domain 5 (Male peer relations emphasising aggression and disrespect towards women) look at men's propensity to undertake bystander action if they witness sexism or disrespect, male peer relations emphasising aggression and disrespect, and men's hostility towards women. Due to the limitations of existing population-level datasets, the data used includes population-representative surveys undertaken by Our Watch.

### **Shifting male peer relations which emphasise aggression and disrespect towards women: Summary of change over time**

As this is a monitoring domain with limited and emerging data, this analysis is largely establishing a baseline, rather than reporting on progress. Some individual attitudes and behaviour intentions captured in the National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS) situate respondents in hypothetical social situations and can be used to illicit some understandings about men's attitudes towards women when they are with other men. However, this doesn't capture the specific dynamics of men's peer relationships; hence, further research on this issue is needed, including consideration of how this indicator might be measured and monitored across the population. Recommendations for future research and data collection that would strengthen the ability to monitor progress in this domain are noted below.

Taken together, the measures analysed in this domain suggest that many men are susceptible to the perceived expectations of other men, with the effect that some men may express sexism or hostility towards women when with their male peers, or be more reluctant than women to call out such behaviours from other men. When asked about intention to take bystander action when witnessing a male friend make a sexist joke, men were less likely than women to say they would take action. Of respondents who said they would take action, fewer men than women believed their friends would support them.

The findings support the suggestion in *Change the story* that 'men may be reluctant to take a stand against their peers' disrespect of women, or even use of violence itself, because they fear rejection from their peers'.<sup>385</sup> They also suggest that actions to strengthen positive, equal and respectful relationships between and among women and men, girls and boys, are critically important, and may help to reduce the prevalence of men's aggression and disrespect towards women as a feature of male peer relations. These actions could be supported by prevention efforts which 'seek to further understand the ways in which men relate to each other in their social and work contexts, and seek to challenge peer relations that normalise aggression, disrespect and hostility towards women, as expressions of masculinity'.<sup>386</sup>

## Indicator 5.1: Men's reluctance to intervene in sexism and disrespect

What does this indicator tell us about Monitoring domain 5: Male peer relations emphasising aggression and disrespect towards women?	This indicator reflects male peer relations that emphasise disrespect towards women by measuring the extent to which men challenge sexism and disrespect towards women with their peers.
Expected change if high-quality programs and infrastructure for prevention of violence against women and gender equality are implemented	Short- and medium-term: proportion of men reluctant to intervene in instances of sexism and disrespect towards women decreases gradually. Long-term: these rates plateau.
Data source(s)	National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS) 2017, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS)
Change over time summary: short-term change revealed by the data	Only baseline data available at this point; no assessment of change possible.
Does the change confirm or run contrary to expected change?	Not yet able to assess change.
Gaps in existing data	Only very limited data is available via the NCAS. More data instruments focused on men's attitudes and norms of masculinity are required.

In 2017, for the first time, the NCAS incorporated a section on bystander behaviour and intentions when witnessing sexism and disrespect towards women. Specifically, respondents were asked about their likely response if a male friend told a sexist joke about women. Given that this is the first time these questions were included in the NCAS, it is not yet possible to track results over time. However, future iterations of the NCAS will allow tracking of changes in bystander intentions. An important caveat here is that the NCAS asks respondents to indicate how they think they would respond in a hypothetical scenario, and not about their actual behaviour. While behavioural intentions are considered important for understanding how and why people act the way they do, there is often a discrepancy between how people say they will act, and their *actual* behaviour, a phenomenon known as the 'intention-behaviour gap'.<sup>387</sup> Thus, inferring actual behaviour from intentions is likely to overestimate bystander behaviour.

Almost half (45%) of Australians said they would take action if they witnessed a male friend make a sexist joke about women. A further 13% said they would like to act but would not know what to do, and almost one in five (18%) said they would not take action because they would feel uncomfortable doing so. There were key gender differences in the results, with women significantly more likely to say they would act (55%) compared to men (33%).

More than half of respondents (55%) believed that if they were to act, they would have the support of all or most of their friends. This was especially the case among women, with over three in five (62%) believing most of their friends would support them, compared to less than half (48%) of men. Men were also more likely than women to report that few if any friends would support them if they took action (15% of men compared to 7% of women).

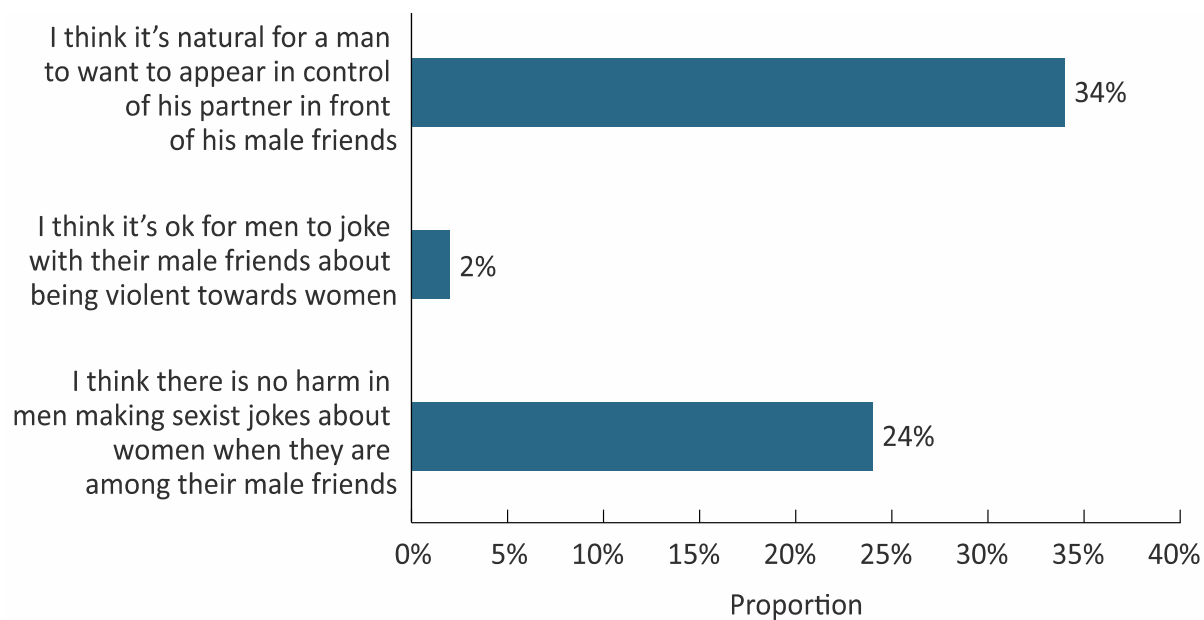
## Indicator 5.2: Male peer relationships that emphasise disrespect and control over women

What does this indicator tell us about Monitoring domain 5: Male peer relations emphasising aggression and disrespect towards women?	This indicator reflects male peer relations that emphasise disrespect towards women by measuring the extent to which men challenge sexism and disrespect towards women with their peers.
Expected change if high-quality programs and infrastructure for prevention of violence against women and gender equality are implemented	Short- and medium-term: gradual decrease in rates of the condoning of male peer relationships that emphasise disrespect and control over women. Long-term: these rates plateau.
Data source(s)	National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS) 2017, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS)
Change over time summary: short-term change revealed by the data	Only baseline data available at this point; no assessment of change possible.
Does the change confirm or run contrary to expected change?	It is not yet possible to assess change.
Gaps in existing data	There is very limited data available via the NCAS. While future waves of the NCAS will allow for tracking of change in attitudes, additional data instruments focused on men's attitudes and norms of masculinity are required.

In 2017, for the first time, the NCAS examined the extent to which Australians condone male peer relationships that emphasise disrespect and control over women. While only one data point is provided at present (as it was not included in previous iterations of the NCAS), future waves of the survey will allow for subsequent tracking of these attitudes. As Figure 29, below, shows, while almost no Australians (2%) agree that it's OK for men to joke with their male friends about being violent towards women, nearly one-quarter (24%) agree that there is no harm in men making sexist jokes about women when among their male peers. Analysis by gender reveals that this attitude was much more pronounced among men than women (with 30% of men agreeing, compared to just 18% of women). Further, more than one in

three Australians (34%) believed that it's natural for a man to want to appear in control of his partner in front of his male friends (see Figure 29, below).

**Figure 29: Proportion of men agreeing with statements condoning male peer relations that involve aggression and disrespect towards women, 2017**



Source: NCAS 2017

# Intersecting drivers of violence (other forms of oppression and discrimination)

## Monitoring domain 6: Intersecting drivers of violence (other forms of oppression and discrimination)

Indicator 6.1	Racism and ongoing impacts of colonisation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural determinants of health and wellbeing
Indicator 6.2	Proportion of population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the past 12 months on the basis of a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law
Indicator 6.3	Proportion of the population who hold discriminatory views around race, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, etc.

Reflecting the *Change the story* framework, *Counting on change* listed the domain of ‘Socioeconomic inequality and discrimination’ under factors reinforcing or compounding violence against women.<sup>xlvi</sup> Since *Change the story*, Our Watch has undertaken a range of work which further develops an intersectional approach to prevention of violence against women. During this process we have learned much from other organisations and stakeholders with expertise and lived experience relating to intersecting drivers of violence (other forms of oppression and discrimination). As noted in *Change the story three years on* (2019), factors such as racism, colonisation, ableism, homophobia and transphobia not only reduce or limit some women’s access to social and economic power and resources, and their perceived worth, but also affect the relative influence of gender inequality, gendered drivers and reinforcing factors in any given context. Experiences of violence against women are varied and often multidimensional, and for many women experiences of both gender inequality and violence are compounded by the impacts of other forms of structural discrimination and inequality, whether based on race, sexuality, ability, gender identity or expression, faith, ethnicity or economic disadvantage. These broader structural processes intersect and interact to further deny women their social, political and economic rights.<sup>388</sup> As such, they can play a significant role in increasing the frequency, severity and prevalence of violence against women and in creating particular forms of impunity and immunity from accountability for perpetrators of violence.<sup>389</sup>

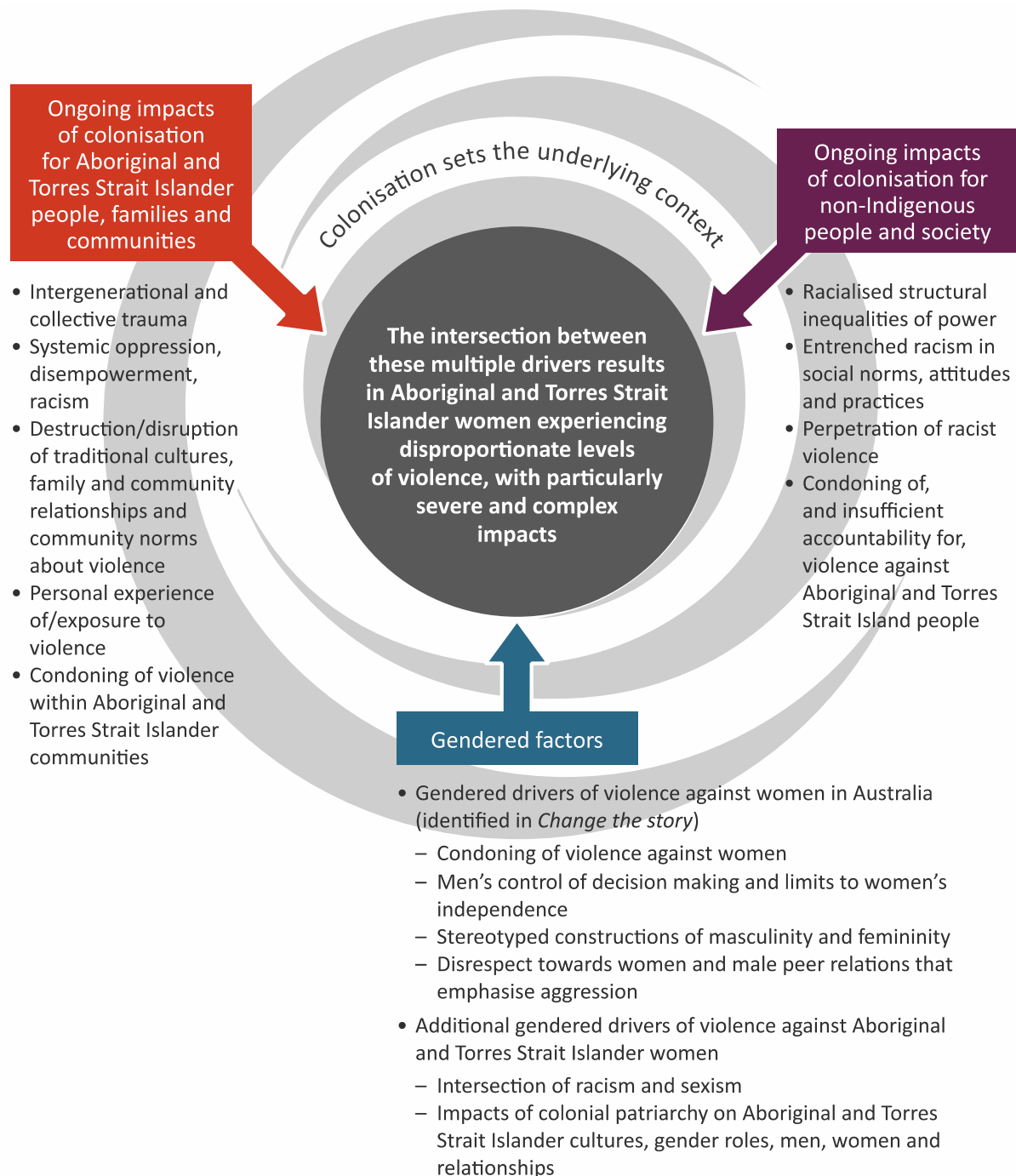
To highlight the importance of this domain, this report separates it out from the ‘reinforcing factors’, in order to more strongly convey how other forms of oppression and discrimination intersect with gender inequality to drive violence against women in specific ways. Across the gendered drivers measured in this report we have sought to articulate how various intersecting forms of oppression and privilege can shape and particularise the operation of each of the gendered drivers of violence measured in the previous section, creating different impacts and experiences for different groups of women in different contexts.

xlvi It appeared as domain 12 in *Counting on change*.

## Intersectional approaches to preventing violence against women

The model presented in *Changing the picture* (see Figure 30, below) shows how it is the intersection of gendered factors and the ongoing impacts of colonisation (on both non-Indigenous people and society and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, families and communities) that together drive disproportionate levels of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, with particularly severe and complex impacts. *Changing the picture* demonstrates that in understanding violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, racism and the impacts of colonisation cannot be considered only as ‘reinforcing’ factors that are necessarily of lower significance than gendered drivers. None of these factors operate in isolation and none provides a simple explanation in any given context. Rather, it is the combination, or intersection, of these multiple factors that drives such high rates of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.<sup>390</sup>

**Figure 30: The intersecting drivers of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women**



Source: Our Watch. (2018). *Changing the picture: A national resource to support the prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children*, Melbourne, Australia: Our Watch, p. 13.

[Text-equivalent description of Figure 30 in Appendix E](#)



**An intersectional model for understanding violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women, edited extract from *Changing the picture – Background paper: Understanding violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women* (Our Watch, 2018)**

Colonisation is itself an inherently violent process. In Australia, multiple forms of state or state-sanctioned systematic violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been used as tools of this process. [...] The devastating impacts on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of these various forms of colonial violence are widely documented. They include cultural devastation, loss, significant family and community dislocation, and ongoing negative impacts on health and wellbeing. Colonisation has also left significant legacies for non-Indigenous people, and has influenced and shaped Australian society and culture in general, creating racist and discriminatory norms, structures and practices [...]

While the combined, ongoing impacts of colonisation and racism are a significant driver of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, this alone cannot explain the gendered patterns in the data. Violence affects many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, but women and their children suffer disproportionately, especially as a result of intimate partner violence, family violence and sexual violence. We also know from the national prevention framework [*Change the story*, 2015] that gender inequality sets the necessary conditions for the levels of violence against women generally across Australia. For all these reasons, any model for understanding violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women therefore needs to consider the gendered dimensions of this issue [...]

The explanatory model [in *Changing the picture*] depicts three intersecting drivers of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. [It] shows that these drivers are overlapping and interrelated, and that they all exist in the context of colonisation.

The diagram also emphasises that it is the complex intersection of these factors that creates the conditions for the extremely high prevalence and severity of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women that we see in Australia today [...]

None of these factors operates in isolation. There is no one cause of violence, and none of these drivers provides a simple explanation in any context.

Rather, it is the combination, or intersection of these various factors that drives such high rates of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

A key feature of the model is the way it helps explain the different combinations of factors that drive the use of violence by non-Indigenous men, and by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men.

As another example, our paper on *Primary prevention of family violence against people from LGBTI communities* (2017) demonstrates that hostility, discrimination and violence against women of diverse sexual orientations, trans women and gender-diverse people is firmly rooted in harmful constructs of the gender binary and the subsequent gender hierarchy.

Just as gender constructions and inequality drive violence against women, so too does the rigid adherence and enforcement of binary gender roles and stereotypes continue to harm people of diverse sexual and gender identities.<sup>391</sup> As such, it is the combining of gendered drivers and hostility to sexual and gender diversity that drives violence against people of diverse sexual and gender identities.

We also know through available research and advocacy that the experiences of violence against women with disability are varied and can often be multidimensional. For women with disability, experiences of violence are often compounded by experiences of ableism and disability discrimination. These broader structural processes intersect and interact to deny women with disability their social, political and economic rights, thus contributing to a social context whereby women and girls with disability, and people with disability more broadly, are devalued and dehumanised.<sup>392</sup> In Australia, we know that women with disability experience violence in similar situations to all women – they are likely to be assaulted by someone who is known to them, the perpetrator is most likely to be a man, and the violence will occur in their home or place of residence.<sup>393</sup> Yet there are also differences to consider. For example, women with disability are more likely to reside in institutions such as community-based group homes, boarding houses, hospitals, mental health facilities or nursing homes. Within these varied settings, violence may be perpetrated by a range of people, including medical professionals, disability support service practitioners, and paid or non-paid carers. Ableism also means that the violence experienced by women with disability may be hidden, reframed as an unspecified ‘incident’, and downplayed. There are limitations in the Personal Safety Survey with regard to capturing data on women with disabilities. The survey is only administered to individuals in private dwellings, rather than including other situations in which some people with disability live, such as care homes. Participation cannot be supported by a carer, which also excludes many people with disability. Notwithstanding these limitations, Personal Safety Survey data reveals that women with disability experience a higher prevalence of various forms of violence, including partner physical or sexual violence, sexual violence by non-partners, partner emotional abuse, and sexual harassment. In order to understand and prevent violence against women with disabilities, it is essential to consider and address the intersection of sexism and ableism.

Race discrimination, religious xenophobia, and in some instances class discrimination, also intersect with gender inequality in particular ways for women from refugee and migrant backgrounds.<sup>394</sup> For example, social and legal structures such as visa and citizenship settings intersect with gender inequality to limit women’s access to social and economic independence in workplaces and homes, particularly if women’s visa status is dependent on their spouse, children or employer,<sup>395</sup> or in accessing vital services. These forms of discrimination also result in racial stereotypes and harmful assumptions that need to be challenged as an essential component of preventing violence against immigrant and refugee women.<sup>396</sup>

Age discrimination also intersects with gender inequality, impacting older women in particular ways. Ageism in the workplace, and the enactment of traditional gender roles that influence time spent in employment, occupation type and income level, combined with the unequal distribution of unpaid care work and unpaid labour in the home contributes to older women having less financial security and independence than men<sup>397</sup> (as discussed in Monitoring domain 3: Men’s control of decision-making and limits to women’s independence in public life). These impacts can be exploited by perpetrators of violence

against older women. While this is an emerging research area, research that has been conducted suggests that the victims of elder abuse are predominantly women, although this varies depending on the type of abuse.<sup>398</sup> Conversely, ageism can also have negative impacts on young women, who may have less independence, fewer supports and less knowledge of their rights, factors that again can be exploited by perpetrators of violence against younger women.

### **Measuring intersecting drivers of violence (other forms of oppression and discrimination)**

The indicators measuring progress in this domain include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's experiences of racial discrimination as well as social outcomes of the ongoing impacts of colonisation, people's reported experiences of discrimination across a range of oppressions, discriminatory attitudes and socioeconomic inequality.

It is crucial to note that there are considerable limitations to the available data which quantifies structural disadvantage, discrimination and socioeconomic inequality at a population level in Australia. While there have been a number of single studies of particular forms of discrimination, many have not been included here because they have not been repeated, and therefore do not allow for an assessment of change over time (the focus of this report). Further, the data that is available does not always allow for disaggregation along multiple axes of demographic factors, e.g. cultural background and sex/gender, and certainly almost never for more than two factors.

A significant limitation of a quantitative methodology and of existing population-representative datasets is with regard to measuring the intersection of gendered factors with other factors. This is not simply a matter of a lack of or limited disaggregation (though that is a challenge in many instances). It is also that many quantitative datasets are designed in ways which tend to reflect normative framing of issues and of people (for example, implicit heteronormative framing of intimate relationships and families), expressions of gender inequality as experienced by more privileged women, and a 'separation out' of issues (for example, surveys focused on gender inequality and surveys focused on racial discrimination, as distinct from one another). Quantitative datasets are also typically focused on individual attitudes, experiences and personal outcomes resulting from structural inequality and systemic oppression, rather than being able to fully take account of and measure these structural and systemic factors in and of themselves. That is, the outcomes of structural and systemic inequality are presented in quantitative datasets in ways that can be divorced from the context in which they were created. Population-level datasets are focused on the individual's experiences of interpersonal dynamics, or their perceptions and attitudinal expressions of structural inequality, rather than measuring change in the structures themselves.

It is also important to recognise that the collection, analysis and use of data is not neutral; it is a deeply political process in and of itself. This has been made particularly clear by the growing movement for Indigenous data sovereignty in Australia, which has articulated the right of First Nations peoples to govern the design, collection, ownership, analysis and application of data about and pertinent to First Nations communities.<sup>399</sup> Further, the process of counting and measuring progress in itself does not necessarily mean that strategic outcomes will be achieved. The *Close the Gap Strategy* is a key illustration of how monitoring

outcomes of the structures of colonisation impacting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through data does not automatically translate to improvements in those outcomes, because the latter relies on real and sustained intent to transform structural inequalities, matched by appropriate planning, investment and architecture.<sup>400</sup> These tensions with regard to use of data, particularly concerning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, are acknowledged; this project is also embedded in these tensions. For this reason, this report draws upon the prior work of Our Watch with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in developing *Changing the picture* (2018).

Moreover, the data drawn upon in Indicator 6.1 (Racism and impacts of colonisation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural determinants of health and wellbeing) is a snapshot only of the extensive data and indicators that have been developed primarily by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to advocate for addressing the impacts of colonisation and monitoring ongoing strategies. This report references and summarises these major efforts at national monitoring of Indigenous structural discrimination and refers readers to these sources of data where they have been analysed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, rather than undertaking a separate analysis. As articulated in the 2019 *Family Matters* report, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led analyses and critique of existing data is a critical dimension of Indigenous data sovereignty and advocacy for government accountability to policy demands addressing ongoing impacts of colonisation:

‘This year’s Family Matters report is also an opportunity for us to exercise data sovereignty in the interpretation of data related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. Government interpretations of data are often used in support of its own policy agenda and servicing requirements (Kukutai and Taylor, 2016). The report uses data to interpret current efforts to address the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care from our standpoint, and to demand government accountability.’<sup>401</sup>

This report also draws upon First Nations–designed data which challenges a deficit-based model of counting and focuses on cultural strengths.

The available data allows for proxy measurement of progress in relation to addressing inequality and discrimination. However, for the reasons stated above, this report and indeed all forms of quantitative data, should be read alongside qualitative research and analysis. It is highly recommended that readers look to key documents on intersectional approaches to prevention of violence against women, and the specific experiences of women facing multiple, intersecting forms of discrimination and oppression. This broader focus is necessary to build a fuller picture of how these intersecting drivers of violence interact with the gendered drivers to drive violence against women in the contemporary Australian context.

The research and data advocacy of activists, scholars and organisations with specialisation and lived experience in the issues facing particular communities in Australia is critical to building this understanding.

## Challenging socioeconomic inequality and discrimination: Summary of change over time

Analysis of the 2017 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS) findings reveal that there is a significant relationship between prejudicial attitudes relating to Aboriginality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and disability, and attitudes that endorse gender inequality and violence against women.<sup>402</sup> This relationship is particularly concerning in the context of increasing prevalence of experiences of discrimination on the basis of skin colour, ethnic origin or religion which has almost doubled between 2009 and 2018.<sup>403</sup> The indicators below also confirm high prevalence rates of experiences of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, disability, recent migration, lone parenthood, and low socioeconomic status, and multifaceted experiences of discrimination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as a result of the ongoing impacts of racism, colonisation and gender inequality. An analysis of *Footprints in time – The Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children* (LSIC)<sup>404</sup> dataset conducted by Shepherd et al. found that that 40% of primary carers of Indigenous children, 45% of Indigenous families and 14% of Indigenous children aged five to ten years had experienced racial discrimination at some point in their lifetimes and that a significant cohort of the groups that had experienced racial discrimination continue to experience it on a persistent or recurrent basis.<sup>405</sup> The 2015 survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers also showed that experiences of discrimination due to disability were almost twice as likely for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability than non-Indigenous people.<sup>406</sup> Multiple large meta-analyses of data on structural inequalities and social and economic outcomes experienced by First Nations people (including on health inequalities and over-representation of children in out-of-home care) evidence deeply concerning lack of positive progress on many dimensions of structural disadvantage, and, in many respects, some backsliding.<sup>407</sup>

This analysis demonstrates, that, as recognised in *Change the story*, gender inequality can never be considered in isolation from other intersecting forms of systemic social, political and economic discrimination.<sup>408</sup> It also reaffirms findings from *Change the story three years on* which found that that ‘intersectional prevention work requires a structural and systemic focus to address the social systems, structures, norms and practices that create complex intersecting forms of discrimination and privilege, and that influence patterns of perpetration as well as experiences of violence.’<sup>409</sup> In practice, this may include:

- taking time to explicitly explore how simultaneous work can shift other forms of co-existing discriminatory attitudes in conjunction to ‘sexism and hostility towards women’ and recognising that co-existing attitudes may reflect a values system hostile to ‘diversity and difference’<sup>410</sup>
- acknowledging that no single initiative or approach will be equally relevant to all groups or effective in every context, and therefore multiple, different, but mutually reinforcing collective efforts are required
- allowing for dedicated time and resourcing to build the alliances and partnerships required to support a collective and systemic approach to challenging all forms of social, political and economic discrimination.

## Indicator 6.1: Racism and impacts of colonisation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural determinants of health and wellbeing<sup>xlvi</sup>

What does this indicator tell us about Monitoring domain 6: Intersecting drivers of violence (other forms of oppression and discrimination)?	This indicator measures change over time to different dimensions of structural discrimination and interpersonal expressions of racism experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This indicator also measures Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural strengths which help combat the impacts of colonisation upon First Nations people.
Expected change if quality, intersectional primary prevention, gender equality and anti-discrimination programming and infrastructure is implemented	<p>Short- to medium-term: limited change to the prevalence of experiences of structural disadvantage and racism by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Some change to expressions of cultural strengths.</p> <p>Long-term: some reduction in the long term to the degree of structural disadvantage and racism experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Strong change to the expressions of cultural strengths.</p>
Data source(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Mayi Kuwayu: The national longitudinal study of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander wellbeing</i>, Mayi Kuwayu team, National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health (NCEPH) at ANU, 2019 baseline data forthcoming (recommended data source for future monitoring waves)<sup>411</sup></li> <li>2. <i>Overcoming Indigenous disadvantage: Key indicators</i>, 2016 Productivity Commission<sup>412</sup></li> <li>3. Close the Gap campaign report, 2018, Close the Gap Campaign Steering Committee<sup>413</sup></li> <li>4. <i>Family Matters report</i>, 2019, SNAICC – National Voice for Our Children<sup>414</sup></li> <li>5. National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS) 2008 and 2014–15, ABS</li> <li>6. Footprints in time – The Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children (LSIC), 2008 to 2013, Department of Social Services (DSS)<sup>415</sup></li> <li>7. Disability, Ageing and Carers survey 2015, ABS</li> </ol>

xlvi In *Counting on change*, this indicator appeared as ‘Indigenous structural disadvantage’. However, Our Watch’s subsequent work in *Changing the picture* (2018) enables us to more clearly articulate the drivers of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women as gender inequality, racism, and the ongoing impacts of colonisation.



