



Australia's National Research Agenda to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children: ANRA 2020–2022

ANROWS

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

ANROWS acknowledgement

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Acknowledgement of Country

ANROWS acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land across Australia on which we work and live. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past, present, and future, and we value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures, and knowledge. We are committed to standing and working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, honouring the truths set out in the [Warawarni-gu Guma Statement](#).

Acknowledgement of lived experiences of violence

It is also important to acknowledge the lives and experiences of the women and children affected by domestic, family and sexual violence and neglect who are represented in this report. It is important to recognise the individual stories of courage, hope and resilience that form the basis of ANROWS research.

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Introduction

ANROWS was established under the [National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022](#) (the National Plan) to lead national efforts to build the evidence base on domestic and family violence and sexual assault to inform policy development and service delivery responses.

In this context, ANROWS has produced *Australia's National Research Agenda to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children* (ANRA) on behalf of its funders and primary stakeholders, the Australian Government and the state and territory governments of Australia.

ANRA provides a framework for, and guidance on, priority areas of research and research topics for academics, researchers, research funding bodies and governments across Australia. Its aim is to encourage the production of evidence needed for national policy and practice design in preventing and responding to violence against women (VAW), regardless of the source of funding for the research.

The 2020–2022 ANROWS Core Grant Research Program will produce evidence to support policy and practice design responding to the needs of children and young people, with a focus on children and young people in marginalised populations. The ANROWS Core Grant Research Program, to be announced in early February 2021 following a competitive grants round, will address priority topics identified in ANRA below.

Development method

An initial five-stage process was used to develop ANRA. Methods used for each stage are provided in detail in Appendix A and summarised below.

1. Review of the national and international literature to map evidence gaps

Literature was systematically reviewed to identify key research gaps and directions for future research. This stage included a review of international systematic reviews published between 2015 and 2020 in relation to “what works” to reduce or respond to VAW, ANROWS research reports published between 2015 and 2020 (Australian-focused), and research reports produced by other Australian research institutions.

2. Targeted discussion with policy developers

Targeted discussions were held with senior officials who have responsibilities related to the implementation of the National Plan in the Australian Government and each of the state and territory governments. National Plan Senior Officials (NPSOs) were asked to identify key research priorities for their respective jurisdictions.

3. Survey of subject matter experts, practice leaders and service designers

A short survey was administered to capture research gaps identified by experts in the VAW field. In total, 288 experts completed the survey.

4. Feedback from policy developers

Findings from Phases 1, 2 and 3 were synthesised and provided the basis for an initial list of research priorities. A subsequent survey asked policy developers to select their priorities (with no limit on the number selected) and to provide a rationale for their selection.

5. Feedback on the draft ANRA report

NPSOs, peak bodies and key research organisations provided feedback on the draft ANRA.

This process resulted in five research themes, incorporating 25 research areas and nearly 200 research topics (see Appendix B for details). Drawing on its expertise and knowledge of the national policy landscape, ANROWS distilled the comprehensive list of potential areas of investigation into ANRA. While doing so, precedence was given to research areas that could advance prevention and response initiatives at a systemic level in key areas, nationally. Subject to the production of a robust evidence base, this approach is expected to yield a significant positive impact on preventing and responding to VAW and their children.

ANRA context and principles

Context

Violence against women and its impacts on their children is a major national concern. Violence against women is the subject of the current [National Plan](#), delivered through a series of four 3-year action plans. In March 2020 the Council of Australian Governments made a commitment to a further National Plan. The new National Plan will be informed by the 2020 House Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs' inquiry into family, domestic and sexual violence, followed by targeted consultation.

Due to the nature and impacts of VAW and their children, policy in this area intersects with other significant national policy considerations in areas such as health ([National Women's Health Strategy 2020–2030](#)), housing ([National Housing and Homelessness Agreement](#)), disability ([National Disability Strategy](#)), and overcoming inequality experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people ([National Agreement on Closing the Gap](#)). Further, there has been an increased focus on safety for women “at work, while studying, in public, and online” (see p. 6 of the [Fourth Action Plan of the National Plan](#), as well as [Respect@Work: Sexual Harassment National Inquiry Report \[2020\]](#) and [eSafety Commission](#)), and safety at home. A recurring theme in the current VAW literature is the critical importance of integration and co-ordination across systems to increase effectiveness of support and reduce “systems abuse” by perpetrators of domestic and family violence.

Effective integration or co-ordination of systems responding to VAW and their children requires an evidence base that captures the complexity of the phenomenon to inform relevant policy and practice design. The complexity of VAW is in the various forms it takes; the motivations of the perpetrator of violence; the multiple impacts on victims/survivors, their children and others; and the various social, cultural and socio-economic contexts in which VAW occurs.

Principles

Overarching intersectional framework

The ANRA framework is grounded in the diverse lived experiences of women and their children. The experiences of many women and children are located at the intersections of multiple structural inequalities or disadvantage related to, for example, gender, cultural identity, sexuality, socio-economic status, disability, age and geographic location. Responsiveness to intersectionality in policy and practice design requires an evidence base that represents this complexity. Therefore, policy-relevant research requires an intersectional lens for the investigation of any topic relevant to preventing or responding to violence against women and their children. At the same time, diversity within any population must be recognised and respected: stereotyping people within marginalised populations must be avoided.

Inclusion

Centring the perspectives of victims/survivors in building the evidence base will enable the development of policy and practice design sensitive to their needs. Although the experiences of specific cohorts and communities of interest in research are not universal, perspectives from within the relevant cohorts and communities should be included in research design, implementation and dissemination. This includes the use of measures developed by those who are the subject of research to capture what is important to them in building evidence for the development of strategies to address their needs.

Practicable and outcomes-oriented

ANRA aims to encourage research focused on policy and practice design aimed at reducing VAW and achieving improved outcomes for victims/survivors and their children. It emphasises that research should contribute to the evidence base to inform future systems reform, policies and programs; and shape models of service and support for women and their children and effective interventions for perpetrators of domestic, family and sexual violence. Research should be informed by as well as inform theoretical development.

A wide range of research types and methods are appropriate for the development of an evidence base for change. Without being too prescriptive and limiting the scope for research innovation, ANRA supports the use of:

- applied research
- action research
- effectiveness evaluations, including realist evaluation
- process evaluations
- economic evaluations
- large-scale surveys
- mixed method studies
- analysis of administrative data and data linkage
- activities that contribute to data development/accessibility
- longitudinal studies.

Structure and maintenance

Structure

ANRA presents two major categories of priorities: data development and priority topics for research. These should be read in conjunction with the context and principles above. The priority topics are derived from extensive consultation (see Appendix A) and selected on the basis of current policy priorities that intersect with VAW policy. Research currently underway (whether ANROWS research or not) is presented under relevant topic areas in

Appendix B. This category within Appendix B will be updated as projects are completed and new projects commence, meaning that ANRA will evolve along with the evidence base. Appendix C lists acronyms, abbreviations and key terms used in ANRA. A numbered referencing system is used for brevity (i.e. numbers appearing at the end of each research topic relate to the relevant literature which is listed in order of appearance in ANRA, rather than alphabetically).

Maintenance of ANRA

ANROWS will maintain a “[Register of Active Research](#)” (RAR) on its website as a centralised record of current research in priority areas and, thus, progress on implementing ANRA. This will be an important resource for researchers who are considering projects and seeking research funding, and for research funders when assessing grant applications. The success of the RAR is dependent, however, on researchers entering details of their project in it. To support the maintenance of the RAR, ANROWS will continuously promote ANRA and the RAR to its stakeholders through various channels, including ANROWS’s [Notepad](#).

ANRA research priorities 2020–2022

Data development, availability and transparency

Monitoring progress towards the goals of the National Plan is supported by two periodic national surveys: the Personal Safety Survey, led by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, and the National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS), led by ANROWS. Data for the next wave of the NCAS will be collected in 2021 to measure change over time (since 2009) in Australians' knowledge about and attitudes towards VAW.

There are various other national surveys that also collect data relevant to interpersonal violence though that is not their primary purpose (e.g. the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey). There are, however, significant data gaps in relation to prevalence and impacts of domestic, family and sexual violence for diverse groups of women.¹ Data enhancement is needed for effective monitoring of initiatives aimed at addressing VAW in these diverse settings. For example, a reduction in the number of women and children subjected to violence and abuse is a specific target for the [Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap 2019–2029](#), yet there is currently no data available on the rate of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in Australia as a benchmark for progress in this regard. The absence of prevalence data is also true for other cohorts.¹

In the absence of prevalence data, measures such as rates of hospitalisation due to domestic and family violence are used to indicate the rate of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, for example, compared to other women. Administrative data is a potentially valuable resource for understanding the role of systems (e.g. health, legal, housing) in responding to VAW and how these systems can be enhanced and better integrated to safeguard women and their children. Data mapping is required, however, to understand the availability of current nationally comparative administrative data in key areas, such as health, law and justice, and child protection, to undertake research and to identify opportunities to establish minimum data sets. This would complement the Australian Government's proposed [legislation](#) on access to public data and an associated accreditation framework enabling public sector data to be safely shared for research and policy development. This is the subject of a [Discussion Paper](#) released by the Office of the National Data Commissioner and currently open (closing 6 November 2020) for submissions.

Priority topics

1. Children and young people

Priority research gaps

There is a need to investigate:

- the experience of children and young people's exposure to domestic and family violence (DFV)

- the short- and long-term physical, emotional and psychological impacts of DFV on children and young people
- adolescent violence and harmful sexual behaviours, with a focus on how various social, cultural and socio-economic contexts mediate children's and young people's exposure to and use of violence and harmful sexual behaviours
- how services and systems can respond more directly to the needs of children and young people to mitigate against the risks associated with exposure to DFV
- effective responses to young people's use of violence and harmful sexual behaviours.

Why action is needed

The impact of DFV on children and young people is increasingly recognised as an issue of great concern, with long-term negative impacts including elevated risk of victimisation and perpetration of domestic, family and sexual violence in adulthood.^{2,3} The Personal Safety Survey found, in 2014–15, that nearly 2.1 million women and men were estimated to have witnessed violence towards their mother by a partner before the age of 15.^{4,5} This data further shows that around half of women who experienced DFV had children in their care when the violence occurred, with over half of these stating that the children had seen and heard the violence.⁵ Despite its prevalence, this continues to be a well-recognised research gap.⁶⁻¹¹ To develop tailored services that are age-appropriate,² there is an urgent need to investigate the nature, experience and impacts of childhood exposure to DFV.⁶⁻¹¹

Topics for specific focus

- What are the prevalence and experiences of children and young people exposed to DFV in marginalised populations?
- What are the short- and long-term physical, emotional and psychological impacts of DFV on children and young people?
- What are the protective factors that support prevention and harm minimisation, in relation to both perpetration of and exposure to violence?
- What are the support and service needs of children and young people who are exposed to DFV, with consideration given to the service needs of children of different ages?
- What is the effectiveness and appropriateness of service responses for children and young people exposed to DFV?
- What are the experiences and service needs of children and young people exposed to DFV in out-of-home care and the juvenile justice system?
- How can service systems best work together to identify, prevent and mitigate the adverse effects of childhood exposure to DFV?
- What works to prevent or minimise the intergenerational transmission of violence?
- What is the prevalence and nature of adolescent family violence?

- What are the drivers of, and situational factors that contribute to, adolescent family violence?
- What is the prevalence and nature of adolescent intimate partner violence (IPV)?
- What are the drivers of harmful sexual behaviours among young people, with consideration given to the role of alcohol and other drugs, mental health problems and disability?
- What is the prevalence and nature of harmful sexual behaviours, including sibling sexual harm, with a focus on the experience of marginalised groups?
- What is the relationship between adolescent violence and perpetration and victimisation in adulthood?
- What works in responding to young people who perpetrate family violence and supporting their victims/survivors?
- What works in responding to young people who perpetrate IPV and supporting their victims/survivors?
- What works in responding to young people who exhibit harmful sexual behaviours and supporting their victims/survivors?

2. Understanding the intersecting drivers of violence against women

Priority research gaps

There is an urgent need to investigate the roles of coercive control (a course of conduct involving physical and/or non-physical tactics of abuse to dominate and control the life of another person) and abuse (physical and non-physical abuse that does not involve coercive control) in DFV, and how each of these types of violence intersect with factors such as economic status, mental health, emotional wellbeing, drug and alcohol use, and intergenerational and complex trauma.

There is also a need to investigate how forms of structural discrimination and disadvantage, and power and privilege intersect to influence experiences as well as patterns of perpetration of VAW across the diverse Australian population.

Why action is needed

International research consistently demonstrates that gender inequality is the primary driver of VAW,¹²⁻¹⁴ while the role of intersecting drivers are not so well understood, specifically in regard to coercive control and “fights”.^{15,16} Moreover, the role of intersecting drivers of VAW in regard to coercive control and fights is critically important to inform the development of appropriate and effective primary prevention, early intervention, men’s behaviour change programs and legal responses.¹⁷⁻¹⁹ The role of structural inequality associated with gender, race, class and other factors—including economic status, mental health, emotional wellbeing, and drug and alcohol use—remains poorly understood.^{20,21} In addition, there is a need to better understand the link between violence and particular notions of masculinity to develop effective prevention initiatives that target both individual

and broader attitudinal change.^{20,22} There is also a need to better understand norms of masculinity and what they mean to men in various cohorts, and how they intersect with structural inequality and disadvantage.²⁰

How forms of structural discrimination and disadvantage, and power and privilege intersect to influence experiences as well as patterns of perpetration of VAW across the diverse Australian population remains poorly understood. There is a dearth of evidence using intersectional approaches to explore VAW in marginalised populations. While we know that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, women from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, women from LGBTIQ communities, women from rural and remote communities, women with disability, older women, socio-economically disadvantaged women, young women, and women in the sex industry are at a higher risk of violence, we know less about how their experiences of multiple forms of discrimination intersect to compound risk and experiences of violence.^{1,4,17,23-30}

Topics for specific focus

- How does coercive control manifest and what are the characteristics of those who perpetrate it?
- How prevalent is reproductive coercion and what are the characteristics of those who perpetrate it? What are the impacts of coerced pregnancy on women subjected to such abuse, and their relationships with children born as a result of coercion? What is the impact on women of coerced pregnancy termination and what therapeutic interventions are required immediately and in the short term to mediate long-term mental health impacts?
- What is the nature and extent of systems abuse by perpetrators of coercive control, and how can systems guard against being exploited by perpetrators of coercive control?
- What mechanisms for system integration need to be improved to support women subjected to violence and their children?
- What is normative Australian masculinity and how does it influence VAW?
- What are Australian men's attitudes in relation to norms and stereotypes of masculinity and what pressure do they feel to adhere to these?
- How do multiple discriminations and structural inequalities, including gender inequality, racial inequality, class, sexuality and disability, intersect to compound victimisation and perpetration?
- What roles do poverty, economic inequality and women's socio-economic insecurity play in women's experiences of violence, including for marginalised groups of women?
- How do the drivers of VAW manifest in the context of natural disasters and pandemics?

3. Sexual violence and harassment

Priority research gaps

There is a need to investigate:

- the occurrence and impact of sexual violence
- the conditions, settings and contexts in which sexual violence³¹ and harassment occur³²
- the behaviours and characteristics of perpetrators³²
- accountability of developers/providers of dating apps that facilitate predatory sexual abuse and harassment
- the experience of sexual assault and harassment against women in marginalised populations.

