

Media Release

Friday 16 May 2014

Governments unite to launch national research body aimed at improving women's safety

A national research organisation funded jointly by the Commonwealth, state and territory governments has been launched today to undertake research aimed at addressing the high rates of domestic, family and sexual violence against women and their children and improving outcomes for victims.

Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) was established in 2013. It is the first of its kind in Australia and was officially launched at Parliament House, Canberra by Federal Minister for Social Services Kevin Andrews and Federal Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Women Michaela Cash. They were joined by state and territory ministers from across Australia, including South Australian Minister for the Status of Women Gail Gago, and by representatives from the services sector, women's organisations and researchers.

The establishment of ANROWS delivers on a key commitment under the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022*.

In South Australia, a number of successful programs to combat violence are in place or being rolled out. Minister for the Status of Women Gail Gago said it is vitally important that a nationwide commitment is made to address these issues.

"Reducing violence against women is a one of the most significant issues facing our nation and is something all Australian governments are working hard to address. It is all the more confronting because despite our best efforts, and the efforts of service providers and the research community, the rates of violence remain the same," she said.

Research over the past seven years shows violence against women remains alarmingly high. The Australian Bureau of Statistics Personal Safety Survey 2012 found one in five (19%) Australian women had been subjected to sexual violence, and one in six (17%) had experienced physical or sexual violence from a current or former partner.

The survey found no reduction in the rates of women who reported partner violence between the 2005 ABS Personal Safety Survey and that undertaken in 2012, despite numerous programs and initiatives aimed at addressing the issue.

In South Australia in 2012, around 40,000 women – or 5.5 per cent of South Australian women – experienced physical or sexual violence in the previous 12 months, according to the survey.

Today's launch also marked the announcement of the *National Research Agenda to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children*, addressing the four key areas of experience and impacts of violence against women, gender inequality and prevention, effectiveness of service responses and interventions, and the impact of systems (see below for summary). The National Research Agenda was produced by ANROWS on behalf of the Australian governments to develop a cohesive and comprehensive national evidence base to support the National Plan.

ANROWS will undertake a program of research under the National Research Agenda, with the ANROWS Research Priorities for 2014-15 also announced at today's launch. ANROWS will work with governments and non-government agencies, researchers, and practitioners to undertake high quality research that aims to influence policy, service provision and professional practice. Applications are now open for ANROWS research grants in priority areas.

"It is clear that we need to understand what policies and practices work, so the actions we take to reduce violence against women are effective. The South Australian government has provided funding for this new organisation to ensure there is co-ordinated approach to building a strong evidence base for how we respond in the future," Ms Gago said.

Ms Gago said that the organisation will focus on research that is tailored to communities at a state level.

"Comprehensive state-specific research is essential in the effort to reduce violence against women. In South Australia there we have a diversity of cultures and lifestyles and it is important we understand what policies and services best address the needs of these different groups of women," Ms Gago said.

The South Australian government is investing \$112,500 annually as a part of the total contribution from all governments of \$3 million per annum over three years to enable the organisation to begin its own research projects and provide funding for other researchers. The Commonwealth has also invested an additional \$1 million per annum over 3 years to support specific research on interventions with perpetrators of violence against women. The investment in ANROWS is a part of the \$170 million National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children.

ANROWS Director for South Australia Joslene Mazel said the launch of the organisation marks a turning point in how we respond to reducing violence against women.

"ANROWS is the first of its kind in Australia and will deliver research that addresses issues at a national and state level, ensuring responses to domestic violence are relevant to the local setting," Ms Mazel said.

"The organisation will combine the capabilities and views of the many groups involved in working to reduce violence against women, ensuring the body of research produced is comprehensive and relevant."

More information about the National Research Agenda, grant applications and ANROWS' research priorities is available at anrows.org.au.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

National Research Agenda – Key themes

The National Research Agenda will inform the development of ANROWS’s Research Program and provide a framework for, and guidance on, priority areas of research and research themes for academics, researchers, organisations and governments across Australia. More information is available at anrows.org.au

Strategic Research Theme	Area of research
Experience and impacts	Prevalence and incidence of violence against women <i>e.g. Prevalence and incidence in various sub-populations</i>
	Disclosure and reporting <i>e.g. Factors that facilitate and impede disclosure; barriers to reporting to social networks, health and social services</i>
	Intersections: context, vulnerability and risk <i>e.g. Intersections such as alcohol consumption and abuse, drug use, trauma, post-traumatic stress and health issues</i>

	<p>Building bridges: co-occurrence and re-victimisation <i>e.g. Prevalence and incidence of co-occurrence</i></p>
	<p>Experiences, effects and impacts <i>e.g. Rural and remote women, Indigenous women, and women with disability; intergenerational impact; economic costs</i></p>
Gender inequality and primary prevention	<p>Gendered nature of violence against women <i>e.g. Links with gender inequality; gender roles, stereotype and myths; objectification of women and girls</i></p>
	<p>Social determinants of violence against women <i>e.g. Intersection with social inequality; poverty; unequal access to resources; discrimination; culture.</i></p>
	<p>Design, evaluation and monitoring of primary prevention programs <i>e.g. Efficacy and outcomes of primary prevention; links between community attitudes and behaviours</i></p>
Service responses and interventions	<p>Service responses to women and their children <i>e.g. Effectiveness of current service delivery models; cultural appropriateness; specialist compared to mainstream services</i></p>
	<p>Characteristics of men who use violence <i>e.g. Identifying characteristics of those at risk of perpetrating; undetected men who use violence; adolescent violence</i></p>
	<p>Interventions targeting men who use violence <i>e.g. Standardised treatment models and efficacy of programs across jurisdictions; court-mandated programs</i></p>
Systems	<p>Criminal justice and legal systems <i>e.g. Law reform and legal responses to domestic and family violence; restorative justice in Indigenous communities</i></p>
	<p>Pathways, intersections and integrated responses <i>e.g. Integrated service models and collaborative approaches, especially in child protection, health and legal/justice systems</i></p>
	<p>Government policy <i>e.g. Violence against women policy; community education campaigns; economic analyses of policy and programs</i></p>