Change over time summary: short-term change revealed by the data	Various meta-analyses of data on outcomes of structural disadvantage and racism experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over the past decade show very limited progress only in certain areas, and no progress or negative trends in many other areas. Trends across multiple indicators and datasets show that the prevalence of experiences of racism and the ongoing impacts of colonisation as creating multiple forms of structural disadvantage continue to be extensive for First Nations people, with only limited positive change, much limited to no change, and some concerning negative trends.
Does the change confirm or run contrary to expected change?	Largely confirms expected trend, though we note that there are concerning negative trends.
Gaps in existing data	Without the baseline data from the Mayi Kuwayu study yet available, the available data is considerably deficit-based, and draws from datasets which tend not to be governed by First Nations people.  The release of baseline data from the new Mayi Kuwayu national longitudinal study of culture, health and wellbeing will be critical to measuring this indicator in the future.

As articulated in the overview of Monitoring domain 6: Intersecting drivers of violence (other forms of oppression and discrimination), the approach to this indicator differs somewhat to other indicators. We acknowledge Indigenous data sovereignty principles<sup>416</sup> and the extensive work of First Nations people and many organisations to develop measures, datasets and meta-analyses with the intent of monitoring trends in structural disadvantage and cultural strengths experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and supporting advocacy and action for addressing racism and the ongoing impacts of colonisation. Such endeavours include the Close the Gap strategy shadow reports on Indigenous health inequality produced by the Close the Gap Campaign Steering Committee, and SNAICC's *Family Matters* reports on turning the tide on the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care. The Council of Australian Governments has also commissioned extensive monitoring reports on datasets illuminating different areas of Indigenous structural disadvantage. Here we document at a very summary level the findings of these large monitoring and campaign projects, and point readers to these analyses for further detailed data analysis. In addition, we have included some summary analyses of key datasets such as the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS).

For future waves of primary prevention monitoring, we recommend:

- use of the new Mayi Kuwayu national longitudinal study on the links between culture, health and wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and how strong culture may in part address the ongoing impacts of colonisation upon First Nations people

- consultation with First Nations researchers and First Nations women working to prevent violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, to find the most appropriate measures and ways by which to support monitoring of prevention of violence against First Nations women.

### **Cultural determinants of health and wellbeing: the Mayi Kuwayu national study of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander wellbeing**

There is currently limited data on the cultural determinants of health and wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. A new study aims to address this gap, in order to 'help us understand the cultural factors that are important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and how these factors relate to health and wellbeing.' (M. Salmon et al., 2019, p. 1). As the project team describes it:

'Mayi Kuwayu is a major new study that will provide a far greater understanding of the value of culture for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The Mayi Kuwayu Study looks at how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander wellbeing is linked to things like connection to country, cultural practices, spirituality and language use.

Our research team will follow a large number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and ask about their culture and wellbeing. As a longitudinal study, we will survey people and then ask them to take the same survey every few years, so that we can understand what influences changes over time.'

(['Mayi Kuwayu: The national study of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander wellbeing'](#), retrieved 10 January 2020).

After years in development, a literature review and extensive community consultation, the Mayi Kuwayu team developed a survey which will enable the tracking of indicators related to culture, and correlate these with the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. A baseline survey wave was conducted in 2019.

This is the first national study of this type. It aims to provide an evidence base for the creation of better policies and programs. The study has been created by and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander controlled research resource, with a majority Aboriginal staffing and governance structure.

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Sources:

['Mayi Kuwayu: The national study of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander wellbeing'](#) (2020)

Mayi Kuwayu study team, 'Community engagement: Good engagement practices for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research', 2018

M. Salmon et al., 'Defining the indefinable: Descriptors of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' culture, and their links to health and wellbeing: A literature review' (2019).



Mayi Kuwayu data will be highly relevant for future primary prevention monitoring waves. The six domains and their indicators in the Mayi Kuwayu study are:

Mayi Kuwayu domain	Indicators
1. Connection to country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spiritual connection</li> <li>• Living on Country</li> <li>• Land rights and autonomy</li> <li>• Caring for Country</li> </ul>
2. Indigenous beliefs and knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spiritual and religious beliefs</li> <li>• Traditional knowledge</li> <li>• Traditional healing</li> <li>• Knowledge transmission and continuity</li> </ul>
3. Indigenous language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impacts of language on health</li> <li>• Language revitalisation</li> <li>• Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language education</li> </ul>
4. Family, kinship and continuity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family and kinship</li> <li>• Community</li> </ul>
5. Cultural expression and continuity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identity</li> <li>• Traditional practices</li> <li>• Arts and music</li> <li>• Community practices</li> <li>• Sport</li> </ul>
6. Self-determination and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural safety</li> <li>• Self-determination and wellbeing</li> <li>• Leadership</li> </ul>

Source: M. Salmon et al., 2019, p. 31

Baseline data has been collected and findings will be published imminently. Mayi Kuwayu data will be highly relevant for future primary prevention monitoring waves.

### **Over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care: Family Matters campaign report 2019**

Family Matters is a campaign led by SNAICC – National Voice for Our Children along with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders, representing an alliance of over 150 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous organisations, with the aim of eliminating the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children being placed in out-of-home care. This is important with regard to prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women for many reasons, including as an ongoing expression and outcome of colonisation and structural racism, and as a reason which precludes many

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women seeking help for partner-perpetrated violence because of concern about children being removed from them.

The 2019 Family Matters report found that in 2018, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were 10.2 time more likely to be residing in out-of-home care than non-Indigenous children, that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are over-represented at almost every level of the child protection system, and that on the basis of current actions the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care is projected to rise, with predictions that the figure will double over the next decade.<sup>417</sup>

## **Health inequalities: Close the Gap review 2018**

The 2017 Close the Gap campaign report concluded that '[o]verall, the improvements to the headline targets have been disappointing' and that Australia is not on track to meet the stated targets and government commitments in the Close the Gap Strategy.<sup>418</sup> The 2018 Close the Gap shadow report produced by the Close the Gap Campaign Steering Commission on health inequality experienced by First Nations people as compared to non-Indigenous people, as produced by the ongoing impacts of colonisation and racism, was a ten-year review aligned with the period of time in which Australia had had a Close the Gap Strategy, with the aim of achieving life expectancy equality between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people by 2030.

In this report, it is noted that government commitment and investment has not been sufficient to produce positive change, and that most of the gains made have been due to the efforts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations:

'Over the decade since 2008, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs have experienced discontinuity and uncertainty. Regular changes to the administration and quantum of funding, shifting policy approaches and arrangements within, between and from government, cuts to services, and a revolving door of Prime Ministers, Indigenous Affairs Minister and senior bureaucrats have all but halted the steady progress hoped for by First Peoples.

After the initial funding commitments made for the Closing the Gap Strategy, via the National Indigenous Reform Agreement (NIRA) and the supporting National Partnership Agreements (NPAs) – the Strategy was effectively abandoned with the extensive cuts (over \$530 million) made to the Indigenous Affairs portfolio in the 2014 Federal Budget. A new competitive tendering process for services to apply for funding grants was introduced, creating enormous upheaval and led to uncertainty, lost continuity, and eroded engagement between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and government.

Government expenditure at all levels has not been commensurate with the substantially greater and more complex health needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Of the investments made, in many cases it has been invested in the wrong areas, focusing more on tertiary than primary care, mainstream rather than Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services, or been exhausted by the administrative costs of government departments.

It is unsurprising in this environment that governments have not been able to make real in-roads into closing the gap in health equality and life expectancy for Australia's First Peoples.

Despite this, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled health services continue to account for much of the gains made in health equality. Similarly, the small but growing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce continues to improve access and approaches to addressing First Peoples' health.<sup>419</sup>

## **Overcoming Indigenous disadvantage: Productivity Commission monitoring reports**

As commissioned by the Council for Australian Governments (COAG), a number of trend-monitoring reports on indicators of Indigenous disadvantage have been produced by the Productivity Commission since 2003, analysing multiple datasets. While the detailed data analysis will not be repeated here, the latest (2016) report shows that positive progress has been made in recent years on a small number of indicators only, including child mortality rates, some educational outcome markers, some employment and income measures, and recognition of traditional lands. However, the report also notes that there has been no change in the prevalence of violence experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including women, and worsening outcomes with regard to mental health, self-harm hospitalisations, and adult and juvenile incarceration rates.<sup>420</sup>

## **National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey**

Only limited dimensions of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS) allow for assessment of change to the experience of structural disadvantage over time. There has been some reduction over time to the experience of living in overcrowded dwellings. Due to data collection tools changes, limited data beyond baseline (2014–15) is available for other dimensions of Indigenous structural data. However, this data shows that there has been next to no change in the structural disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over time, and that this remains substantial, and tends to be exacerbated for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, First Nations people with disability, and First Nations people living in remote areas.

### **Housing and homelessness**

Large, though declining, proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years or over live in overcrowded dwellings. In the 2008 NATSISS, 24.9% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people reported living in an overcrowded dwelling; this declined to 18.4% in 2014–15.

As of 2014–15, approximately one in seven (14.9%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years or over lived in a dwelling in which facilities were not available or did not work. This proportion was higher for people living in remote areas (27.7%) than non-remote areas (11.2%). The 2014–15 percentage is higher than that recorded in the 2008 NATSISS, which found that 13% of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults lived in a dwelling with at least one faulty household facility.<sup>421</sup>

There appears to be a significant correlation between homelessness and the experience of family or domestic violence among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. The 10% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who reported having experienced physical family or domestic violence in the 12 months prior to the 2014–15 survey were more likely

to have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives than women who had not experienced family or domestic violence in the previous 12 months (55% compared to 26%).

## **Employment**

As of 2014–15, less than half (46.0%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years or over were employed, and only 27.7% were employed full-time. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men were more than twice as likely as women to be working full-time (37.9% compared with 18.4%). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women were more likely than men to be working part-time (22.6% compared with 13.7%). While not directly comparable because of changes to the classification of labour force status between 2008 and 2014–15, it is important to note that in 2008, 52% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over were employed, and even when adjusted to ensure a more consistent comparison with the 2014–15 estimate, there has been no change to this ratio between 2008 and 2014–15.<sup>422</sup>

Employment rates among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are even lower in remote areas. In 2014–15, just over one-third (35.6%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over living in remote areas were working; this compares with an employment rate of 49.0% in non-remote areas.

## **Law and incarceration**

Rates of arrest among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are significantly higher than for non-Indigenous people. As of 2014–15, one in seven (14.5%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over had been arrested in the previous five years. Rates of arrest are higher among men (20.4%) than women (9.2%).

Lifetime incarceration rates are also high – 14.6% for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men aged 15 years and over, and 3.5% of women aged 15 years and over.

Recent research on the over-imprisonment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people showed that Indigenous people are more likely than non-Indigenous people to be arrested, charged and sentenced to imprisonment for similar crimes,<sup>423</sup> reflective of structural racism.

## **Health**

On the basis of 2014 to 2015 data, almost half (45.1%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people live with disability. Rates of disability are higher among women (47%) than men (43%).

## **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's experiences of racial discrimination**

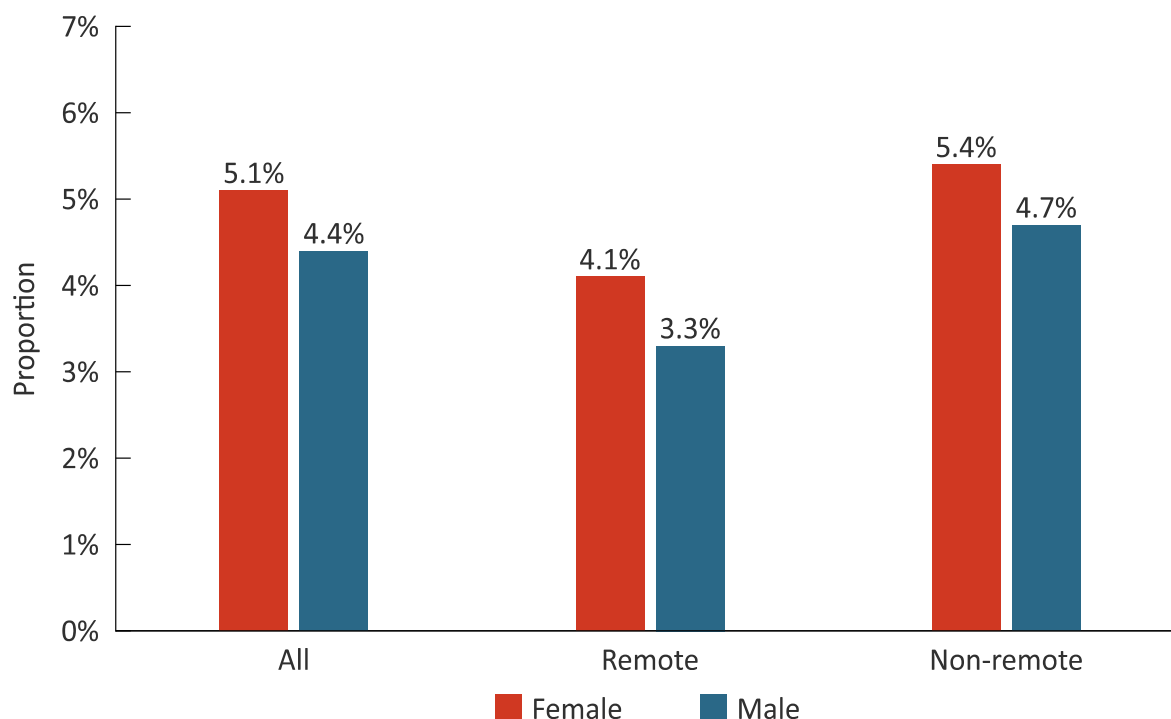
The most recent published round of NATSISS, 2014–15, captured self-reported rates of discrimination on the basis of being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander for the first time, as part of measuring a range of stressors in the past 12 months.<sup>xlix</sup>

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xlix It is essential to note that this data should not be regarded as comparable to the General Social Survey data outlined in forthcoming indicators – experiences of discrimination are measured differently in each survey, and each survey is also administered differently.

In 2014–15, 4.8% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people had experienced discrimination on the basis of being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander in the previous 12 months. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experienced higher rates of discrimination (5.1%) than men (4.4%). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women living in non-remote areas experienced even higher rates of discrimination (5.4%) (see Figure 31, below).

**Figure 31: Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who experienced discrimination on the basis of being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander in past 12 months, by gender and remoteness**



Source: ABS, NATSISS 2014–15

Extended disaggregated analysis of the 2015 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers also showed that experiences of discrimination due to disability were almost twice as likely for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability than non-Indigenous people. In 2015, 15.0% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability reported experiencing discrimination in the previous 12 months, compared with 8.4% of non-Indigenous people with disability.<sup>424</sup>

*Footprints in time – The Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children (LSIC)* includes measures of racial discrimination.<sup>425</sup> Shepherd et al. undertook an analysis of the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children data from waves 1 to 6 (2008 to 2013), with wave 6 including a retained sample of 1239 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from diverse settings across Australia and the Torres Strait.<sup>426</sup> This analysis determined that of the participating cohort, 40% of primary carers of Indigenous children, 45% of Indigenous families and 14% of Indigenous children aged five to ten years had experienced racial discrimination at some point in their lifetimes. A significant proportion of each of these groups that had experienced racial discrimination continued to experience it on a persistent or recurrent basis. That is,

31% of primary carers who reported experiencing racial discrimination experienced it persistently, as did 40% of discriminated against family members, and 28% of children. Moreover, this analysis found that vicarious and/or direct exposure to racial discrimination negatively impacted on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's mental and physical health, at a young age and across their lifetime.<sup>427</sup>

Another study that underlines the extent of discrimination against Aboriginal people is the Lowitja Institute's survey (n=755) about the mental health impacts of racial discrimination in Victorian Aboriginal communities, undertaken in 2010 to 2011 and published in 2013.<sup>428</sup> Nearly all (97%) of Victorian Aboriginal participants reported having experienced at least one incident of racism in the previous 12 months, and over one-third (34%) had experienced 12 or more racist incidents in the previous 12 months. The average number of racist incidents experienced by participants across the sample in the previous year was an incredible 13.7 incidents.<sup>429</sup>

## **Indicator 6.2: Proportion of population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the past 12 months on the basis of a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law**

What does this indicator tell us about Monitoring domain 6: Intersecting drivers of violence (other forms of oppression and discrimination)?	<p>This indicator measures prevalence of self-reported experiences of discrimination or harassment by people who experience forms of discrimination on bases other than gender (for example, disability status, cultural or migrant background, sexual orientation), and tracks any change in the prevalence of experiences of discrimination over time.</p> <p>See Indicator 6.1 for data on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's experiences of discrimination and racism.</p>
Expected change if quality, intersectional primary prevention, gender equality and anti-discrimination programming and infrastructure is implemented	Long-term: reduction in self-reported experiences of discrimination.
Data source(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mapping Social Cohesion reports 2009 and 2018, Scanlon Foundation<sup>430</sup></li> <li>2. General Social Survey (GSS) 2014, ABS<sup>431</sup></li> <li>3. Speak Out Against Racism (SOAR) student survey 2017, Centre for Social Research &amp; Methods, ANU<sup>432</sup></li> </ol>

Change over time summary: short-term change revealed by the data	<p>Prevalence of experiences of racial and religious discrimination religion has almost doubled between 2009 and 2018 (Scanlon Foundation); other sources (such as the 2017 Speak Out Against Racism student survey) confirm high prevalence of experiences of racism and religious discrimination as experienced by people of non-Anglo Celtic or European or non-Christian backgrounds.</p> <p>Multiple sources of data confirm high prevalence rates of experiences of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, disability, recent migration, lone parenthood, and Indigenous status. However, a lack of timeseries data (repeated surveys undertaken at regular intervals) means it is not possible to assess change over time.</p>
Does the change confirm or run contrary to expected change?	<p>Too soon to tell as change not expected in the short term. However, the sharp increase in experiences of certain forms of discrimination in the short period under consideration was not expected. The possible reasons for this may warrant further research.</p>
Gaps in existing data	<p>Some of the key sources of tracking experiences of discrimination are not disaggregated by gender as well, let alone other demographic categories such as disability status, sexual orientation or gender beyond a binary definition.</p>

## Racial and religious discrimination

### Scanlon Foundation Mapping Social Cohesion surveys 2009 to 2018

Experiences of discrimination on the basis of skin colour, ethnic origin or religion have increased dramatically in the past ten years, as measured in the Scanlon Foundation's annual Mapping Social Cohesion surveys. In 2009, 10% of respondents affirmatively answered the question 'Have you experienced discrimination because of your skin colour, ethnic origin or religion in the past 12 months?'. This figure nearly doubled to 19% of the population reporting having experienced discrimination in the past 12 months in 2018.<sup>433</sup>

Migration and language backgrounds significantly correlated with experiences of discrimination. In response to the 2018 survey, people of non-English-speaking backgrounds experienced higher prevalence of discriminatory experiences (25%), as compared with 17% of people born in Australia, and 20% born overseas in English-speaking countries.<sup>434</sup> On the basis of aggregated data from the annual surveys from 2013 to 2018, religious background also significantly correlated with experiences of discrimination. People who identify as Muslim reported the highest levels of discrimination (39%), followed by people who identify as Hindu (36%), Buddhist (22%), Catholic (14%) and Anglican (13%).<sup>435</sup>

People's financial or economic status also correlated significantly with their self-reported experiences of discrimination. Prevalence of discrimination was highest among people who identified as 'struggling to pay the bills' or 'poor' (34%), as compared to e.g. people who identified as 'prosperous' or 'very comfortable' (15%).<sup>436</sup> These results speak to the



intersectional experience of racism or xenophobia and socioeconomic disadvantage for people of culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse backgrounds.

Women and men reported experiencing non-gender-based forms of discrimination in similar proportions. In 2018, 20% of men reported having experienced discrimination on the basis of skin colour, ethnic origin or religion, as compared with 17% of women.<sup>437</sup>

### **Speak Out Against Racism (SOAR) student survey, NSW and Victoria, 2017<sup>438</sup>**

In 2017, a population-representative survey of students in years 5 to 9 (n=4664) was conducted, focusing on their experiences of discrimination on racial, religious and gender bases. It found that at least half of young people of different non-white (Anglo-Celtic or European) backgrounds had experienced racial discrimination. For example, 49.2% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, 56.0% of young people of African backgrounds, and 64.7% of young people of East Asian backgrounds reported having experienced racism (see Table 33, below). Moreover, almost two-thirds (63.3%) of students who speak a language other than English reported having experienced racial discrimination, as compared to 29.8% of students who only speak English.<sup>439</sup>

**Table 33: Reported experiences of any racial discrimination, proportion (%) of students per self-identified cultural background, 2017**

Student background	% prevalence of experiences of racism
East Asian	64.7%
South Asian	61.0%
Middle Eastern	58.0%
Pacific Islander/Maori	57.3%
African	56.0%
South East Asian	55.5%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	49.2%
European	37.1%
Anglo-Celtic	24.4%

Source: 2017 Speak Out Against Racism (SOAR) survey, p. 24

Significant proportions of students also reported having experienced religious discrimination. While 14.8% students who identified as having no religion and 30.7% of students who identify as Christian reported having experienced religious discrimination, the prevalence of religious discrimination was far higher among Hindu students (56.6%) and Muslim students (53.4%).<sup>440</sup>



## Overall prevalence of discrimination experiences: General Social Survey 2014

On the basis of the ABS's General Social Survey (GSS) 2014, approximately one in five (18.6%) people in Australia reported having experienced at least one incident of discrimination in the prior 12 months. In 2014, the top five most common reasons for the most recent incident of discrimination were nationality, race or ethnicity; age; gender; way one dresses or appearance; and disability or health issue (see Table 34, below). It should be noted that the way that discrimination is measured in the GSS means that respondents had to nominate one primary reason for the most recent incident of discrimination (on the basis of their subjective judgement), rather than a combination of intersecting factors (e.g. such as gender and race, or gender and disability).

**Table 34: Reasons for most recent incident of discrimination among those who have experienced discrimination**

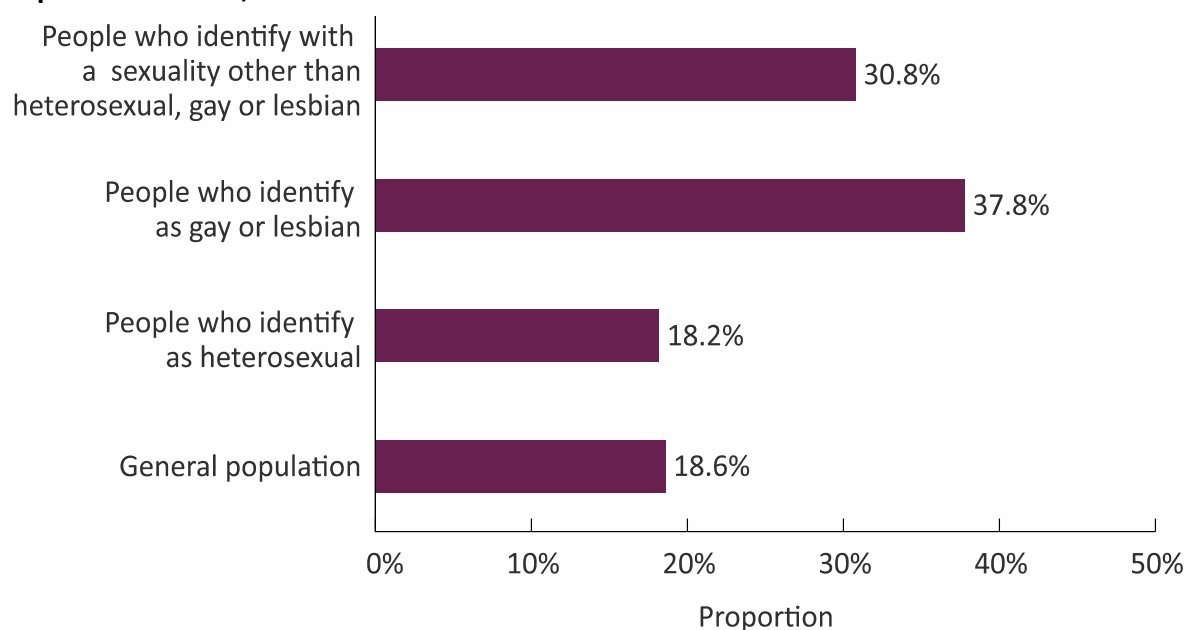
Reason	2014
Nationality, race or ethnicity	5.0%
Age	4.0%
Gender	3.0%
Way dressed/appearance	2.9%
Disability/health issue	1.9%
Other	10.2%

Source: ABS General Social Survey 2014

People of a highly disadvantaged status are significantly more likely to have experienced discrimination in the last 12 months than the overall population. The GSS identifies that people of diverse sexual identities, certain groups of migrants, lone parents, and people with disability, a mental health condition or long-term health condition experience various forms of disadvantage, and also higher prevalence rates of discriminatory experiences in the previous 12 months than the average population. Unfortunately, like other sources of ABS population-level data such as the Personal Safety Survey (PSS), the GSS does not allow for disaggregated analysis of discrimination experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. To this end, other sources of data are used to measure discrimination experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, below.

People of diverse sexual identities (gay or lesbian, or other) reported higher rates of discrimination in the last 12 months than any other group. Approximately two in five (37.8%) of people who identify as gay or lesbian reported at least one experience of discrimination in the previous 12 months. This is more than double the rate of the general population (18.6%) and heterosexual people (18.2%). People who identify with a sexuality other than heterosexual, gay or lesbian also reported very high rates of discriminatory experiences. Approximately one-third (30.8%) of people who identify with a sexuality other than heterosexual, gay or lesbian reported at least one experience of discrimination in the past 12 months (see Figure 32, below).