Why action is needed

To develop tailored primary prevention and early intervention strategies, it is critical to build on existing data and research¹² to better understand the context of sexual harassment, as well as particular risk factors that create an environment in which sexual harassment is more likely to occur.³² To develop tailored sexual violence interventions that meet the needs of victims/survivors in their recovery, it is critical to gain a better understanding of the occurrence and impact of sexual violence.

Topics for specific focus

- What is the nature and prevalence of sexual violence within different settings, such as at home and in workplaces, educational settings and entertainment settings (e.g. sporting events and music festivals)?
- What is the nature and prevalence of sexual harassment within different settings including public places, hospitality and entertainment venues, workplace settings and different industries?
- How can legislation against sexual harassment in the workplace be better understood and enforced?
- What mechanisms can be put in place to guard against the use of technology, such as dating apps and social media, to perpetrate sexual abuse and harassment?
- What are the characteristics and patterns of help-seeking of women who have experienced workplace sexual harassment?
- What are the behaviours, characteristics and trends that can be observed in sexual harassers?

4. What works to prevent violence against women

Priority research gaps

There is a need to investigate:

- the effectiveness of primary prevention programs (stopping violence before it starts) in changing attitudes and behaviours, including long-term changes demonstrated by reductions in sexual violence, sexual harassment and DFV
- conditions required to implement evidence-based primary prevention initiatives, including the barriers and enablers of implementation (e.g. workforce and training needs)
- the effectiveness of specific primary prevention strategies in responding to specific drivers and reinforcing factors of VAW³³
- the effectiveness and appropriateness of various primary prevention strategies for different populations and different forms of violence.

Why action is needed

To reduce rates of VAW, there is a need to develop an evidence base in relation to the effectiveness of primary prevention initiatives to reduce sexual violence, sexual harassment and DFV. Primary prevention is fundamental to reducing VAW and, although it is a substantial emerging area of practice, it currently receives little research attention and there remains a need to establish what works. Few studies evaluate primary prevention strategies, and the body of prevention research is almost entirely qualitative.^{17,18,34} There is a need for both process and effectiveness evaluations to determine what works to reduce or stop VAW, as well as implementation research that provides insight into the appropriateness of interventions, implementation barriers and enablers, and strategies to support scaling up.^{35,36}

Topics for specific focus

- What does the manifestation of drivers of VAW in times of disasters and pandemics mean for primary prevention strategies?
- What is the effectiveness of a specific primary prevention program in changing drivers of VAW, attitudes and behaviours?
- What works to prevent or reduce VAW, and what are the factors associated with successful outcomes?
- Which primary prevention strategies impact on which drivers and reinforcing factors of VAW?
- Which interventions are most successful in which settings, and what are the associated outcomes?
- Which primary prevention strategies are most effective or appropriate for specific populations?
- What are the contextual factors and underlying mechanisms associated with program effectiveness?^{37,38}

- Are gendered or gender-neutral programs most effective?^{39,40}

Specific priority programs for process and effectiveness evaluations include:

- bystander interventions,³⁷⁻⁴² including those administered electronically³⁸
- initiatives that address masculinities and/or engage men and boys in prevention efforts
- primary prevention initiatives (e.g. respectful relationship training) in primary, secondary and tertiary educational settings⁴³⁻⁵¹
- primary prevention initiatives in workplaces, specifically those addressing norms and bystander behaviour in male-dominated workplaces³²
- primary prevention initiatives in sport settings
- primary prevention in faith-based organisations, with a focus on how to engage faith-based leaders to support change
- media campaigns, with a focus on the role of the media in increasing awareness of VAW, and influencing behaviour change
- advocacy, community awareness and education initiatives, with a focus on what works in different contexts and communities, and how to engage men in primary prevention initiatives
- consideration of the evidence in relation to creating protective environments in particular settings (e.g. workplaces, educational institutions, festivals).

5. What works in responding to violence against women

Priority research gaps

There is a need to develop a comprehensive understanding of what works to respond to VAW,^{4,29,52-56} with a focus on integrated care and interagency collaboration. There is a need to establish the effectiveness of service responses, including health, primary care, justice and specialist service responses; police and legal responses; perpetrator intervention programs; and housing and homelessness services, with a specific focus on service integration and the service systems from which interventions are most effectively delivered.

There is a need to establish the effectiveness of system and service responses, as well as to develop an understanding of why and how interventions work, and identify where and when interventions are most effective (including in terms of cost).⁵⁷⁻⁵⁹

Why action is needed

Victims/survivors of VAW often have complex needs that cannot be met by a single service and require an integrated approach.⁶⁰ Yet, the current service structure is fragmented and confusing to victims/survivors whose care is met by multiple agencies and services. To provide a more streamlined and effective response to victims/survivors and perpetrators and to enhance the capacity of services to meet their needs, greater understandings of

the efficacy, efficiency, effectiveness and ethicality of system integration and cross-sector collaborative initiatives in producing positive outcomes are needed.^{61,62}

Developing an understanding of what works is required to inform policy and practice design, and ensure funding allocation is directed to the response models most likely to achieve long-term safety, social and emotional health and wellbeing, and social and economic security. Understanding why and how interventions work is essential to supporting translation or implementation of interventions across different settings. The implementation of evidence into practice is complex and impacted by a wide range of social, cultural and organisational contextual factors and underlying mechanisms that need to be better understood.⁶³⁻⁶⁵

Topics for specific focus

- What works to improve the relationships between specialist services, mainstream child and family support services, disability services, alcohol and other drugs services, and the child protection, health and justice systems, including family law?
- What constitutes good practice and successful outcomes in integrated service models and service collaborations, including, but not limited to, specialist services dealing with child protection, and health and legal/justice systems?
- What supports or hinders the implementation and sustainability of integrated service responses?
- How effective are existing services in terms of reducing the impacts of violence, particularly for marginalised populations, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, women from CALD communities, women from LGBTIQ communities, women in rural and remote communities, women with disability and older women?
- Which models of care that support women and their children in recovery from DFV are most effective in terms of short- and long-term outcomes for women and children, with consideration given to the different settings?
- What is the impact of routine screening in various settings (maternity, mental health, primary care, emergency departments), including unanticipated outcomes?
- How effective is a specific perpetrator intervention in responding to drivers and reinforcing factors of VAW, including physical health, mental health, quality of life, emotional regulation, substance use and socioeconomic outcomes, as well as changing behaviours and reducing reoffending?
- What is the effectiveness of online perpetrator interventions, including consideration of the effectiveness for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and those in rural and remote communities?
- What is the role of intergenerational trauma and recovery approaches in perpetrator programs?
- How effective are current police responses to DFV, with consideration given to

the appropriateness of current practices and the capacity of the police to support victims/survivors?

- How effective are current legal responses to DFV and sexual violence, and what are the limitations and unintended consequences of current responses?
- What is the effectiveness and appropriateness of restorative justice programs, including consideration of the risks and benefits for victims/survivors?
- What are the housing and safety needs of victims/survivors of VAW, and how effective are current housing responses, with a specific focus on older women?
- What economic support and protection is currently available to victims/survivors of DFV, and how effective are such interventions?
- What service responses support victims/survivors of DFV during and after health pandemics and natural disasters?
- What are appropriate and effective legal responses to VAW which is perpetrated in contexts of intergenerational and complex trauma?
- What roles do therapeutic interventions, or restorative justice practices, play in seeking justice for victims/survivors and holding perpetrators accountable?

Conclusion

ANRA 2020-2022 is the result of extensive research and consultation on current gaps in the evidence needed to inform policy and systems-wide practice design to address violence against women and their children in Australia. It addresses five priority areas for further research, and provides guidance on the types of questions still to be answered through robust research capable of driving policy and practice design, nationally. ANRA will be updated biennially.

Complementing ANRA 2020-2022 is the centralised [Register of Active Research](#) (RAR). ANROWS will actively promote ANRA 2020-2022 and the RAR and synthesise and disseminate the evidence produced. If you have relevant research underway, or research that has been recently completed but not yet published, please register it for inclusion on the RAR.

APPENDIX A:

ANRA development method

The development of the research priorities was informed by extensive stakeholder consultations as well as review of the literature, using a multi-method process as summarised below.

Evidence review

To identify research gaps, a review of the national and international literature was conducted.

Specifically, the following literature was systematically reviewed to identify key research gaps and directions for future research:

1. 95 international systematic reviews* published between 2015 and 2020 in relation to “what works” to reduce or respond to VAW
2. 53 reports produced by ANROWS between 2015 and 2020 (Australian-focused)
3. 41 research reports produced by Australian peak bodies in the sector published between 2017 and 2020, including the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS), Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC), Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI), Our Watch, Australian Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Network (ADFVDRN), Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) and the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth).

*To identify relevant systematic reviews we searched the database Scopus between 2015 and 2020 using the following search string.

TITLE-ABS-KEY (“violence against” OR vaw* OR “domestic violence” OR gbv OR “gender violence” OR “gender-based violence” OR femicide OR feminicide OR “partner violence” OR “abuse of” OR “wife abuse” OR “abuse of wives” OR “wife battering” OR “battering of wives” OR “battering of” OR “spouse abuse” OR “family violence” OR “murdering of” OR “homicides of” OR rape OR “sexual violence” OR “sexual abuse” OR “sexual assault” OR “sexual harassment” OR “coerced sex” OR “unwanted sex” OR “unwanted fondling” OR “unwanted touching” OR “intimate partner abuse” OR “intimate partner psychological abuse” OR “intimate partner social abuse” OR “intimate partner verbal abuse” OR “intimate partner control” OR “intimate partner coercion” OR stalking OR “spiritual abuse” OR “technology facilitated abuse” OR “financial abuse” OR “education abuse” OR “health abuse” OR fgm* OR fgc OR “female genital mutilation” OR “sexual exploitation” OR “forced prostitution” OR “sexual slavery” OR “relationship debt” OR “cyberstalking” OR “account take over*” OR “image-based abuse” OR “fake social media” OR “online tracking” OR “online abuse”)

AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (woman OR women OR female OR child OR youth)

AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (review OR meta-analysis OR synthesis)

Consultation process

A consultative process took place with key stakeholders from across Australia, including:

- researchers from diverse disciplines
- practitioners and service designers
- policymakers
- representatives of community groups and peak bodies.

To generate key priorities, the following methods were used:

- a survey of subject matter experts, practice leaders and service designers (n=288)
- targeted one-on-one discussions with the NPSOs from each of the Commonwealth, state and territory governments
- a survey of policymakers to establish key priorities (n=19).

Targeted discussion with policymakers

Targeted discussions with NPSOs were held by video or teleconferencing to identify key research priorities from the perspective of each of the state and territory and Commonwealth governments.

Survey with subject matter experts, practice leaders and service designers, and other ANROWS core stakeholders

A short survey was administered to capture research priorities as determined by experts in the field. The survey was targeted at the following expert groups:

- subject matter experts (academic and non-academic researchers) in the broader field of VAW
- practice leaders and service designers in the VAW sector
- peak bodies and research organisations in the VAW sector
- NPSOs with a request to circulate to their networks
- ANROWS researchers and Board members.

Respondents were asked to self-nominate their area(s) of expertise and then identify specific research gaps and priorities in relation to these areas.

In total, 288 experts working in the VAW field completed the ANRA survey. The majority of the respondents were academic researchers (n=102, 35.5%), followed by practitioners (n=58, 20.2%), service managers and designers (n=51, 17.7%), policymakers (n=42, 14.6%) and non-academic researchers (n=33, 11.5%). Thirty-nine respondents selected “other” (13.5%). As some people selected multiple responses, the total does not add up to 100 percent.

Feedback from policymakers

Findings from Phases 1, 2 and 3 were synthesised and provided the basis for a list of research priorities. A subsequent survey of policymakers asked participants to select

their research priorities. There was no limit to the number of research priorities that policymakers could select. For each selected research priority, respondents were to provide further detail explaining why their selection was a priority.

A survey was sent to:

- NPSOs
- nominated representatives of ANROWS Ltd
- the ANROWS Board
- Australian Human Rights Commission (Office of the Sex Discrimination Commissioner).

A total of 19 responses were received. The majority came from NPSOs (including an ANROWS Board member; n=12), followed by their nominees (n=2), a nominee of ANROWS Ltd (n=1), two who selected “other” and two respondents who were not identified. Responses were received from the Commonwealth government representatives (n=5) and those from the Australian Capital Territory (n=3), New South Wales (n=3), Tasmania (n=2), Western Australia (n=2), the Northern Territory (n=1) and South Australia (n=1). Two responses did not indicate a state/territory.

Data analysis

To identify key research priorities, data from the different sources was analysed separately, using inductive thematic analysis. The findings from the different sources were then compared and contrasted. Qualitative findings showed a high degree of coherence across data sources, and research gaps that were consistent across the data sources were included as key research priorities. Both research priorities that call for primary research and priorities that point towards the need to undertake a systematic review or research synthesis are included.

What is a priority?

Research priorities were developed using a two-phased approach.

In first instance, research gaps were considered a priority if *all three* of the following conditions were met:

1. **research gap identified in the literature**
2. **priority from expert and practitioner perspective**
3. **priority from policymaker perspective**

This process generated five key themes, with a total of 25 priorities, each with a range of sub-priorities totalling nearly 200.

Preliminary research priorities and research underway

1. Understanding victimisation and perpetration, and their impacts

1.1 Understanding the characteristics and dynamics of, and relationship between, different forms of intimate partner violence

To understand different forms of IPV and how they are interrelated	
Priority research gaps	<p>There is a need to investigate the characteristics and dynamics of, and relationship between, different forms of IPV,^{23,24,66-68} including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sexual violence in intimate partner relationships^{23,66} • coercive control and other forms of non-physical violence^{23,24,66-68} • physical violence • reproductive coercion^{69,70} • financial abuse⁶⁸ • dating violence⁵⁰
Why action is needed	<p>To develop tailored interventions and prevention programs it is critical to understand the many forms that IPV takes, and how they are interrelated.^{34,68} There is limited existing evidence about how the different forms of IPV intersect</p>
What researchers might ask	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the dynamics of and relationships between different forms of IPV? • What is the prevalence and nature of sexual violence in intimate partner relationships? • What is the prevalence and nature of non-physical forms of IPV, specifically coercive control? • What is the prevalence and nature of coercive control in the context of separation and post-separation co-parenting? • What is the prevalence and nature of reproductive coercion? • What is the prevalence and nature of financial abuse, as experienced by different groups (e.g. older women)? • What is the prevalence and nature of dating violence experienced by young women, particularly in the context of online dating? • How do perpetrators of violence use systems, such as courts and the legal system, to perpetrate violence? • What are the characteristics of individuals who perpetrate economic abuse against their partners? • What are the characteristics of individuals who perpetrate IPV, and do these characteristics vary depending on the type of abuse perpetrated?

