

ANROWS

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

ANROWS launch speech Chair, Emeritus Professor Anne Edwards AO

Minister Andrews, Minister Cash,
Minister Burch, Minister Gago,
Minister Goward and all other guests,
on behalf of Australia's National
Research Organisation for Women's
Safety – ANROWS – I have to say this
is a day we have looked forward to
and planned for since we were created
last year as the National Centre of
Excellence to Reduce Violence against
Women and their Children, and I am



delighted with our new name. We are here because the governments of Australia decided in 2011 to take on the challenge of violence against women and to launch and fund a national plan which would include a research centre dedicated to the advancement of knowledge about all types and aspects of violence against women and their children, and about how best to prevent domestic, family and sexual violence and to protect and support those who have experienced or are at risk of experiencing such violence.

We owe our existence to the commitment of all political parties and all governments in Australia to make a concerted effort to address this major threat to women's personal safety and to family and community life. Today we have our two Federal Ministers present and ministers from states and territories, as well as representatives from all governments, from the services sectors, from the research community and other interested parties. ANROWS is represented here by our Board directors and our staff, and you will hear shortly from our CEO Heather Nancarrow. We also have the chair, Libby Lloyd, and other members of the National Council to reduce violence against women and their children, the body which originally proposed having a National Plan.

Australia can rightly claim to be an international leader in having this National Plan and in setting up a dedicated national research centre. ANROWS intends to fully meet the expectations of our funders and supporters and we have adopted a strategic plan which describes how we will achieve the objectives we have been set. We are now moving into the active phase of operation. We have reached the stage when we can announce our first set of research priorities and invite applications for research funding. This follows an extensive process of consultations last year which led to the development of the National Research Agenda, which provides a comprehensive map of research for the next few years, and from this has been made a selection of research projects that would constitute our first funding round in 2014.

Through this process, four broad areas, described as Strategic Research Themes, were identified which capture the breadth of scope of the research that is needed. These are: experience and impacts of violence; gender inequality, social determinants and primary prevention; service responses and interventions; and the roles of different systems and their interactions. This categorisation of areas of research is used as the structure for the National Research Agenda and as a guide in selecting the priorities for ANROWS' own research program, to which was added a fifth theme, research on knowledge translation and exchange, which for ANROWS is a functional area of equal importance to knowledge production.

There are twenty-four projects in this initial funding round, which are described in the supporting material and on the web-site. They are spread across the five thematic areas. They include projects on the experience of particular population groups about whom we have limited knowledge, such as recent refugees, rural and remote communities, and women with disability, or where alcohol and drugs are involved ; projects with a focus on the particular circumstances and cultures of Indigenous communities which affect the incidence and impact of violence and appropriate strategies of prevention and intervention; the comparison of different methods of intervention into domestic violence and evaluation of their relative effectiveness in protecting and supporting women and their children; evaluation of different approaches to perpetrator behaviour change; investigation of innovative models of inter-agency collaboration and their effectiveness. We recognise there are differences as well as similarities between domestic and family violence, and sexual assault and sexual violence. There are projects which focus on one or other of these major forms of violence and others which explore the common features and underlying social determinants with a view to developing preventative strategies.

Some are large-scale multi-jurisdictional projects which will be designed and conducted by a combination of government agencies, services and researchers with overall supervision and coordination provided by ANROWS; a small number will be undertaken in partnership with other organisations or commissioned from experts; and the others, the majority will be allocated through an open competitive application process.

I have only been able to give a brief overview of how ANROWS has approached the task of developing its research program and of the type of research projects that will be funded in our first round. Full details are available on the ANROWS web-site. It is a very exciting time for us and we know our government funders, the service sector, researchers and all those concerned about this major social problem will be following with interest how this research program develops, and more importantly, what we can all learn from the results of that research that will substantially improve our capability in Australia to reduce violence against women and their children, and to create a safer and better society for all.