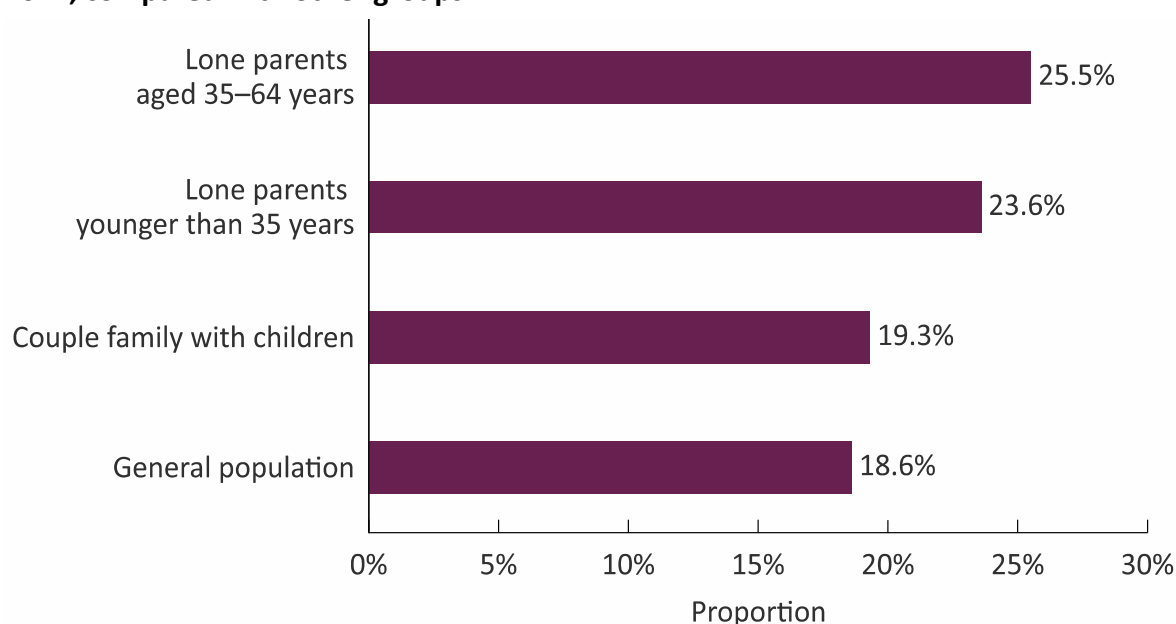
**Figure 32: Proportion of people by sexual identity who experienced discrimination in past 12 months, 2014**



Source: ABS General Social Survey 2014

Various sources of data including the Household Income and Labour Dynamics Australia (HILDA) survey and the GSS have been essential in bringing to light the discrimination and disadvantage experienced by lone parents, of whom a great proportion are women.<sup>441</sup> In the GSS, lone parents reported high rates of discrimination in the previous 12 months, second only to people of diverse sexual identities. One-quarter (25.5%) of lone parents aged between 35 and 64 years and 23.6% of lone parents younger than 35 years reported having experienced at least one discriminatory incident in the previous 12 months. This is significantly higher than the rates of discrimination reported by couple families with children (19.3%) (see Figure 33, below)

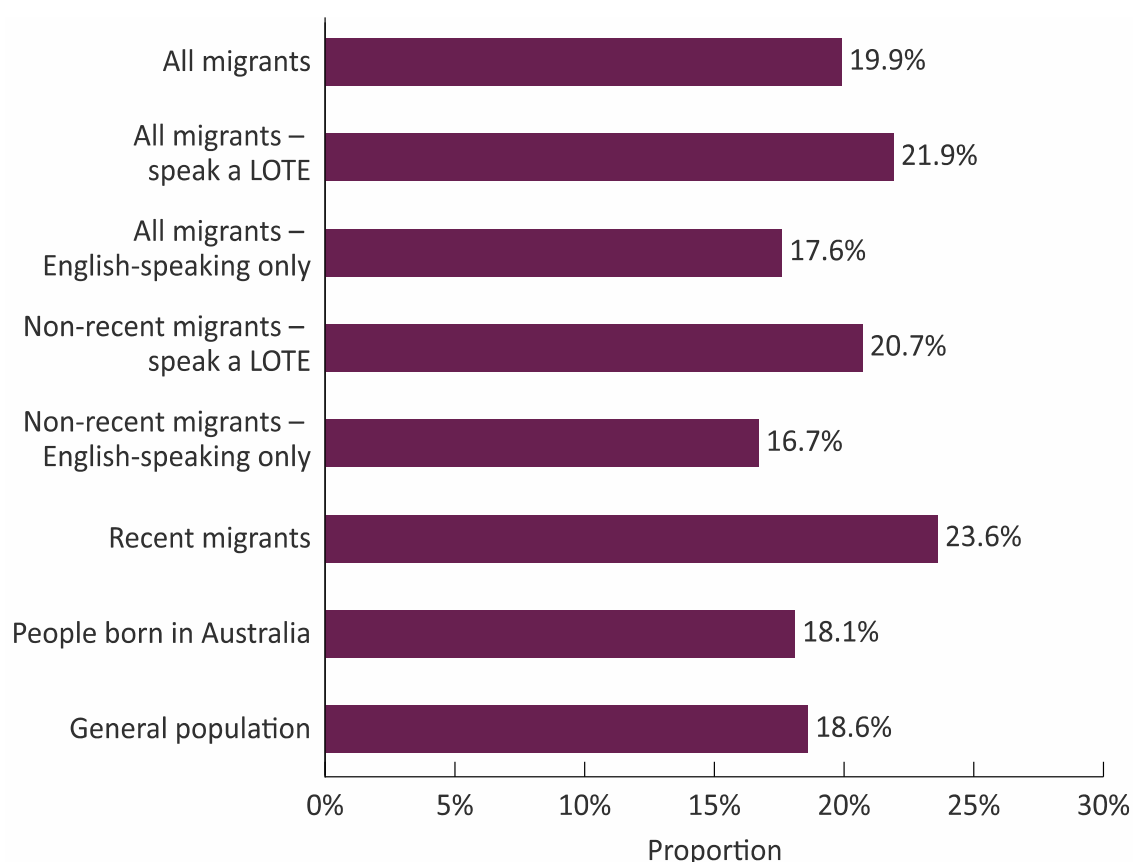
**Figure 33: Proportion of lone parents who experienced discrimination in last 12 months, 2014, compared with other groups**



Source: ABS General Social Survey 2014

The experience of discrimination for migrants is a mixed picture, dependent on other intersecting experiences of discrimination. On average, nearly one-fifth (19.9%) of all migrants reported experiencing discrimination in the past 12 months, slightly higher than the general population rate of discrimination (18.6%) and 1.8 percentage points higher than those who were born in Australia (18.1%). However, rates of discrimination are far higher among recent migrants (23.6%), and among all migrants who speak a language other than English (21.9%). On the other hand, experiences of discrimination among all migrants who are English-speaking only are lower (17.6%) than the general population, as are the experiences of discrimination among non-recent migrants who only speak English (16.7%) (see Figure 34, below).

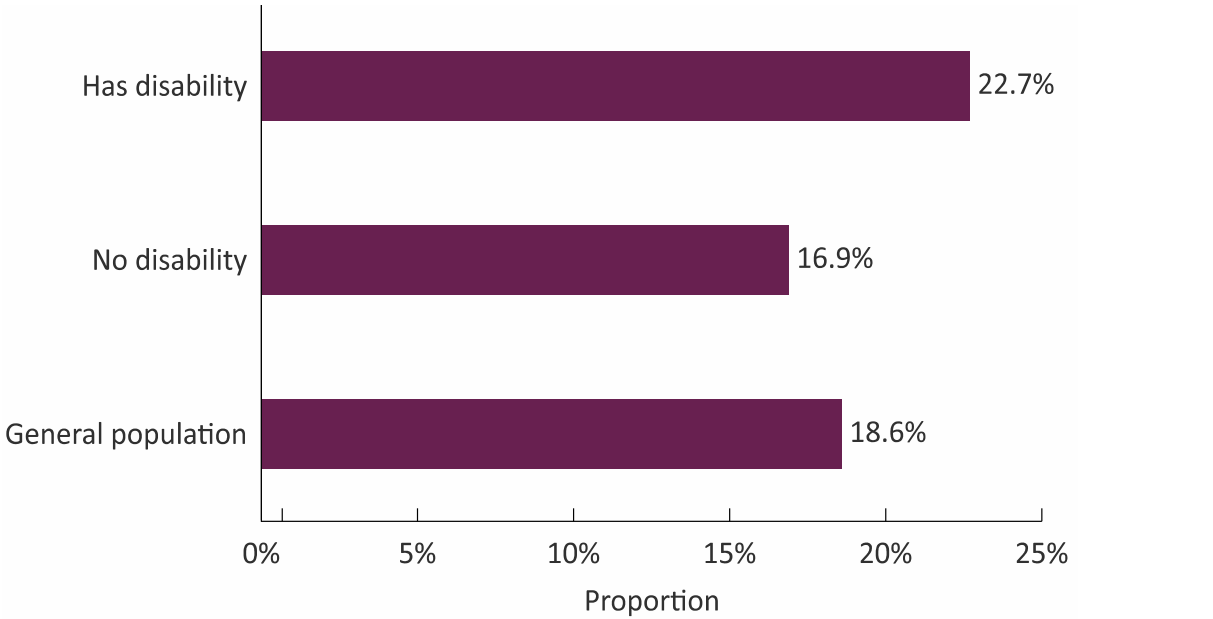
**Figure 34: Proportion of migrant groups who experienced discrimination in last 12 months, 2014, compared with other groups**



Source: ABS General Social Survey 2014

People with disability (in the GSS classified separately to a long-term health condition or mental health condition) also reported rates of discrimination significantly higher than the general population and people with no disability. The rates of discrimination against people with no disability is notably lower than for the general population (16.9% compared to 18.6%). In contrast, over one-fifth (22.7%) of people living with disability report experiencing discrimination, 4.1 percentage points higher than the general population and a very significant 5.8 percentage points higher than people with no disability (see Figure 35, below).

**Figure 35: Proportion of people living with disability who experienced discrimination in last 12 months, 2014, compared with other groups**



Source: ABS General Social Survey 2014

One-fifth (20.8%) of people living with a long-term health condition and approximately one-fifth (19.1%) of people living with a mental health condition reported having experienced discrimination in the past 12 months.

Unfortunately, publicly available GSS data is not sex/gender-disaggregated, so that it is difficult to gauge from this data whether women of particular disadvantaged statuses (e.g. women with disability) experience higher rates of discrimination compared with men. As noted earlier, the GSS also does not report on experiences of discrimination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Moreover, 2014 is the only wave of the GSS to fall within our considered time period (that is, there is no other, more recent release).

**Indicator 6.3: Proportion of the population who hold discriminatory views around race, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, etc.**

What does this indicator tell us about Monitoring domain 6: Intersecting drivers of violence (other forms of oppression and discrimination)?	Whereas Indicators 6.1 and 6.2 measured the prevalence of experiences of discrimination by affected individuals, this indicator measures the prevalence of discriminatory or prejudicial attitudes held across the Australian population and assesses change to these attitudes over time.
Expected change if quality, intersectional primary prevention, gender equality and anti-discrimination programming and infrastructure is implemented	Short- to medium-term: limited change to the extent of discriminatory attitudes held by people in Australia. Long-term: reduction of extent of discriminatory attitudes.

Data source(s)	National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS) 2017, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS)
Change over time summary: short-term change revealed by the data	No change over time able to be assessed.
Does the change confirm or run contrary to expected change?	Not yet able to assess change.
Gaps in existing data	Only baseline data is currently available, so no change over time is possible to measure at present.  The NCAS is limited with regard to the focus on prejudicial attitudes. It would be helpful to develop a dataset with a more extensive and multifaceted focus on prejudicial attitudes.

Analysis of the 2017 NCAS findings reveal that there is a significant relationship between prejudicial attitudes relating to Aboriginality, ethnic difference, sexual orientation diversity, and/or disability, and attitudes that endorse gender inequality and violence against women. For example, it was found that among the people who were ranked as having low attitudinal support for prejudicial attitudes (n=4,526), this cohort ranked 46/50 with regard to low endorsement of attitudes supportive of violence against women, and only 9/50 with regard to high endorsement of attitudes supportive of violence against women.

The inverse relationship – between high support for prejudicial attitudes, and endorsement of attitudes supportive of violence against women – also held true. That is, high levels of prejudicial attitudes co-existed with a high endorsement of attitudes supportive of violence against women. The cohort who measured as having a high level of support for prejudicial attitudes (n=4,211) were far more likely to have a high level of endorsement of attitudes supportive of violence against women (43/50) than a low level (10/50).

NCAS 2017 findings show that while the 'strongest predictor of attitudes towards violence against women is the overall GEAS (Gender Equality Attitudes Score) (contributing 54% of variance), prejudicial attitudes contribute significantly to variance (9%) – more than any single demographic factor.'<sup>442</sup>

# Reinforcing factor: Condoning of violence in general

## Monitoring domain 7: Condoning of violence in general

Indicator 7.1	Gendered attitudes towards violence and acceptability of violence in general
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Condoning of violence in general is generated through similar social norms, practices and structures as the condoning of violence against women. The difference is that condoning of violence in general is not as influential on levels of violence against women as condoning of violence against women. However, it becomes a reinforcing factor in conjunction with gendered social norms – particularly those concerning masculinity.

Violence can be condoned either informally, as in reactions (or lack thereof) of family and communities, or formally, such as through weak laws. This can lead to a ‘normalisation’ of violence, with violence taken for granted as a part of everyday life.

As discussed in *Change the story*,<sup>443</sup> some have argued that violence against women simply reflects that violence more generally is a learned social practice, but this does not explain the specifically gendered patterns of violence against women. Studies show that people learn about violence not in isolation, but in the context of learning about and experiencing social norms about gender and gender (in)equality, particularly masculine gender identities. The violence that our society normalises, valorises or condones is in itself ‘masculinised’. The vast majority of acts of violence – whether against women or men, in public or private, in reality or in media and in cultural representations – are perpetrated, or depicted as being perpetrated, by men.<sup>444</sup>

Men’s violence is also more likely to be downplayed or excused under certain circumstances, such as if a man is drunk. Women’s perpetration of violence, on the other hand, is rarely normalised, valorised or condoned to the same degree.<sup>445</sup>

The valorisation of masculine violence in media and popular culture, or in male-dominated peer groups such as gangs or some sporting clubs, predicts a higher likelihood of all types of violence – including, but not limited to, violence against women. However, not all violence against women can be attributed to the valorisation of male violence, as men’s violence against other men is different from that against women, and not all men who are violent against other men are violent against women.<sup>446</sup>

There is a single indicator measuring progress in challenging the condoning of violence in general. This indicator looks at community attitudes towards violence and the acceptability of violence in general.

## Challenging the condoning of violence in general: Summary of change over time

As this is a monitoring domain with limited and emerging data, this analysis is establishing a baseline, rather than reporting on progress. As such, recommendations for future research and data collection to strengthen action and monitor progress towards preventing violence against women in this domain are noted below.

The indicators below suggest reasonably low attitudinal support for violence in general, though the National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS) indicates that some Australians do hold attitudes that support violence, and particularly parental ‘disciplinary’ violence against children. The data also shows that attitudinal support for violence in general was the second strongest predictor of attitudes towards gender equality (after prejudicial attitudes).<sup>447</sup> People who hold attitudes that are strongly supportive of violence in general are more likely to hold attitudes supportive of violence against women, and less likely to endorse positive attitudes towards gender equality. The converse is also clear – people who reject the use of violence in general are also more likely to reject violence against women and support gender equality.<sup>448</sup>

This suggests that while specific efforts and specialised strategies to prevent violence against women are critical, other strategies that address the norms, structures and practices that legitimise any form of violence can also make a positive contribution. In particular, further exploration of the links between dominant forms of masculinity and the valorisation of men’s violence in media, popular culture and sport is required, alongside investigations into how to strengthen sanctions and laws in response to violence in general, and violence as a means to settle disputes.

### Indicator 7.1: Gendered attitudes towards violence and acceptability of violence in general

What does this indicator tell us about Monitoring domain 7: Condoning of violence in general?	This indicator tells us about the extent of community acceptance of violence in general, and looks at links between condoning of violence in general and condoning of violence against women in particular.
Expected change if high-quality programs and infrastructure for prevention of violence against women and gender equality are implemented	Short- and medium-term: the proportion of the population who reject gendered attitudes towards violence and acceptability will increase. Long-term: this proportion will plateau.
Data source(s)	National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS) 2017, Australia’s National Research Organisation for Women’s Safety (ANROWS)
Change over time summary: short-term change revealed by the data	Only baseline data available at this point; no assessment of change possible.



Does the change confirm or run contrary to expected change?	Not yet able to assess change.
Gaps in existing data	New datasets should incorporate a focus on the relationship between masculinity and the acceptability of violence.

The 2017 NCAS benchmarked attitudes legitimising or minimising violence as a practice in general in terms of reprisal, punishment or a response to conflict. The questions asked of respondents under this theme included scenarios of violence in the sporting arena, games and the media, child disciplining, and retaliation between adults.<sup>449</sup>

The results of this set of questions have not been reported in great detail in the NCAS reports; however, overall a majority of respondents disagreed with the legitimacy of violence in general. And yet, in response to most of the questions, a significant minority responded in a way that condones violence in general as a practice. For example:

- in response to the statement ‘If a person hits you, you should hit them back’, nearly three-quarters (73%) of Australians disagreed, while 22% agreed
- in response to the statement ‘It is okay to hit children if they have done something wrong’, 71% disagreed and 18% agreed
- a concerning one-third (30%) agreed that ‘When children misbehave, a quick slap is the best way to quickly end trouble’, with 66% disagreeing
- nine in ten (90%) disagreed with the statement ‘Violence among fans in sporting arenas is just “part of the game” and should not be taken seriously’, with only 9% agreeing.<sup>450</sup>

The 2017 NCAS sought to test the theorised relationship between attitudes condoning violence in general, attitudes condoning violence against women, and gender equality attitudes.<sup>451</sup> This was achieved by asking whether in the contemporary Australian context there is a significant relationship between a culture that condones violence in general and a culture that condones violence against women specifically. That is, the NCAS was seeking to test the empirical evidence for a relationship between ‘attitudes endorsing violence generally, whereby those who support dominance and aggression as ways of resolving conflict are more likely to hold attitudes supportive of violence against women’.<sup>452</sup>

The findings of the 2017 NCAS are clear. Those people who demonstrate attitudes of high support for violence in general are more likely to hold attitudes supportive of violence against women and less likely to endorse positive attitudes towards gender equality. The converse is also clear – people who reject the use of violence in general are also more likely to have higher attitudinal support for gender equality and lower attitudinal support for violence against women.<sup>453</sup>

More specifically, attitudes endorsing violence generally was the second strongest predictor of attitudes to gender equality (after prejudicial attitudes), accounting for 24% of individuals’ differences in their support for gender equality.<sup>454</sup> To put this in context, this is a far stronger association than any demographic factor linked to the individual respondent. For example, gender of the respondent only accounts for 6% of contribution to variance between support for gender equality; age is also 6%, and education is 9%.<sup>455</sup>

From those who demonstrated a high attitudinal support for violence in general, 43% also registered a high endorsement for attitudes supportive of violence against women, while only 10% registered a low endorsement.<sup>456</sup> Conversely, of those who registered a low support for violence in general, 41% also registered a lower endorsement of attitudes supportive of violence against women, and only 15% registered a high endorsement.<sup>457</sup>

There is, then, a significant relationship between attitudes condoning violence in general and attitudes resistant to gender equality and condoning of violence against women. Policy and practice implications include the need to simultaneously address cultures and settings legitimising all forms of violence, and associations between valorised masculinities and violent practices, while also targeting violence against women specifically.

# Reinforcing factor: Experience of, and exposure to, violence

## Monitoring domain 8: Experience of, and exposure to, violence<sup>1</sup>

Indicator 8.1	Proportion of children aged 0 to 17 years who experienced any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression that constitutes abuse by caregivers in the past year
Indicator 8.2	Percentage of men who have experienced violence by a male perpetrator (male victims of male-on-male violence)

Exposure to violence as a child (such as witnessing abuse of a mother or other female caregiver, family member or friend), direct experience of violence (such as child physical or sexual abuse) or long-term exposure to other forms of violence either during childhood or adulthood (such as racial violence, community violence or armed conflict) can contribute to the normalisation of violence. This is especially the case where positive supports or reinforcements are lacking, such as in the absence of positive alternatives and support to recover from the impacts of these experiences. Importantly, experiences of and exposure to violence can be mitigated by other social, educational and psychological factors, such as positive relationship models, and gender-equitable and non-violent norms. For this reason, those who have been exposed to or experienced violence should not be considered at inevitably higher risk of perpetration or victimisation.

### Childhood exposure to, and experience of, violence

Children's direct experience of physical or sexual violence, and/or exposure to violence against their mothers or other female caregivers, can have profound and negative impacts on their development and later lives. Early exposure to violence can potentially lead to developmental issues that predispose a child to later behavioural problems, such as poor school performance, bullying or antisocial behaviour in adolescence.<sup>458</sup> This pathway is not inevitable – while exposure of children to violence (either directly, or witnessing violence against female caregivers) can shape later attitudes to violence and gender relationships, making some more accepting of violence against women, it conversely makes others 'highly intolerant of such violence, having experienced its damaging effects'.<sup>459</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In *Counting on change*, an indicator was listed under this domain: 'Percentage of women who experienced violence reporting that children heard or saw the violence'. We have decided not to utilise this indicator. This is because the data only allows tracking of change with regard to the proportion of women who experience violence with children in their care who report the children witnessing or hearing the violence, as a proportion of female victims. It is well-established in the data that many women who experience partner violence have children in their care, and that many of these children witness the violence; therefore what needs to be tracked with regard to change is the proportion of women who experience partner violence: see Monitoring domain 11 (Prevalence of violence against women) for this data. In this domain, then, we focus on childhood exposure to direct child abuse.

Long-term exposure to, or experience of, any type of violence – particularly in early life, but also for adults – can establish and reinforce a belief that violence is an appropriate form of discipline, punishment or way of solving disputes.<sup>460</sup> But such social learning does not occur in isolation from learning about gendered power and roles. For example, childhood exposure to violence against mothers, stepmothers or non-binary parents by fathers, stepfathers or other male partners also normalises such violence as an expression of masculinity in relationships and can increase the likelihood of intergenerational transmission of violence. Children witnessing violence against their mothers also learn that it is acceptable for men to control and denigrate women. The impact of exposure to or experience of violence reflects gendered socialisation and patterns of violence – that is, boys and men are more likely to go on to perpetrate violence, and girls and women to experience and/or accept it. This demonstrates the need to address gender norms and power relations, and not just the practice of violence itself.

### **Violence in adulthood: men’s experiences of male-perpetrated violence**

Men’s experience of male-perpetrated violence is another aspect of this domain that it is important to measure. International research suggests that men who enact violence upon other men are more likely to perpetrate violence against women than men who do not use physical violence against other men. Models of masculinity that support and emphasise aggression and violence towards other men are linked to and overlap with ideas of masculinity that emphasise dominance and power over women and condone violence against women.

The indicators identified as measurements of progress in this domain look at exposure to violence in childhood, and men’s experience of male-perpetrated violence after the age of 15.<sup>li</sup>

### **Reducing exposure to, and experience of, violence: Summary of change over time**

Recent analysis (2019) of Personal Safety Survey (PSS) data of 2016<sup>461</sup> validates what was articulated in *Change the story*: a strong correlation between childhood exposure to violence, and experiences of violence as an adult (after age 15) among the current adult

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li The indicators measuring exposure to violence in childhood in this report do not utilise the full extent of Personal Safety Survey data on the correlation between exposure to violence in childhood and experiences of violence in adulthood. This decision has been made because this data concerns individuals’ experiences across their lifetimes from childhood. It is, therefore, unlikely that any substantial change to the correlation patterns will be observed among the adult population sample for a long time. With regard to measuring change in childhood exposure to partner violence against mothers and other female caregivers, it is more relevant to focus on contemporary experiences of children. Therefore, we have used the data that examines the reports of women who experience violence in terms of whether children in their care were witness to the violence, and data on child abuse among the current child population from other datasets. However, the ABS data confirms that (without appropriate intervention) a correlation pattern exists between childhood exposure to violence and experiences of violence against women: see ABS (2019). [\*Characteristics and outcomes of childhood abuse: Feature article, Personal Safety Survey, 2016.\*](#)

population in Australia.<sup>lii</sup> The PSS data from 2016 shows that 71% of people who experienced childhood abuse also experienced some form of violence in their adult lifetime, compared with 33% of those who have not experienced childhood abuse. That is, ‘people who experienced childhood abuse were twice as likely to experience violence as an adult compared to those who did not experience abuse’ during childhood.<sup>462</sup> Women who experienced childhood abuse were almost three times as likely to experience physical violence as an adult (61% who experienced childhood abuse compared with 24% who did not), and more than three times as likely to experience sexual violence as an adult (43% compared with 13%). Women who experienced childhood abuse were also almost three times as likely to experience physical and/or sexual partner violence as women who did not experience childhood abuse (36% compared with 13%), and over twice as likely to experience partner emotional abuse (46% as compared with 18%).<sup>463</sup>

While the PSS data helps to further evidence this correlation between childhood experiences of violence and adult victimisation,<sup>liii</sup> it is difficult to assess change to prevalence rates of childhood abuse from this survey instrument. This is because the PSS asks adults about their historical experiences of childhood abuse, meaning this data would take a generation to reveal change to childhood abuse prevalence, and would always be historical in nature. However, other sources of data on childhood abuse, most notably administrative child protection data, reveal a very large rise (24% increase) in the number of children who were the subjects of child protection substantiated reports between 2013–14 and 2017–18. While there are likely to be a number of factors contributing to this steep increase in child protection substantiated reports, including changes to reporting procedures, an actual rise in incidence may be one of those factors. From this data, it is clear at the very least that the rates of child abuse in Australia are considerable and certainly not on the decline.

In relation to men’s experiences of male-perpetrated violence, whole-of-population data (the PSS) shows that lifetime and 12-month prevalence of male-perpetrated physical and/or sexual violence experienced by men has decreased markedly between 2012 and 2016, mostly due to a considerable decline in physical violence. It could be posited that public attention and policy responses to male public violence have had some effect in the time period. The rate of male homicide victimisation also declined between 2009–10 and 2015–16.

These findings are encouraging and show that high rates of violence can be reduced in relatively short periods of time. On the basis of this data, it is not possible to make conclusive statements about what factors have influenced this marked decline in the prevalence rates of men’s experiences of male physical violence. However, there have been a number of public policy interventions and legislative reforms undertaken in this time period, as well as significant community discourse, focused on male violence towards other men in public spaces. However, it is also important to note that, as Section 2 Part B of this report demonstrates, commensurate declines in women’s experiences of male-perpetrated violence have not occurred in the same period. In this respect, while it is critical to reduce

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lii Importantly, this dataset does not allow for testing of any correlation between childhood abuse and perpetration in adulthood.

liii Due to the design of the Personal Safety Survey, which focuses on individuals’ victimisation experiences rather than perpetration, the data cannot be tested for correlation between boys’ childhood experiences of or exposure to violence, and adult perpetration.

men's experience of male violence (both in principle and because this is a reinforcing factor for violence against women), the data shows that this alone will not automatically translate to a reduction in male-perpetrated violence against women. Without ongoing attention to the gendered drivers of violence against women, it is unlikely that we will see such declines in the prevalence rates of violence experienced by women.

Additionally, reductions in men's experiences of male violence have not been universally experienced across the Australian population. As the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS) data reveals, the 12-month prevalence rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men's experience of violence has remained high and relatively consistent between 2008 and 2014–15. This finding highlights the need to address not only gender inequality but other intersecting forms of discrimination and oppression in undertaking violence prevention work – what works for significant proportions of the population does not work for everyone.

### Indicator 8.1: Proportion of children aged 0 to 17 years who experienced any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression that constitutes abuse by caregivers in the past year<sup>liv</sup>

What does this indicator tell us about Monitoring domain 8: Experience of, and exposure to, violence?	This indicator measures change in contemporary incident reporting of child abuse by caregivers through the national child protection system.
Expected change if high-quality programs and infrastructure for prevention of violence against women and gender equality are implemented	Short- and medium-term: increased reports of child abuse and neglect. Long-term: these rates will plateau.
Data source(s)	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), <i>Child protection Australia</i> , annual reports, 2013–14 and 2017–18, AIHW <sup>464</sup>
Change over time summary: short-term change revealed by the data	Substantial increase in substantiated reports of child abuse through the national child protection system, between 2013–14 and 2017–18.
Does the change confirm or run contrary to expected change?	Confirms expected change.
Gaps in existing data	Child protection data is not prevalence data; that is, it does not tell us the true prevalence of child abuse and neglect in the current period.

<sup>liv</sup> In *Counting on change*, this was listed as Indicator 9.2. The temporal period in the original wording of the indicator was 'past month', but this has been adjusted to 'past year' based on the available data.