To understand different forms of IPV and how they are interrelated	
How this is best achieved	<p>Priority research gaps can be best addressed through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • large-scale studies to develop national datasets • studies that centre the perspectives of victims/survivors • studies that focus on the characteristics and dynamics of perpetration • studies that incorporate feminist intersectional approaches (intersectionality) as the framework • studies that use measures developed by those being surveyed to capture what is important to them • economic evaluations
Expected outcomes and impact	<p>To inform policy and legislation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to support the identification of risk and protective factors • to inform early intervention initiatives (e.g. early identification, workforce development) • to inform prevention
Current research	<p>ANROWS research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “A life course approach to determining the prevalence and impact of sexual violence in Australia: The Australian Longitudinal Study on Women’s Health”, led by Professor Loxton (Women’s Health Australia), is identifying the prevalence of sexual violence, inside and outside of an intimate relationship across the life course • “Technology-facilitated abuse: Extent, nature and responses in the Australian community”, led by Dr Flynn (Monash University), is identifying the experience of victims and perpetrators of technology-facilitated abuse, inside and outside of an intimate partner relationship • “Compliance with and enforcement of family law parenting orders”, led by Dr Kaspiew (AIFS), is identifying the circumstances of non-compliance with family law parenting orders • “Transforming responses to intimate partner and sexual violence: Listening to the voices of victims, perpetrators and services”, led by Professor Hegarty (University of Melbourne) and Dr Coates (ANROWS), is identifying the experiences and dynamics of perpetration of and victimisation by intimate partner and sexual violence • “Pathways to intimate partner homicide”, led by Dr Bricknell (AIC), is identifying the nature and course of intimate partner homicide in Australia to identify potential intervention points

To understand different forms of IPV and how they are interrelated	
	<p>External research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Religion and domestic violence: Exploring men’s perpetration”, led by Professor Wendt (Flinders University), is analysing the perpetration of spiritual abuse as a form of domestic violence (ARC) • “The non-fatal strangulation offence as a response to domestic violence”, led by Professor Douglas (University of Queensland), is reviewing the application and experience of the non-fatal strangulation offence as a response to domestic violence (ARC) • “Preventing intimate partner homicide”, led by Professor McCulloch (Monash University), is reviewing intimate partner homicides in Australia over the previous 10 years to identify points of intervention that might have prevented killings (ARC) • Personal Safety Survey, led by the ABS, is collecting information from men and women aged 18 years and over about the nature and extent of violence experienced since the age of 15, including IPV, sexual violence, sexual harassment and children’s witnessing of DFV

1.2 Understanding victimisation and perpetration of sexual violence and sexual harassment

To understand sexual violence and harassment	
Priority research gaps	<p>There is a need to investigate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the occurrence and impact of sexual violence • the conditions, settings and contexts in which sexual violence³¹ and harassment³² occur • the behaviours and characteristics of perpetrators³² • the prevalence and experience of sexual assault in marginalised populations such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and CALD communities
Why action is needed	<p>To develop tailored primary prevention and early intervention strategies, it is critical to build on existing data and research¹² to better understand the context of sexual harassment, as well as particular risk factors that create an environment in which sexual harassment is more likely to occur.³² To develop tailored sexual violence interventions that meet the needs of the victims/survivors in their recovery, it is critical to gain a better understanding of the occurrence and impact of sexual violence</p>

To understand sexual violence and harassment	
What researchers might ask	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the nature and prevalence of sexual violence within different settings (home, workplaces, educational settings, sport settings, etc.)? • What is the nature and prevalence of sexual harassment within different settings including public places, hospitality and entertainment venues, workplace settings and different industries? • What are the characteristics and patterns of help-seeking of women who have experienced workplace sexual harassment? • What are the behaviours, characteristics and trends that can be observed in sexual harassers?
How this is best achieved	<p>Priority research gaps can be best addressed through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • studies that centre the perspectives of victims/survivors • studies that focus on the drivers and dynamics of perpetration and the characteristics of perpetrators • large-scale quantitative studies to provide national data • studies focused on industries with high prevalence of sexual harassment • national data to compare men’s experiences of sexual violence (from women) with women’s experiences of sexual violence (from men and women) • economic evaluations • studies that incorporate feminist intersectional approaches (intersectionality) as the framework
Expected outcomes and impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To inform policy and legislation • to inform early intervention • to inform primary prevention
Current research	<p>ANROWS research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “A life course approach to determining the prevalence and impact of sexual violence in Australia: The Australian Longitudinal Study on Women’s Health”, led by Professor Loxton (Women’s Health Australia), is identifying the prevalence of sexual violence across the life course, including risk factors, impacts and factors that assist in recovery

To understand sexual violence and harassment	
Current research	<p>External research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Web-based help-seeking for intimate partner sexual violence”, led by Dr Tarzia (University of Melbourne), is developing an understanding of women’s experiences of sexual violence perpetrated by an intimate partner, identifying their help-seeking needs, and exploring the use of the internet as a means of support (ARC) • “Achieving justice in response to street and public sexual harassment”, led by Dr Fileborn (University of New South Wales), is delivering insights into what street harassment victims require to achieve justice, and providing an evidence base to inform the development of formal and informal justice responses (ARC) • “Eliminating sexual violence within the military”, led by Professor MacKenzie (University of Sydney), is addressing how we can better understand and reduce military sexual violence through a comparative analysis of rates, responses and reporting (ARC) • Personal Safety Survey, led by the ABS, is collecting information from men and women aged 18 years and over about the nature and extent of violence experienced since the age of 15, including IPV, sexual violence, sexual harassment and children’s witnessing of DFV • “Sexual Violence Research”, led by AIFS, is exploring issues related to sexual violence, such as child sexual abuse, child and adolescent problem sexual behaviours, adult sexual assault, prevention of sexual violence, perpetration and sexual offending

1.3 Understanding victimisation and perpetration of technology-facilitated abuse

To understand technology-facilitated abuse	
Priority research gaps	<p>There is a need to investigate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the prevalence and nature of technology-facilitated abuse (TFA), and its interrelationship with other forms of violence • the drivers of TFA • the use and experience of TFA by marginalised populations • the use of TFA through dating apps • the impact of TFA • what works to reduce or prevent TFA
Why action is needed	<p>TFA is an emerging form of VAW that is not well understood.^{32,71-73} Understanding the nature, prevalence, impacts and outcomes of TFA is required to develop primary prevention strategies and responses that empower women to use technology safely.^{20,32,72,73} There is a specific need to understand TFA experienced by marginalised communities^{25,71,74}</p>

To understand technology-facilitated abuse	
What researchers might ask	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the prevalence and nature of TFA, with specific consideration of the experiences of marginalised populations? • How is TFA related to other forms of VAW? • What is the relationship between TFA and dating apps? • What are the short- and long-term impacts of TFA? • What works to reduce or prevent TFA?
How this is best achieved	<p>Priority research gaps can be best addressed through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • studies that centre the perspectives of victims/survivors • studies that focus on the drivers and dynamics of perpetration and the characteristics of perpetrators • review studies that bring together existing evidence • large-scale studies to develop national datasets • longitudinal studies • effectiveness evaluations of interventions that seek to reduce TFA or respond to the impacts • economic evaluations
Expected outcomes and impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To inform legislation and policy • to inform primary prevention • to inform early intervention • to inform service responses to reduce the impact of TFA
Current research	<p>ANROWS research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Technology-facilitated abuse: Extent, nature and responses in the Australian community”, led by Dr Flynn (Monash University), is identifying the experience of victims and perpetrators of TFA, inside and outside of an intimate partner relationship • “Transforming responses to intimate partner and sexual violence: Listening to the voices of victims, perpetrators and services”, led by Professor Hegarty (University of Melbourne) and Dr Coates (ANROWS), is identifying the experience of perpetrators and victims of abuse, including TFA

To understand technology-facilitated abuse

External research:

- [“Detecting, preventing and responding to image-based abuse”](#), led by Associate Professor Henry (RMIT), is investigating the efficacy of digital tools and interventions to detect, prevent and respond to image-based abuse (ARC)
- [“Building state responses to technology-facilitated domestic violence”](#), led by Dr Harris (Queensland University of Technology), is assessing existing government responses to and regulation of technology-facilitated domestic violence to safeguard and empower victims/survivors (ARC)
- [“Safety, risk and wellbeing on digital dating apps”](#), led by Professor Albury (Swinburne University of Technology), is building evidence on the current role of digital dating apps in users’ negotiations of consent, condom use, contraception, and other aspects of sexual health and wellbeing (ARC)
- [“Precarious accounts: Money, sex and power in the industrial revolution”](#), led by Associate Professor Barclay (University of Adelaide), is providing a historical perspective on contemporary debates around the uses of self-tracking technologies and sexual exploitation (ARC)
- [“Hate speech against women online”](#), led by Dr Richardson-Self (University of Tasmania), is developing new understanding of online gendered hate speech and evaluating legal and extra-legal responses to determine which can be justified and which are most effective to ensure cybersecurity for women (ARC)
- [“The Second National Study of the Use of Technology in Domestic and Family Violence”](#), led by Curtin University and WESNET, is gathering knowledge and experience of the way DFV practitioners see perpetrators using technology in DFV

1.4 Understanding the drivers and reinforcing factors of violence

To understand the drivers and reinforcing factors of violence

Priority research gaps	<p>There is a need to investigate the relationship between the perpetration of violence and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • normative Australian masculinity, including male peer relations, and how dominant forms of masculinity fit into broader structures and systems • privilege/power and intersecting forms of structural inequalities, such as gender, race and class • overlapping factors such as economic status, mental health, emotional wellbeing, drug and alcohol use, relationship difficulties and childhood abuse • global crises and disasters, including fire, floods and pandemics
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There is also a need to better understand:

- the specific drivers associated with various forms of VAW, specifically sexual harassment, with consideration given to the role of masculinities, male (hetero) sexuality and sexual entitlement
- the drivers of VAW in different populations and contexts

Why action is needed	<p>There is a need to develop a better understanding of the drivers of VAW to inform primary prevention, early intervention and perpetrator interventions.¹⁷⁻¹⁹ The role of structural factors, including gender, race, class and other factors—for example economic status, mental health, emotional wellbeing, and drug and alcohol use—remains poorly understood.^{20,21} In addition, there is a need to better understand the link between violence and masculinity to develop effective prevention initiatives that target both individual and broader attitudinal change.^{20,22} There is a need to better understand norms of masculinity and what they mean to different men, and how they intersect with structural inequality and disadvantage²⁰</p>
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What researchers might ask	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the range of factors associated with perpetration of VAW, including violence against women from specific populations? • What are the characteristics of offenders, with consideration given to the role of masculinity and gender inequality? • What is the relationship between exposure to childhood violence and adult perpetration? • What is the relationship between masculinities, patriarchy and VAW, including in specific contexts such as the workplace? • In what way does normative Australian masculinity influence VAW? • What are Australian men's attitudes in relation to norms and stereotypes of masculinity and what pressure do they feel to adhere to these? • What is the role of male peer relationships in driving VAW? • What are the specific drivers of sexual harassment, and how are these similar to and different from drivers of other forms of VAW? • How do the drivers of VAW manifest in the context of disasters and pandemics, and what does this mean for primary prevention?
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To understand the drivers and reinforcing factors of violence	
How this is best achieved	<p>Priority research gaps can be best addressed through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • large-scale national studies to establish correlation between perpetration and drivers of violence • national studies to identify what violence respondents have perpetrated • studies that measure men’s relationships to the norms and stereotypes of masculinity ⁷⁵ • whole-of-population studies that measure masculinities across the lifespan and across a range of settings and contexts • longitudinal studies that measure the relationship between drivers and perpetration over time • studies that incorporate feminist intersectional approaches (intersectionality) as the framework • economic evaluations
Expected outcomes and impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To inform policy and legislation • to inform primary prevention • to inform early intervention, including early identification of risk • to inform responses to violence, specifically perpetrator intervention programs
Current research	<p>ANROWS research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Transforming responses to intimate partner and sexual violence: Listening to the voices of victims, perpetrators and services”, led by Professor Hegarty (University of Melbourne) and Dr Coates (ANROWS), is identifying patterns of abuse and violence over the lifetime of perpetrators

1.5 Understanding social norms and attitudes towards violence against women

To understand social norms and attitudes towards violence against women	
Priority research gaps	<p>There is a need to better understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social norms and attitudes towards VAW • the factors associated with attitudes towards VAW • how social norms are connected to patriarchal gender relations and perpetuate VAW • experiences of violence or abuse from behaviour which is considered “normal” in some cultures • resistance to engagement in gender equality efforts, including resistance from men and women as well as organisational and institutional forms of resistance
Why action is needed	<p>To inform primary prevention, there is a need to gain a better understanding of social norms and attitudes^{42,76} and the factors associated with different attitudes.⁷⁶ There is also a need to better understand the causes of men’s active resistance to gender equality efforts^{20,77}</p>
What researchers might ask	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the similarities and differences in women’s and men’s attitudes towards VAW and gender inequality changing? • What are the current factors that underpin attitudes towards VAW, such as sexism and prejudice on the basis of race, ethnicity, disability and sexuality? • What are the causes or factors associated with resistance to gender equality efforts?
How this is best achieved	<p>Priority research gaps can be best addressed through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • additional analyses of large-scale national surveys (e.g. NCAS) • qualitative and mixed method studies to provide a more in-depth and nuanced understanding of change in attitudes and behaviours
Expected outcomes and impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To inform primary prevention initiatives
Current research	<p>ANROWS research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2021 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS), led by ANROWS, is examining the Australian population’s knowledge and attitudes regarding VAW and measuring change over time • “Mistrust study”, led by Dr Coumarelos (ANROWS), is providing further analysis of NCAS and investigating high levels of community mistrust in women’s reports of sexual assault victimisation to develop an understanding of what drives attitudes of mistrust. The study will contribute to debunking myths about sexual assault • “Young People’s Attitudes Study”, led by Dr Coumarelos (ANROWS), is examining young people’s understanding of relationship norms, and how abusive dynamics may be considered part of “normal” relationships, to highlight opportunities for education and primary prevention

To understand social norms and attitudes towards violence against women	
	<p>External research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Far right in Australia: Intellectuals, masculinity and citizenship”, led by Professor Turner (Australian Catholic University), is exploring attitudes and use of transnational far right ideas to “imagine” Australia, yielding insights into how masculinity is actively utilised as a recruitment mechanism into far-right groups (ARC)

1.6 Understanding the multiple forms of victimisation and perpetration across the lifespan

To understand the multiple forms of victimisation and perpetration across the lifespan	
Priority research gaps	<p>There is a need to investigate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • women’s experiences of VAW across the lifespan • patterns and forms of perpetration across the lifespan • the relationship between exposure to childhood violence and adult perpetration and victimisation
Why action is needed	To identify key intervention points, a better understanding of the various forms of multiple victimisation women experience across the lifetime, ^{23,66,67} as well as patterns of perpetration, is critical
What researchers might ask	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the nature of women’s experiences of VAW across the lifespan? • What are the patterns of perpetration across the lifespan? • What is the relationship between exposure to childhood violence and adult victimisation and perpetration?
How this is best achieved	<p>Priority research gaps can be best addressed through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • longitudinal studies • large-scale studies to develop national datasets • studies that use measures developed by those being surveyed to capture what is important to them • review studies that bring together existing evidence • studies that incorporate feminist intersectional approaches (intersectionality) as the framework • economic evaluations
Expected outcomes and impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To inform early intervention by identifying key intervention points • to inform primary prevention
Current research	<p>ANROWS research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “A life course approach to determining the prevalence and impact of sexual violence in Australia: The Australian Longitudinal Study on Women’s Health”, led by Professor Loxton (Women’s Health Australia), is identifying sexual violence experienced in childhood and adulthood and its role as a risk factor for violence at different life stages

To understand the multiple forms of victimisation and perpetration across the lifespan

External research:

- [“Testing an integrative model of interpersonal partner aggression”](#), led by Associate Professor Karantzas (Deakin University), is developing an integrative framework to identify couples most at risk of IPV and guide the development of interventions and policy to reduce IPV (ARC)

1.7 Understanding the short- and long-term impacts of violence against women

To understand the short- and long-term impacts of violence against women

<p>Priority research gaps</p>	<p>There is a need to investigate the short- and long-term impacts of VAW, with a focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the physical and mental health impacts • the impact on alcohol and other drug use • the economic impacts, including impact on employment • the impacts associated with different forms of violence (e.g. impact of coercive control or financial abuse) • the longitudinal and lifelong impacts of VAW • the variables associated with more severe mental health outcomes
<p>Why action is needed</p>	<p>To inform appropriate service responses there is a need to better understand the short- and long-term impacts of VAW,^{4,24,67,78-83} including the impact of VAW on the life-course.^{4,23,24,67} This includes consideration of the impacts of different forms of violence, including sexual harassment,³² as well as the impact on women in the context of discrimination, barriers and inequalities^{23,24}</p>
<p>What researchers might ask</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the long- and short-term impacts associated with different forms of VAW? • What are the health impacts of VAW, and specifically the health burden associated with different forms of violence? • What are the variables associated with more severe outcomes, with consideration given to variables such as relations with perpetrator, duration and repetition of assault events, and impacts of criminal justice processes? • What is the impact of IPV on economic outcomes (e.g. impact on employment, superannuation, retirement, housing) for women? • What is the economic impact of sexual harassment? • What is the relationship between IPV and health outcomes, and what is the role of mediating factors such as engagement in healthcare screening?
<p>How this is best achieved</p>	<p>Priority research gaps can be best addressed through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analysis of national data sets and administrative data, including data linkage • large-scale studies to develop national datasets • longitudinal studies • review studies that bring together existing evidence • economic evaluations

To understand the short- and long-term impacts of violence against women

Expected outcomes and impact

- To inform early intervention
- to inform service responses to reduce the impact of violence

Current research

ANROWS research:

- [“A life course approach to determining the prevalence and impact of sexual violence in Australia: The Australian Longitudinal Study on Women’s Health”](#), led by Professor Loxton (Women’s Health Australia), is identifying the impact of sexual violence on women’s physical and mental health
- [“Transforming responses to intimate partner and sexual violence: Listening to the voices of victims, perpetrators and services”](#), led by Professor Hegarty (University of Melbourne) and Dr Coates (ANROWS), is identifying the impacts of victimisation on women and their children

External research:

- [“Australian Longitudinal Study on Women’s Health \(ALSWH\)”](#), led by Women’s Health Australia, is collecting data on the health impacts of violent behaviour (including but not limited to physical violence, harassment and stalking) or a threat of violent behaviour on women across the life course

2. Children and young people

2.1 Understanding the experiences and service needs of children who are exposed to family violence

2.1.1 Understanding the impact of domestic and family violence on children

To understand the impact of domestic and family violence on children

Priority research gaps

There is a need to investigate:

- the prevalence and experience of children’s exposure to DFV
- the short and long term physical, emotional and psychological impact of DFV on children

Why action is needed

The impact of DFV on children is increasingly recognised as an issue of great concern, with long-term negative impacts. The Personal Safety Survey found in 2014-15 that nearly 2.1 million women and men were estimated to have witnessed violence towards their mother by a partner before the age of 15.^{4,5} Despite its prevalence, this continues to be a well-recognised research gap.⁶⁻¹¹ To develop tailored services that are age-appropriate, there is an urgent need to investigate the nature, experience and impacts of childhood exposure to DFV⁶⁻¹¹

To understand the impact of domestic and family violence on children	
What researchers might ask	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the prevalence and nature of children’s exposure to DFV? • What are the short- and long-term physical, emotional and psychological impacts of DFV on children? • How does exposure to DFV impact on children’s vulnerability to child sexual abuse, within or outside of the family?
How this is best achieved	<p>Priority research gaps can be best addressed through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • studies that centre the perspectives of children exposed to DFV • longitudinal studies • analysis of administrative data, including data linkage • studies that incorporate intersectional approaches as the framework • economic evaluations
Expected outcomes and impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To inform early intervention • to inform service responses
Current research	<p>External research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Australian Child Maltreatment Study (2019-2023)”, led by Professor Mathews (Queensland University of Technology), is studying the prevalence of child maltreatment to inform policy and practice reforms to reduce child abuse and neglect in Australia • Personal Safety Survey, led by the ABS, is collecting information from men and women aged 18 years and over about the nature and extent of violence experienced since the age of 15, including IPV, sexual violence, sexual harassment and children’s witnessing of DFV

2.1.2 Understanding what works to meet the service needs of children impacted by domestic and family violence

To understand what works to meet the service needs of children impacted by domestic and family violence	
Priority research gaps	<p>There is a need to investigate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the support and service needs of children who are exposed to DFV, with consideration given to the service needs of children of different ages • the effectiveness and appropriateness of service responses for children exposed to DFV
Why action is needed	<p>To understand the service experiences and needs of children exposed to DFV, there is a need for process and effectiveness evaluations.^{4,84-90} While it is recognised that childhood exposure to DFV has long-term negative impacts, including increased risk of both perpetration and victimisation,^{66,91,92} how the negative impacts, including the intergenerational transmission of violence, can be prevented or minimised is poorly understood. There is an urgent need to develop and evaluate interventions that reduce the impact of exposure to DFV and ultimately break the pattern of intergenerational violence^{92,93}</p>

To understand what works to meet the service needs of children impacted by domestic and family violence

What researchers might ask	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What works to reduce the negative impact of childhood exposure to DFV?
How this is best achieved	<p>Priority research gaps can be best addressed through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • research that captures the voices of children exposed to DFV in relation to their service needs • research that captures the voices of victims/survivors of childhood exposure to DFV on children's service needs, including consideration of the roles of the family law and other systems on children's exposure to violence • process and effectiveness evaluations • evaluation of Child-At-Risk (CAR) electronic Medical Record (eMR) alert information sharing system and referrals⁹⁴ • longitudinal studies to determine the impact of intervention on long-term outcomes, including adult victimisation and perpetration • economic evaluations
Expected outcomes and impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To inform effective programs and practices that reduce the impact of exposure to DFV, and break the pattern of intergenerational DFV • review studies that bring together existing evidence
Current research	<p>External research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Threshold decisions in determining whether to prosecute child sexual abuse", led by Professor Cashmore (University of Sydney), is examining how police and prosecutors make decisions about the prosecution of child sexual assault (ARC) • "Childhood maltreatment and late modernity: Public inquiries, social justice and education", led by Dr Wright (University of Melbourne), is exploring how changing understanding of children's development, vulnerability and rights has shaped social policy, educational responses and public attitudes towards safeguarding children and promoting their wellbeing (ARC) • "Breaking silences: Media and the Child Abuse Royal Commission", led by Professor McCallum (University of Canberra), is analysing the role of media, journalism and social media activism in the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (ARC) • "Understanding and responding to online child sexual exploitation offenders", led by Professor Ogloff (Swinburne University of Technology), is building evidence-based practice with online sexual offenders and assisting in preventing the sexual exploitation of children online and in the community (ARC)

2.2 Understanding adolescent violence and harmful sexual behaviours as well as what is required in terms of service response

2.2.1 Understanding adolescent violence and harmful sexual behaviours

To understand adolescent violence and harmful sexual behaviours	
Priority research gaps	<p>There is a need to investigate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the prevalence and nature of adolescent family violence • the drivers and situational factors that contribute to adolescent family violence • the prevalence and nature of adolescent IPV • the drivers of sexual violence among young people, with consideration given to the role of alcohol and other drugs • the prevalence and nature of harmful sexual behaviours, including sibling sexual harm, with a focus on the experience of marginalised groups • the relationship between adolescent violence and perpetration and victimisation in adulthood
Why action is needed	To develop primary prevention and early intervention initiatives, there is a need to better understand the prevalence and nature of adolescent harmful sexual behaviours ⁹⁵ , as well as the situational factors that contribute to the occurrence and recurrence of adolescent violence ^{95,96}
What researchers might ask	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the nature and prevalence of adolescent family violence? • What is the nature and prevalence of adolescent IPV? • What is the nature and prevalence of adolescent harmful sexual behaviours? • What is the relationship between adolescent violence and harmful sexual behaviours and perpetration or victimisation in adulthood? • What are the experiences of harmful sexual behaviour in young people, with consideration given to a diverse population including young people from CALD communities and ^{66,97}Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities,⁹⁷ and young people with disability?⁶⁶ • What is the role of alcohol and other drugs in sexual violence among young people in Australia?
How this is best achieved	<p>Priority research gaps can be best addressed through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an analysis of court files of young people in the court system that use family violence or sexual violence⁶⁶ • review studies that bring together existing evidence • national surveys to determine prevalence and nature of adolescent violence • studies that seek the perspectives of young people who use DFV or who engage in harmful sexual behaviours • studies that incorporate intersectional approaches (intersectionality) as the framework • economic evaluations

To understand adolescent violence and harmful sexual behaviours

Expected outcomes and impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To inform policy in relation to youth justice • to inform early intervention • to inform program development to stop the trajectory of adolescent violence to adult perpetration
Current research	External research: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Sexual violence research", led by AIFS, is exploring issues related to sexual violence, such as child sexual abuse, child and adolescent problem sexual behaviours, adult sexual assault, prevention of sexual violence, perpetration and sexual offending

2.2.2 Understanding what works to meet the service needs of young people who are violent or exhibit harmful sexual behaviours

To understand what works to meet the service needs of young people who are violent or exhibit harmful sexual behaviours

Priority research gaps	<p>There is a need to investigate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what works in responding to young people who perpetrate family violence • what works in responding to young people who perpetrate IPV • what works in responding to young people who exhibit harmful sexual behaviours
Why action is needed	To reduce adolescent harmful behaviours and the escalation to adult VAW, there is a need to establish best practice in working with young people ^{21,95,97,98}
What researchers might ask	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What works to support young people displaying violent behaviours? • What works to respond to young people with harmful sexual behaviours?
How this is best achieved	<p>Priority research gaps can be best addressed through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • process and effectiveness evaluations of specific interventions^{95,97} • interviews and surveys with young people who are violent or demonstrate harmful sexual behaviours to identify their support needs and what constitutes good practice⁹⁷ • longitudinal studies to determine the impact of treatment on long-term outcomes, including adult victimisation and perpetration.⁹⁵ • review studies that bring together existing evidence • economic evaluations
Expected outcomes and impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To inform effective programs and practices that reduce adolescent DFV • to inform effective programs and practices that reduce harmful sexual behaviours • to inform early intervention
Current research	None identified

3. Intersectionality and marginalised populations

3.1 Understanding intersectionality, structural inequalities and experiences of violence by marginalised populations

To understand intersectionality, structural inequalities and experiences of violence by marginalised populations	
Priority research gaps	<p>There is a need to investigate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how multiple discriminations/inequalities intersect to compound experiences of violence and perpetration • women's experience of violence in circumstances of intersecting inequality • the prevalence, nature and characteristics of violence experienced by marginalised populations
Why action is needed	<p>To inform primary prevention, there is a need to better understand how forms of structural discrimination and disadvantage, and power and privilege intersect to influence experiences, as well as patterns of perpetration, of VAW across the diverse Australian population. There is a dearth of evidence using intersectional approaches to explore VAW in marginalised populations. While we know that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, women from CALD communities, women from LGBTIQ communities, women from rural and remote communities, women with disability, older women, socio-economically disadvantaged women, young women and women in the sex industry are at a higher risk of violence, we know less about how their experiences of multiple forms of discrimination intersect to compound risk to and experiences of violence^{1,4,17,23-30}</p>
What researchers might ask	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the prevalence and nature of violence experienced by women from different populations? • How do multiple discriminations/structural inequalities, including gender equality, racial inequality, class, sexuality and disability, intersect to compound victimisation and perpetration? • What roles do poverty, economic inequality and women's socio-economic insecurity play in women's experiences of violence, including for marginalised groups of women?
How this is best achieved	<p>Priority research gaps can be best addressed through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • studies that incorporate feminist intersectional approaches (intersectionality) as the framework • studies that incorporate an intersectional approach to understanding perpetration of VAW • studies that mainstream intersectionality in policy and response • studies that centre the perspectives of victims/survivors • studies that centre decolonising models of support • studies that use measures developed by those being surveyed to capture what is important to them

To understand intersectionality, structural inequalities and experiences of violence by marginalised populations

Expected outcomes and impact

- To inform early intervention initiatives tailored to the needs of specific populations
- to inform an intersectional approach to prevention³⁴

Current research None identified

3.2 Understanding and addressing violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women

3.2.1 Understanding victimisation and perpetration of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women

To understand victimisation and perpetration of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women

Priority research gaps

While recognising they are not a homogeneous group, there is a need to investigate violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, including:

- the characteristics of VAW
- the impacts of DFV and sexual violence
- the dynamics and drivers of coercive control
- unique characteristics of violence experienced by this population, including the impacts of colonisation, racism and sexism as well as characteristics of the perpetration of “lateral violence” as intersecting drivers of DFV¹
- the links between intergenerational trauma and DFV and sexual violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- the specific impacts of COVID-19 on violence

Why action is needed

To reduce violence experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and respond in more culturally appropriate and effective ways to the impacts of violence, there is a need to gain a better understanding of the unique experiences of this population. To understand the characteristics of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, there needs to be a specific focus on violence in the broader context of colonisation, dispossession, structural discrimination, intergenerational trauma and socio-economic disadvantage.^{17,18} There is a need to place reconciliation and healing efforts at the centre of understanding DFV in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

To understand victimisation and perpetration of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women

- What researchers might ask**
- What are the experiences of violence experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women?
 - What are the impacts of DFV and sexual violence?
 - How do intersecting forms of structural discrimination (such as colonisation, racism and sexism) compound violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women?
 - What are the dynamics and drivers of coercive control in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and how can these be addressed effectively?

- How this is best achieved**
- Priority research gaps can be best addressed through:
- studies that centre the perspectives of victims/survivors
 - studies that centre feminist intersectional approaches to understanding violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women
 - studies that use Indigenous methodologies led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
 - studies that centre decolonising models of support in framing work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women
 - strength-based research led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
 - economic evaluations

- Expected outcomes and impact**
- To inform primary prevention
 - to inform policy and legislation
 - to inform responses to reduce the impacts of VAW

- Current research**
- External research:**
- [National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey \(NATSISS\)](#), led by the ABS, is collecting data about the experience of physical violence, including DFV, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

3.2.2 Understanding what works to respond to or reduce sexual and family violence experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women

To understand what works to respond to or reduce sexual and family violence experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women

Priority research gaps

There is a need to identify and evaluate:

- what works to reduce or prevent violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women
- what works to reduce the impact of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women
- what works to best support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children affected by DFV and sexual violence
- what Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women need to access services
- how communities can be supported to implement locally appropriate solutions
- interventions of value according to victims/survivors
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-specific legal responses to VAW
- the availability of Aboriginal-specific refuges and other cultural supports
- the effectiveness of programs and initiatives that use holistic healing methods and a whole-of-family approach to address intergenerational trauma and promote holistic healing
- models for building cultural competency among service providers, including trauma awareness and assessment tools for non-Indigenous organisations

Why action is needed

To better support women who have experienced violence, understanding what works in DFV service provision to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is a key research gap.^{52,99,100} To reduce the impact of VAW, there is need to better understand the complicated causes, forms and impacts of family violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children^{17,18,24,52} and what appropriate service responses⁵² and healing¹⁰¹ entail. There is a need to prioritise research that uses Indigenous methodologies and is led by and engages Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, especially victims/survivors^{27,52}

What researchers might ask

- What are the service needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and how can these needs be met?
- What works to increase service access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women?
- What is the significance of cultural sensitivity and understanding when researching and working with DFV in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities?
- What are the implementation barriers and enablers of culturally sensitive models in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander settings?
- What is the efficacy of current programs aimed at providing housing assistance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims of DFV via integrated support?

