

ANROWS

AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL RESEARCH
ORGANISATION FOR WOMEN'S SAFETY
to Reduce Violence against Women & their Children

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, and by representatives from the services sector, women's organisations and researchers.

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.

The Victorian government is investing \$371,700 a year, 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 delivers on a key commitment under the \$170 million *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022*.

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.

ANROWS Chair Emeritus Professor Anne Edwards said there is a need to bring a uniform, coordinated and national approach to the issue.

“Violence against women is one of the most significant issues facing our community, and is all the more confronting because we have seen little change in the rates of violence against women, despite the best efforts of governments, service providers and the research community.

“To tackle this issue we need a coordinated approach to build a strong evidence base for what policies and practices will be most effective for reducing violence against women,” Professor Edwards said.

ANROWS CEO, Heather Nancarrow, said that recognition of diversity across the Australian community, was essential in the work of ANROWS.

“We are aware of the cultural, geographic and other diversity across the states and territories and the need to understand the variety of circumstances facing different groups of women so that services are attuned to these various circumstances. We also know that there are many people working in innovative ways to support victims and intervene with perpetrators and we want to engage them in the process of building evidence to guide policy and future practice,” Ms Nancarrow said.

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. Applications are now open for ANROWS research grants in priority areas.

Professor Edwards said the creation of this research organisation marks a turning point in how we respond to reducing violence against women.

“The organisation is unique in Australia as it aims to combine the capabilities and views of the many groups involved in working to reduce violence against women and their children across the country, ensuring a comprehensive and relevant body of research is undertaken. It will have a significant national and international leadership role in research on violence against women,” Professor Edwards said.

ANROWS Independent Director, and Executive Director for the Court Network, Dr Melanie Heenan said the organisation will be welcomed by advocates in community services and government agencies in Victoria.

“After some 20 years working in research, policy and practice in the area of violence against women in Victoria, I was ecstatic when I learnt an organisation dedicated to providing comprehensive research into the issue would be established.

“This is something the sector has been crying out for as we look to how we can better serve victims and shift attitudes to prevent violence from happening in the first place,” Dr Heenan said.

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' 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> |
| | Building bridges: co-occurrence and re-victimisation <i>e.g. Prevalence and incidence of co-occurrence</i> |
| | Experiences, effects and impacts <i>e.g. Rural and remote women, Indigenous women, and women with disability; intergenerational impact; economic costs</i> |
| Gender inequality and primary prevention | Gendered nature of violence against women <i>e.g. Links with gender inequality; gender roles, stereotype and myths; objectification of women and girls</i> |
| | Social determinants of violence against women <i>e.g. Intersection with social inequality; poverty; unequal access to resources; discrimination; culture.</i> |
| | Design, evaluation and monitoring of primary prevention programs <i>e.g. Efficacy and outcomes of primary prevention; links between community attitudes and behaviours</i> |

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| Service responses and interventions | Service responses to women and their children <i>e.g. Effectiveness of current service delivery models; cultural appropriateness; specialist compared to mainstream services</i> |
| | 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> |
| | Interventions targeting men who use violence <i>e.g. Standardised treatment models and efficacy of programs across jurisdictions; court-mandated programs</i> |
| Systems | Criminal justice and legal systems <i>e.g. Law reform and legal responses to domestic and family violence; restorative justice in Indigenous communities</i> |
| | Pathways, intersections and integrated responses <i>e.g. Integrated service models and collaborative approaches, especially in child protection, health and legal/justice systems</i> |
| | Government policy <i>e.g. Violence against women policy; community education campaigns; economic analyses of policy and programs</i> |