There are currently no Australian nationwide studies tracking the prevalence of child abuse and neglect in the contemporary period.<sup>465</sup> The PSS only tracks prevalence of child abuse by asking adults about their childhood experiences, and therefore is historical in nature. The following data relies on administrative data that measures incidences of specific forms of maltreatment, as reported and investigated through child protection channels. National child protection data is aggregated across states and territories annually. However, it is important to note that this data is based on *reported* cases, so is likely to understate the true prevalence of child abuse and neglect across Australia. Data tracking over time also has some limitations including jurisdictional changes, and therefore data collected earlier than 2013–14 cannot be compared to the most recent data (2017–18).<sup>466</sup>

According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare’s Child Protection Australia reports, the overall number of children who were the subjects of child protection report substantiations has risen by 24% between 2013–14 and 2017–18.<sup>467</sup> A ‘substantiation’ means there is ‘sufficient reason (after an investigation) to believe the child has been, is being, or is likely to be abused, neglected or otherwise harmed’.<sup>468</sup> As a proportion of the population aged 0 to 17 years, this increase is from 7.2 per 1,000 children in 2013 to 2014, to 8.5 per 1,000 in 2017 to 2018.<sup>469</sup>

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare attributes the significant increase in substantiations (and prior notifications or reports) to legislative changes, enhanced public awareness, changes to statutory responses to child protection issues, and inquiries into child protection processes, as well as actual increases in the incidences of abuse and neglect perpetrated against children.<sup>470</sup> The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse ran from January 2013 to December 2017. The subsequent media coverage and public discourse around the broader issue of child sexual abuse may have contributed to the increase in public awareness and subsequent reporting.

## Indicator 8.2: Percentage of men who have experienced violence by a male perpetrator (male victims of male-on-male violence)

What does this indicator tell us about Monitoring domain 8: Experience of, and exposure to, violence?	Men’s exposure to violence from other men, and socialisation into a culture of interpersonal relations whereby violence is a key form of male expression, propels greater risk of male perpetration of violence against women. A decrease in male-on-male violence is one necessary element in reducing the risk of male perpetration of violence against women. This indicator tracks any change to male victimisation by other men.
Expected change if high-quality programs and infrastructure for prevention of violence against women and gender equality are implemented	Short- and medium-term: Reported rates of violence will increase with increased awareness.  Long-term: Experiences of male-on-male violence will plateau.



Data source(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Personal Safety Survey (PSS) 2012 and 2016, ABS</li> <li>2. National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS) 2008 and 2014–15, ABS</li> <li>3. National Homicide Monitoring Program, Australian Institute of Criminology, analysis of 2009–2016 homicide data<sup>471</sup></li> </ol>
Change over time summary: short-term change revealed by the data	<p>A decline in men's 12-month experiences of male-perpetrated physical violence has been noted.</p> <p>The 12-month prevalence rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men's experiences of physical violence has remained high and relatively consistent between 2008 and 2014–15.</p> <p>The rate of whole-of-population male homicide victimisation declined between 2009–10 and 2015–16.</p>
Does the change confirm or run contrary to expected change?	Contrary to expected change: there has been a decline in prevalence rates of male-on-male violence.
Gaps in existing data	<p>The PSS 12-month rates of male-perpetrated sexual violence against men are very low with high relative standards of error, and therefore not provided in this report.</p> <p>The publicly-available NATSISS data does not allow for gender disaggregation of perpetration; therefore there are limits to the accuracy in measuring First Nations men's experience of <i>male</i>-perpetrated violence.</p>

### Men's 12-month experiences of physical violence by a male perpetrator<sup>lv</sup>

On the basis of the PSS data, in 2012, 7.7% of adult men experienced male-perpetrated physical violence in the previous 12 months. This rate had declined to 4.4% of adult men in 2016.

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men's experiences of physical violence

As noted elsewhere in this report and in *Counting on change*, the PSS does not disaggregate results by Indigenous status and therefore does not allow for analysis of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men's experiences of male violence as compared with the broader or non-Indigenous population. The 2014–15 NATSISS gives us some indication of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men's experiences of male violence, as does national homicide data (see the next section).

According to the 2014–15 NATSISS, both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women experienced, in the 12 months prior, physical violence or threatened physical

<sup>lv</sup> 12-month rates of male-perpetrated sexual violence against men are very low with high relative standards of error, and therefore not provided in this report.



violence at rates which are similar to each other (22.8% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men, and 21.7% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women).<sup>lvi</sup> In the 12 months prior to the 2008 survey, 24% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men had experienced one or more incidents of physical violence (by any perpetrator). Therefore, between 2008 and 2014–15, 12-month prevalence rates of physical violence experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men have remained high and relatively consistent, though with a marginal decrease of approximately 1%.

Unfortunately, publicly available NATSISS data does not allow for a sex/gender-disaggregation of perpetrators of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and therefore the exact prevalence of specifically male violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men is unable to be reported here. However, it can be inferred from looking at the victim–perpetrator relationship in the data that men are more likely to be perpetrators of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women than women. On the basis of the 2014–15 NATSISS data, women were approximately seven times more likely than men to identify an intimate partner as the perpetrator of their most recent incident of physical violence in the previous 12 months. On the other hand, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men were more likely than women to experience violence from a known person other than a family member (49.4% of men and 29.9% of women) or a stranger (17.2% of men and 4.7% of women).

It should also be noted that the NATSISS data does not allow for disaggregation as to whether perpetrators are Indigenous or non-Indigenous. However, as was noted in *Changing the picture, Background paper* (2018), violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women is perpetrated by men of all cultural backgrounds.<sup>472</sup> As such, we would also expect this in relation to violence experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men.

## Male homicide victimisation

While men are overrepresented as victims of homicide,<sup>lvii</sup> the annual rate of male homicide victimisation has declined somewhat in recent years. In 2009–10, the male victimisation rate was 1.70 homicides per 100,000 men; in 2015–16, this had declined to 1.27 homicides per 100,000 men.<sup>473</sup>

Men are far more likely than women to perpetrate homicide, with 88% of homicide offenders in the 2012 to 2014 period being men. Men have consistently comprised at least 80% of offenders over the 25 years since the National Homicide Monitoring Program was established in 1989–90.<sup>474</sup>

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lvi While these figures cannot be directly compared to those of the PSS, they do suggest a much higher prevalence rate of violence experienced by both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women as compared with general population rates. For example, on the basis of 2016 PSS data, the general male population prevalence rate for 12-month physical violence was 4.4%; compare this with 12-month Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men's physical violence exposure rate of 22.8% in the 2014–15 NATSISS data. A considerable 7.0% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men had experienced physical violence or threatened physical violence on more than one occasion during this 12-month period.

lvii On the basis of national homicide data from 2012 to 2014, men represented 64% (n=328) of homicide victims, and women 36% (n=184): Bryant and Bricknell, 2017, p. 20.

The patterns of male and female homicide victimisation vary considerably, and echo broader violence patterns, whereby women are far more likely to be killed by an offender with whom they have a partner or familial relationship than men, and less likely than men to be victims of acquaintance or stranger homicide. In the period from 2012 to 2014, women comprised 79% of intimate partner homicide victims, and were almost twice as likely as men to be victims of any type of domestic/familial homicide. In contrast, men comprised 83% of acquaintance homicides, 92% of stranger homicides and 82% of homicides wherein the principal relationship to the perpetrator was not able to be determined or had not yet been determined (see Table 35, below).<sup>475</sup>

**Table 35: Proportion of type of homicide by gender of victim, 2012 to 2014**

Type of homicide as classified by victim's principal relationship to offender	Proportion of female victims	Proportion of male victims
Intimate partner (current or former)	79%	21%
Total domestic / familial (including intimate partner)	65%	35%
Acquaintance	17%	83%
Stranger	8%	92%
Unclassified	18%	82%

Source: Bryant and Bricknell, 2017, p. 20

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are highly overrepresented as homicide victims. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men experience homicide at a rate of 4.9 per 100,000 persons, five times the rate of non-Indigenous men.<sup>476</sup>

# Reinforcing factor: Weakening of pro-social behaviour, especially harmful use of alcohol

## Monitoring domain 9: Weakening of pro-social behaviour (harmful use of alcohol)

Indicator 9.1	Percentage of population who report that, in the past 12 months, their drinking or being drunk has had a harmful effect on their intimate relationship or family members, including children, and/or has played a role in them getting involved in a (verbal and/or physical) fight
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Certain factors erode or weaken pro-social behaviour, heighten individualistic tendencies or reduce concern for others and the consequences of actions in the context of gendered socialisation and power imbalances. These factors include harmful use of alcohol. Alcohol is a feature in a disproportionate number of police call-outs to partner violence, and is correlated with a higher number of, and more severe, incidents of violence against women.<sup>477</sup> Alcohol does not itself drive violence against women; not all people who drink are violent, and many people who do not drink are violent. However, the contribution of alcohol to increased perpetration is significant in the context of social norms and practices that condone or support violence against women, in particular those relating to masculinity and masculine peer group behaviour.<sup>478</sup>

Gender socialisation and identities are also reflected in the ways in which alcohol is consumed, and in the social norms relating to alcohol, e.g. in drinking cultures that emphasise male conquest and aggression, as well as in the ways individual men and women tend to behave under the influence of alcohol. This suggests it is the interaction between social norms relating to alcohol and social norms relating to gender that can increase the likelihood, frequency or severity of violence against women, not just the consumption of alcohol itself. Strategies that address the intersection between alcohol use and social norms relating to both violence and gender can help create a more supportive environment for other prevention activity.

Research is limited on the impact of other drugs on violence against women, but similarities can exist where a drug has similar effects to alcohol, and where it is also used in the context of gendered socialisation and power differentials. For example, a recent synthesis of Australian and international evidence found that there is some basis for an association between methamphetamine use (a growing trend in the past decade in Australia) and domestic violence.<sup>479</sup> The authors note, however, that the evidence is complex and suggests that methamphetamine use can exacerbate the likelihood of violence by reinforcing other 'determinants' (or drivers) of domestic violence.

This domain is measured by a single indicator. This indicator does not focus on the violence prevalence data in terms of where alcohol usage has been reported by victims, either by the perpetrator or by themselves (such as asked in the PSS), or recorded by others (such as homicide data drawn from police records). Rather, it looks at the data focused on alcohol usage whereby respondents are asked about the effect of their alcohol usage on key relationships (with partners, children and other family members) and whether they have been involved in fights when consuming alcohol.

**Strengthening pro-social behaviour: Summary of change over time**

Little progress has been made in terms of reducing alcohol-related violence. Some indicators suggest an increase in personal experiences of alcohol-related violence in the past 12 months. However, due to the lack of earlier data, it is unclear if this evidence is reliable. According to reports by the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE),<sup>480</sup> the proportion of Australians that has been affected by alcohol-related violence, either directly or as experienced by a friend or family member, has remained fairly consistent over time, as has the proportion who reported physically or verbally abusing someone after drinking, and the proportion of parents reporting their children being harmed or put at risk of harm because of someone else’s drinking. Alcohol-related violence continues to have a disproportionate impact on women, with women being more likely than men to have been the direct victim of alcohol-related violence.

While behaviour appears to have remained constant, there are indications in the NCAS<sup>481</sup> that attitudinal change is occurring, with only a small and declining proportion of Australians believing that alcohol use excuses male perpetrators or suggests that female victims of violence are partly to blame. This is linked to Monitoring domain 1: Condoning of violence against women, and the data analysed in this domain overall suggests that while some attitudes are changing, further work is required to translate this into meaningful and sustained behaviour change.

Strategies to prevent violence against women can be supported by approaches that aim to reduce the harmful use of alcohol and other drugs across the Australian population, when implemented in ways that address not only the substance itself, but the social context of its use.<sup>482</sup> Starting points for this work might include increased inclusion of gender-specific and violence related questions in alcohol-related research, and evaluation and monitoring tools that ensure the data can be disaggregated by gender. In addition, program development to prevent harmful use of alcohol should include initiatives specifically designed to address male drinking cultures that emphasise aggression and disrespect for women, and the intersection between these and other prejudicial attitudes, such as racism.

**Indicator 9.1: Percentage of population who report that, in the past 12 months, their drinking or being drunk has had a harmful effect on their intimate relationship or family members, including children, and/or has played a role in them getting involved in a fight**

What does this indicator tell us about Monitoring domain 9: Weakening of pro-social behaviour (harmful use of alcohol)?	Alcohol does not itself drive violence against women; however, the contribution of alcohol to increased perpetration is significant in the context of social norms and practices that condone or support violence against women. Therefore, a decrease in the percentage of the population who report that drinking or being drunk had a harmful effect on their intimate relationship, family members or whether they were involved in a fight will contribute to our understanding of whether significant changes have been made to underlying social norms and practices that drive violence against women.
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Expected change if high-quality programs and infrastructure for prevention of violence against women and gender equality are implemented	<p>Short- and medium-term: decreased rate of alcohol-related violence in past 12 months.</p> <p>Long-term: decreased rate of alcohol-related violence ever experienced.</p>
Data source(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Annual survey on alcohol-related attitudes and behaviours, 2011 to 2018, Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE)</li> <li>2. National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS) 2017, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS)</li> </ol>
Change over time summary: short-term change revealed by the data	No decrease in the rate of alcohol-related violence has been recorded; however, there has been a decline in the proportion of Australians who hold attitudes that excuse perpetrators or blame the victim where alcohol usage co-exists with male violence against women.
Does the change confirm or run contrary to expected change?	Slower than expected.
Gaps in existing data	<p>The data is not oriented so much to measuring social norms related to violence (and for example to masculinity). This would be a helpful direction for future research.</p> <p>Key data points are not (at least in public reporting) disaggregated by gender.</p>

## Experiences of alcohol-related harms and negative behaviours

### Alcohol-related violence – overall victimisation

FARE's annual survey on alcohol-related attitudes and behaviours suggested that, for the past eight years (2011 to 2018), approximately one-third of Australians had been affected by alcohol-related violence either directly (they were a victim), or a friend or family member was a victim.<sup>483</sup> This has remained fairly consistent over time (41% in 2011 and 37% in 2018). Each year, women were more likely than men to have been the direct victim of alcohol-related violence. For example, in the most recent survey, 23% of women had *ever* been a victim of alcohol-related violence, compared to 18% of men.

### Alcohol-related violence – personal victimisation

The FARE survey has recently expanded to collect 12-month prevalence of alcohol-related violence (2017 and 2018 surveys). Initial findings suggest that personal experiences of alcohol-related violence in the past 12 months may have increased (17% of people in 2017 to 24% of people in 2018); however, in the absence of earlier data, it is unclear if this is

evidence for an increase in the overall rates of alcohol-related violence. A definition of alcohol-related violence was not provided in the survey and it is possible that this increase in reporting may reflect the growing recognition of non-physical forms of violence.

### **Alcohol-related harm – parents’ reports on child’s exposure**

Since 2015, parents’ reports of their children being harmed or put at risk of harm because of someone else’s drinking have remained fairly static. According to FARE, the proportion of parents who report that their children had being exposed to various forms of harm (including verbal abuse, physical abuse and neglect) related to someone else’s drinking have remained at around one in five parents for the past four iterations of the survey (20% in 2015 and 23% in 2018).<sup>484</sup>

### **Negative drinking behaviours**

FARE surveyed negative drinking behaviours over a 3-year period (2014, 2015 and 2016) and found that the proportion of Australians who reported physically or verbally abusing someone after drinking was fairly consistent. Specifically:

- the proportion of Australians who had ever physically abused someone after drinking was consistent (3% each year). Men were more likely than women to report this (5% of men and 2% of women from the 2018 survey). Between 0–1% of people reported they had physically abused someone in the past year
- the proportion of Australians who reported having ever verbally abused someone after drinking declined slightly (13% in 2014, 12% in 2015 and 10% in 2016). Gender disaggregation was not provided for this behaviour. Between 2–3% of people had done so in the past year
- the proportion of Australians who reported having ever had an argument after drinking declined slightly (24% in 2014, 20% in 2015 and 19% in 2016). Gender disaggregation was not provided for this behaviour. Between 6–7% of people had done so in the past year.<sup>485</sup>

### **Attitudes excusing violence against women where alcohol is involved**

While this indicator focuses on harmful usage of alcohol as a reinforcing factor for violence against women, it is worth examining Australians’ attitudes about the interactions between violence and violence against women, for a number of reasons. First, by doing so we can test public understanding of the drivers of violence against women – whether Australians are mistaking reinforcing risk factors such as alcohol usage as the underpinnings of violence against women, or whether the general population recognise that alcohol is only ever a factor in violence against women where other gendered drivers of violence are already in play. As noted in the National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS) 2017 report, evidence shows that ‘the increased risk [of sexual violence perpetration] associated with alcohol is primarily among men who are already predisposed to sexual aggression’.<sup>486</sup>

The second reason for examining Australians’ attitudes to alcohol in the context of violence against women is to reveal whether we are prepared to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions or to excuse them if the perpetrator or the victim is intoxicated at the point of the physical or sexual violence incident.<sup>487</sup> This relates to Monitoring domain 1: Condoning

of violence against women, and is important in terms of understanding how we can prevent this form of behaviour and also how criminal justice agencies and men's services respond to it.

Hearteningly, the 2017 NCAS results reveal that a small and declining proportion of Australians hold attitudes that excuse perpetrators or blame the victim where alcohol usage co-exists with male violence against women. In 2017 only 5% of Australians agreed with statements that excuse domestic violence where there has been alcohol usage by either the perpetrator or the victim ('Domestic violence can be excused if the victim is heavily affected by alcohol' and 'Domestic violence can be excused if the offender is heavily affected by alcohol').<sup>488</sup> The 2017 results to each of these questions shows some progress in Australians' attitudes regarding alcohol usage in the context of domestic violence. In 2013, 11% of Australians agreed with excusing domestic violence where the victim was affected by alcohol, and 9% where the offender was intoxicated.

There has also been a positive change since 2013 in the proportion of Australians prepared to excuse a male rape perpetrator or blame a female rape victim where they are intoxicated or affected by drugs. In 2013, 19% agreed that 'If a woman is raped while she is drunk or affected by drugs she is at least partly responsible' compared to 13% in 2017. However, the proportions of Australians who in 2017 indicate excusing perpetration or victim-blaming in the context of sexual assault is still higher than it is for domestic violence. This is particularly the case in terms of at least partly blaming female rape victims – in 2017, 13% of Australians agreed that 'If a woman is raped while she is drunk or affected by drugs she is at least partly responsible'.<sup>489</sup> While this result represents a 6 percentage point decline from 2013, these results, combined with other findings of the NCAS on attitudes to sexual violence and consent, and Australia's prevalence rates on sexual violence, do suggest that sexual relations and sexual violence need a strong focus in our prevention efforts moving forward.



# Reinforcing factor: Backlash factors (when male dominance, power or status is challenged)

## Monitoring domain 10: Backlash factors

Backlash theories point to the aggressive, sometimes explicit and violent, and sometimes more implicit and covert resistance to change that has been demonstrated in the international research when rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity are challenged. For example, violence against women is more likely to be condoned in societies undergoing rapid social and economic change, where women are being propelled into more prominent roles in paid work and civic society.<sup>490</sup> At an individual/relationship level, men who have fewer economic and social resources relative to their partners (whether in the form of employment, education or income) have been shown to be more likely to perpetrate violence against women, but this is primarily among men holding stereotypical beliefs about their roles as 'providers'.<sup>491</sup> Men with fewer resources than their partners who hold more egalitarian beliefs about gender roles do not have a greater risk of perpetration.<sup>492</sup> Increases in perpetration of violence in such circumstances indicate that violence is used as a tool to re-establish a perceived 'natural', 'traditional' or pre-existing gender role.

In working towards the prevention of violence against women and the promotion of gender equality and women's rights, it is essential we closely monitor associated trends in backlash activity. International research about gains in the field of gender equality and women's rights shows that there are typically countervailing forces that rise up to resist and counter this progress. While the rise of these forces may in themselves be an indication of progress (i.e. there is a perceived need for a 'pre-emptive strike' by opponents of gender equality because of the strength, or perceived strength, of progress), backlash is also harmful to individual women and to the progress of movements for gender equality and prevention of violence against women as a whole.<sup>493</sup>

This domain is measured by a single indicator, which uses attitudinal data collected in the most recent iteration of the NCAS (2017).

## Backlash: Summary of change over time

As this is a monitoring domain with limited and emerging data, this analysis is establishing a baseline, rather than reporting on progress. As a benchmarking exercise, however, the results of the relevant data points in the 2017 NCAS are concerning. They indicate that considerable proportions of the population deny the continued persistence of gender inequality in Australia, consider women to be too sensitive about sexism, think that women flirt with men in order to hurt them, and believe women undervalue men.

Analysis of the 2017 NCAS results highlights a strong correlation between backlash attitudes that deny the problem of gender inequality, and attitudes supportive of violence against women. That is, the holding of backlash attitudes was a strong predictor of attitudes that condone violence against women.



While there is limited quantitative data available for this domain, qualitative analyses of the political environment have identified the rise of contemporary backlash forces operating at a global and national level, challenging movements for gender equality and the prevention of violence against women. These backlash activities are taking the form of:

- Men's Rights Activist movements, including overlapping or sub-groups such as Fathers' Rights Activists and Incels (Involuntary Celibates), which not only reject a gendered understanding of violence and issues faced by women and men, but argue that feminism has created a crisis of masculinity, hurting and disadvantaging men.<sup>494</sup> Organised men's rights movements in Australia have had significant influence on areas of policy and legislative reform, especially family law<sup>495</sup>
- The rise of far-right extremist political parties, movements and political representatives, which tend to espouse misogynistic, racist and anti-diversity ideologies (demonstrating how anti-gender equality attitudes are typically held simultaneously with other forms of discriminatory attitudes)
- Strategies of men associated with men's rights or far right ideologies, especially organised online trolling and harassment (including threats of violence), of women and organisations working to progress gender equality and prevent violence against women<sup>496</sup>
- Backlash against the #MeToo movement's exposure of the widespread nature of women's experiences of sexual harassment and sexual violence, particularly in workplaces. Some analyses have characterised this backlash in terms of men's dismissal of women's claims, rising denial of gender inequality, and discrimination against and hostility toward women in hiring and other workplace practices as a means of avoiding sexual harassment claims.<sup>497</sup> Interestingly, this corresponds with analysis of the gender pay gap in Australia, which places gender discrimination in the workplace as the leading contributor to the gender pay gap, and one that has grown in influence in recent years.<sup>498</sup>

In summary, there is a need for better data to monitor backlash forces, particularly in Australia. However, emerging evidence suggests backlash expressed as a denial of gender inequality is considerable. Moreover, ideological movements associated with anti-gender equality positions are in effect exacting influence upon policy spaces and individual attitudes, and creating harm against women. Prevention strategies will need to carefully monitor and account for backlash forces moving forward, to ensure that any gains achieved are not lost.

## Indicator 10.1: Backlash factors

What does this indicator tell us about Monitoring domain 10: Backlash factors?	Backlash is a reaction against progressive social change, designed to prevent further change from happening. <sup>499</sup> As backlash can be enacted by individuals and groups, this indicator measures individual attitudes that indicate 'overt hostility to women' or that deny the persistence of sexism and gender inequality in Australia.
Expected change if high-quality programs and infrastructure for prevention of violence against women and gender equality are implemented	<p>Short- and medium-term: proportion of the population who express denial of continued gender inequality, hostility towards women, and antagonism towards the women's movement may increase. Backlash to gender equality and a societal rejection of violence against women is, somewhat conversely, often a sign of progress. However, it needs to be effectively countered.</p> <p>Long-term: if effective strategies to address backlash are put into place, the proportion of the population who express these views will decrease.</p>
Data source(s)	National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS) 2017, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS)
Change over time summary: short-term change revealed by the data	<p>For four of the five questions, only baseline data is available at this point; no assessment of change is possible. However, the high levels of attitudes linked to backlash may be a sign of progress.</p> <p>The one question measuring attitudes that has been collected over time indicates a reduction in attitudes that are linked with backlash, specifically in relation to discrimination in the workplace in Australia.</p>
Does the change confirm or run contrary to expected change?	Not yet able to assess change.
Gaps in existing data	The NCAS provides limited attitudinal backlash measures. However, other forms of quantitative data on the shape of backlash in Australia, and change over time, are greatly needed.

The 2017 NCAS was adapted to include five questions (four new) associated with backlash attitudes – that is, attitudes that indicate an ‘overt hostility to women’ or that deny the persistence of sexism and gender inequality in Australia.<sup>500</sup> Results of the 2017 NCAS on backlash attitudes are disturbing:

- Two in five (40%) Australians deny the continued persistence of gender inequality, agreeing ‘Many women exaggerate how unequally women are treated in Australia.’
- Half of all Australians (50%) agreed that ‘Many women mistakenly interpret innocent remarks or acts as being sexist.’
- One in five (20%) agreed that ‘Women often flirt with men just to be hurtful.’
- Over one-third (36%) agreed that ‘Many women fail to fully appreciate all that men do for them.’

However, and significantly, the one statement that has been asked over successive NCAS waves – ‘Discrimination against women is no longer a problem in the workplace in Australia’ – received the lowest agreement response rate in 2017. One in ten (10%) agreed in 2017, as compared to 13% in 2013 and 11% in 2009, indicating a shift in attitudes regarding recognition of discrimination against women in Australian workplaces.

The prevalence of backlash attitudes in contemporary gender equality movements – as indicated by the NCAS results above – are high. It is also crucial to note that the 2017 NCAS results indicate that backlash attitudes that deny the problem of gender inequality is the strongest gender equality theme predictor of attitudes supportive of violence against women. That is, the 2017 NCAS found that gender equality attitudes are the factor most predictive of attitudes towards violence against women. Within gender equality attitudes, backlash attitudes make the largest contribution (40%) to attitudes supportive of violence against women, demonstrating a strong association between backlash attitudes and attitudinal support for violence against women. This further underlines the critical importance of efforts to prevent violence against women becoming equipped to deal with and counter backlash.

# Section 2 Part B: Long-term change: Prevalence of violence against women

*Change the story* outlines how violence against women and their children<sup>lviii</sup> is a prevalent, serious and preventable abuse of human rights with devastating individual and social consequences. The ultimate goal of those working on prevention is the elimination of violence against women; hence, monitoring prevalence is essential in order to track progress towards this ultimate goal. This section focuses on the prevalence of key forms of violence against women in Australia.

## A focus on short-term prevalence data, with lifetime prevalence as a baseline for longer-term monitoring

Lifetime prevalence would only be expected to decrease at the population level in the very long term, because incidents in the relatively distant past will continue to be recorded long after any prevention strategies have been introduced. The short-term period prevalence measurement is more amenable to change over time, as it captures the proportion of women who have experienced violence within a short-term contemporary period (typically 12 months), and therefore is likely to be more reflective of prevention strategies implemented in recent years.

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lviii While the focus of *Change the story*, *Counting on change*, and this report is the primary prevention of violence against women, the inclusion of the phrase ‘and their children’ is to acknowledge that many women who experience violence have children in their care. Exposure to violence against their mothers or other caregivers causes profound harm to children, with potential impacts on attitudes to relationships and violence, as well as behavioural, cognitive and emotional functioning, social development, and – through a process of ‘negative chain effects’ – education and later employment prospects. Because violence against women has such direct and significant impacts on children, preventing it will also prevent associated harm to, and consequences for, children.

For this reason, the following sections draw on 12-month prevalence data as the more appropriate timeframe to compare across survey periods. The most recent data on lifetime exposure to violence (that is, occurring at any point or points since age 15) is presented, in order to provide broader context and a baseline for future prevention monitoring reports.

However, while we would expect 12-month prevalence to decrease *sooner* than lifetime prevalence, we would still not expect to see a measurable decrease in the short term. This is because short-term prevalence rates are still dependent on primary prevention strategies comprehensively and effectively addressing the drivers of violence against women and reaching the whole population in a sustained and coordinated way.

## Monitoring domain 11: Prevalence of violence against women

### Twelve-month prevalence indicators

Indicator 11.1	Proportion of women aged 18 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the last 12 months
Indicator 11.2	Proportion of women aged 18 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the last 12 months
Indicator 11.3	Proportion of women aged 18 years and older subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by any perpetrator in the last 12 months
Indicator 11.4	Proportion of women who have experienced sexual harassment in the last 12 months
Indicator 11.5	Number of women killed per year by any (non-state actor) perpetrator (femicide)*

\* Indicator 11.5 is an addition to those in *Counting on change* and has been included to aid a more comprehensive picture of the prevalence of violence against women in Australia.

### Lifetime prevalence indicators

Indicator 11.6	Proportion of women subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner since age 15
Indicator 11.7	Proportion of women subjected to sexual violence by a person other than an intimate partner since age 15
Indicator 11.8	Proportion of women aged 18 years and older subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by any perpetrator since age 15
Indicator 11.9	Proportion of women who have experienced sexual harassment since age 15*

\* Indicator 11.9 is an addition to those in *Counting on change* and has been included to aid a more comprehensive picture of the prevalence of violence against women in Australia.