To understand what works to respond to or reduce sexual and family violence experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women

- What researchers might ask**
- What is the effectiveness of early intervention and primary prevention initiatives that use holistic healing methods and a whole-of-family approach?
 - What works in trauma and healing (truth-telling) responses to DFV?
 - How effective are services/programs that prioritise cultural healing, rebuilding traditions and support networks, and strengthening Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identities?
 - What are examples of successful models of Aboriginal community-controlled and self-determined responses to DFV?
 - What is best practice for building cultural competency among service providers, including trauma awareness and assessment tools for non-Indigenous organisations?

- How this is best achieved**
- Priority research gaps can be best addressed through:
- studies that centre the perspectives of victims/survivors
 - effectiveness evaluations to assess the impact of an intervention
 - process evaluations that assess the barriers and enablers of implementation of interventions
 - review studies that bring together existing evidence
 - research that centres Indigenous methodologies led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
 - economic evaluations

- Expected outcomes and impact**
- To support services in meeting the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experiencing violence
 - research that Aboriginal organisations and communities can use to inform their work as well as to develop and implement interventions tailored for their communities

- Current research**
- ANROWS research:**
- [“An exploration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander healing programs that respond to domestic and family violence and sexual assault”](#), led by Professor Carlson, is assessing the effectiveness and appropriateness of healing programs to respond to violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women
- External research:**
- [“The role of cultural factors in the sentencing of Indigenous sex offenders in the Northern Territory”](#), led by Dr Cripps (University of New South Wales), is examining the impact of extra-legal factors about sexuality and Indigenous culture on the sentencing of Indigenous sex offenders in the Northern Territory (ARC)
 - [“Where are Indigenous women in the sentencing of Indigenous offenders?”](#), led by Professor Anthony (University of Technology Sydney), is exploring the experience of Indigenous women in Australian courts (ARC)
 - [“Family, domestic and sexual violence within Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander communities study”](#), led by the Australian National University

3.2.3 Understanding the experiences and service needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who have been incarcerated

To understand the experiences and service needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who have been incarcerated

Priority research gaps

There is a need to investigate the experiences and service needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who have been incarcerated, including:

- experiences of continued violence in custody (i.e. violence in institutional settings) and revictimisation
- the link between victimisation and offending behaviour
- the service pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women leaving prison
- how to support women in the transition out of prison, including the availability of refuges and specialist DFV support

Why action is needed

To better support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who have been incarcerated, it is important to understand the specific experiences and service needs of this group. Women who are/have been incarcerated receive little service inside the criminal justice system and yet they are also a group with high rates of violence in their backgrounds. There is also need for research into safer pathways for women leaving prison¹⁰²

What researchers might ask

- What are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's experiences of continued violence in custody revictimisation in institutional settings?
- What are the characteristics of DFV and sexual violence experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in prisons?
- What are the long-term impacts of trauma on the lives of incarcerated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women?
- What are the service pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women leaving prison?
- What is the interaction between DFV in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and the criminal justice system?
- What is the need for and advantages of trauma-specific responses for incarcerated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women?

How this is best achieved

Priority research gaps can be best addressed through:

- studies that centre the perspectives of victims/survivors
- strength-based research led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- studies that centre feminist intersectional approaches
- studies that centre decolonising models of support
- research that uses Indigenous methodologies
- effectiveness evaluations to assess the impact of an intervention
- process evaluations that assess the barriers and enablers of implementation of interventions
- economic evaluations

To understand the experiences and service needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who have been incarcerated

- Expected outcomes and impact**
- To inform policy and legislation
 - to identify appropriate supports, including financial support, service coordination, safe places to seek refuge and clinical support¹⁰²
 - to inform responses to reduce the impact of incarceration

Current research

External research:

- [“Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women perpetrators of violence: A trial of a prison-based intervention \(Beyond Violence\)”](#), led by Professor Butler (University of New South Wales), is evaluating the effectiveness of a tertiary prevention program for incarcerated women, aimed at reducing recidivism among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women and focusing on their mental health and substance use
- [“Preventing violence-related mortality and morbidity among people exposed to the criminal justice system”](#), led by Melissa Willoughby (University of Melbourne), is examining violence-related mortality and morbidity among people involved in the criminal justice system, including among incarcerated Indigenous women, to generate evidence on rates, risk, predictive factors, and circumstances of violence-related mortality and morbidity in this population

3.3 Understanding and addressing violence against culturally and linguistically diverse women

3.3.1 Understanding victimisation and perpetration of violence against culturally and linguistically diverse women

To understand victimisation and perpetration of violence against culturally and linguistically diverse women

Priority research gaps

There is a need to investigate violence against CALD women, while recognising they are not a homogeneous group, including:

- the prevalence, nature and characteristics of violence, including sexual violence¹⁰³
- the impact of intersecting forms of structural inequality including racism, immigration status, poverty, etc.
- the impact of violence
- the impact of IPV/DFV on visa status
- the specific impacts of COVID-19

Why action is needed

To prevent and reduce violence against CALD women, an in-depth understanding of CALD women’s experience of violence needs to be developed.²⁵ The current service system does not meet the needs of CALD women, and currently VAW is an under-recognised issue in many CALD communities

To understand victimisation and perpetration of violence against culturally and linguistically diverse women

<p>What researchers might ask</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the prevalence and nature of violence experienced by CALD women? • How do multiple discriminations and structural inequalities, including gender equality, racial inequality, class, sexuality and disability, intersect to compound victimisation and perpetration of violence? • What are the educational and empowerment needs of CALD women in relation to VAW? • What are the characteristics of individuals who use violence against CALD women? • What are the specific impacts of COVID-19 on violence against CALD women?
<p>How this is best achieved</p>	<p>Priority research gaps can be best addressed through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • studies that centre the perspectives of victims/survivors • large-scale quantitative studies to provide national data • studies that centre feminist intersectional approaches to understanding violence against CALD women • studies that centre decolonising models of support • strength-based research led by CALD communities • economic evaluations
<p>Expected outcomes and impact</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To inform policy and legislation • to inform responses to reduce violence against CALD women
<p>Current research</p>	<p>ANROWS research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Transforming responses to intimate partner and sexual violence: Listening to the voices of victims, perpetrators and services”, led by Professor Hegarty (University of Melbourne) and Dr Coates (ANROWS), is identifying the experiences of victimisation and perpetration of diverse populations, including CALD communities <p>External research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “International students’ sexual and intimate partner violence experiences”, led by Dr Tarzia (University of Melbourne), is identifying the nature, circumstances and impacts of sexual and intimate partner violence against female international students in Australia (ARC) • “Family violence within Indian migrant women residing in Australia”, led by Jatinder Kaur (University of Melbourne), is examining DFV within Indian migrant families settled in Australia and exploring integrated responses of domestic violence, child protection and family law systems

To understand victimisation and perpetration of violence against culturally and linguistically diverse women

Current research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Family violence in newly-arrived migrant and refugee communities”, led by Associate Professor Harry Minas from the University of Melbourne, is studying DFV and sexual violence in newly arrived migrant and refugee communities to inform the development of resources to support effective service responses to CALD women and children • National Survey on Migrant and Refugee Women, led by Harmony Alliance and Monash University, is developing understanding of the issues of importance to women from migrant and refugee backgrounds, with a focus on safety and wellbeing
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3.3.2 Understanding the specific types of abuse experienced by culturally and linguistically diverse women

To understand the specific types of abuse experienced by culturally and linguistically diverse women

Priority research gaps	<p>There is a need to investigate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the unique forms of abuse for migrant and refugee women, such as threats to cancel visas and the role of extended family in perpetrating violence • the prevalence of female genital cutting/circumcision (FGC), including experiences and healthcare needs of women and girls who have had FGC as well as how FGC is talked and thought about among second generation migrants • prevalence of forced marriage, including pathways out of forced marriage and sustainability of long-term crisis housing pathways; accessibility of legal responses to forced marriage; and prevention strategies specific to forced marriage • community attitudes to dowry abuse victims as well as supporting community-generated strategies to prevent dowry abuse • the prevalence and experience of sexual exploitation, domestic servitude and trafficking
Why action is needed	<p>To support CALD women experiencing violence, understanding the unique characteristics of violence against this group must be prioritised.¹ There is a lack of knowledge on the prevalence and impact of FGC on girls and women in Australia over their lifetime.¹⁰⁴ There is also a lack of knowledge on prevalence, incidence and effective service provision in relation to forced marriage,¹⁰⁵ sexual exploitation, domestic servitude and trafficking</p>
What researchers might ask	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the prevalence and nature of FGC experienced by CALD women in Australia? • What is the prevalence and nature of forced marriage experienced by CALD women in Australia? • What is the prevalence and nature of dowry abuse experienced by CALD women in Australia? • What are the best practice standards and the effectiveness of current mechanisms (including preventative measures) in relation to forced marriage?

To understand the specific types of abuse experienced by culturally and linguistically diverse women

What researchers might ask	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we build knowledge of different forms of abuse occurring in CALD communities and how can we prevent and respond to these? • What can we learn from the international context to inform interventions at the local level?
How this is best achieved	<p>Priority research gaps can be best addressed through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • studies that centre the perspectives of victims/survivors • large-scale quantitative studies to provide national data on the prevalence and characteristics of specific types of abuse experienced by CALD women • studies that centre feminist intersectional approaches and decolonising models of support • review studies that bring together existing evidence • strength-based research led by CALD communities
Expected outcomes and impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To inform policy and legislation • to inform responses to the unique types of violence experienced by CALD women
Current research	<p>External research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The effects of female genital mutilation laws in Australia”, led by Associate Professor Rogers (University of Melbourne), is producing new knowledge about laws that have criminalised female genital mutilation (FGM) in Australia since 1994 (ARC). • “Refugee women, intimate partner violence and settlement”, led by Associate Professor Rees (University of New South Wales), is identifying the specific risk factors for IPV and mental disorder in refugee women, thereby guiding the most effective interventions (NHMRC)

3.3.3 Understanding what works to respond to and reduce violence experienced by culturally and linguistically diverse women

To understand what works to respond to and reduce violence experienced by culturally and linguistically diverse women

Priority research gaps	<p>There is a need to investigate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what works to reduce the impact of violence on CALD women • what works to reduce or prevent violence against CALD women • barriers to and enablers of service access for CALD women • systemic barriers to support CALD victims/survivors • interventions of value from the perspective of victims/survivors • the effectiveness and appropriateness of perpetrator interventions for specific CALD communities • the effectiveness of DFV risk assessment tools when used with CALD women²⁵
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To understand what works to respond to and reduce violence experienced by culturally and linguistically diverse women	
Why action is needed	To effectively respond to the unique forms of DFV and sexual violence experienced by CALD women, there is a need to establish the effectiveness and appropriateness of primary prevention and service responses ¹⁰⁶
What researchers might ask	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are effective strategies for engaging with, and appropriately responding to the needs of, CALD women? • What are the current service responses for CALD women who experience violence, and how effective are these? • What are the current prevention strategies to reduce violence against CALD women, and how effective are these? • How effective are perpetrator programs for CALD perpetrators, and what are the strategies associated with successful outcomes?
How this is best achieved	<p>Priority research gaps can be best addressed through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effectiveness evaluations to assess the impact of an intervention • process evaluations that assess the barriers and enablers of implementation of interventions targeted to CALD women • longitudinal studies to assess whether changes are durable over time • realist evaluations to develop insight into the contextual factors and underlying mechanisms that inform change • review studies that bring together existing evidence • economic evaluations
Expected outcomes and impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To inform primary prevention • to inform development and implementation of interventions tailored for CALD women • to inform development and implementation of perpetrator interventions tailored for CALD populations
	<p>ANROWS research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Transforming responses to intimate partner and sexual violence: Listening to the voices of victims, perpetrators and services”, led by Professor Hegarty (University of Melbourne) and Dr Coates (ANROWS), is identifying the service experiences and perspectives of diverse women, including women from CALD communities • “‘What works’ to reduce and respond to violence against women: Evidence synthesis, methods and communication”, led by Dr Coates (ANROWS), is identifying what works when responding to the experiences and needs of a diverse group of women <p>External research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Screening and responding to domestic violence experienced by refugee women”, led by Professor Spangaro (University of Wollongong), is testing evidence-based interventions to identify and address DFV with newly arrived refugee women (ARC)

To understand what works to respond to and reduce violence experienced by culturally and linguistically diverse women

Current research

- [“HARMONY: A cluster randomised controlled trial of a whole of general practice intervention to prevent and reduce domestic violence among migrant and refugee communities”](#), led by Professor Taft (La Trobe University), is building data platforms that enhance assessment and care plans for DFV victims and lead to safer outcomes for those from vulnerable populations (NHMRC)
- [“Family violence within Indian migrant women residing in Australia”](#), led by Jatinder Kaur (University of Melbourne), is examining DFV within Indian migrant families settled in Australia and exploring integrated responses of domestic violence, child protection and family law systems
- [“Abused and abandoned: Family violence in the Australian Indian community”](#), led by Tania Cass (Northern Community Legal Centre), is examining issues faced by Indian women who experience DFV in Australia, with a view to improve coordination of legal and non-legal responses at local, state and national levels
- [“Representations of culturally and linguistically diverse \(CALD\) women in domestic and family violence policies in Australia”](#), led by Renee Romeo (University of South Australia), is identifying the representations of CALD women in the Third and Fourth Action Plans as well as South Australia and Queensland’s action plans
- [“Family violence in newly arrived migrant and refugee communities”](#), led by the University of Melbourne, is studying DFV and sexual violence in newly arrived migrant and refugee communities to inform the development of resources to support effective service responses to CALD women and children

3.4 Understanding and addressing violence against LGBTIQ women

3.4.1 Understanding victimisation and perpetration of violence against LGBTIQ women

To understand victimisation and perpetration of violence against LGBTIQ women

Priority research gaps

- While recognising that this is not a homogeneous group, there is a need to investigate violence against LGBTIQ women, including:
 - the prevalence of violence¹⁰⁷
 - the nature of violence, including the types and characteristics^{1,26,108}
 - the risk factors
 - victimisation across settings and over the life course^{107,108}
 - the drivers of violence^{26,109}
 - the impacts of violence¹⁰⁹
 - the characteristics of perpetrators of violence within LGBTIQ communities¹⁰⁸
 - the experience of violence by LGBTIQ women who experience intersecting forms of discrimination, for example, LGBTIQ women of colour, LGBTIQ women with disability, and LGBTIQ asylum-seeking and refugee women^{1,110}

