

Media Release

Friday 16 May 2014

Western Australia supports launch of national research body aimed at improving women's safety

A national research organisation funded by the Western Australian Government, in partnership with the Commonwealth and other 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) 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.

Western Australian Minister for Mental Health, Disability Services and Child Protection, The Hon. Helen Morton MLC, today said a national response to addressing violence against women is critical.

"Family and domestic violence is an insidious and often invisible social problem which cuts across social, economic and demographic boundaries and profoundly effects women and children in our community. I believe a comprehensive, shared response across state and Commonwealth government departments, community sector agencies in partnership with our community is needed to reduce the incidence of family and domestic violence in our state and across the country.

"That is why the Western Australian Government is proud to be contributing to this national research body that will provide valuable and locally tailored insights into this tragic issue," Minister Morton 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 Western Australia there has been an increase in reporting, charges and police orders relating to family and domestic violence over the past five years, with a 42.8% increase in incidents reported to WA Police. The increase in reporting most likely reflects significant progress in raising community awareness and

engagement, and implementing effective integrated responses holding perpetrator accountable for their violence.

The brutality of violence committed against women is demonstrated by the figures from the WA Department of Health which show that in 2011-12, four out of every five (84%) assault victims hospitalised by an intimate partner were female.

“Although we are always striving to improve our work, the figures show there is still so much more to be done.

“Our focus must remain on providing a safe place to live for all members of our community and it is only when we work toward a shared vision, to change our culture and move towards a life without violence, that we will truly succeed in eliminating family and domestic violence. This is why the Western Australian Government has invested \$150,600 in 2013-14, towards the future safety of all women and children in Australia,” Minister Morton said.

The Western Australian Government is investing \$150,600 this year and has committed to three years of funding, 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 three 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, established in 2013, was officially launched today 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.

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

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.

The ANROWS Research Priorities for 2014-15, under the National Research Agenda, were also announced at today’s launch. Applications are now open for ANROWS research grants in priority areas.

ANROWS Independent Director, and Co-Chairperson of the Australian Indigenous Psychologists Association Steering Committee, Victoria Hovane said the organisation will bring a unique approach to research into violence against women.

“The organisation will significantly impact what we know about violence against women by conducting research that takes into account the diversity of cultures and lifestyles in Australia.

“What I’ve learnt from my involvement in the sector in Western Australia, and particularly from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, is that there is a pressing need for research that not only informs our understanding of this diversity, but also how these research outcomes can then be translated into practical advice for policy and practice in diverse settings,” Ms Hovane 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’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</i>

	<i>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>

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>