Australia's shared framework for the prevention of violence against women, *Change the story*, and the *Counting on change* prevention monitoring framework recognise that reductions in the rates of violence against women will only be seen in the long-term (i.e. outside of the time period in consideration within this first monitoring report). Moreover, long-term change to prevalence rates is not inevitable: it is only going to be achieved if we sufficiently address the gendered drivers of violence, intersecting drivers of violence (other forms of oppression and discrimination), and other factors reinforcing the likelihood of violence. To this end, then, the framework for prevention monitoring outlined in *Counting on change* and operationalised in this report does not focus on prevalence alone as the only measures by which we know we are succeeding in preventing violence against women. It also measures change in relation to the gendered drivers, intersecting drivers and reinforcing factors, as well as the national infrastructure that catalyses and supports change.

‘Significant and sustained reductions’<sup>501</sup> in prevalence of violence against women can, logically, only be expected if we first achieve reductions in the factors that drive such violence.

## **Reducing the prevalence of violence against women: Summary of change over time**

The data detailed in the indicators which follow show that there have been only minor and inconsistent changes in the 12-month prevalence rates of most forms of violence against women in the time period under consideration in this report. That is, prevalence rates of most forms of violence against women have remained relatively consistent over the past decade. Where there have been reductions, these have been mostly only small and we cannot yet determine if these reductions will ‘stick’ (be sustained).

The clear exception to the overall findings is with regard to sexual harassment prevalence rates. Women are reporting marked increases in 12-month experiences of sexual harassment (in any setting). Workplace sexual harassment data, detailed in Indicator 3.6, also shows a marked upswing in reported rates of workplace sexual harassment of women. It is not possible to conclusively state why prevalence surveys have registered significantly higher prevalence rates of sexual harassment between survey waves (between 2012 and 2016 for the Personal Safety Survey (PSS), and 2012 and 2018 for the AHRC workplace sexual harassment surveys). However, it is hypothesised that this may be linked to the #MeToo movements (and its antecedents), which have shone a light on sexual harassment and reframed many women’s perceptions of their own experiences. Further research is required to understand the considerable increases in prevalence rates of sexual harassment experienced by women in this short period of time.

While there are many gaps in data with regard to the victimisation rates of women who experience intersecting forms of inequality and discrimination (as noted throughout this section), available data suggests disproportionately high and mostly unchanging prevalence rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, women with disability, and women who experience socioeconomic disadvantage.

The data collated against this monitoring domain demonstrates the clear need for continued, sustained and strategic efforts to both prevent and respond to violence against women in Australia. The whole-of-population prevalence of violence against women remains unacceptably high and persistent, and higher still for women who experience intersecting forms of inequality and discrimination.

### **Short-term prevalence shifts**

For the most part, there have not been large shifts in 12-month prevalence rates of different forms of violence against women, by different categories of perpetrator, in the time period under consideration in this report. For example:

- Twelve-month rates of violence against women by intimate partners have remained fairly consistent between 2012 and 2016.
- Twelve-month rates of sexual assault against women perpetrated by persons other than partners have remained fairly consistent.

However, the following statistically significant changes to prevalence rates are noted:

- Twelve-month rates of sexual violence against women by any perpetrator have increased somewhat.
- Twelve-month rates of physical violence against women by any perpetrator have decreased somewhat.
- There has been a marked increase in twelve-month rates of sexual harassment of women.

## **About prevalence data**

Measuring change in the proportion of women who have experienced violence is best done through repeatable population-based surveys, which provide reliable, comparable prevalence data. In Australia the primary vehicle for measuring the prevalence of violence is the Personal Safety Survey (PSS), funded by the Department of Social Services and conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). Australia's PSS is considered to be world-class. It conforms with, and has informed, international World Health Organization (WHO) module standards and ethical procedures. Violence prevalence surveys – including the PSS – usually distinguish between different forms of violence (e.g. physical and sexual) and different categories of perpetrator (e.g. former or current intimate partner, friend or colleague), and such distinctions are essential to any nuanced understanding of change.

Violence prevalence rates are often measured in two ways:

1. lifetime prevalence (i.e. the percentage of women who have experienced violence in their lifetime since the age of 15), and
2. short-term prevalence rates, typically 12 months (i.e. the percentage of women who have experienced violence in the past year at the point of survey).

The PSS measures 12-month and lifetime experiences of violence (as well as collecting some data on past childhood experiences of abuse).

## **Limitations to whole-of-population violence against women prevalence data**

Population-based prevalence data is essential to our understanding of whether we are making progress toward the elimination of violence against women at a population level. Australia is leading the way globally through having a strong, credible and dedicated instrument in the PSS. However, there are some important limits to what population-based surveys (including the PSS) and prevalence data tell us about progress in prevention of violence against women.

### *Measuring the prevalence of all forms of violence against women*

For methodological and pragmatic reasons, and to be able to preserve data comparability over time (as well as between countries/jurisdictions), key prevalence surveys typically focus on the most common interpersonal forms of violence against women. The PSS is highly comprehensive by international standards. It measures, for example, physical and sexual violence, as well as emotional abuse (which includes some measures of financial abuse), sexual harassment, and stalking. At present, it does not measure other forms of gendered violence which have been gaining increased attention and driving new policy and practice, such as reproductive coercion, systems abuse, elder abuse, coercive control, and a range of



technological, emotional and financial abuse behaviours. It is also not able to measure in great detail the settings in which certain forms of violence may be enabled, e.g. in institutional settings. Of course, survey instruments are also unable to measure the most severe form of violence against women – homicide – so results must be read in conjunction with homicide statistics. For this reason, homicide crime statistics and coronial data have been included in this report.

Surveys such as the PSS, by their nature, focus on direct, interpersonal, individual experiences of violence. They are not suitable for measuring structural violence against women. To capture this aspect and provide a fuller picture of violence against women, other indicators are critical - including those associated with intersecting drivers of violence (other forms of oppression and discrimination), and those associated with the range of reinforcing factors discussed in this report.

### *Measuring the prevalence (and patterns) of perpetration*

As with most international survey instruments, the PSS and other prevalence instruments in Australia focus on eliciting data on respondents' *experience* of violence (i.e. victimisation information), rather than on respondents' *perpetration* of violence. As such, perpetration data in the PSS is limited to what respondents who have been subject to violence reveal about their relationship to the perpetrator. Population-based data on the proportion of the population who are perpetrating violence, and their patterns of perpetration, is therefore, limited, and cannot be comprehensively included in our prevention monitoring framework.

### *Capturing demographic diversity and disaggregation of analysis*

In the design of population-representative surveys, certain choices are made about the capturing of demographic information, and then the extent to which disaggregated analysis is made available to the public. These choices are made in a way that seeks to balance nuance and sub-population group representation with sample size and the ability to disaggregate findings along multiple axes. Demographic choices are also sometimes made due to ethical reasons or pragmatic difficulties in survey delivery in the field, and sometimes political choices or reflections of our understanding of diversity at particular points in time. Such choices are also difficult to shift over time because of the potential to obstruct 'timeseries analysis', i.e. the comparison of data over time based on different survey waves.

For example, the PSS is affected by a number of diversity and demographic limitations:

- Disaggregation of PSS victimisation data by demographic factors is mostly limited to 12-month data rather than lifetime prevalence data, because victim demographics can change over time (i.e. people age or can acquire disability). However, as noted by Cox (2016, p. 51), 'the use of prior year data reduces the sample size ... making it more difficult for variations between groups to be classified as statistically significant'.<sup>502</sup> As such, it is likely that there is more difference in prevalence rates between different groups of women than the PSS data reveals.<sup>503</sup>
- Notably, the PSS is not able to be disaggregated by Indigenous status, nor is it administered in remote communities. For these reasons, it cannot tell us anything about the comparative prevalence rates of violence experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women vis-à-vis the whole population or the non-Indigenous population. While other surveys focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are used to generate violence prevalence data (the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Health Survey, NATSIHS, and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, NATSISS), this data is not directly comparable to that of the PSS, and perhaps more importantly, is not as comprehensive because these other survey instruments are not focused solely on violence.

- While some information is collected on cultural and language diversity through country of birth and language demographic factors, the demographic information is limited and the survey is typically delivered in English, though some provision for interpretation is made. Publicly available analysis of the PSS data typically yields findings which do not give us great insight into how experiences and prevalence of violence differ along cultural or linguistic or place-of-birth lines. This is likely to stem in significant part from under-representation of people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, due to the limitations in the delivery of the survey in languages other than English.<sup>504</sup> This report does not include, then, disaggregation by country of birth and language under all indicators, as this data seems to be limited in its usefulness.
- The PSS is not administered in care or other institutions, nor are the sensitive questions on violence allowed to be administered with the assistance of a caregiver. The ABS therefore notes that people with more severe, and particularly communicative, forms of disability, are likely to under-represented in the survey sample.<sup>505</sup>
- Given that the survey is administered to individuals with a fixed residential address only and not in institutions, it excludes participation by individuals who are either transient or institutionalised, such as homeless women, trafficked women, imprisoned women, institutionalised women with disability, and asylum seeker or migrant women in detention centres. And yet we know through settings-based evidence that women in such institutions are likely to experience high prevalence rates of violence, as a catalyst to institutionalisation or homelessness, and/or due to being subject to violence within a hostile institutional setting or in impermanent accommodation.
- While in the forthcoming wave of the PSS (2020) information will be captured about sexual identity for the first time, currently there is no option on gender identity which goes beyond the binary male/female option, nor does this allow self-identification as cisgender or transgender. Therefore, prevalence rates among women of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities is rendered largely invisible in the PSS data.

### **Understanding the gendered and intersectional nature of violence against women: Beyond prevalence to experiences**

The PSS and other data and research regarding women's victimisation can tell us a great deal more than simply prevalence and comparative demographic patterns of victimisation and perpetration. Analysis of what happens during and after incidents of violence, impacts on victims, or patterns of multiple victimisations and ongoing patterns of violence are not included in this section. Some of this is drawn upon in the Drivers and Reinforcers sections of this report; other analysis is beyond its scope. We have not undertaken an exhaustive comparison to men's violence victimisation – though key elements of this are included at Indicator 8.2: Percentage of men who reported experiencing violence by a male perpetrator. However, in order to fully understand women's experiences of violence based on available data, including comparison to male victimisation, we recommend other reports such as *Violence against women: Additional analysis of the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Personal Safety Survey, 2012* (ANROWS, 2016), and Our Watch's recent report on understanding the

higher prevalence and differential impacts of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.<sup>506</sup>

Even where we have some prevalence data for groups of women who experience intersecting forms of discrimination and oppression, victimisation prevalence data alone does not describe or explain the full extent of how violence is disproportionate and particular for some women when compared to others. Other forms of data related to the severity, impacts, frequency, patterns and qualitative experiences of violence against some women compared to others are critical to build an understanding of how violence against women manifests where gender inequality intersects with drivers of violence that are associated with other forms of oppression and discrimination. Therefore, this monitoring report should be read in conjunction with other work that examines the experiences of violence against specific population groups, such as *Changing the picture*, which analyses violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, for example.

## Twelve-month prevalence

### Indicator 11.1: Proportion of women aged 18 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the last 12 months, by form of violence<sup>lix</sup>

What does this indicator tell us about Monitoring domain 11: Prevalence of violence against women?	<p>This indicator allows us to compare the proportion of the population of women in Australia who experienced intimate partner-perpetrated physical, sexual and/or emotional violence in a defined short-term window (12 months) prior to each survey wave. In doing so, it allows for an assessment of whether rates of partner violence against women are shifting in the short term.</p> <p><b>Please note:</b> See also Indicator 4.1 for detailed analysis of partner emotional abuse, and Indicator 11.5 for detailing of 12-month femicide prevalence rates, including as perpetrated by intimate partners.</p>
Expected change if high-quality programs and infrastructure for prevention of violence against women and gender equality are implemented	<p>Short- and medium-term: little change in the 12-month prevalence of intimate partner violence.</p> <p>Long-term: as drivers of violence are addressed, prevalence rates of intimate partner violence to drop. Twelve-month prevalence rates will show change before lifetime prevalence rates.</p>
Data source(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Personal Safety Survey (PSS) 2012 and 2016, ABS, including additional analysis of partner violence data from the 2016 PSS</li> <li>2. National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS) 2008 and 2014–15, ABS</li> <li>3. National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS) 2018–19<sup>507</sup></li> </ol>

lix The original wording of this indicator in *Counting on change* was ‘Proportion of women aged 18 years and older, subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence, by a current or former intimate partner in the last 12 months, by form of violence and age group’. For the purposes of this report, we have based our analysis primarily on publicly available Personal Safety Survey data cubes. This publicly available data does not include an analysis of age group victimisation of 12-month partner violence. Moreover, *Counting on change* indicator wordings were designed to align with Sustainable Development Goal indicators; hence the wording ‘psychological violence’. In the Australian context, we are more familiar with this form of violence being referred to as ‘emotional’, and in the Personal Safety Survey, this form of violence is referred to as ‘emotional abuse’.

Change over time summary: short-term change revealed by the data	<p>In comparing the data for the 12 months prior to the 2012 and 2016 PSS waves, whole-of-population prevalence rates of partner-perpetrated physical and sexual violence and emotional abuse have remained relatively consistent.</p> <p>Data from the 2008 and 2015–16 NATSISS waves do not allow full comparison of 12-month rates of partner-perpetrated physical assault. Only one wave of data (2018–19) is available for the NATSIHS, and perpetration by intimate partners and family members is presented as a single category. These limitations noted, data from these two surveys suggests that 12-month rates of partner-perpetrated physical assault against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are high and relatively consistent over time.</p>
Does the change confirm or run contrary to expected change?	Whole-of-population results (PSS) and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women population results (NATSISS) confirm expected short-term consistency in prevalence rates.
Gaps in existing data	<p>Current datasets focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people do not allow for investigation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women’s 12-month experiences of partner-perpetrated sexual violence, sexual harassment and non-physical forms of violence (defined as ‘emotional abuse’ in the PSS).</p> <p>The National and Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (2018–19) publicly available data presents ‘intimate partner or other family member’ as a single perpetrator category; therefore, specific figures pertaining to the proportion of women who reported an intimate partner as the perpetrator of their experience of physical harm are not able to be reported here.</p> <p>Moreover, there are other critical methodological factors in the NATSISS and NATSIHS which affect prevalence reporting. Most critically, the surveys are administered with respondents in such a way as does not require respondents to be alone, out of earshot of others. This is likely to result in a significant under-reporting of experiences of violence, especially as women are likely to know or be in a current or former intimate or family relationship with the perpetrator.</p> <p>Publicly available PSS data has also been limited in terms of disaggregation of women who experience partner violence by other socio-demographic characteristics; however, recently additional analysis of partner violence data from the PSS 2016 was released, which reveals that higher rates of partner violence victimisation are associated with certain socio-demographic variables such as disability, socioeconomic disadvantage and single parenthood.<sup>508</sup></p>

Comparing the results from the 2012 and 2016 waves of the PSS, the proportion of women aged 18 years and over who have experienced physical and/or sexual violence, or emotional abuse, during the last 12 months by an intimate partner has remained relatively stable. That is, **there has been little change in 12-month prevalence rates of partner violence against women in the time period under consideration in this report**. As noted by the ABS, looking at change over time back to 2005, the 'proportion of women who experienced partner violence in the previous 12 months has remained fairly stable over the last decade'.<sup>509</sup>

## Physical and/or sexual violence

**In 2012, one in 50 (2.1%) women in Australia had experienced at least one incident of physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner (cohabiting or non-cohabiting, current or former) in the last 12 months. This figure had increased slightly to 2.3% in 2016.**

The proportion of women in Australia who experienced current and/or previous *cohabiting* partner physical and/or sexual violence (whether one or more incidents, by one or more partners) in the past 12 months was 1.7% in 2016 and 1.5% in 2012. In 2016, an additional 0.6% of women experienced physical and/or sexual violence from a non-cohabiting boyfriend/girlfriend (current and/or former) or date. The 12-month rate of violence perpetrated by non-cohabiting intimate partners in 2012 was a similar 0.8% (see Table 36, below). None of this change is statistically significant.

**Table 36: Partner physical and/or sexual violence against women in the last 12 months, 2012 and 2016, proportion of women %**

	2012	2016
Intimate partner violence experiences in past 12 months, total cohabiting and non-cohabiting partner	2.1%	2.3%
Cohabiting partner total	1.5%	1.7%
Current partner	0.8%	0.9%
Previous partner	0.8%	0.7%
Non-cohabiting partner (boyfriend/girlfriend or date)	0.8%	0.6%

Sources: ABS, PSS 2012 and PSS 2016; Cox, 2016

## **Emotional abuse**

On the basis of PSS data, the proportion of women in Australia who have experienced emotional abuse from a cohabiting partner (current or previous) in the previous 12 months remained high and consistent between 2012 (4.7%) and 2016 (4.8%). That is, in 2012 and 2016, approximately one in 20 women reported having experienced emotional abuse by a cohabiting partner in the past 12 months.

See Indicator 4.1 for more detailed analysis of partner emotional abuse and a summary of the emotionally abusive behaviours measured in the PSS.

## **Socio-demographic characteristics of women who experienced partner violence**

The ABS published additional analysis of partner violence data from the 2016 wave of the PSS.<sup>510</sup> This analysis reveals that certain socio-demographic variables are associated with higher short-term rates of partner violence. These socio-demographic characteristics include disability, socioeconomic disadvantage, financial stress, unemployment and single parenthood.<sup>511</sup> For example, 3.9% of women who had a disability or long-term health condition experienced partner violence in the last two years, compared with 2.2% of women without a disability or long-term health condition.<sup>512</sup> This is consistent with an intersectional understanding of violence against women, whereby gender inequalities intersect with other forms of structural inequality and disadvantage to drive violence against women.

## **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's 12-month experiences of partner-perpetrated physical assault**

**Available data suggests that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women continue to experience a disproportionately high prevalence of 12-month experiences of partner-perpetrated violence.**

As outlined previously, the PSS does not allow for analysis of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's experiences of violence. The other currently available datasets, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS) and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS), focus on measuring a limited definition of violence – physical only, and not including sexual violence, sexual harassment, or other non-physical forms of violence included in the 'emotional abuse' module of the PSS. The surveys also only measure 12-month experiences rather than lifetime experiences.

The 2018–19 wave of the NATSISS was the first instance that questions about 12-month experiences of violence (defined as 'physical harm' or 'threatened physical harm') were included. Unfortunately, the publicly available survey data does not distinguish intimate partner perpetration as its own category. Rather, cumulative figures for victims who name an intimate partner (inclusive of cohabiting partners and non-cohabiting partners and dates) or family member as a perpetrator are reported. Results of this survey show that while there were relatively even reported prevalence rates of 12-month physical harm or threatened



physical harm for women and men,<sup>ix</sup> women were far more likely than men to name an intimate partner or family member as the perpetrator of the violence. These findings are consistent with the NATSISS (see below).

In 2018–19, of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women (6.2%) who reported experiencing physical harm in the 12 months prior to the survey, three-quarters of these (74.4%) named an intimate partner or family member as a perpetrator of this violence (as compared with 56.0% of men). Of those women who reported experiencing face-to-face threatened physical harm in the previous 12 months (8.4%), approximately two-thirds (67.3%) named an intimate partner or family member as a perpetrator (see Table 37, below).

**Table 37: Physical harm or threatened physical harm experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, proportion (%) of women aged 15 years and over who experienced harm perpetrated by an intimate partner or family member, 2018–19**

Perpetrator category	Physical harm	Face-to-face threatened physical harm
Total proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who experienced this harm in the previous 12 months	6.2%	8.4%
% of women who named intimate partner or family member as perpetrator	74.4%	67.3%
% named other known person as perpetrator	28.1%	36.9%
% named stranger as perpetrator	5.6%	7.4%

Source: ABS, NATSISS 2018–19

ix Several methodological cautions should be noted here in interpreting this data. The 2018–19 NATSISS's module on violence was limited to physical harm only and precluding sexual assault. Moreover, the survey is administrated in a way that does not (unlike the Personal Safety Survey) require respondents to be alone in a private environment (i.e. away from other people). As such, there is likely to be significant under-reporting by women of experiences of violence – not only because they are not asked about sexual violence or non-physical forms of violence, but also because, as the data itself shows, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who experience violence are more likely than men to know the perpetrator. Therefore, the fact that other people may be listening to their survey responses would suggest that experiences are under-reported. Women are likely to be unwilling to disclose experiences of violence when the perpetrator or those close to the perpetrator are within earshot, or may just be unwilling to disclose violence in the presence of others who are close to them. Further, the violence questions asked in the NATSISS are very limited. Providing only a few chances for survey respondents to answer questions about violence is likely to limit disclosure rates, as compared with a longer survey or module focused on violence.



The NATSISS measures prevalence of physical violence (assault and threat) within a 12-month timeframe. In 2008, one-quarter (25%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women had experienced at least one incident of physical violence in the 12 months prior to the survey. This had decreased somewhat to 21.7% in the 12 months prior to the 2014–15 survey.

In the 2014–15 survey results, 37% of women who had experienced physical assault in the 12 months prior identified an intimate partner as responsible for their most recent incident of physical assault (see Table 38, below). A like figure is not available for the 2008 survey results, as publicly available 2008 data does not aggregate intimate partner-perpetrated physical assault including non-cohabiting partners (e.g. boyfriends, dates). Moreover, the way that the NATSISS data presents prevalence of partner violence is as a proportion of the women who have experienced violence, not a proportion of the overall population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, and therefore is different to PSS data analysis. However, data from both waves of the survey suggests that **a high prevalence of partner-perpetrated physical assault continues to be experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in a 12-month timeframe.**

**Table 38: Physical assault experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, most recent incidents of physical assault by type of perpetrator, proportion (%) of women who experienced physical assault in the previous 12 months<sup>lxi</sup>**

Perpetrator category	2008	2014–15
<b>Intimate partner</b> (inclusive of current or previous partners, cohabiting or non-cohabiting)	Not calculated	37%
<b>Current cohabiting partner</b>	12%	13%
<b>Previous cohabiting partner</b>	21%	15%
<b>Non-cohabiting partner, current or previous (e.g. boyfriend, date)</b>	Not presented as a category	10%
Other family member	28%	37%
Stranger	6%	5%

Sources: ABS, NATSISS 2008 and NATSISS 2014–15

As noted earlier, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Social Survey do not measure non-physical forms of violence.

<sup>lxi</sup> Data on ‘other known person’ perpetrator category is not presented in this table as in 2008 this category included non-cohabiting partners and in 2014–15, non-cohabiting partners were classed as a subcategory of intimate partner violence. Therefore the data on physical assault perpetrated by ‘other known persons’ is not comparable between the two survey waves.

**Indicator 11.2: Proportion of women aged 18 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the last 12 months<sup>lxii</sup>**

What does this indicator tell us about Monitoring domain 11: Prevalence of violence against women?	This indicator allows us to compare the proportion of the population of women in Australia who experienced sexual violence by a perpetrator other than a partner in a defined short-term window (12 months) prior to each survey wave. In doing so, it allows for an assessment of how rates of non-partner sexual violence against women are shifting (or otherwise) in the short term. The Personal Safety Survey (PSS) definition of sexual violence includes sexual assault and threat of sexual assault; however, publicly available 12-month data only allows for comparison of rates of sexual assault.
Expected change if high-quality programs and infrastructure for prevention of violence against women and gender equality are implemented	Short- and medium-term: little change in the 12-month prevalence of non-partner sexual violence.  Long-term: as drivers of violence are addressed, prevalence rates of non-partner sexual violence to drop. Twelve-month prevalence rates will show change before lifetime prevalence rates.
Data source(s)	Personal Safety Survey (PSS) 2012 and 2016, ABS
Change over time summary: short-term change revealed by the data	In comparing the data for the 2012 and 2016 survey waves, the 12-month prevalence rate of non-partner sexual assault against women has remained fairly consistent, noting the limitations with this data as below.
Does the change confirm or run contrary to expected change?	Confirms expected change.

lxii The original wording for this indicator in *Counting on change* was 'Proportion of women aged 18 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the last 12 months, by age group and place of occurrence'. Disaggregation by age group and place of occurrence is not available from the publicly available Personal Safety Survey 12-month data, and, therefore, has not been included here.

Gaps in existing data	<p>12-month figures for sexual violence against women perpetrated by persons other than partners cannot be aggregated into a total. Further, 12-month experiences disaggregated by the categories of stranger and known persons other than partners are so low that it is difficult to track change over time. It is therefore difficult to provide a meaningful assessment of change against this indicator.</p> <p>Key datasets (PSS, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey) do not allow us to analyse prevalence of sexual violence against Aboriginal and Torres Islander women, no matter the perpetrator.</p>
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**The proportion of women in Australia who experienced sexual assault by a perpetrator *other than a partner* in the 12 months prior to the 2012 and 2016 surveys has remained consistently low**, with partners continuing to account for a considerable portion of women's experiences of sexual assault.

The PSS allows for measurement of rates of sexual assault by two categories of *non-partner* perpetrators:

1. strangers (that is, persons unknown to the woman subject to violence), and
2. persons known to the victim ('known persons'), but not a partner (i.e. other family member, friend, housemate, acquaintance, neighbour, person in the workplace, client, patient, customer, medical practitioner, religious leader, etc.).

This data cannot be combined to create an aggregate total of 12-month non-partner sexual assault prevalence, as a person may have experienced sexual assault by more than one perpetrator in the time period.

In 2016, 0.4% of women reported experiencing sexual assault perpetrated by a stranger, and 0.6% experienced sexual assault perpetrated by a known person other than a partner, in the previous 12 months. Comparable figures are not provided for 2012 due to high relative standards of error with these figures (see Table 39, below).

Overall, 12-month prevalence of sexual assault of women by any perpetrator increased between 2012 and 2016, and this represents a statistically significant change. Overall sexual violence 12-month prevalence is further examined under Indicator 11.3.

**Table 39: Sexual assault against women during the last 12 months, by type of perpetrator, 2012 and 2016, proportion of women**

Perpetrator	2012	2016
Stranger	*	0.4%
Other non-partner known person	*	0.6%
Partner (cohabiting, current or previous)	0.3%	0.4%
Non-cohabiting partner (boyfriend/girlfriend or date)	0.3%	0.2%
Total all perpetrators (including known and unknown persons)	1.0%	1.6%^

Sources: ABS, PSS 2012 and PSS 2016

\* Figure has a high relatively standard of error and is therefore not provided.

^ Denotes statistically significant change over time.

Note: The figures for the categories of perpetrator cannot be aggregated as a respondent may have experienced sexual assault by more than one perpetrator in the previous 12 months.

#### **Missing subjects: Measuring the prevalence of sexual violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women**

Key violence prevalence survey instruments in Australia either do not disaggregate for Indigenous status, or only measure non-sexual physical forms of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. There is a glaring gap with regard to prevalence data about sexual violence (and sexual harassment) experienced by First Nations women.

**Indicator 11.3: Proportion of women aged 18 years and older subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by any perpetrator in the last 12 months<sup>lxiii</sup>**

What does this indicator tell us about Monitoring domain 11: Prevalence of violence against women?	<p>Indicators 11.1 and 11.2 allow for reporting on 12-month prevalence rates for certain forms of violence as enacted by certain categories of perpetrators (partners and non-partners). Measuring the proportion of women who have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by <i>any perpetrator</i> in the last 12 months allows us to assess change to the overall extent of violence experienced by women in the short term. It also provides greater ability to disaggregate prevalence of violence against women by other socio-demographic characteristics, so that we have a stronger picture of prevalence of violence for different groups of women. For these reasons, this indicator is an addition to the <i>Counting on change</i> monitoring guide.</p> <p><b>Please note:</b> See also Indicator 11.5 for detailing of 12-month femicide prevalence rates.</p>
Expected change if high-quality programs and infrastructure for prevention of violence against women and gender equality are implemented	<p>Short- and medium-term: little change in the 12-month prevalence of physical and/or sexual violence by any perpetrator.</p> <p>Long-term: as drivers of violence are addressed, 12-month prevalence rates of physical and sexual violence to decrease.</p>
Data source(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Personal Safety Survey (PSS) 2012 and 2016, ABS</li> <li>2. National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS) 2008 and 2014–15, ABS</li> <li>3. National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS) 2018–19, ABS</li> </ol>

lxiii This indicator is an addition to what was included in *Counting on change*.