Why action is needed	To inform the development of effective prevention strategies, an increased understanding of the extent and nature of violence against LGBTIQ women is critical ^{26,109}
What researchers might ask	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the prevalence and dynamics of violence experienced by LGBTIQ women? • What are the characteristics of perpetrators of violence against LGBTIQ women? • What are the short- and long-term impacts of violence against LGBTIQ women? • What is the relationship between different types of violence experienced by LGBTIQ women, across settings and over the life course? • What are the drivers of violence against LGBTIQ women, and how are these different or similar to the drivers of violence against cisgender and heterosexual women? • What are the experiences of LGBTIQ women who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination (e.g. LGBTIQ women of colour)? • How do dominant forms of masculinity drive violence against LGBTIQ women, both in their intimate relationships with men and in broader society?
How this is best achieved	<p>Priority research gaps can be best addressed through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strength-based research that is led by LGBTIQ communities • studies that incorporate feminist intersectional approaches (intersectionality) as the framework • large-scale quantitative studies to provide national data
Expected outcomes and impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To inform policy • to inform tailored prevention initiatives • to inform interventions that appropriately respond to the impacts of violence • to increase awareness about violence in LGBTIQ relationships and communities
Current research	<p>ANROWS research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Transforming responses to intimate partner and sexual violence: Listening to the voices of victims, perpetrators and services”, led by Professor Hegarty (University of Melbourne) and Dr Coates (ANROWS), is studying the experiences of victimisation and perpetration by diverse populations, including LGBTIQ women

3.4.2 Understanding what works to respond to and reduce violence experienced by LGBTIQ women

To understand what works to respond to and reduce violence experienced by LGBTIQ women

Priority research gaps	<p>There is a need to investigate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what works to reduce the impact of violence on LGBTIQ women • what works to reduce or prevent violence against LGBTIQ women • the service needs of LGBTIQ women from their perspective¹¹⁰ • the capacities and experiences of services to respond to IPV and sexual violence experienced by LGBTIQ women¹¹⁰ • the help-seeking behaviours of LGBTIQ women • the unique barriers and challenges in the healthcare system^{31,111}
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To understand what works to respond to and reduce violence experienced by LGBTIQ women	
Why action is needed	To reduce violence against LGBTIQ women and reduce the impact of violence, there is a need to understand what works for this population. ^{108,110} While we currently do not have reliable national prevalence data, there is evidence that indicates that the levels of IPV violence in LGBTIQ communities may be comparable to those in the population at large, ²⁶ yet services do not adequately meet the needs of LGBTIQ women experiencing violence ¹⁰⁷
What researchers might ask	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How effective are existing interventions targeting LGBTIQ women that experience IPV or sexual violence? • What programs and interventions are currently available for LGBTIQ women experiencing violence? • What are the service needs of LGBTIQ women? • What are the unique barriers and challenges faced by LGBTIQ women seeking help, especially in healthcare settings? • What are the capacities and experiences of service providers to respond to violence experienced by LGBTIQ women? • What does good practice in preventing and responding to LGBTIQ women look like?
How this is best achieved	<p>Priority research gaps can be best addressed through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effectiveness evaluations to assess the impact of an intervention • process evaluations that assess the barriers and enablers of implementation • studies that centre the perspectives of victims/survivors • review studies that bring together existing evidence • strength-based research led by LGBTIQ women • economic evaluations
Expected outcomes and impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To inform the design of interventions to reduce the impact of violence experienced by LGBTIQ women • to inform primary prevention initiatives to reduce violence experienced by LGBTIQ women
Current research	<p>ANROWS research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Transforming responses to intimate partner and sexual violence: Listening to the voices of victims, perpetrators and services”, led by Professor Hegarty (University of Melbourne) and Dr Coates (ANROWS), is studying the service experiences and perspectives of diverse populations, including LGBTIQ women

3.5 Understanding and addressing violence against women in rural and remote communities

3.5.1 Understanding victimisation and perpetration of violence against women in rural and remote communities

To understand victimisation and perpetration of violence against women in rural and remote communities	
Priority research gaps	<p>While recognising that this is not a homogeneous group, there is a need to investigate VAW in rural and remote communities, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the characteristics and prevalence of violence • the correlation between isolation and vulnerability to VAW • the risk factors to VAW in rural and remote communities • the experience of violence by specific sub-populations, for example experiences of LGBTIQ women or CALD women or women with disabilities in rural and remote communities¹
Why action is needed	<p>To design appropriate prevention programs, there is a need to better understand the risk factors and characteristics of violence experienced by women in rural and remote communities. While women in rural and remote communities are at a higher risk of violence, we do not have adequate data to describe the nature and extent of VAW in this population¹⁰⁷</p>
What researchers might ask	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the unique characteristics of violence experienced by women in rural and remote communities? • What are the risk factors for VAW specific to rural and remote communities? • What are unique challenges for women experiencing violence in rural and remote communities?
How this is best achieved	<p>Priority research gaps can be best addressed through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • studies that centre the perspectives of victims/survivors • review studies that bring together existing evidence • studies that incorporate feminist intersectional approaches (intersectionality) as the framework • large-scale quantitative studies to provide national data
Expected outcomes and impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To inform policy • to inform tailored prevention initiatives • to inform service responses • to inform interventions that appropriately respond to the impacts of violence
Current research	<p>ANROWS research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Transforming responses to intimate partner and sexual violence: Listening to the voices of victims, perpetrators and services”, led by Professor Hegarty (University of Melbourne) and Dr Coates (ANROWS), is studying the experiences of victimisation and perpetration by diverse populations, including women from rural and remote communities

3.5.2 Understanding what works to respond to and reduce violence experienced by women in rural and remote communities

To understand what works to respond to and reduce violence experienced by women in rural and remote communities

Priority research gaps

There is a need to investigate:

- what works to reduce the impact of violence on women in rural and remote communities
- what works to reduce or prevent VAW in rural and remote communities
- service experiences of women in rural and remote communities seeking help

Why action is needed

To improve service availability and responses and to develop innovative interventions and holistic models of care, an increased understanding of service needs and service experiences of women in rural and remote communities is critical. Even though women in rural and remote communities are at increased risk of some forms of VAW, existing evidence suggests that this population is often underserved^{79,80,112}

What researchers might ask

- How effective are existing interventions targeting women in rural and remote communities?
- What are the service needs of women in rural and remote communities who experience VAW?
- What barriers, challenges and obstacles do women in remote and rural communities face when seeking help?
- What services are available to women seeking help, with a focus on identifying service gaps?
- What innovative interventions could meet the needs of women in rural and remote communities more effectively (e.g. technology-assisted support services)?
- What does best practice in service response look like in rural and remote communities?

How this is best achieved

Priority research gaps can be best addressed through:

- implementation studies that assess how evidence-based interventions can be translated and implemented in rural and remote settings
- review studies that bring together existing evidence
- effectiveness evaluations to assess the impact of a specific intervention
- process evaluations that assess the barriers and enablers of implementation
- evaluation studies that centre the perspectives of key stakeholders
- economic evaluations

Expected outcomes and impact

- To inform prevention programs
- to inform the development and implementation of interventions
- to improve and innovate service responses (e.g. through use of technology)

To understand what works to respond to and reduce violence experienced by women in rural and remote communities

Current research	ANROWS research: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Transforming responses to intimate partner and sexual violence: Listening to the voices of victims, perpetrators and services”, led by Professor Hegarty (University of Melbourne) and Dr Coates (ANROWS), is investigating the service experiences and perspectives of diverse populations, including women from rural and remote communities
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3.6 Understanding and addressing violence against women with disability

3.6.1 Understanding victimisation and perpetration of violence against women with disability

To understand victimisation and perpetration of violence against women with disability

Priority research gaps	<p>While recognising they are not a homogeneous group, there is a need to investigate violence against women with disability, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the prevalence and characteristics of violence against women with disability within and outside of institutional settings • the experiences of coercive control and other forms of non-physical violence • the unique experiences of women with intellectual disability • the impacts of VAW • the experience of violence by specific marginalised populations, e.g. experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women,¹ women in rural and remote communities, older women with disability, and women from LGBTIQ communities^{113,114}
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Why action is needed	To design appropriate responses and prevention programs, there is a need to better understand the prevalence and nature of violence against women with disability ^{1,28}
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What researchers might ask	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the prevalence of violence against women with disability? • What are the unique characteristics of violence against women with disability? • What are the experiences of coercive control and other forms of non-physical abuse by women with disability? • What are the impacts of violence against women with disability?
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To understand victimisation and perpetration of violence against women with disability	
How this is best achieved	<p>Priority research gaps can be best addressed through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strength-based research that is led or co-led by women with disability • studies that centre the perspectives of victims/survivors • review studies that bring together existing evidence • large-scale quantitative studies on the impacts of violence on women with disability, disaggregated by type and severity of disability • analysis of administrative data, including data linkage • studies that incorporate feminist intersectional approaches (intersectionality) as the framework • economic evaluations
Expected outcomes and impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To inform policy • to inform tailored prevention initiatives • to inform service responses • to inform interventions that appropriately respond to the impacts of violence
Current research	<p>ANROWS research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Transforming responses to intimate partner and sexual violence: Listening to the voices of victims, perpetrators and services”, led by Professor Hegarty (University of Melbourne) and Dr Coates (ANROWS), is identifying the experiences of victimisation and perpetration of diverse populations, including women with disability <p>External research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “A resource to prevent violence against women with disabilities”, led by Our Watch, is underway and will result in production of a resource on the prevention of violence against women with disability. Work underway includes a literature review of the evidence on violence against women with disability; its prevalence, impacts and underlying drivers; and the development of a draft conceptual model for understanding violence against women with disability • “A social marketing initiative to prevent violence against young women with intellectual disabilities”, commissioned by Our Watch and being undertaken by the University of New South Wales, is reviewing literature on the specific issue of violence against young women and girls with intellectual disability

3.6.2 Understanding what works to respond to and reduce violence experienced by women with disability

To understand what works to respond to and reduce violence experienced by women with disability	
Priority research gaps	<p>There is a need to investigate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what works to reduce the impact of violence on women with disability • what works to reduce or prevent violence against women with disability • the service experiences of victims/survivors with disability²⁸ • the different barriers faced by women with physical disability and women with intellectual disability when seeking help³¹ • the integration of VAW and disability support services¹¹⁵
Why action is needed	To reduce the occurrence and impact of violence against women with disability, an increased understanding of service experiences and needs of women with disability is critical. ^{28,31} This population is often characterised by complex needs, and an understanding of best practice when responding to this population is required
What researchers might ask	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What programs and services are available to women with disability, and to what extent they are meeting their complex needs? • How effective are existing interventions for women with disability who experience violence? • What are the unique service needs of women with disability? • What are the barriers faced by women with disability when seeking help? • What are the unique challenges and barriers faced by women with intellectual disability?
How this is best achieved	<p>Priority research gaps can be best addressed through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effectiveness evaluations to assess the impact of an intervention • process evaluations that assess the barriers and enablers of implementation • studies that centre the perspectives of victims/survivors • evaluation studies that assess the effectiveness and appropriateness of existing service responses • economic evaluations
Expected outcomes and impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To inform prevention programs • to support services in meeting complex needs of women with disability • to inform the development and implementation of tailored interventions

To understand what works to respond to and reduce violence experienced by women with disability

Current research	<p>ANROWS research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Transforming responses to intimate partner and sexual violence: Listening to the voices of victims, perpetrators and services”, led by Professor Hegarty (University of Melbourne) and Dr Coates (ANROWS), is identifying the experiences of victimisation and perpetration of diverse populations, including women with disability. <p>External research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “A resource to prevent violence against women with disabilities”, led by Our Watch, is developing a proposed set of practice principles for prevention of violence against women with disability
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3.7 Understanding and addressing violence against older women

3.7.1 Understanding victimisation and perpetration of violence against older women

To understand victimisation and perpetration of violence against older women

Priority research gaps	<p>While recognising they are not a homogeneous group, there is a need to investigate violence against women aged 50 and older, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the prevalence, patterns and types of violence • the impacts of violence • the characteristics of perpetrators
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Why action is needed	To inform policy and design effective prevention programs, an increased understanding of violence against older women is required ^{113,114}
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What researchers might ask	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the prevalence and nature of violence against older women? • What are the patterns and types of violence experienced by older women, with a focus on how different forms of violence are interrelated? • What are the impacts of violence on older women? • What are the characteristics of perpetrators of violence against older women? • What are the settings in which older women experience violence?
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How this is best achieved	<p>Priority research gaps can be best addressed through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • large-scale quantitative studies • studies that centre the perspectives of victims/survivors • analysis of administrative data • studies that incorporate feminist intersectional approaches (intersectionality) as the framework • economic evaluations
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To understand victimisation and perpetration of violence against older women

- Expected outcomes and impact**
- To inform policy
 - to support the identification of risk and protective factors
 - to inform prevention programs
 - to inform interventions that appropriately respond to the impacts of violence
 - to educate the public about violence against older women

Research underway	<p>ANROWS research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Transforming responses to intimate partner and sexual violence: Listening to the voices of victims, perpetrators and services”, led by Professor Hegarty (University of Melbourne) and Dr Coates (ANROWS), is studying the experiences of victimisation and perpetration by diverse populations, including older women <p>External research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “National Elder Abuse Prevalence Study”, led by AIFS, is assessing the nature of elder abuse in Australia and the extent to which it occurs among the Australian population
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3.7.2 Understanding what works to respond to and reduce violence experienced by older women

To understand what works to respond to and reduce violence experienced by older women

- Priority research gaps**
- There is a need to investigate:
- what works to reduce the impact of violence on older women
 - what works to reduce or prevent violence against older women
 - the service needs of older women
 - the disclosures and help-seeking behaviours of older women

Why action is needed

To inform program design to prevent and respond to violence against older women, evaluations of the effectiveness of current service responses and prevention efforts is required.^{113,114} Existing knowledge on appropriate responses to this population is very limited^{113,114}

- What researchers might ask**
- What are help-seeking behaviours of older women who experience violence?
 - What are the service needs of older women, with consideration given to socio-economic support, housing, healthcare and legal protection needs?
 - What interventions are currently in place, and how effective or appropriate are these? Do current interventions meet the needs of older women?
 - What is currently considered best practice?