Change over time summary: short-term change revealed by the data	<p>Between the years 2012 and 2016, there has been statistically significant a decrease in 12-month physical violence prevalence rates, while sexual violence prevalence rates have increased (with statistical significance).</p> <p>Twelve-month rates of physical and/or sexual violence against women with disability or long-term health conditions have remained high and consistent between 2012 and 2016.</p> <p>Prevalence of 12-month rates of physical violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women (as measured through the NATSISS) have decreased between 2008 and 2014–15. However, rates of physical violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are still disproportionately high as compared with whole-of-population results. This is confirmed by the results of the 2018–19 NATSISS.</p>
Do the results confirm or run contrary to expected change?	<p>At a whole-of-population level (PSS), results largely confirm expected change, though a small decrease in the 12-month prevalence rate for physical and/or sexual violence against all women by any perpetrator is noted. However, the prevalence rate for sexual violence by any perpetrator has increased, as has the 12-month rate of sexual assault of young women aged between 18 and 34.</p> <p>The decrease in the 12-month prevalence rate of physical violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women (NATSISS) runs contrary to expected change. However, it must be noted that prevalence rates still remain disproportionately higher as compared with whole-of-population rates, and the impacts more severe. Moreover, this data is limited in a number of ways, not least being that it does not measure sexual violence, emotional abuse or lifetime prevalence. Disproportionately high rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's 12-month experiences of physical violence are confirmed by the NATSISS.</p>
Gaps in existing data	<p>The available data does not tell us about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's 12-month experiences of sexual violence. PSS data also has not proved sensitive to revealing statistically significant differences in the experiences of violence of migrant and non-migrant women.</p>

**In both 2012 and 2016, about one in 20 women in Australia had experienced at least one incident of physical and/or sexual violence (by any perpetrator) in the previous 12 months. Notably, the 12-month prevalence rate of sexual violence against women by any perpetrator has registered a statistically significant increase, from 1.2% in 2012 to 1.8% in 2016 (see Table 40 below). Women's 12-month experiences of physical violence have demonstrated a statistically significant decline, from 4.6% in 2016 to 3.5% in 2012.**

**Table 40: Prevalence of physical and sexual violence against women in the past 12 months by any perpetrator, 2012 and 2016, proportion of women (%)**

Women's 12-month experiences of violence by any perpetrator	2012	2016
<b>Total sexual violence</b>	<b>1.2%</b>	<b>1.8%^</b>
Sexual assault	1.0%	1.6%^
Sexual threat	Figure has a high relative standard of error and therefore is not used	0.4%
<b>Total physical violence</b>	<b>4.6%</b>	<b>3.5%^</b>
Physical assault	3.0%	2.7%
Physical threat	2.2%	1.4%^
<b>Total all physical and sexual violence</b>	<b>5.3%</b>	<b>4.7%</b>

Sources: ABS, PSS 2012 and PSS 2016

^ Denotes a statistically significant change between survey waves

## Age

Analysis of the PSS 2016 data on 12-month prevalence of sexual and physical violence against women by age groups reveals that younger women are at higher risk of experiencing sexual violence, and physical and/or sexual violence (assault and threat), than women of other age groups (see Table 41, below).

**Table 41: 12-month prevalence of physical and sexual violence against women, by age group, 2016, % of women**

Age group	Sexual violence (including assault and threats)	All physical and sexual violence (including assault and threats)
18–24	5.9%	11.7%
25–34	3.5%	7.0%
35–44	1.2%	4.1%
45–54	0.8%	4.0%
55–64	0.6%	2.6%
65 years and over	0.3%	1.2%
All ages	1.8%	4.7%

Source: ABS, PSS 2016

## Women with disability and long-term health conditions

Even with the methodological limitations in terms of measuring violence against women with disability which are likely to result in an under-representation of prevalence, the PSS data reveals that women with disability or long-term health conditions are more likely to have been subject to *all forms of violence* within the past 12 months than women without disability or long-term health conditions.

**The 12-month prevalence rates of any physical and/or sexual violence experienced by women with disability or long-term health conditions has remained consistently high between 2012 (6.0%) and 2016 (5.9%).** That is, in both survey waves, approximately one in 17 women with disability or long-term health conditions had experienced physical and/or sexual violence within the previous year.<sup>lxiv</sup> Analysis of the 2016 PSS data reveals that women with a disability or long-term health condition experienced statistically significant higher 12-month rates of sexual violence, physical violence, and overall physical and/or sexual violence. (see Table 42, below).

**Table 42: Women's experiences of violence in the past 12 months, comparison of women with and without disability or long-term health condition status, 2012 and 2016, % of women**

Type of violence experienced in past 12 months	Women with a disability or long-term health condition 2012	Women who did not have a disability or long-term health condition 2012	Women with a disability or long-term health condition 2016	Women who did not have a disability or long-term health condition 2016
Sexual violence total	1.7%	0.9%	2.2%	1.6%
Physical violence total	5.0%	4.4%	4.8%	2.9%
<b>Any physical or sexual violence total</b>	<b>6.0%</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>5.9%</b>	<b>4.3%</b>

Sources: ABS (2018), '[Experiences of violence and personal safety of people with disability, 2016](#)', PSS 2012; custom data request

Publicly available PSS data from 2012 also shows that the prevalence of physical and/or sexual violence against women with profound disability and psychological disability is higher again. Whereas, overall, 6.0% of women with disability or long-term health conditions experienced physical and/or sexual violence in the 12 months prior to the 2012 survey,

lxiv No statistically significant change in the 12-month experiences of violence of women with a disability or long-term health condition were registered between 2012 and 2016.



6.7% of women with profound or severe core activity restriction experienced violence, and 12.0% of women with a form of psychological disability.

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's 12-month experiences of physical violence

The PSS does not allow for analysis of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's experiences of violence, and the NATSISS and NATSIHS only measure 12-month experiences of physical violence (rather than sexual violence, sexual harassment or emotional abuse).

The NATSISS data suggests that while Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experience disproportionately high 12-month rates of physical violence (and with severe impacts), **prevalence decreased somewhat between the 2008 and 2014–15 surveys.**

In 2008, one-quarter (25%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women aged 15 years and over reported experiencing at least one incident of physical violence in the 12 months prior to the survey. This figure had decreased to 21.7% in 2014–15 (see Table 43, below). **However, this decrease is more attributable to a reduction in the prevalence rate of threats of physical assaults than in physical assaults themselves.**

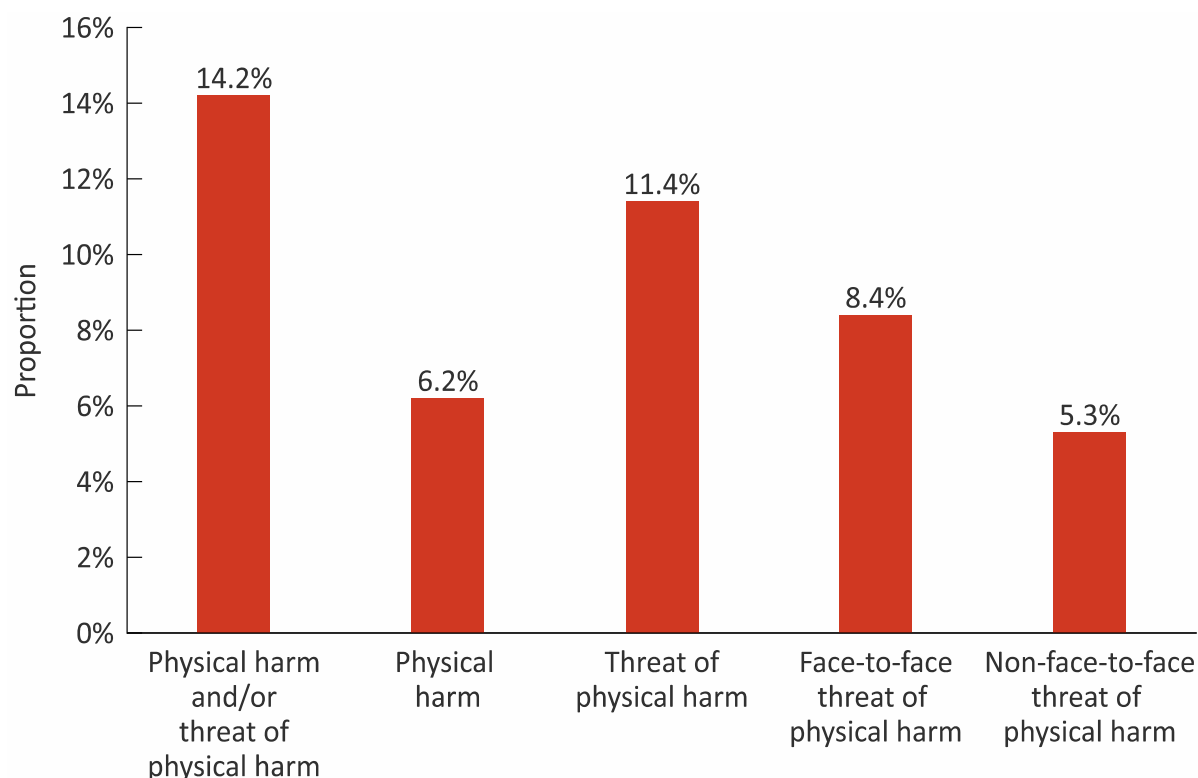
**Table 43: Physical violence experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women aged 15 and over in 12 months prior to survey by any perpetrator, proportion (%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander female population**

Type of physical violence	2008	2014–15
Physical assault	15%	13.8%
Threat of physical assault	19%	14.9%
Both assault and threat	9%	Data not publicly available
Any kind of physical violence (assault and/or threat)	25%	21.7%

Sources: ABS, NATSISS 2008 and NATSISS 2014–15

The NATSISS 2018–19 shows a high prevalence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who experienced physical harm and/or threatened physical harm in the 12 months prior to the survey. In 2018–19, **one in seven (14.2%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women reported experiencing physical harm and/or threatened physical harm in the previous 12 months.** The prevalence of 12-month experiences of physical harm was 6.2%, while 11.4% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women reported experiencing threatened physical harm in the previous 12 months, 8.4% reported face-to-face threats of physical harm and 5.3% reported non-face-to-face threats of physical harm (see Figure 36, below).

**Figure 36: Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women aged 15 and over who experienced physical harm or threat of physical harm in 12 months prior to survey by any perpetrator**



Source: ABS, NATSISS 2018–19

#### **Technology-facilitated violence experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women**

In the 2018–19 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey, of the 5.3% of women who reported experiencing non-face-to-face threats of physical harm in the prior 12 months, 45.6% said they'd received threats via a social media network, and 75% said they'd received threats via text message, phone, email or writing. These results demonstrate how technology is being utilised to facilitate violence against women in the contemporary context.

### **Forthcoming research: ‘Reducing family violence among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities’**

In 2020, researchers (Dr Bianca Calabria, Dr Jill Guthrie, Associate Professor Ray Lovett, Dr Katie Thurber) at ANU’s National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health are scheduled to release findings of a new study into ‘the extent and impacts of family violence among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities’, as well as response and early intervention—related areas of inquiry. See [Reducing family violence among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities](#) for further information.

## **Indicator 11.4: Proportion of women who have experienced sexual harassment in the last 12 months, all settings**

What does this indicator tell us about Monitoring domain 11: Prevalence of violence against women?	<p>This indicator allows us to compare the proportion of the population of women in Australia who experienced sexual harassment in any public setting in a defined short-term window (12 months) prior to each survey wave. In doing so, it allows for an assessment of whether sexual harassment prevalence is shifting in the short term.</p> <p>For workplace sexual harassment data, please see Indicator 3.6 of this report.</p>
Expected change if high-quality programs and infrastructure for prevention of violence against women and gender equality are implemented	<p>Short- and medium-term: an increase in the proportion of women and girls who report experiencing sexual harassment in any public setting in the past 12 months, due to increased public awareness.</p> <p>Long-term: 12-month prevalence of sexual harassment of women reduced.</p>
Data source(s)	<p>Personal Safety Survey (PSS) 2012 and 2016, ABS</p> <p>The Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) workplace sexual harassment data is not used against this indicator, because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• this data has already been detailed against Indicator 3.6</li><li>• for the short-term victimisation data, the AHRC’s focus is workplace sexual harassment, rather than sexual harassment in any setting</li><li>• the AHRC data measures lifetime and 5-year experiences – not 12-month experiences.</li></ul>

Change over time summary: short-term change revealed by the data	Marked, statistically significant increase in the reported prevalence of sexual harassment experienced by women in the past 12 months, between 2012 and 2016 survey waves.
Does the change confirm or run contrary to expected change?	Confirms expected change.
Gaps in existing data	<p>The PSS does not allow for measurement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's experiences of violence. The alternate ABS instruments which have been used to measure prevalence of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey, do not include questions about sexual harassment. Therefore, from the most available and rigorous survey instruments, no conclusions can be drawn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's 12-month experiences of sexual harassment.</p> <p>Five-year data on workplace sexual harassment generated by the AHRC and detailed at Indicator 3.6 shows that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experience disproportionately high rates of workplace sexual harassment, as compared with non-Indigenous Australians.</p>

**Comparison of the 2012 and 2016 waves of the PSS data reveals a statistically significant increase in the proportion of women reporting having been subjected to sexual harassment in the past 12 months.** In 2012, 14.8% of women aged 18 years and over reported having experienced sexual harassment in the past 12 months. This increased in 2016 by 2.5 percentage points, with 17.3% of women having reported experiencing sexual harassment in the 12 months prior to the survey (see Table 44, below).

In both 2012 and 2016, men were far more likely than women to perpetrate sexual harassment against women. In 2016, men were nearly four times more likely than women to perpetrate sexual harassment against a woman (Table 40).

**Table 44: Women's experiences of sexual harassment in the past 12 months by sex of perpetrator, 2012 and 2016, proportion of women (%)**

Perpetrator	2012	2016
By a male	14.0%	16.1%^
By a female	2.8%	4.1%^
<b>Total by any person</b>	<b>14.8%</b>	<b>17.3%^</b>

Sources: ABS, PSS 2012 and PSS 2016

^ Denotes a statistically significant change between survey waves.

## Age

On the basis of the 2016 PSS data, **younger women are more likely to have experienced sexual harassment in the last 12 months than older women.** Nearly two in five (38.3%) women aged 18 to 24 years and approximately one-quarter (24.8%) of women aged 25 to 34 years reported having experienced sexual harassment in the previous 12 months (see Table 45, below).

**Table 45: Women's experiences of sexual harassment in the past 12 months by age of respondent, 2016, proportion of women (%)**

Age group	Proportion of women from that age group who experienced sexual harassment in the previous 12 months, 2016 (%)
18 to 24 years	38.3%
25 to 34 years	24.8%
35 to 44 years	17.4%
45 to 54 years	14.7%
55 to 64 years	10.3%
65 years and over	4.7%
<b>Any age (total population of women)</b>	<b>17.3%</b>

Source: PSS 2016

## Disability and long-term health conditions

On the basis of the 2016 PSS data, **women with disability or long-term health conditions are more likely than women without disability or long-term health conditions to have experienced sexual harassment.**<sup>lxv</sup> Nearly one in 20 (19.1%) of women with disability or long-term health conditions reported experiencing sexual harassment by any perpetrator in the past 12 months. In comparison, 16.5% of women without disability or long-term health conditions reported experiencing sexual harassment in the previous 12 months.<sup>513</sup>

Men are over three times more likely than women to perpetrate sexual harassment against women with disability or long-term health conditions, with 17.3% of women with disability reporting having experienced sexual harassment in the past 12 months perpetrated by a man, compared to 5.4% who experienced sexual harassment by a woman.<sup>514</sup>

## Socioeconomic disadvantage

On the basis of the 2016 PSS data, **women from the lowest two quintiles of socioeconomic disadvantage status are more likely than other women to have experienced sexual harassment in the past 12 months** (see Table 46, below).

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lxv This is a statistically significant difference.

**Table 46: Women's experiences of sexual harassment in the past 12 months by socioeconomic index of disadvantage, 2016, proportion of women (%)**

Quintile of socioeconomic index of disadvantage	Proportion of women from that quintile who experienced sexual harassment in the past 12 months, 2016 (%)
Lowest quintile	18.5%
Second quintile	19.5%
Third quintile	15.3%
Fourth quintile	16.8%
Highest quintile	16.6%
<b>Any quintile (total population of women)</b>	<b>17.3%</b>

Source: ABS, PSS 2016

### Indicator 11.5: Number of women killed per year by any (non-state actor) perpetrator (femicide)<sup>lxvi</sup>

What does this indicator tell us about Monitoring domain 11: Prevalence of violence against women?	Homicide of women (or 'femicide') represents the most extreme form of violence against women. Women are more likely to be killed by a partner or other known person than a stranger, and homicide is often preceded by other acts of violence, especially in the case of partner-perpetrated homicide.
Expected change if high-quality programs and infrastructure for prevention of violence against women and gender equality are implemented	Short- and medium-term: Little to no change to the prevalence of homicide of women.  Long-term: A decrease in the rate of homicide of women as the drivers of violence against women are addressed.

<sup>lxvi</sup> The term 'femicide' is used in this heading as the preferred term for the killing of women as a gendered act. However, because the data sources referred to throughout this section use the term 'homicide', or 'female homicide' to refer to deaths of women, we have reflected that use in the text.

Data source(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Australian Institute of Criminology National Homicide Monitoring Program 2012–13, 2013–14 (published 2017) and 2015–16 (published 2019)</li> <li>2. Australian Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Network analysis of coronial records, 2010 to 2014 (published 2018)</li> <li>3. Recorded Crime – Victims, Australia, 2010 to 2018, ABS</li> </ol>
Change over time summary: short-term change revealed by the data	<p>Available Homicide Monitoring Program and Recorded Crime – Victims data shows relative consistency in overall female homicide victimisation rates, with a slight decline over time. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are over-represented as victims of homicide, and victimisation rates are unstable, with no decline over time noted.</p> <p>Data on intimate partner-perpetrated homicide is only nascent; as such, only baseline data is available. This data shows that women are over-represented as victims of male-perpetrated partner violence, and that these figures include high representation of migrant, refugee and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.</p>
Does the change confirm or run contrary to expected change?	Confirms limited to no change at this point.
Gaps in existing data	<p>Homicide statistics are complex. As administrative data, they are based on official police or coronial records, in which a crime must be recorded or determined as homicide (or a related offence such as manslaughter). There are often significant time lags with coronial data, and jurisdictional differences in how coronial data is recorded and made available. There is a possibility that some or many homicide cases ‘go missing’, e.g. a murder or death is not reported, cause of death is miscategorised, or missing persons cases are not closed or pursued. Patterns of missing data often correspond with intersecting forms of discrimination and disadvantage, compounding invisibility. How perpetrators/offenders are categorised also differs across jurisdictions.</p> <p>Moreover, official homicide data does not include deaths perpetrated by state actors (for example, in custody) or in offshore, Australian-managed facilities.</p> <p>See the text boxes in the section below for commentary on missing and complex data with regard to intimate partner homicide, homicides of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls, and homicides of trans women and gender-diverse people.</p>

## Overall homicide rates

The Australian Institute of Criminology's National Homicide Monitoring Program captures, analyses and monitors homicide data from police records and state coronial records, supplementing this data with media reports on occasion.<sup>515</sup> There is some time lag with homicide data due to the nature of investigation, such that the most recent public data is 2015–16.

The National Homicide Monitoring Program analysis shows that between 2009–10 and 2015–16, there has been only a small decrease in the annual rate of female homicide victimisation. In 2009–10, the overall rate of female homicide victimisation per 100,000 women (killed by any perpetrator) was 0.87 (96 women killed); in 2015–16, the comparable rate was 0.67 (82 women killed) (see Table 47, below).

**Table 47: Female homicide victimisation prevalence, 2009–10 to 2015, number and rate per 100,000**

Year	Number	Rate per 100,000 women
2009–10	96	0.87
2010–11	90	0.80
2011–12	94	0.82
2012–13	86	0.74
2013–14	99	0.84
2014–15	84	0.70
2015–16	82	0.67

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, National Homicide Monitoring Program, 2019, p. 27

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women victims of homicide

On the basis of population figures, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are significantly over-represented as victims of homicide. In 2015–16, the homicide victimisation rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women was 3.5 per 100,000, which equates to six times the non-Indigenous female victimisation rate (0.6 per 100,000).<sup>516</sup> Moreover, while the rate of non-Indigenous female homicide victimisation has remained relatively consistent, with a small decline between 2009–10 to 2015–16, the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander female victimisation has fluctuated considerably, and there has been no overall decline. In fact, in the time period examined, the victimisation rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women was at its lowest in 2009–10. In 2009–10, ten homicides of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women were recorded, and 13 in 2015–16 (see Table 48, below).<sup>517</sup>



**Table 48: Comparison of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous female homicide victimisation prevalence, 2009–10 to 2015, number and rate per 100,000**

Year	Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rate per 100,000 women	Number of non-Indigenous women	Non-Indigenous rate per 100,000 women
2009–10	10	3.0	86	0.8
2010–11	17	5.1	73	0.7
2011–12	11	3.2	83	0.7
2012–13	17	4.9	69	0.6
2013–14	15	4.2	84	0.6
2014–15	15	Not reported	69	Not reported
2015–16	13	3.5	69	0.6

Sources: Australian Institute of Criminology, National Homicide Monitoring Program, 2019;  
Australian Institute of Criminology, National Homicide Monitoring Program, 2017

### Counting violent deaths of trans women and gender-diverse people

Like most official datasets and administrative systems in Australia, the homicide datasets profiled in this section assume a female–male (cis) gender binary for gender categorisation. As such, they cannot tell us about the homicides of trans women and gender-diverse people. As the trans community in Australia points out, official reports are likely to vastly under-represent the numbers of trans and gender diverse people murdered (E. Brook [2019–20], ‘Counting the Dead’, The Gender Centre Inc., Sydney).

Internationally, since 2008 the Trans Murder Monitoring (TMM) Project, organised by Transrespect vs Transphobia has sought to address the consistent gap in global data by monitoring and analysing reports of homicides of trans and gender-diverse people. The project collates cases reported on the internet, and by crowd-sourcing information from activists and researchers worldwide (see [TMM website](#)).

Researchers in Australia have begun to investigate and draw public attention to our lack of knowledge of and ability to commemorate the homicides and other deaths of trans and gender-diverse people in Australia, and take account of the complex intersecting drivers of this violence, including transphobia and transmisogyny. Dr Eloise Brook of NSW’s The Gender Centre Inc. has recorded the difficult process of trying to find and count the violent deaths of trans and gender-diverse people in Australia. Prompted by the Transgender Day of Remembrance, the TMM Project and the fact that there were so few stories known in Australia, Dr Brook describes her determination to ensure that people and their deaths do not ‘slip through the cracks’. She is interested in more than the numbers; she wants to bring people’s stories to life and ensure that their deaths are remembered. (Brook, 2019–20, Episode 1).

On Brook’s podcast, Dr Andy Kaladelfos of UNSW points to several factors that complicate the task of making these deaths more visible. Not only is there no standard way of recording trans or gender-diverse status in homicide records, police records or coronial proceedings, Australia does not even have an accurate figure for the number of trans and gender-diverse people in Australia. It is widely believed by the trans community that the first attempt at recording this by the ABS in the 2016 Census of Population and Housing was inaccurate and vastly under-represented numbers. Without population baseline data, it is impossible to determine homicide victimisation or prevalence rates. The invisibility of trans and gender-diverse people in violence statistics reflects the lack of recognition of this community in society more broadly. Dr Kaladelfos also draws attention to the likelihood of homicide cases being miscategorised as other causes of death, such as suicide.

There are other complications in counting homicides of trans people; some identify with the gender binary and do not want to be recorded as trans, while others are misgendered after their deaths by families or institutions (A. Lavoipierre, ‘[Why is it so hard to work out how many transgender people have been murdered in Australia?](#)’, ABC News, 20 November 2019).

## Intimate partner-perpetrated homicide

As noted by the Australian Institute of Criminology in its National Homicide Monitoring Program reports, while the rate of male homicide victimisation is higher than for women, women are more likely to be victims of intimate partner homicide.<sup>518</sup> On the basis of the AIC's 2012–14 data, women represented 79% (n=99) of victims of intimate partner-perpetrated homicide.<sup>519</sup>

The Australian Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Network (the 'Network') is an interjurisdictional government initiative established in 2011 to better document and analyse data on 'domestic and family violence-related homicide'. The Network collates and analyses Coroners Court data from state and territory jurisdictions across Australia. The Network's 2018 report examined cases wherein:

- the death resulted from homicide and occurred between 1 July 2010 and 30 June 2014, and coronial or criminal proceedings were finalised by September 2017;
- there was a known intimate partner relationship (current or previous) between victim and offender; and
- there was an 'identifiable history' of violence (from police reports, intervention orders, anecdotal evidence) between offender and victim.<sup>520</sup>

**Of the 152 intimate partner-perpetrated homicides that occurred in Australia between 2010 and 2014 that followed an identifiable history of partner violence, eight in ten (79.6%, n=121) involved a man killing a woman; that is, male-perpetrated intimate partner homicide.**<sup>521</sup> In 92.6% of these cases (n=112), it was established that the male perpetrator had been violent with the woman on other occasions prior to killing her.<sup>522</sup>

From the 121 cases where a man killed a female partner, over one-third (36.4%) killed a former partner, and of the cases where there was a current relationship at the time of the homicide, in just under one-third of the cases one or both parties had indicated an intention to separate. Therefore the Network concluded that separation or intention to separate is a key characteristic of male-perpetrated intimate partner homicides.<sup>523</sup>

One in five (20%) of the 121 men who killed a female partner in this time period subsequently committed suicide.<sup>524</sup>

## Demographics of female intimate partner homicide victims

One-quarter (25.6%, n=31) of the 121 female victims of male-perpetrated intimate partner homicide were migrants or refugees, from a wide range of countries. Just under one-quarter (22.3%, n=27) of victims were Aboriginal, meaning that Aboriginal women are highly over-represented as victims of intimate partner homicide. The median age of victims was 35 years and the average age 37.6 years. Five per cent of victims were on a disability pension (n=6) and almost half (44.6%, n=54) were unemployed at the time they were killed.<sup>525</sup> This data suggests that there is considerable interplay between gender inequality and other, intersecting drivers of violence when it comes to female homicide victimisation. Understanding these intersections is key to prevention.

### **Data project case study: Securing women's lives – preventing intimate partner homicide**

*Authored by the project research team, Monash Gender and Family Violence Prevention Centre (Monash University)*

Researchers from the Monash Gender and Family Violence Prevention Centre are conducting a three-year Australian Research Council (ARC) Funded Discovery Project which aims to develop new understandings of risk and to build the evidence base needed to inform the prevention of intimate partner homicide in Australia.

The project team has collected sentencing judgments and coronial findings in over 250 intimate partner homicide cases from across Australian state and territory jurisdictions. While the project intends to produce national findings, the final project database does not include any Queensland homicide cases due to challenges arising from data access.

The research team has utilised the sentencing judgments in each case to identify potential points of intervention that might have provided an opportunity to prevent such killings. Sentencing judgments are typically detailed narrative accounts, in which the judge describes how and where the crime took place, and the circumstances that led to it. The research team, assisted by Dr Jasmine McGowan, Naomi Pfitzner, and Kate Thomas, have identified over 75 themes from the judgments relating to risk, intervention and prevention.

As part of this project the researchers published *Towards a Global Femicide Index: Counting the Costs* (Routledge, 2020).

Increasingly there is global attention on the prevalence of women's deaths resulting from intimate partner violence. Campaigns such as 'Counting Dead Women' in Australia, the 'Femicide Census in England', the Canadian Femicide Observatory, and the emergence of family violence death review teams globally highlight the fatal consequences of intimate partner violence for women around the world.

*Towards a Global Femicide Index* considers the need for and the steps to be taken towards creating a meaningful framework for a global index of women's deaths from intimate partner violence. While there are global indices for deaths that relate to public violence, such as terrorism, there is to date no systematic global count of killings of women by their intimate partners. This project considers the possibilities and challenges that arise in counting intimate partner femicide. It argues that such an exercise needs to avoid narrow empiricism and instead be part of a broader feminist political project aimed at ending violence against women.

**Research Team:** Professor Jude McCulloch, Dr Kate Fitz-Gibbon, Professor JaneMaree Maher and Professor Sandra Walklate.

**Project website:** [Research project – Intimate partner homicide](#)

## Homicide and related offences crime statistics

The ABS also compiles data annually on recorded victimisation for particular crimes (as recorded by police) from participating jurisdictions, published as Recorded Crime – Victims.<sup>526</sup> The value of this data is that it is more up-to-date than coronial data.

Analysis of this crime data shows that there has been relative consistency, though some small decrease, in the victimisation rates for homicide and related offences in total (murder, attempted murder, manslaughter) and murder for women over time. In 2010, the female victimisation rate for homicide and related offences was 1.5 per 100,000; this figure was 1.0 in 2018. The female victimisation rate for murder specifically was 0.8 per 100,000 in 2010 and 0.7 in 2018. In 2010, there were 93 recorded murders of women in Australia and there were 82 in 2018 (see Table 49, below).

**Table 49: Recorded homicide and related offences, number of women and female victimisation rate per 100,000, 2010 to 2018**

Year	Number of homicides and related offences of women	Female victimisation rate per 100,000, homicide and related offences	Number of murders of women	Female victimisation rate per 100,000, murder
2010	169	1.5	93	0.8
2011	149	1.3	90	0.8
2012	138	1.2	83	0.7
2013	154	1.3	94	0.8
2014	151	1.3	94	0.8
2015	146	1.2	84	0.7
2016	164	1.4	80	0.7
2017	134	1.1	63	0.5
2018	127	1.0	82	0.7

Source: ABS, Recorded Crime – Victims, Australia, 2018

The ABS notes that in 2018, over one-third (38%, or n=75) of recorded female homicides and related offences were ‘family- and domestic-violence-related’, and almost half (45%) of these were perpetrated by an intimate partner.<sup>527</sup>

**Over-represented in statistics, yet the full picture still obscured:  
Femicides of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls**

As detailed in this indicator, official homicide statistics show that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are over-represented as victims. And yet researchers and advocates argue that these figures considerably under-represent the extent of femicides of First Nations women.

A 2018 research case study in the *Deathscapes* project, 'Indigenous Femicide and the Killing State', draws attention to the multiplicity of ways that official homicide statistics obscure the scale of deaths of First Nations women and girls (T. Allas et al. (2018). '[Indigenous Femicide and the Killing State](#)', *Deathscapes: Mapping race and violence in settler states*, retrieved 15 December 2019).

The authors show that femicides of First Nations women are more likely to be under-recorded in circumstances such as:

- deaths occurring in custody (which are not included in homicide statistics)
- 'slow deaths' – suicides due to racialised, sexualised or gendered violence, or deaths due to ill health as a result of ongoing or past violence
- deaths being miscategorised as due to 'natural causes' (for example, an acute health condition), even when there has been very recent interpersonal violence experienced by the deceased
- unpursued or delayed missing persons cases and poor investigations due to police reluctance to take seriously reports of disappearances of First Nations women and girls
- open coronial findings in cases where there has been obstruction of justice (T. Allas et al., 2018).

Missing data on the femicides of First Nations women and girls is reflective of the same intersection of factors – gender inequality, racism and the ongoing impacts of colonisation – that drives this violence. (See Our Watch, 2018, *Changing the picture*.)

As has occurred in Canada and the United States, there have been recent calls in Australia for an official government inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women (R. Hirini, '[“Why isn't this a national crisis”: Report calls for action on Indigenous women's deaths](#)', NITV News, 5 February 2020).

# Lifetime prevalence: Proportions of women subject to various forms of violence at least once during their lifetime since age 15

## Indicator 11.6: Proportion of women subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner since age 15

Lifetime prevalence data is highly insensitive to change over time, (unless one had access to data covering several decades), given that this data captures a person's experience at any point since the age of 15. For example, a women's experience of incidents of violence in earlier life continue to be accounted for as part of her 'lifetime experience' across multiple waves of the survey as she ages. It would therefore be misleading to perform timeseries analysis, or analysis of change over time, for lifetime prevalence data between the 2012 and 2016 waves of the Personal Safety Survey, or the 2012 and 2018 waves of the Australian Human Rights Commission's National Workplace Sexual Harassment survey. The time period between these survey waves is far too short to provide any reliable indication of change. As such, only the most recent wave of lifetime prevalence data sources has been included in this section, and we caution that these figures comprise a baseline which should not be used to assess change over time, at least until several decades have passed. Lifetime prevalence data has been included in this report to provide a fuller picture as to the extent of violence against women in Australia, and to provide a baseline for long-term monitoring.

For these reasons the data summary tables for the following indicators do not include a summary of expected change or change over time between two data points.

What does this indicator tell us about Monitoring domain 11: Prevalence of violence against women?	This indicator allows us to establish a baseline for lifetime prevalence rates of intimate partner violence experienced by women.
Expected change if high-quality programs and infrastructure for prevention of violence against women and gender equality are implemented	<p>This monitoring report is designed to monitor change across a number of points within a lifetime. As such, while lifetime prevalence is included, it is included to provide the broad context for shorter-term tracking (i.e. tracking covering less than 80 years at a time).</p> <p>Short- and medium-term: little change in lifetime prevalence of intimate partner violence expected.</p> <p>Long-term: as drivers of violence are addressed, 12-month rates of intimate partner violence to drop, with lifetime prevalence rates falling in the very long term.</p>

Data source(s)	Personal Safety Survey (PSS) 2016, ABS
Gaps in existing data	<p>Current datasets do not allow for investigation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's lifetime experiences of partner-perpetrated violence.<sup>lxvii</sup> Please refer to Indicator 11.1 for inclusion of data on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's 12-month experiences of partner-perpetrated physical assault.</p> <p>Publicly available PSS data has also been limited in terms of disaggregation of women who experience partner violence during their lifetime by other socio-demographic characteristics. This was recently partly addressed (February 2020) with the release of additional analysis of partner violence. See Indicator 11.1 for a breakdown of socio-demographic characteristics associated with higher rates of short-term partner violence prevalence.</p>

## Physical and/or sexual violence against women by a partner

**Lifetime prevalence rates of physical and/or sexual partner violence experienced by women are high.** In 2016, approximately one in five (17.3%) women reported having experienced cohabiting partner physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15 during their lifetime.

With the addition of women who have experienced non-cohabiting partner violence (i.e. violence by a boyfriend, girlfriend or date, as it is termed in the PSS), this 2016 figure of lifetime partner violence prevalence jumps from 17.3% to an astounding 23.0%. That is, based on 2016 data, nearly one-quarter of all adult women have experienced intimate partner physical and/or sexual violence on at least one occasion during their lifetime since age 15.

Men comprise the vast majority of partners perpetrating physical and/or sexual violence against women. In 2016, 22.8% of women reported having experienced intimate partner violence from a man (cohabiting or boyfriend/date) during their lifetime, whereas only 0.3% of women reported having experienced female intimate partner violence (see Table 50, below). That is, based on 2016 figures women are 76 times more likely to experience male partner violence than female partner violence.

lxvii The Personal Safety Survey does not allow for disaggregation by Indigenous status, and the NATSISS only measures 12-month rates of *physical* violence, including disaggregation by perpetrator type.



**Table 50: Lifetime prevalence of intimate partner violence, by sex of perpetrator, proportion of women, 2016**

	Male perpetrator	Female perpetrator	All perpetrators
<b>Intimate partner violence, total</b>	22.8%	0.3%	23.0%
Cohabiting partner violence (current or previous partner)	17.2%	0.2%	17.3%
Non-cohabiting partner violence (boyfriend/girlfriend or date)	7.4%	Too low to report	7.4%

Source: ABS, PSS 2016

Note: Total refers to the total proportion of women who have experienced intimate partner violence during their lifetime since age 15, noting that they may have experienced violence from more than one partner.

### Proportion of women who experienced partner violence while pregnant

It is well established in Australia and internationally that pregnancy is a key transitional risk point in patterns of male partner violence against women, and often the beginning of the exposure of children to partner violence.<sup>528</sup> It is also a recognised period of heightened risk of intimate partner homicide. The PSS measures this violence during pregnancy as a proportion of women who have reported experiencing current or previous cohabiting partner physical and/or sexual violence since age 15 and who have been pregnant during that relationship.

In 2016, 18.2% (34,500) of women who had experienced current partner violence since age 15 and who had been pregnant at some point during that relationship reporting having experienced violence from that partner while pregnant. Of the women who experienced violence and were pregnant during the relationship with a current partner, in 2016, 5.2% experienced violence by that current partner for the first time during pregnancy (see Table 51, below).

**Table 51: Proportion (%) of women who experienced partner violence while pregnant, 2016**

<b>Of the women who experienced violence and were pregnant during the relationship:</b>	<b>Current partner</b>	<b>Previous partner</b>
Violence occurred during pregnancy	18.2%	47.5%
Violence occurred for the first time during pregnancy	5.2%	24.1%

Sources: ABS, PSS 2016

## Emotional abuse

The lifetime prevalence rates for emotional abuse experienced by women perpetrated by a cohabiting partner (current or previous) are high. Approximately one-quarter of women in 2016 reported having experienced emotional abuse by a partner at some point during their lifetime since age 15.

Of those women who, at the time of the 2016 survey, had a current partner, one in ten (10.2%) had experienced emotional abuse by that partner at some point. Recent experiences of partner emotional abuse contribute considerably to overall lifetime prevalence rates. For 5.3% of women with a current partner, partner emotional abuse had occurred less than 12 months ago and for 7.8% it had occurred less than five years ago.

### Indicator 11.7: Proportion of women subjected to sexual violence by person other than an intimate partner since age 15

What does this indicator tell us about Monitoring domain 11: Prevalence of violence against women?	This indicator allows us to understand the proportion of the population of women in Australia who experienced sexual violence by a perpetrator other than a partner at any point during their lifetime since age 15. In doing so, it allows for an assessment of how rates of non-partner sexual violence against women are shifting (or otherwise) across generations. The Personal Safety Survey definition of sexual violence includes sexual assault and threat of sexual assault; however, publicly available data only allows for comparison of non-partner sexual <i>assault</i> prevalence.
Expected change if high-quality programs and infrastructure for prevention of violence against women and gender equality are implemented	Short- and medium-term: little change in lifetime prevalence of non-partner sexual violence against women.  Long-term: as drivers of violence are addressed, 12-month prevalence rates of non-partner sexual violence to drop and lifetime prevalence rates to fall in the very long term (i.e. across generations).
Data source(s)	Personal Safety Survey (PSS) 2016, ABS
Gaps in existing data	Current datasets do not allow for investigation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's lifetime experiences of sexual violence. <sup>lxviii</sup>  Publicly available PSS data is limited in terms of disaggregation of women who experience non-partner sexual violence during their lifetime by other socio-demographic characteristics.

lxviii The Personal Safety Survey does not allow for disaggregation by Indigenous status, and the NATSISS only measures 12-month rates of *physical* violence.

The lifetime prevalence of sexual assault against women by persons known to the woman who are *not* partners was 9.2% in 2016. The proportion of women in Australia who have experienced sexual *assault* by a *stranger* at at least one point during their lifetime since age 15 was 3.7% in 2016 (see Table 52, below).

Partners comprise a significant proportion of perpetrators of sexual assault of women, and men are almost exclusively the perpetrators of sexual assault of women.<sup>lxix</sup>

**Table 52: Women’s lifetime experiences since age 15 of sexual assault, by perpetrator type, 2016, proportion (%) of women**

Perpetrator type	2016
<i>Stranger</i>	3.7%
Known person	15.3%
Intimate partner	8.4%
Cohabiting partner (current and/or previous)	4.7%
Boyfriend/girlfriend or date	3.8%
<i>Other known person (family member, friend, housemate, acquaintance or neighbour, person in workplace, client, patient or customer, medical practitioner, other non-partner known person)</i>	9.2%

Sources: ABS, PSS 2016; Cox, 2016

lxix Additional ANROWS analysis of 2012 Personal Safety Survey data showed that of the women who had experienced sexual assault during their lifetime by 2012, 99% had experienced sexual assault by a man: see Cox, 2016, p. 50.

## Indicator 11.8: Proportion of women aged 18 years and older subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by any perpetrator since age 15<sup>lxx</sup>

What does this indicator tell us about Monitoring domain 11: Prevalence of violence against women?	Indicators 11.6 and 11.7 allow for reporting on lifetime prevalence rates for certain forms of violence as enacted by certain categories of perpetrators (partners and non-partners), providing a baseline measure of the proportion of women who have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by <i>any perpetrator</i> during their lifetime since age 15.
Expected change if high-quality programs and infrastructure for prevention of violence against women and gender equality are implemented	<p>Short- and medium-term: no change expected in lifetime prevalence of physical and/or sexual violence against women by any perpetrator.</p> <p>Long-term: as drivers of violence are addressed, 12-month prevalence rates of physical and sexual violence to decrease, with lifetime prevalence rates to drop in the very long term (i.e. across generations).</p>
Data source(s)	Personal Safety Survey (PSS) 2016, ABS
Gaps in existing data	<p>Current datasets do not allow for investigation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's lifetime experiences of physical and sexual violence.<sup>lxxi</sup></p> <p>Publicly available PSS data is also very limited in terms of disaggregation of women who experience physical and/or sexual violence during their lifetime by other socio-demographic characteristics. Please refer to Indicator 11.3 for inclusion of publicly available and useful data on 12-month experiences of physical and/or sexual violence, disaggregated by socioeconomic demographic factors.</p>

### Lifetime prevalence of physical and/or sexual violence against women in Australia is devastatingly high.

- The overall proportion of women who have experienced at least one incident of **physical and/or sexual violence** since age 15 was 36.8% in 2016.
- The proportion of women who have experienced at least one incident of (non-sexual) **physical violence** since age 15 was 30.5% in 2016.
- The proportion of women who have experienced at least one incident of **sexual violence** since age 15 was 18.4% in 2016 (see Table 53, below).

<sup>lxx</sup> This indicator is an addition to what was included in *Counting on change*.

<sup>lxxi</sup> The PSS does not allow for disaggregation by Indigenous status, and the NATSISS only measures 12-month rates of *physical* violence.

**Table 53: Prevalence of physical and sexual violence against women since age 15, 2016, % of women, by type of violence**

<b>Women's lifetime experience of violence by any perpetrator</b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>Total sexual violence</b>	<b>18.4%</b>
Sexual assault	16.9%
Sexual threat	3.6%
<b>Total physical violence</b>	<b>30.5%</b>
Physical assault	27.2%
Physical threat	10.2%
<b>Total all physical and sexual violence</b>	<b>36.8%</b>

Sources: ABS, PSS 2016

Lifetime prevalence rates of physical and sexual violence continue to be very high, and 12-month prevalence rates quite stable. This trend is similar for emotional abuse, as previously outlined.

Men are almost exclusively the perpetrators of sexual violence against women, comprising 99% of perpetrators of sexual assault against women in 2012 and 98% in 2016.<sup>529</sup>

#### **Data project case study: Violence against women with disability**

*Authored by the project research team, Disability and Health Unit and the Melbourne Disability Institute at the University of Melbourne, with the Centre of Research Excellence in Disability and Health (CRE-DH)*

The Disability and Health Unit and the Melbourne Disability Institute at the University of Melbourne, together with the Centre of Research Excellence in Disability and Health (CRE-DH) are undertaking a series of projects examining the extent of violence against people with disability in Australia. Embedded in these projects is a key focus on the intersections of gender, disability and violence.

It is generally acknowledged that women with disability experience violence at higher rates than women in the general population. However, their under-representation or omission from national data collections, and the lack of up-to-date analyses where comprehensive data are available, means there is limited empirical evidence to understand the scope of the problem and respond accordingly.

Our projects respond to this knowledge gap in several ways. We have undertaken additional analyses of key Australian population level datasets, including e.g. the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2016 Personal Safety Survey (PSS), to provide current estimates of the prevalence of violence against people with disability, patterns of abuse for men and women with disability, where violence takes place and who perpetrates the violence. We have also compiled a data compendium on existing survey, longitudinal and administrative data sources in Australia that include identifiers for violence and disability.

The compendium includes a precis of the strengths and limitations of each data source.

Key findings include:

- Violence against women with disability is a widespread problem in Australia.
- Across their lifetime, 65% of women with disability have experienced at least one incident of violence (physical, sexual, emotional abuse, stalking and/or harassment).
- Approximately one in three women with disability has experienced sexual violence since the age of 15.

Young women with disability (under the age of 25 years) and women with psychosocial and cognitive disability are at particular risk of violence and abuse.

Overwhelming, however, our investigations have shown that despite many decades of advocacy to improve the representation of people with disability in population-based data collections in Australia, very little has changed. Key challenges remain and include:

- definitional complexities within data sources;
- methodological and design shortcomings that exclude people from participating in surveys;
- barriers to reporting in administrative data systems designed to collect information about violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation;
- gaps in recording and reporting of data; and
- gaps in the leveraging of existing data and linking of data for the creation of new statistical information.

**Research Team:**

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## Indicator 11.9: Proportion of women who have experienced sexual harassment since age 15<sup>lxxii</sup>

What does this indicator tell us about Monitoring domain 11: Prevalence of violence against women?	<p>This indicator tells us the proportion of the population of women in Australia who have experienced at least one incident of sexual harassment (in any setting) during their lifetime since age 15.</p> <p>This indicator should be read alongside Indicator 11.4 (12-month experiences of sexual harassment in any setting), Indicator 3.6 (workplace sexual harassment) and Indicator 3.9 (feelings of lack of safety in public spaces) for a more complete picture of the prevalence and patterns of sexual harassment, including disaggregated five-year workplace sexual harassment prevalence figures for different groups of women.</p>
Expected change if high-quality programs and infrastructure for prevention of violence against women and gender equality are implemented	<p>Short- and medium-term: an increase in the proportion of women and girls who report experiencing sexual harassment during their lifetime, due to increased public awareness.</p> <p>Long-term: lifetime prevalence of sexual harassment of women reduced.</p>
Data source(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Personal Safety Survey (PSS) 2016, ABS</li> <li>2. Workplace Sexual Harassment Survey 2018, AHRC (lifetime data is not restricted to workplace experiences of sexual harassment)</li> </ol> <p>Important methodological differences exist between these two survey instruments in terms of how sexual harassment is measured.<sup>lxxiii</sup> As such the two datasets are not directly comparable.</p>

<sup>lxxii</sup> This indicator did not appear in *Counting on change*.

<sup>lxxiii</sup> The methodologies of the PSS and the AHRC sexual harassment surveys differ in regard to how sexual harassment is counted. The AHRC's instrument focuses on sexual harassment, while the PSS asks respondents about a wider range of violence. The AHRC surveys can therefore be more in-depth with regard to sexual harassment, and they ask respondents about a wider range of sexual harassment behaviours than the PSS. Another difference is that the AHRC's definition of sexual harassment includes sexual assault and stalking, whereas these are measured as separate categories of violence in the PSS. The PSS additionally asks respondents who report having experienced a sexual harassment behaviour whether they found that behaviour inappropriate or offensive, and only counts incidents where the respondent indicates that they did. These methodological differences appear to have led to the AHRC surveys yielding higher prevalence rates of sexual harassment across the board than the PSS.

Gaps in existing data	<p>The PSS does allow for analysis of the prevalence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's lifetime experiences of sexual harassment.<sup>lxxiv</sup> The publicly available data is also limited in terms of disaggregation by other socioeconomic demographic factors. Please refer to Indicator 11.4 for inclusion of publicly available and useful disaggregated data on women's 12-month experiences of sexual harassment.</p> <p>The latest AHRC data is, however, able to be disaggregated by a number of socio-demographic factors, which is helpful in building a picture of the prevalence of sexual harassment against women and non-binary people who experience intersecting forms of discrimination and oppression. It is limited, however, in revealing differences on the basis of cultural and linguistic diversity, partly because the survey is administered in English only.</p>
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PSS data shows that in 2016, 52.9% of women reported lifetime experiences of sexual harassment (see Table 54, below).<sup>lxxv</sup> In both the 2012 and 2016 PSS results, men were almost five times more likely than women to be perpetrators of sexual harassment of women.

**Table 54: Proportion (%) of women who have experienced sexual harassment during their lifetime, by sex of perpetrator, 2016**

Sex of sexual harassment perpetrator	2016
A man	52.2%
A woman	10.6%
Anyone (total for lifetime sexual harassment experience)	52.9%

Sources: ABS, PSS 2016

The Workplace Sexual Harassment surveys by the Australian Human Right Commission (AHRC) have also measured lifetime prevalence of sexual harassment in *any setting* (that is, not just workplaces). This data reveals that **prevalence of sexual harassment is both gendered and driven by intersecting forms of oppression and discrimination.**

In 2018, when reading the legal definition of sexual harassment, 61% of women aged between 18 and 64 reported having experienced sexual harassment at some point during their lifetimes since the age of 15.

<sup>lxxiv</sup> The PSS does not allow for disaggregation by Indigenous status, and the NATSISS only measures 12-month rates of *physical* violence.

<sup>lxxv</sup> It should be cautioned that the 2016 PSS saw some adaptation to measurement of sexual harassment (i.e. inclusion of additional behaviours), and therefore the data of 2012 and 2016 is not directly comparable. However, an increase in lifetime prevalence of women's experiences of sexual harassment is indicated.



Respondents were also asked about their experience of sexual harassment behaviours. Together, the proportion of women who reported sexual harassment lifetime experiences (against the legal definition or in response to behavioural questions) was 85% in 2018 (as compared with 56% of men).

The AHRC provided useful disaggregation of lifetime sexual harassment 2018 data by a number of other demographic factors, as follows:

Demographic factor	Lifetime sexual harassment prevalence data
Gender identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>89% of non-binary people have experienced sexual harassment during their lifetime</li> </ul>
Intersex status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>90% of intersex people have experienced sexual harassment during their lifetime</li> </ul>
Sexual orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>70% of people (any gender) who are straight or heterosexual have experienced sexual harassment in their lifetime, as compared with 84% of people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, queer, asexual, aromantic, undecided, not sure, questioning or other sexual orientation</li> <li>92% of women who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, queer, asexual, aromantic, undecided, not sure, questioning or other have experienced sexual harassment during their lifetime</li> </ul>
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The data did not reveal a significant difference in the lifetime prevalence of sexual harassment experienced by Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander women as compared with non-Indigenous women</li> <li>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men were more likely to have experienced sexual harassment during their lifetime (66%) than other men (56%)</li> </ul>
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>89% of women with disability have experienced sexual harassment during their lifetime</li> </ul>
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>75% of people aged 18 to 29 years and 67% of people aged 65 years and over have experienced sexual harassment during their lifetime. No gender disaggregation is available for these figures.</li> </ul>

Source: AHRC 2018, pp. 21–24

# Conclusion and ways forward

Primary prevention is a long-term collaborative effort, and population-level change will only occur over a sustained period of time. Learning from our endeavours and making the most of emerging opportunities is critical to ensuring our concerted efforts lead to the short-, medium- and long-term change required to lower the probability of violence against women and reduce future occurrences. Some of Australia's successes to date have been articulated in this report, together with areas requiring additional attention and effort, and opportunities to strengthen the national approach. These are summarised in the Executive Summary, where [key findings](#) and the implications of these for next steps and future priorities are discussed.

## Suggested directions forward from this first national prevention monitoring report

This first monitoring report is intended to provide a basis for a national conversation about how to move forward with primary prevention monitoring into the future. We hope to encourage wider uptake of monitoring at national, state and local levels and collaboration between governments and other stakeholders (including NGOs, research institutions and data collection organisations) to institutionalise regular, long-term monitoring.

Stakeholders are invited to use this first national monitoring report on the primary prevention of violence against women in various ways, for example:

- as a basis for future national monitoring
- as monitoring guidance
- to understand change to date in order to support future prevention strategies
- as a tool to support advocacy
- to inform future directions for research, data collection, and analysis and evaluation.

# Considerations for the process of future primary prevention monitoring

## Who should undertake future primary prevention national monitoring?

Ideally, national primary prevention monitoring should involve a range of organisational stakeholders, professional skillsets, and a diversity of community perspectives; be appropriately staffed by a team; and be guided by at least one advisory group with varied representation.

## How often should primary prevention monitoring be undertaken?

Future primary prevention national monitoring should be undertaken at regular, reasonably spaced intervals which allow enough time for new data to be released and for some population-level change to be registered. For example, five-year national prevention monitoring waves would be sensible.

## Advice for state and territory jurisdictions

As with *Counting on change*, we encourage state and territory jurisdictions to take up primary prevention monitoring. In doing so, states and territories should consider not only the recommendations outlined in this report, but also the ability of datasets to be disaggregated to state/territory level. *Counting on change* provides some guidance on this. Choices may need to be made about the number of indicators monitored. We would encourage at a minimum ensuring some coverage across four gendered drivers of violence, indicators pertaining to all forms of structural inequality and discrimination, and 12-month and lifetime prevalence rates of particular forms of violence against women. As with national monitoring, we suggest that state and territory jurisdictional monitoring be undertaken in collaboration with a diverse range of stakeholders.

# Appendix A: Methodology and limitations

## Quality primary prevention infrastructure: the foundations of change – an overview of the measures investigated, methodology used and limitations

*Counting on change: A guide to prevention monitoring* developed a number of suggested measures but acknowledged that data for many of these is not currently collected in Australia. As such, a limitation across this section is that the data collected was drawn either from limited publicly available information, or from the survey and semi-structured interviews conducted specifically for this project. Only two interviews were conducted as the interview and follow-up process was interrupted by the social disruptions associated with the COVID-19 crisis. While every effort was made to capture information from across the decade where possible, more recent initiatives and information was more readily available in the public realm. Additional limitations of particular data collection approaches are noted below.

### Domain 1 – Political and civil society leadership

#### Measure

- Public statements in the context of parliament by political leaders, across the political spectrum and at different levels of government, and civil society organisations speaking in parliament.
- Private and not-for-profit sector workplaces reporting to WGEA have or institute domestic violence leave, parental leave, and flexible work provisions for their employees.
- Public employers have or institute domestic violence leave, parental leave, and flexible work provisions for their employees.
- Joint campaigns and joint statements initiated and led by those most impacted are supported by those working towards gender equality more broadly (e.g. significant events, responses to injustice, responses to inquiries).

## Methodology

- Keywords and keyword combinations, using the publicly available online search databases provided for the Commonwealth Parliament, the Parliament of New South Wales and the Parliament of South Australia. The date range searched was January 2009 to December 2019. Keyword frequencies were recorded per calendar year and per search term. These three jurisdictions were chosen because the Hansard search functions were the most comparable.
- Rapid content analysis of a single year of mentions in one jurisdiction, using inductive and deductive coding.
- A desktop search strategy was employed to gather information about public service provisions. This included searches for, and reviews of, publicly available policies in each jurisdiction as well publicly available Enterprise Bargaining Agreements across public service departments, as well as state and federal reports on gender equality.
- Desktop scan and review of inquiry submissions.

## Limitations

- To ensure data was comparable, the search of Hansard parliamentary records was conducted across three jurisdictions.
- A content analysis wasn't conducted across every year for every word mention; therefore this analysis isn't able to provide insight into the context and sentiment surrounding the use of the terms.
- Public sector organisations and organisations employing under 100 people are not represented in the WGEA data – therefore, this analysis doesn't cover all employers, or all organisation types.
- The desktop search strategy used to gather information about entitlements in the public service was limited to overarching enterprise bargaining agreements and policy documents covering the entire public service for each jurisdiction. As such, this analysis doesn't include additional entitlements that may be provided by particular departments.
- Data about joint campaigns and joint statements was collected through identifying government inquiries and commissions in Hansard documents, and then reviewing submissions. This was combined with data provided by survey respondents. Despite the use of two data collection methods, some joint campaigns, submissions and responses may not have been captured.