- How this is best achieved**
- Priority research gaps can be best addressed through:
- effectiveness evaluations to assess the impact of the intervention
 - process evaluations that assess the barriers to and enablers of implementation
 - studies that centre the perspectives of victims/survivors and other key stakeholders
 - economic evaluations

To understand what works to respond to and reduce violence experienced by older women

- Expected outcomes and impact**
- To support services in meeting the needs of older women who experience violence
 - to support primary prevention and reduce violence against older women
 - to inform the development and implementation of interventions for older women who experience violence

- Current research**
- ANROWS research:**
- [“Transforming responses to intimate partner and sexual violence: Listening to the voices of victims, perpetrators and services”](#), led by Professor Hegarty (University of Melbourne) and Dr Coates (ANROWS), is studying the service experiences and perspectives of diverse populations, including older women

4. Primary prevention: What works to prevent violence against women

4.1 What works to prevent violence against women

To understand what works to prevent violence against women

- Priority research gaps**
- There is a need to investigate:
- the effectiveness of primary prevention programs in changing attitudes and behaviours, including long-term changes demonstrated by a reduction in sexual violence, sexual harassment and DFV
 - the impact of primary prevention on the different forms of VAW
 - conditions required to implement evidence-based primary prevention initiatives, including the barriers to and enablers of implementation (e.g. workforce and training needs)
 - the contextual factors and underlying mechanisms that inform change^{37,38}
 - the effectiveness of specific primary prevention strategies in responding to specific drivers and reinforcing factors of VAW³³
 - the effectiveness and appropriateness of various primary prevention strategies for different populations

- Why action is needed**
- To reduce VAW, there is a need to develop an evidence base in relation to the effectiveness of primary prevention initiatives to reduce sexual violence, sexual harassment and DFV. Primary prevention is fundamental to reduce VAW and, although it is a substantial emerging area of practice, it currently receives little research attention and there remains a need to establish what works. Few studies evaluate primary prevention strategies, and the body of prevention research is almost entirely qualitative.^{17,18,34} There is a need for both process and effectiveness evaluations to determine what works to reduce or stop VAW, as well as implementation research that provides insight into the appropriateness of interventions, implementation barriers and enablers, and strategies to support scaling up.^{35,36}

To understand what works to prevent violence against women

Why action is needed

Specific priority programs for process and effectiveness evaluations include:

- bystander interventions,^{37,42} including those administered electronically³⁸
- initiatives that address masculinities and/or engage men and boys in prevention efforts
- primary prevention initiatives (e.g. respectful relationship training) in primary, secondary and tertiary educational settings⁴³⁻⁵¹
- primary prevention initiatives in workplaces, specifically addressing norms and bystander behaviour in male-dominated workplaces³²
- primary prevention initiatives in sport settings
- primary prevention in faith-based organisations, with a focus on how to engage faith-based leaders to support change
- media campaigns, with a focus on the role of the media in increasing awareness of VAW, and influencing behaviour change
- advocacy, community awareness and education initiatives, with a focus on what works in different contexts and communities, and how to engage men in primary prevention initiatives
- consideration of the evidence in relation to creating protective environments in particular settings (e.g. workplaces, educational institutions, festivals)

What researchers might ask

- What is the effectiveness of a specific primary prevention program in changing drivers of VAW, attitudes and behaviours?
- What works to prevent or reduce VAW, and what are the factors associated with successful outcomes?
- Which primary prevention strategies impact on which drivers and reinforcing factors of VAW?
- Which interventions are most successful in which settings, and what are the associated outcomes?
- Which primary prevention strategies are most effective or appropriate for specific populations?
- What are the contextual factors and underlying mechanisms associated with program effectiveness?^{37,38}
- Are gendered or gender-neutral programs most effective?^{39,40}

How this is best achieved

Priority research gaps can be best addressed through:

- effectiveness evaluations to assess the impact of an intervention on attitudes and behaviours
- process evaluations that assess the barriers and enablers of implementation
- implementation studies that assess how evidence-based interventions can be translated and implemented in different contexts
- realist evaluations to develop insight into the contextual factors and underlying mechanisms that inform change
- longitudinal evidence of the preventative effects of primary prevention in different settings, specifically education/school settings

To understand what works to prevent violence against women	
How this is best achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • longitudinal studies to assess whether changes observed in the short term are durable over time, and result in a reduction of VAW^{38,41} • studies that assess the impact of primary prevention on the various forms of abuse • evaluation of the prevention landscape to assess integration or duplication of current prevention efforts • realist syntheses of available program-level evaluations, and other review studies that bring together existing evidence • studies that incorporate feminist intersectional approaches (intersectionality) as the framework • economic evaluations
Expected outcomes and impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To inform policy • to develop primary prevention programs that reduce VAW
Current research	<p>ANROWS research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Respectful relationships in secondary schools: A control trial study and network evaluation of a classroom program for prevention of gender-based violence”, led by Professor Cahill (University of Melbourne), is evaluating the effectiveness of primary prevention interventions, and using Social Network Analysis to track changes in attitudes, relationships and behaviour • “‘What works’ to reduce and respond to violence against women: Evidence synthesis, methods and communication”, led by Dr Coates (ANROWS), is reviewing the existing evidence in relation to what works to reduce or prevent VAW <p>External research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Engaging men and boys in violence prevention: Effective directions for practice”, led by Associate Professor Flood (Queensland University of Technology), is developing a systematic framework for effective practice in engaging men and boys in preventing VAW (ARC) • “Primary Prevention Data Platform”, led by Respect Victoria, is developing data and tools for policymakers, researchers and practitioners to track population-level progress towards the prevention of DFV • “Ten to Men: The Australian Longitudinal Study on Male Health”, led by AIFS, is addressing key research gaps about the health of Australian males, including risk behaviour

5. Service response: What works to respond to violence against women

5.1 Perpetrator intervention programs: What works to engage men in keeping women and their children safe

To understand what works in intervention programs for perpetrators of violence against women

Priority research gaps

There is a need to investigate:

- what works to motivate perpetrators of VAW towards change^{116,117}
- the impact of perpetrator interventions on victims/survivors and their children, particularly in the context of DFV^{116,118}
- what victims/survivors want and need from perpetrator interventions, including consideration of the needs of different populations¹¹⁹
- the effectiveness of perpetrator intervention programs in responding to drivers and reinforcing factors of VAW, changing behaviours and reducing reoffending^{21,32,98,120-124}
- the effectiveness and appropriateness of perpetrator interventions for different populations¹¹⁷ and perpetrators with different characteristics (e.g. personality or psychological disorders)¹²⁴
- the service needs of fathers who use VAW, especially those who remain living with their partner^{90,101,125}
- the effectiveness of mandatory interventions (court-mandated) versus non-mandatory participation
- conditions required to implement evidence-based perpetrator intervention programs, including the barriers to and enablers of implementation^{126,127}
- the role of intergenerational trauma and recovery approaches in perpetrator programs

Why action is needed

To reduce VAW, there is a need to develop an evidence base in relation to the effectiveness and appropriateness of perpetrator interventions to reduce sexual violence, sexual harassment and DFV. There is a need to establish what works and for whom, and under what conditions programs are most effective.^{4,29,117,120-124,128,129} There is also a need to better understand how to improve implementation and engagement of perpetrators in evidence-based interventions^{4,29,89}

What researchers might ask

- What are the best practice models or interventions for perpetrators of sexual assault, sexual harassment and DFV?
- How effective is a specific perpetrator intervention in responding to drivers and reinforcing factors of VAW, including physical health, mental health, quality of life, emotional regulation, substance use and socioeconomic outcomes, as well as changing behaviours and reducing reoffending?
- Which perpetrator interventions are most effective, and how does court-mandated intervention compare to voluntary participation?
- What is the effectiveness of online interventions, including consideration of the effectiveness for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and those in rural and remote communities?
- What conditions or contextual factors facilitate engagement in perpetrator intervention programs? (E.g. various setting and intervention emphases)

To understand what works in intervention programs for perpetrators of violence against women

<p>What researchers might ask</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the contextual factors and underlying mechanisms, including barriers and enablers, to implement evidence-based perpetrator interventions, including consideration of the needs of different populations and settings (e.g. rural and remote)? • What do victims/survivors want and need from perpetrator interventions, including consideration of the needs of different populations? • What are the service needs of fathers who use VAW, especially those who remain living with their partner? • What are the roles of intergenerational trauma and recovery approaches in perpetrator programs?
<p>How this is best achieved</p>	<p>Priority research gaps can be best addressed through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effectiveness evaluations to assess the impact of an intervention on perpetrator and victim/survivor outcomes, as well as outcomes for children • process evaluations that assess the barriers and enablers of implementation • implementation studies that assess how evidence-based interventions can be translated to and implemented in different contexts • realist evaluations to develop insight into the contextual factors and underlying mechanisms that inform change • longitudinal studies to assess whether changes observed in the short term are durable over time, and result in a reduction of VAW • studies that centre the perspectives of victims/survivors as well as perpetrators • development of a minimum dataset for monitoring and reporting on perpetrator intervention programs nationally²⁹ • review studies that bring together existing evidence • studies that incorporate feminist intersectional approaches (intersectionality) as the framework • economic evaluations
<p>Expected outcomes and impact</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To inform policy • to develop effective perpetrator interventions that reduce VAW
<p>Current research</p>	<p>ANROWS research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “‘What works’ to reduce and respond to violence against women: Evidence synthesis, methods and communication”, led by Dr Coates (ANROWS), is reviewing the existing evidence in relation to what works to prevent or respond to perpetration of VAW • “Transforming responses to intimate partner and sexual violence: Listening to the voices of victims, perpetrators and services”, led by Professor Hegarty (University of Melbourne) and Dr Coates (ANROWS), is examining the perspective of perpetrators and their victims about the service needs of perpetrators across the service system

To understand what works in intervention programs for perpetrators of violence against women	
Current research	<p>External research:</p> <p>“Breaking the cycle’ of crime–Improved health and justice outcomes for offenders through effective interventions”, led by Professor Butler (University of New South Wales), is developing effective interventions for offender populations in the areas of infectious diseases, mental health and violence, including domestic and family violence (NHMRC)</p> <p>“Perpetrator package–Female perpetrators” is led by the University of Melbourne</p> <p>“Developing innovation for behavioural change programs with men who perpetrate domestic and family violence: Piloting a restorative, environmental project within an integrated program” is led by Dr Boddy (Griffith University), funded by AIC in 2019</p>

5.2 Integrated care and interagency collaboration: What works to reduce service fragmentation

To understand what works to provide integrated care and for interagency collaboration	
Priority research gaps	<p>There is a need to investigate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the effectiveness of integrated care and multi-agency and sector collaborations in meeting the needs of victims/survivors and responding to perpetrators • the barriers and enablers to integrated care and multi-agency collaborations • how the implementation of integrated care can be supported • the impact of different policy frameworks for providing integrated care
Why action is needed	<p>Victims/survivors of VAW often have complex needs that cannot be met by a single service but require an integrated approach.⁶⁰ Yet, the current service structure is fragmented and confusing to victims/survivors whose care is met by multiple agencies and services. To provide a more streamlined and effective response to victims/survivors and perpetrators and to enhance the capacity of services to meet their needs, greater understanding of the efficacy, efficiency, effectiveness and ethicality of system integration and cross-sector collaborative initiatives in producing positive outcomes is needed.^{61,62} There is a need to build a robust evidence base on service collaboration</p>
What researchers might ask	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the evidence base in terms of process and effectiveness outcomes in relation to integrated service responses? • What works to improve the relationships between specialist services, mainstream child and family support services, disability services, alcohol and other drug services and the child protection, health and justice systems, including family law? • What constitutes good practice and successful outcomes in integrated service models and service collaborations, including, but not limited to, specialist services dealing with child protection, and health and legal/justice systems?

To understand what works to provide integrated care and for interagency collaboration

What researchers might ask	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the effectiveness and impact of co-location of services from a range of multidisciplinary agencies and how can it be more client-oriented? • What works from the perspective of families accessing integrated services? • What supports or hinders the implementation and sustainability of integrated service responses?
How this is best achieved	<p>Priority research gaps can be best addressed through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effectiveness evaluations to assess the effectiveness of integrated care • analysis of administrative data, including data linkage • realist evaluations to develop insight into the contextual factors and underlying mechanisms that inform change • process evaluations that assess the barriers and enablers of implementation • implementation studies that assess how evidence-based interventions can be translated and implemented in different contexts • economic evaluations
Expected outcomes and impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To inform policy • to inform a more streamlined and integrated service response for victims and perpetrators
Current research	<p>ANROWS research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “‘What works’ to reduce and respond to violence against women: Evidence synthesis, methods and communication”, led by Dr Coates (ANROWS), is reviewing the existing evidence in relation to what works to respond to VAW

5.3 Health, primary care, justice and specialist service responses: What works to reduce the impact of violence

To understand what works to reduce the impact of violence on victims/survivors and their children

Priority research gaps

There is a need to investigate:

- the effectiveness and appropriateness of services that seek to reduce the impact of violence on women, including sexual violence, sexual harassment and DFV, with consideration given to the importance of setting (i.e. services provided by specialist women's services and mainstream organisations)^{35,81,130-132}
- the significance of informal supports, including how to increase social support systems for women as well as understanding the experiences of friends and informal supporters/carers
- the perspectives of victims/survivors in relation to the appropriateness of various service responses, with consideration given to the perspectives of different populations^{1,78,89}
- the effectiveness, including cost-effectiveness, of interventions that seek to reduce the impact of violence delivered by different service settings (justice services; primary care services; health services; specialist family and domestic violence or sexual assault services, etc.)^{79,81,130,131,133-135}
- the effectiveness of various models of care and interventions that support women and their children in recovery from DFV^{9,135-137}
- safe practices for working with women and children where there is DFV and mothers and fathers co-parent or remain living together^{90,101,125}
- what works to engage women in service responses, particularly women from marginalised populations
- the effectiveness and appropriateness of early identification and screening in different settings, including antenatal care, mental health settings, emergency departments and primary care^{79,129,134,136,138-143}
- the critical elements of good practice, including the underlying mechanisms and contextual factors that inform effectiveness, with consideration of how this may vary for different populations
- conditions required to implement evidence-based responses in different contexts (including rural and remote settings), including the barriers and enablers of implementation³⁵
- the implementation and effectiveness of trauma-informed responses^{83,132}
- the support and training needs of health professionals to provide evidence-based care^{142,144-148}

Why action is needed

To reduce the short- and long-term impacts of VAW on women and their children, there is a need to better understand which interventions are effective at achieving which outcomes, for whom and under what conditions^{4,35,52,81,89,90,130,131,149,150}

To understand what works to reduce the impact of violence on victims/survivors and their children

What researchers might ask

- How effective are existing services at reducing the impacts of violence, particularly for marginalised populations including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, CALD women, LGBTIQ women, women in rural and remote communities, women with disability and older women?
- What is the effectiveness of a specific intervention reducing the impact of violence across a range of outcomes, including consideration of long-term effectiveness?
- Which models of care that support women and their children in recovery from DFV are most effective in terms of short- and long-term outcomes for women and children, with consideration given to the different settings?
- What are the conditions required to implement evidence-based interventions across a range of settings (including rural and remote settings)?
- What are the support and training needs of health professionals to provide evidence-based care?
- What works to engage women in service responses, particularly women from marginalised populations?
- What are the service pathways for women screened as at risk of violence, and what factors inform whether women accept referrals?
- What is the impact of routine screening in various settings (maternity, mental health, primary care, emergency departments), including unanticipated outcomes?
- How is service effectiveness or appropriateness mediated by service setting, for example, services provided by specialist women's services and mainstream organisations?