## Domain 2: Policy and legislative reform

### Measure

- Governments (federal, state/territory) have a dedicated policy for primary prevention of violence against women or have primary prevention of violence against women included as a specific area within a broader policy, aligned with *Change the story*.
- Governments have a gender equality policy.
- Changes to legislation address the drivers of violence against women.

- Governments (federal, state/territory and local) embed gender equality goals and targets in legislation, regulation and agency guidelines (e.g. >40% representation for each gender on public committees and boards).

## Methodology

- Online search to identify all available relevant government strategies, policies and plans.
- Rapid content analysis of policies, strategies and action plans, based on a keyword search to investigate references to:
  - primary prevention in existing government policies, strategies and action plans
  - shared frameworks and recent evidence referenced in these documents
  - gender equality as a human right
  - how approaches account for differential experiences of violence, and for structural discrimination
  - governance arrangements
  - length of funded period (short- or longer-term).
- Scan of legislation for all calendar years 2009–2019 inclusive using the keyword search function in Lawlex. More than 20 keywords and combinations of keywords were used in this search.
- Desktop scan using key word searching to identify gender equality goals and targets.

## Limitations

The desktop scan approach and keyword search approaches used in this and other domains have some limitations, including that not all relevant materials may be captured by the search strategy. As such, where documents identified in keywords linked to other relevant documents, a snowball approach was utilised to ensure as many relevant documents as possible were uncovered and analysed.

## Domain 3: An expert workforce

### Measure

- The current and future workforce is supported by formal, accredited and non-accredited pre-service and in-service gender equality and primary prevention training, professional development, guidance and support.
- An increasing number of people who work to prevent violence against women undertake professional development in specific areas.
- Specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's leadership strategies and models of leadership are resourced and supported.
- Prevention of violence against women workforce and organisational development is resourced and supported – financially and in-kind – by governments, workplaces and relevant training institutions.
- A specialist and expert prevention workforce provides leadership, technical assistance, program development and policy support to a diverse range of stakeholders to prevent violence against women.

## Methodology

- Collection of quantitative and qualitative data through an online research survey (n=312 partial and complete) distributed using a snowball method. The survey was initially distributed in January 2020 to 2000 Our Watch stakeholders and closed in mid-February 2020. Where percentages are provided for survey data, these are the percentages of total responses to the question referenced.
- Analysis of survey data included:
  - simple descriptive statistical analysis of quantitative data
  - thematic analysis of qualitative research survey data, involving inductive and deductive coding of qualitative survey responses, which were then themed and analysed alongside quantitative responses to create categories for interpretive analysis and cross-analysis with other questions.
- Desktop scan to review university courses and identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's leadership initiatives.

## Limitations

While the survey respondents represent more than 10% of the initial distribution group, 46% of respondents indicated that their work was focused in a single jurisdiction (Victoria). This was considered during data analysis, with some analysis being conducted with and without the Victorian data to minimise bias.

## Domain 4: Mechanisms for coordination, collaboration and quality assurance

### Measure

- Coordination structures exist across different levels, and these structures promote consistency between legislative and policy reforms, programs, communications campaigns and other prevention efforts.
- Advisory structures exist to support quality primary prevention policy and programming.
- Prevention programs show evidence of being implemented and evaluated according to good practice principles (e.g. those outlined in the Our Watch/VicHealth Handbook).
- Partnerships of all kinds demonstrate an inclusive, intersectional and participatory approach (e.g. policy and program development is led by members of the different communities it seeks to engage).

### Methodology

- Online search to identify all available relevant government strategies, policies and plans.
- Rapid content analysis of policies, strategies and action plans, searching for references to coordination structures or advisory groups.
- A desktop scan of all state and federal parliamentary websites was conducted to identify inquiries and royal commissions. Where inquiries aligned with the drivers of violence against women or the reinforcing factors, a further review of submissions was conducted.

- Analysis of quantitative and qualitative data collected through the research survey (n=312) outlined above.
- Desktop scan of the grey literature on primary prevention of violence against women, evaluations, intersectional approaches to primary prevention, using combinations of the search terms, such as 'evaluation framework', 'outcomes framework', 'monitoring' together with 'prevention of violence against women', 'primary prevention', 'primary prevention of violence against women', and 'gender equality'. Additional targeted searches on the ANROWS and National Plan websites.
- Snowball searching from data collected in the two searches above also identified additional relevant information.

## Limitations

As identified above, as much of this data isn't currently collected, the online search strategy was able to identify a lot of the current work. However, it did not necessarily provide a comprehensive mapping of every evaluation for every program across the decade. This is also limited by the fact that evaluation information may be removed from websites as it is replaced by newer content. This limitation was ameliorated by including snowball search strategies whereby additional searches were conducted based on information provided in documents discovered in the initial search and further exploration of websites and documents identified by survey respondents.

## Domain 5: Monitoring, reporting and evaluation frameworks

### Measure

- Agreed monitoring and evaluation frameworks exist with accountabilities articulated for all relevant implementing partners (e.g. different government departments or different regional agencies).
- Agreed monitoring and evaluation frameworks exist with outcomes and targets that demonstrate alignment with the shared national framework, *Changing the picture*, and with *Counting on change*.
- Monitoring frameworks and national research and data strategies are established to support evidence building and accountability for the prevention of violence against all women, which acknowledge multiple forms of knowledge and data.
- Such monitoring, evaluation, research and data frameworks and strategies are supported (financially, in-kind and through appropriate and fair mechanisms and systems) by implementing partners and their funders.
- Prevention initiatives are supported to undertake ethical, appropriate and effective monitoring, evaluation and learning practice through funding investment and sectoral capacity building, knowledge sharing and collaboration.
- Governments (federal, state/territory and local) establish independent governance and oversight mechanisms to monitor progress on preventing violence against women and promoting gender equality.



## Methodology

- Grey literature search for key references to monitoring and evaluation in primary prevention of violence against women between 2009 and 2019. Desktop searches as outlined in Domain 4.
- Content analysis of policy documents referred to in Domain 2.
- Further analysis of quantitative and qualitative data collected through the research survey (n=312) as outlined in Domain 3.

## Limitations

As identified above, as much of this data isn't currently collected, the online search strategy was able to identify a lot of relevant literature, although it did not necessarily provide a comprehensive mapping of all documents. This is also limited by the fact that evaluation and monitoring information may be removed from websites as it is replaced by newer content. This limitation was ameliorated by including snowball search strategies whereby additional searches were conducted based on information provided in documents discovered in the initial search, or websites and documents identified by survey respondents.

## Domain 6: Quality primary prevention programming

### Measure

- Prevention programming:
  - takes an intersectional approach to addressing drivers of violence
  - employs a range of techniques across a range of settings and contexts
  - works at different levels of the socio-ecological framework
  - is tailored to audience and context and inclusive
  - is long-term.
- Prevention programs that have been trialled and evaluated as effective or promising are supported for continuous improvement and scale-up over the long term (i.e. more than five years).
- As the above quality standards are progressively developed, measures of progress in each setting are identified, monitored and reported on. For example, for education and care settings, the number of students (K–12) reached by respectful relationships education initiatives using the whole-of-school approach.
- Prevention programs show evidence of being implemented and evaluated according to good practice principles and shared standards.
- Measures of progress in each setting are identified, monitored and reported on.
- Prevention programs show evidence of being designed and funded in accordance with the evidence base and shared national framework (i.e. based on alignment with *Change the story, Changing the picture, Primary prevention of family violence against people from LGBTI communities*, previous program learning).
- At the program level, prevention initiatives demonstrate implementation of shared evaluation frameworks, and monitor and report on progress according to the above frameworks.

## Methodology

- Rapid scan of primary prevention initiatives funded under the National Plan published on the National Plan website, selecting only initiatives that were coded to one or more of the 'Primary prevention is key' national priority actions (National priority actions 1–5).
- Rapid scan of primary prevention programs in addition to those found in key pieces of literature identified in desktop searches described above, including:
  - a selection of programs that have been used as case studies in previous Our Watch publications
  - programs cited in the 2017–18 Annual Progress Report of the Third Action Plan<sup>530</sup>
  - additional flagship or well-known programs.
- Further analysis of quantitative and qualitative data collected through the research survey (n=312) as outlined in Domain 3.

## Limitations

Due to similar limitations noted above, the strategies of keyword and snowball searching were used to identify primary prevention programming between 2009 and 2019. However, this is not a comprehensive mapping activity and may not have captured all activities.

# Adjustments made compared to the *Counting on change* monitoring guide

## Structural changes

This monitoring report has been structured to align more closely with the elements of *Change the story*. As such, there are fewer monitoring domains than appeared in *Counting on change* and the numbering also differs from *Counting on change*.

The monitoring domains for the medium-term outcomes correspond with the gendered drivers and reinforcing factors outlined in *Change the story* – with one difference. In *Counting on change*, ‘Socio-economic inequality and discrimination’ was included as a reinforcing factor, and one indicator under this domain was ‘Indigenous structural disadvantage’. This reflects *Change the story*. However, in 2018 Our Watch released *Changing the picture: A national resource to support the prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children*.<sup>531</sup> *Changing the picture* acknowledges that in the context of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, racism and the impacts of colonisation upon Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and upon non-Indigenous people and society are also drivers of violence, which interact with the gendered drivers outlined in *Change the story*.

Therefore, in this report the *Counting on change* reinforcing factor domain of ‘Socio-economic inequality and discrimination’ has been recast as ‘intersecting drivers of violence (other forms of oppression and discrimination)’. This includes indicators focused on:

- racism and the ongoing impacts of colonisation upon Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- other forms of structural inequality and discrimination such as homophobia, transphobia, heterosexism, ableism, racism, xenophobia, socioeconomic disadvantage, and rigid norms about family formations, which can interact with gendered drivers to drive, and influence, the patterns and dynamics of violence against women.

## Significant developments: understanding and assessing change to primary prevention foundations

*Counting on change* left scope for the further development of the approach to understanding and assessing change to the building of foundations for effective primary prevention. Accordingly, during this project the project team carefully considered the most appropriate ways to understand and track change to the building of primary prevention foundations, and assessed the forms of available evidence and what new evidence was needed. This exploratory work led to a less quantitative and more qualitative methodological approach to that suggested in *Counting on change*. As a result, many of the Foundations indicators now look different to those suggested in *Counting on change*.

## Minor changes, additions and refinements to the medium- and long-term outcomes indicators

*Counting on change* identified datasets which could be used to measure particular indicators aligned with the medium- and long-term outcomes. This monitoring report identified specific data points within the datasets (that is, key questions or measures) relevant to each indicator and provides more detailed guidance on how to use these particular data points to measure specified indicators. Some indicators themselves were slightly altered to reflect the specificity of available data, or evolutions in Our Watch's understanding of effective primary prevention of violence against women. Unless very minor, these changes have been noted throughout the report.

This monitoring report also sees the inclusion of some new indicators in the medium- and long-term outcomes monitoring domains, where it was determined that there was a significant need and where data was available. These additional indicators have been noted throughout the report. Additional or more appropriate alternative datasets have also been identified for many of the indicators. In some cases, additions reflect new data releases or the incorporation of previously unfamiliar datasets that came to light during the project.

## Inclusion of data by revised criteria for medium- and long-term outcomes indicators

*Counting on change* identified datasets for the medium- and long-term outcomes monitoring indicators based on the following criteria:

- they are quantitative in nature
- they are designed, tested and implemented with a high level of rigour
- they are population-level and with population-representative sampling
- data is readily publicly available, and
- the studies are replicated at regular intervals to allow for comparison of results and tracking change over time (known as 'timeseries analysis').

Adopting these criteria meant *Counting on change* prioritised large, established, cross-sectional and longitudinal statistical survey datasets (typically administered by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, other government data agencies, or by research agencies, often funded through the Commonwealth Government and aligned with key policy areas or strategies such as the National Plan), as well as some select administrative datasets.

As *Counting on change* acknowledged, there are limits to these datasets when attempting to apply an intersectional lens to the data. For this reason, in this project we have broadened the criteria for data inclusion to enable us to draw upon other quantitative studies, even if small or single-study, where they help to provide a different angle or build a richer picture of the indicator under consideration. These additions appear as text boxes throughout the report. The scope of the project did not allow for an exhaustive mining of such additional data sources. However, by including some of them we hope to generate interest and prompt further questions among readers, and encourage further research and data collection to strengthen an intersectional approach to prevention monitoring. We hope these examples prompt thinking about how to strengthen existing datasets, support new data initiatives and design new datasets.

## Surfacing and addressing the limitations, tensions and partiality in numerically based indicators

There are great benefits to analysing numerical data to help describe and monitor complex social phenomena such as violence or its gendered drivers. However, this project also been concerned to acknowledge and, where possible, address the limits, tensions and partiality of indicator projects that rely only on quantitative data.

Various forms of knowledge are crucial to the evidence-building project underpinning the primary prevention of violence against women. These include lived experience, practitioner and community knowledge, qualitative and narrative-based deep inquiry, program and policy evaluation, theory, and quantitative data. We have purposefully utilised quantitative data in Section 2 of this monitoring project in order to elucidate population-level patterns and change over time. However, we recognise that this is but one way to further our understanding of prevention of violence against women, and there is a critical need to value other forms of knowledge and to bring ‘the numbers’ into dialogue with these other forms of evidence. For this reason, we have undertaken some qualitative analysis of the quantitative findings across the suite of indicators contained within an outcome monitoring domain, utilising our qualitatively generated evidence base on the primary prevention of violence against women. We have also supplemented large-scale quantitative studies with smaller, more focused studies, where they address or better illustrate a particular issue or dimension of the problem.

A certain level of reductivity is inherent in the quantification of complex social phenomena. Numbers can cut through complexity with a level of order, elegance and simplicity to generate accessible and important insights. However, the use of statistical indicators can run the risk of oversimplification and inaccuracy. As anthropologist Sally Engle Merry has said, quantitative indicators can ‘appear more accurate and precise than they are ... The ambiguities of the categories, errors in counting, missing data, and the lack of commensurability disappear in the final presentation of the indicator to the public.’ Leung et al. note that ‘[g]iven the highly technical nature of quantitative research, when complexities and nuances are not effectively communicated, findings from quantitative VAWG [violence against women and girls] studies can be misinterpreted or misused.’

It is also critical to recognise that indicators are often proxy measures of complex social phenomena. An indicator is selected as our best attempt to measure an outcomes area, and a dataset is chosen because it is the best we have to measure that indicator. In either case, data does not always or even often precisely measure the actual social phenomenon. There is a danger that what is counted ends up being what counts, such that future policy efforts are directed to the focus of the data or the indicator rather than the real problem itself.

In this monitoring project, we have deliberately chosen to present more detail and complexity. There is typically more than one data point per indicator discussed (that is, each indicator comprises far more than a single or comparable statistic). We have drawn attention to the limitations of the data we are drawing on, and have been cautious and qualified in our interpretations. Where possible, we have drawn upon other studies to supplement the limits of major datasets.

In this report we have reported on disaggregation by demographic categories in addition to gender for any publicly available data where meaningful to the indicator findings. However,

even with a commitment to disaggregated reporting, and even where datasets have a sample size large enough to provide disaggregated data by sex/gender and at least one other demographic characteristic, use of population datasets still risks reinforcing structural inequalities, stereotypes and invisibilities.

The development of population datasets involves the social construction of demographic categories within which to group people as well as choices about how to define or categorise issues of interest. The methodological, administration and sampling techniques of data instruments also require choices about who to include and how. Moreover, the purpose of each data instrument, the power relations involved in the organisations developing and administering it, and the personnel involved, or not involved, in its design all have implications for ‘who and what counts’. All these factors associated with the construction and administration of datasets mean they can have the effect of reinforcing existing patterns of power and privilege, invisibility and marginalisation, and often fail to adequately capture the effects of intersecting forms of discrimination and oppression.

The presentation and interpretation of data, if not carefully considered, can also present risks of decontextualizing issues in a way that has limited explanatory power, ‘problematizing’ certain groups, and adopting a deficit focus that can reinforce harmful stereotypes.

Movements such as that for Indigenous data sovereignty have questioned broader data politics and ethics, such as the purpose behind the collection, dissemination and use of data about people who have been systematically oppressed. This perspective encourages critical consideration of whether and how people subject to data processes are involved in, or have leadership over, project governance, and how data collection instruments can be designed and administered in more participatory, ethical ways to ensure not only relevance to people who experience intersecting forms of discrimination and oppression, but also their control over the use of data.

Pointing to the challenges and risks associated with population data that are discussed above, particularly the dearth of sufficiently disaggregated data, *Counting on change* stresses that improving disaggregated data collection is a key step towards enabling an intersectional approach to monitoring. However, it cautions that while resolving these issues would give us ‘data about diversity’, we must then ensure we adopt an appropriate intersectional approach to analysing such data:

‘the availability of such [disaggregated] data is simply a prerequisite to an intersectional approach for monitoring whole population change. That is, such data makes an intersectional analysis possible. When whole population datasets are of sufficiently large size, and when data is disaggregated into all pertinent demographic characteristics, we can begin the process of analysing the data in a way that doesn’t simply “add” diversity characteristics together, but looks at how they might intersect.’

With this in mind, we included in the report smaller or one-off studies which could shed light on lived experiences of women who experience intersecting forms of inequality and discrimination, or on the structural forms of inequality and discrimination which intersect with gender inequalities to drive violence. We also continually reviewed the monitoring framework and our analysis of findings in light of the work that Our Watch has undertaken since the publication of *Change the story*. In particular, the monitoring domains drew on publications such as *Changing the picture* and *Primary prevention of family violence against*

*people from LGBTI communities*, and our interpretation of findings was guided by these more recent additions to the Our Watch evidence base.

In relation to the principles of Indigenous data sovereignty this project has clear limitations, having been led by a non-Indigenous organisation. We have profiled important studies undertaken by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers which have been designed to respond meaningfully to Indigenous data sovereignty principles – that is, they are undertaken by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, with deep community involvement along the way. Moreover, engagement with Indigenous data sovereignty leaders in Australia led us to suggest future monitoring waves include forthcoming new data which moves beyond ‘deficit’ counting to emphasise cultural determinants and strengths-focused indicators. Please see Monitoring domain 6: Intersecting drivers of violence (other forms of oppression and discrimination).

# Appendix B: A selection of family violence related courses at Australian universities

**Family violence related courses offered at Australian universities**

University	Course	Length	Study requirements
Monash	Professional development short course: <a href="#">Gender, violence and society: Understanding social patterns</a>	4 weeks	Professionals, graduate students or advanced undergraduate students
	Professional development short course: <a href="#">Gender, violence and society: Criminal justice responses</a>	4 weeks	Professionals, graduate students or advanced undergraduate students
	Professional development short course: <a href="#">Using data to understand family violence</a>	4 weeks	Professionals, graduate students or advanced undergraduate students
	Professional development short course: <a href="#">Health and family violence</a>	4 weeks	Professionals, graduate students or advanced undergraduate students
	<a href="#">Graduate Certificate of Family Violence Prevention</a>	1 year part-time	Postgraduate
	<a href="#">Graduate Diploma of Family Violence Prevention</a>	2 years part-time	Postgraduate



University	Course	Length	Study requirements
RMIT	<a href="#">Graduate Certificate in Domestic and Family Violence</a>	0.5 years full-time or part-time equivalent	Postgraduate
	Short course: <a href="#">Gender Development and Globalisation</a>	1 semester	Undergraduate
	Short course: <a href="#">Gender in Development</a>	1 semester	Postgraduate
	<a href="#">Graduate Certificate in Domestic and Family Violence</a>	0.5 years full-time or part-time equivalent	Postgraduate
	Credential: <a href="#">Gender Equity in Action</a>	3 hours online	All students
	Credential: <a href="#">Why Gender Matters</a>	1–2 hours online	All Students
Melbourne University	Graduate coursework: <a href="#">Domestic and Family Violence (HLTH90007)</a>	136 hours online	Nil
CQ University	<a href="#">Graduate Certificate in Domestic and Family Violence Practice – CV74</a>	0.5 years full-time, 1 years part-time, online	Bachelor degree, graduate diploma plus work-related experience or five years of relevant work experience
QUT	<a href="#">Graduate Certificate in Domestic Violence</a>	6 months full-time or part-time equivalent	Postgraduate
University of Newcastle	<a href="#">Graduate Certificate in Family Studies</a>	0.5 years full-time or part-time equivalent	Postgraduate
Flinders University	<a href="#">Graduate Diploma in Gender and Development</a>	1 year full-time	Postgraduate

# Appendix C: Time-limited advisory groups linked to the National Plan

- National Council to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children established in 2008 to provide expert advice towards development of the National Plan,<sup>532</sup> culminating in the Time for Action report<sup>533</sup> presented to the Commonwealth government in March 2009. Members had expertise in domestic and family violence, sexual assault, and experiences of violence including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and culturally and linguistically diverse communities.
- Violence Against Women Advisory Group (September 2009 – September 2011), to provide expert advice on the implementation of the National Plan, including engaging the community and promoting the Plan. Members had expertise in domestic and family violence, sexual assault, family law and the legal system, and the experiences of violence by groups including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities and women with disability.
- Additional advisory groups including a Primary Prevention Advisory Group established under the First Action Plan<sup>534</sup> to ‘establish linkages, share ideas and exchange information on specific key priority areas of the National Plan’.
- Select Council on Women’s Issues established in 2011 consisting of Commonwealth and state/territory ministers with responsibility for the status of women, tasked with overall responsibility for implementation of the National Plan. The Select Council is mentioned in the First Action Plan<sup>535</sup> and alluded to in the Second Action Plan,<sup>536</sup> then not referenced in the next two Action Plans, where it is replaced with a reference to Women’s Safety Ministers.
- COAG Advisory Panel on Reducing Violence against Women and their Children established in January 2015 and culminating in a final report identifying priority areas for action, delivered in July 2016. Members of the Advisory Panel were noted to have expertise in domestic and family violence, sexual assault, online safety and the experiences of violence by groups including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and people with disability.
- National Plan Implementation Panel (NPIP) developed to report to ministers on implementation issues, with members including government and non-government representatives. A 2015 report<sup>537</sup> to parliament noted that this panel was discontinued, leading to ‘confusion’ from stakeholders, and concern regarding the lack of effective mechanisms for ‘ongoing consultation affecting implementation of Action Plans and the need for independent evaluation’.<sup>538</sup>
- National Plan Implementation Executive Group for the Third and Fourth Action Plans,<sup>539</sup><sup>540</sup> consisting of senior officials from Commonwealth, state and territory governments with responsibility for monitoring and reporting progress to the Women’s Safety Ministers on the implementation of the Action Plans.

# Appendix D: Number of initiatives tagged under Fourth Action Plan primary prevention priority actions (National priority 1: Primary prevention is key)

National priority action	Number of initiatives tagging this action
Advance gender equality and respect for women through effective primary prevention initiatives	17
Improve coordination across primary prevention activities to maximise their impact on community attitudes and behaviours that lead to violence	11
Implement targeted primary prevention activities designed by, and tailored for, the specific communities they are intended to support	12
Address intergenerational trauma for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through primary prevention including holistic healing strategies, and by strengthening connections to culture, language, knowledge and identity	4
Promote healthy and safe relationships and build gender-equitable values through initiatives for children and young people	11

Source: Australian Government (2020) [National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children, Implementation Plan, Initiatives](#). Retrieved 6 May 2020

# Appendix E: Text-equivalent descriptions of selected figures

All figures in this document have alternative text attached. For the more complex Figures 1, 2, 3, 12, 26 and 30, the text-equivalent descriptions are presented here.

**Figure 1: Commonwealth Parliament Hansard mentions by year for select search terms**

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Violence against women	69	61	55	82	87	157	199	136	150	204	134
Gender equality	39	30	38	98	54	127	176	101	133	171	86
Gender pay gap	33	13	6	29	7	41	55	49	97	101	61
Domestic violence	176	136	142	199	145	380	511	339	533	617	362
Family violence	84	71	124	82	62	188	374	234	407	509	207

[Return to text following Figure 1](#)

**Figure 2: Frequency of mentions by search terms in NSW Parliament Hansard**

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Violence against women	11	24	13	23	21	25	33	24	24	21	19
Gender equality	1	8	5	9	13	10	14	15	17	18	11
Gender pay gap	1	7	4	3	0	2	3	4	13	3	4
Domestic violence	106	128	67	87	118	160	202	232	223	231	196
Family violence	11	32	17	16	26	44	52	45	60	62	63

[Return to text following Figure 2](#)

**Figure 3: Frequency of mentions of key words in South Australian Parliament Hansard**

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Violence against women	17	14	22	9	14	39	27	30	10	22	19
Gender equality	1	1	3	1	5	6	9	14	7	21	26
Gender pay gap	0	1	0	0	0	2	7	5	7	4	2
Domestic violence	69	31	54	40	37	107	109	118	66	114	89
Family violence	27	4	15	11	3	33	31	39	25	57	48

[Return to text following Figure 3](#)

**Figure 12: Proportion of women employees by industry, 2013–14 and 2018–19**

Bar graph of the following data (proportion).

	2013–14	2018–19
Accommodation and food services	51.2%	52.9%
Administration and support services	47.3%	45.0%
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	34.8%	34.4%
Arts and recreation services	50.8%	50.6%
Construction	16.2%	18.3%
Education and training	62.5%	63.4%
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	24.6%	24.6%
Financial and insurance services	56.1%	54.7%
Health care and social assistance	80.6%	79.9%
Information media and telecommunications	40.0%	39.2%
Manufacturing	26.6%	27.3%
Mining	15.7%	17.0%
Other services	49.4%	45.0%
Professional scientific and technical services	39.3%	41.7%
Public administration and safety	21.5%	20.6%
Rental hiring and real estate services	43.8%	41.4%
Retail trade	59.1%	57.7%
Transport postal and warehousing	25.9%	27.2%
Wholesale trade	35.6%	36.6%

[Return to text following Figure 12](#)

## Figure 26: Most common reasons cited for retiring by retired women and men, 2007

Infographic.

The most common reasons cited by women were:

1. 25% – Personal health or physical abilities.
2. 15% – Caring responsibilities.
3. 13% – To spend more time with partner or family.

The most common reasons cited by men were:

1. 38% – Personal health or physical abilities.
2. 10% – Retrenched or made redundant.
3. 8% – Reaching eligibility age or service for pension.

[Return to text following Figure 26](#)

## Figure 30: The intersecting drivers of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women

An explanatory model of the drivers of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

This figure shows three main drivers, which intersect and result in violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

The figure represents violence as the outcome of the interactions between these three main drivers.

The first main driver on the left says: Ongoing impacts of colonisation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, families and communities. Under this main driver, there are further dot points which say:

- Intergenerational and collective trauma
- Systemic oppression, disempowerment, racism
- Destruction/disruption of traditional cultures, family and community relationships
- and community norms about violence
- Personal experience of/exposure to violence
- Condoning of violence within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The second main driver on the right says: Ongoing impacts of colonisation for non-Indigenous people and society. Under this main driver, there are further dot points which say:

- Racialised structural inequalities of power
- Entrenched racism in social norms, attitudes and practices
- Perpetration of racist violence
- Condoning of, and insufficient accountability for, violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The third main driver sits at the base and says: Gendered factors. Under this main driver, there are further dot points which say:

- Gendered drivers of violence against women in Australia (identified in *Change the story*)
  - Condoning of violence against women
  - Men's control of decision making and limits to women's independence
  - Stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity
  - Disrespect towards women and male peer relations that emphasise aggression
- Additional gendered drivers of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women
  - Intersection of racism and sexism
  - Impacts of colonial patriarchy on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, gender roles, men, women and relationships.

These three drivers all point towards a circle in the middle that says: The intersection between these multiple drivers results in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experiencing disproportionate levels of violence, with particularly severe and complex impacts. A line above the circle says: Colonisation sets the underlying context

[Return to text following Figure 30](#)

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