How this is best achieved

Priority research gaps can be best addressed through:

- effectiveness evaluations to assess the impact of specific interventions on health and wellbeing outcomes for women and their children
- process evaluations that assess the barriers and enablers of implementation
- implementation studies that assess how evidence-based interventions can be translated and implemented in different contexts
- realist evaluations to develop insight into the contextual factors and underlying mechanisms that inform change
- longitudinal studies to assess whether improvements in outcomes are sustained over time
- studies that seek and centre the perspectives of victims/survivors, to gain their recommendations for service improvement
- review studies that bring together existing evidence
- development of a minimum data set for specialist family and domestic violence services, for reporting and monitoring of services nationally
- studies that incorporate feminist intersectional approaches (intersectionality) as the framework
- economic evaluations

To understand what works to reduce the impact of violence on victims/survivors and their children

- Expected outcomes and impact**
- To inform policy
 - to develop effective responses to reduce the impact of VAW on women and their children

Current research

ANROWS research:

- [“‘What works’ to reduce and respond to violence against women: Evidence synthesis, methods and communication”](#), led by Dr Coates (ANROWS), is reviewing existing evidence in relation to what works to respond to VAW
- [“RECOVER–Reconnecting mothers and children after violence: The Child Parent Psychotherapy pilot”](#), led by Dr Hooker (La Trobe University), is testing the feasibility of providing the Child Parent Psychotherapy model of care in Australia to mothers and their pre-school-aged children who are experiencing DFV
- [“The ‘Safe Nest Group’ pilot project–Early intervention for mothers and infants leaving family violence”](#), led by Dr Wood (Swinburne University of Technology), is evaluating the effectiveness of a community-based early intervention program for women and their children (0-3 years) exposed to DFV

External research:

- [“Web-based help-seeking for intimate partner sexual violence”](#), led by Dr Tarzia (University of Melbourne), is developing an understanding of women’s experiences of sexual violence perpetrated by an intimate partner, identifying their help-seeking needs, and exploring the use of the internet as a means of support (ARC)
- [“Beyond skin-deep: Social and emotional work in the beauty industry”](#), led by Dr McCann (University of Melbourne), is exploring how salon workers might be a unique avenue for addressing pressing social issues such as family violence, mental health, and social isolation (ARC)
- [“Tailoring early identification and novel interventions for intimate partner violence”](#), led by Professor Hegarty (University of Melbourne), is generating new knowledge to assist health and family services to identify violence early and tailor responses to individual experiences and to specific communities (NHMRC)
- [“Enhancing data and reporting under the Fourth Action Plan”](#), led by the ABS and AIHW, is focusing on enhancements to data and reporting on DFV and sexual violence

5.4 Policing: What works to better support women?

To understand the effectiveness and impact of police responses

Priority research gaps

There is a need to investigate:

- the effectiveness of current police responses to DFV¹⁵⁰
- the capacity of police to respond to marginalised populations²⁵
- the effectiveness of initiatives designed to increase DFV reporting¹⁵⁰
- the barriers to reporting VAW from the perspective of women
- the effectiveness of training and education for the police in responding to VAW¹⁵⁰
- the effectiveness of risk assessment tools and identification of primary aggressor⁵⁶
- the characteristics of offenders that come into contact with the police¹⁵¹ and patterns of offending and re-offending⁵⁶
- revictimisation caused by contact with law enforcement

Why action is needed

To develop effective law enforcement strategies and increase the effectiveness of police engagement with victims/survivors, an increased understanding of victims'/survivors' experiences with police is required. There is also a need to understand the effectiveness and appropriateness of current practices and the capacity of the police to support victims/survivors^{79,150}

What researchers might ask

- How effective are current police responses to DFV, including in marginalised populations?
- What are the training and education needs of the police to respond more effectively to VAW?
- What are victims'/survivors' experiences with reporting VAW to the police?
- What barriers do victims/survivors face when reporting VAW?
- What innovative responses (including rapid alert technologies) would support the police in assisting victims/survivors?
- How effective are current risk assessment tools, including for marginalised populations?
- What are the characteristics of offenders that come into contact with the police (e.g. substance use issues, mental illness, environmental influences)?
- What are the patterns of offending and re-offending (e.g. timing of repeat events and the correlates of short-term re-offending)?
- What is the impact of police responses on VAW offending?

To understand the effectiveness and impact of police responses	
How this is best achieved	<p>Priority research gaps can be best addressed through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evaluation of police responses and interventions • evaluation of training and education for the police • evaluation of interventions designed to increase DFV reporting • analysis of administrative data, with consideration given to variations in data across all states and territories • studies that seek and centre the perspectives of victims/survivors • review studies that bring together existing evidence • studies that incorporate feminist intersectional approaches (intersectionality) as the framework • economic evaluations
Expected outcomes and impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To inform policy and responses, and in particular interventions, to increase reporting of violence and responsiveness of the police to victims/survivors • to identify risk and protective factors and improve risk assessment tools • to identify training needs of the police • to inform processes in police data to identify VAW across all states and territories
Current research	<p>ANROWS research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “‘What works’ to reduce and respond to violence against women: Evidence synthesis, methods and communication”, led by Dr Coates (ANROWS), is reviewing existing evidence in relation to what works to respond to VAW <p>External research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Threshold decisions in determining whether to prosecute child sexual abuse”, led by Professor Cashmore (University of Sydney), is examining how police and prosecutors make decisions about the prosecution of child sexual assault (ARC)

5.5 Legal responses: What works to enhance safety for women and their children, and hold perpetrators of violence against women accountable

To understand the effectiveness and impact of legal responses

Priority research gaps

There is a need to investigate:

- the effectiveness of legal responses to DFV and sexual violence, including criminal justice responses and family law responses
- the effectiveness of legal responses to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims/survivors and perpetrators
- the limitations and unintended outcomes of legal responses¹⁵²
- the effectiveness of protection orders, including for marginalised populations¹⁵³
- the best combinations of legal and treatment responses for perpetrators of VAW^{21,153,154}
- the education needs of legal staff, including family court staff, to support victims/survivors in criminal justice settings^{79,155} and provide a trauma-informed response⁷⁹
- the link between mandatory reporting of VAW, victim safety and law enforcement¹⁵⁶
- the compatibility, effectiveness and efficacy of restorative justice programs in regard to various forms of VAW¹⁵⁷
- the benefits, risks and impacts of restorative justice programs¹⁵⁷
- the link between the legal and migration system
- the relationship between receiving legal advice and leaving or returning to a violent relationship
- the likelihood and conditions under which victims/survivors initiate the termination of court proceedings
- the proportion of cases before the courts that include allegations of DFV
- the occurrence and consideration of family violence in property orders made by the family law courts

Why action is needed

To develop effective legal responses to DFV and sexual violence, an increased understanding of victims/survivors' experiences with the legal system, including any unintended consequences of current legal responses, is required.¹⁵² Consideration should be given to alternatives to the conventional criminal legal system, such as the effectiveness and appropriateness of restorative justice programs. While research into restorative justice programs has been very limited, emerging evidence indicates that such programs have important benefits for victims/survivors of VAW and there appears to be a trend towards the use of restorative justice in some Australian jurisdictions as well as internationally¹⁵⁷

What researchers might ask

- How effective are current legal responses to DFV and sexual violence?
- What are the limitations and unintended consequences of current legal responses?
- What is required to minimise the misidentification of women as predominant/primary aggressors?
- How effective are protection orders in reducing the incidence and impact of VAW from the perspective of women?
- What are the training and education needs of legal staff to respond more effectively to VAW and better support victims/survivors?

To understand the effectiveness and impact of legal responses

What researchers might ask	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the effectiveness and appropriateness of restorative justice programs, including consideration of the risks and benefits for victims/survivors? • What is the relationship between receiving legal advice and leaving or returning to a violent relationship? • What are the trends in victim-/survivor-initiated termination of court proceedings?
How this is best achieved	<p>Priority research gaps can be best addressed through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evaluations of legal responses and instruments • analysis of administrative data • evaluations of outcomes for women accessing legal interventions • evaluations of restorative justice programs • studies that centre the perspectives of victims/survivors • review studies that bring together existing evidence • studies that incorporate feminist intersectional approaches (intersectionality) as the framework • economic evaluations
Expected outcomes and impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To inform legal responses that reduce VAW and are appropriate from the perspective of victims/survivors • to inform the design of training interventions for legal staff to better support victims/survivors, particularly those from marginalised populations
Current research	<p>ANROWS research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Compliance with and enforcement of family law parenting orders”, led by Dr Kaspiew (AIFS), is evaluating compliance with family law parenting orders and the operation of the enforcement regime • “‘What works’ to reduce and respond to violence against women: Evidence synthesis, methods and communication”, led by Dr Coates (ANROWS), is reviewing existing evidence in relation to what works to respond to VAW • “Accurately identifying the ‘person most in need of protection’ in domestic and family violence law”, led by Dr Nancarrow (ANROWS), is building evidence to support effective identification of the aggrieved and respondent in cases where there are mutual allegations of DFV • “Exploring the impact and effect of self-representation by one or both parties in family law proceedings involving allegations of family violence”, led by Dr Wangmann (University of Technology Sydney), is examining the impact and effect of self-representation by one or both parties in family law proceedings involving allegations of DFV

To understand the effectiveness and impact of legal responses

<p>Current research</p>	<p>External research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Threshold decisions in determining whether to prosecute child sexual abuse”, led by Professor Cashmore (University of Sydney), is examining how police and prosecutors make decisions about the prosecution of child sexual assault (ARC) • “Intoxication evidence in rape trials: A double-edged sword?”, led by Associate Professor Quilter (University of Wollongong), is investigating intoxication evidence in rape trials to assess whether existing laws and court-room practices are adapted to achieving justice for sexual violence victims (ARC) • “Using law and ending domestic violence: Women’s voices”, led by Professor Douglas (University of Queensland), is examining what contributes to women’s satisfaction and sense of safety resulting from legal interventions for domestic violence (ARC) • “The role of cultural factors in the sentencing of Indigenous sex offenders in the Northern Territory”, led by Dr Cripps (University of New South Wales), is examining the impact of extra-legal factors about sexuality and Indigenous culture on the sentencing of Indigenous sex offenders in the Northern Territory (ARC) • “Breaking patterns of violence to prevent family homicide”, led by Dr Bugeja (Monash University), is analysing criminal justice and coroners’ data on family homicide to produce a model to predict the probability of a lethal outcome, and enable resources to be targeted for interventions to parties identified as high risk prior to escalation (ARC) • “Enhancing data and reporting under the Fourth Action Plan”, led by ABS and AIHW, is focusing on enhancements to data and reporting on DFV and sexual violence • “Anonymous and confidential reporting options for sexual assault: An exploration of their purpose, use and potential in Australia”, led by Dr Shepherd (Swinburne University of Technology), was funded by AIC in 2020
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5.6 Housing and homelessness: What works to ensure women and their children are safely housed in the long term

To understand housing insecurity and housing needs of victims/survivors	
Priority research gaps	<p>There is a need to investigate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the housing needs of women who experience DFV, including the risk and prevalence of homelessness^{53,62,80,158,159} • the barriers to accessing shelters and homelessness services, including generalist homelessness services and specialist women's services⁶² • what works to provide and maintain adequate and safe housing, including the effectiveness of different housing interventions and assistance available to the victims/survivors, including shelter services and innovative interventions, such as rapid rehousing and flexible funding¹⁵⁸ • the effectiveness of interventions for specific population groups⁵³ • the long-term impacts of housing interventions¹⁵⁸ • the link between overcrowding and violence, in particular in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
Why action is needed	To design and implement housing interventions and ensure the safety of victims/survivors, an increased understanding of housing insecurity and needs of the victims/survivors is critical ^{53,80,158}
What researchers might ask	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How effective are current housing responses and interventions? • How does VAW impact the prevalence of homelessness? • What are the housing and safety needs of victims/survivors of VAW? • What programs and interventions are available to prevent homelessness for women experiencing violence? • What are the barriers and restrictions on access to housing services? • Which interventions work and for which populations? • What is the long-term impact of various housing interventions and programs? • What safety measures are or could be used to make secure women who remain in their house?
How this is best achieved	<p>Priority research gaps can be best addressed through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evaluations of housing and shelter models • longitudinal research tracking long-term impact of interventions • analysis of administrative data • process evaluations that assess the barriers and enablers of implementation • review studies that bring together existing evidence • studies that incorporate feminist intersectional approaches (intersectionality) as the framework • economic evaluations
Expected outcomes and impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To inform development of housing interventions and responses • to inform strategies preventing homelessness among women experiencing violence

To understand housing insecurity and housing needs of victims/survivors	
Current research	<p>ANROWS research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “‘What works’ to reduce and respond to violence against women: Evidence synthesis, methods and communication”, led by Dr Coates (ANROWS), is reviewing existing evidence in relation to what works to respond to VAW <p>External research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Integrated housing support for vulnerable families”, led by AHURI, is focusing on the provision of integrated housing support for families, including those affected by DFV

5.7 Socio-economic/financial security: What works to safeguard women’s social and economic security and independence from perpetrators of violence

To understand the role of social-economic safeguards in reducing violence	
Priority research gap	<p>There is a need to investigate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the effectiveness and impact of economic empowerment interventions and programs^{67,68,160} • the impact of income management, such as the BasicsCard and cashless debit cards, in responding to financial abuse • the responses of financial institutions, for example Centrelink and the banking industry, to financial abuse⁶⁷ • the training and response of frontline service officers at Centrelink and other financial services • strategies to ensure safety and security for women on temporary visas and newly arrived residents subject to waiting periods, and their children, who are ineligible for social security payments
Why action is needed	<p>To support women who experience DFV to leave violent relationships, establishing the effectiveness and impact of economic empowerment interventions and programs in supporting victims to leave abusive relationships is required.^{29,67,68,160} Consideration should also be given to costing the individual rather than the couple as the basis of eligibility for all social security payments¹⁶¹</p>
What researchers might ask	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What economic support and protection is currently available to victims/survivors of DFV? • How effective are current economic empowerment interventions and programs in supporting victims of DFV? • What is the impact of income management initiatives in responding to DFV and financial abuse? • How effective are current responses of financial institutions, such as Centrelink and the banking industry, including from the perspective of victims/survivors?

To understand the role of social-economic safeguards in reducing violence

- What are the training needs of Centrelink and financial services to respond more effectively to DFV and better support victims/survivors?
- What mechanisms can be employed to support women on temporary visas and their children to be safe from DFV while applications under the Migration Regulations' family violence provisions are considered?

How this is best achieved	<p>Priority research gaps can be best addressed through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evaluations of economic empowerment interventions and programs • evaluations of responses by financial institutions, including Centrelink and the banking industry • studies that centre the perspectives of victims/survivors • studies that incorporate feminist intersectional approaches (intersectionality) as the framework
Expected outcomes and impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To inform policy • to inform interventions that assist women to leave and remain free from DFV • to inform the design of training interventions for financial institutions to better support victims/survivors • to ensure women and children with uncertain residency status are not dependent on their abusers for financial and other (e.g. medical) support
Current research	<p>ANROWS research:</p> <p><u>"What works' to reduce and respond to violence against women: Evidence synthesis, methods and communication"</u>, led by Dr Coates (ANROWS), is reviewing existing evidence in relation to what works to respond to VAW</p>

5.8 Natural disasters and pandemics: What works to ensure safety of women and their children during times of crisis such as natural disasters

To understand what works to respond to the impacts of COVID-19 and natural disasters

Priority research gap

There is a need to investigate:

- the impact of COVID-19 on the nature and prevalence of DFV and other forms of VAW, including technology-facilitated abuse, coercive control and reproductive coercion
- the gendered financial impact of COVID-19, specifically the impact of financial pressures on DFV
- help-seeking behaviours of victims/survivors of DFV and barriers to reporting¹⁶²
- the appropriateness of service responses to DFV in the context of COVID-19 and their capacity to respond effectively in a timely manner¹⁶³
- the complex needs of victims/survivors of DFV during and after health pandemics and natural disasters
- the preparedness (or lack thereof) of specialist DFV services to respond to disasters
- risk of violence in marginalised populations due to the compound effects of COVID-19 and earlier inequalities^{164,165}
- the impact of innovative measures such as emergency court lists or remote hearings

Why action is needed

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of women and their children during and after a health pandemic or natural disaster, a better understanding of the impact of such crises on DFV is critical. While research in this area is still emerging, existing evidence indicates that VAW increases during and after natural disasters and health pandemics,^{163,166} and yet service responses are often scaled back during these times.¹⁶⁷ We need to understand how services can meet the complex needs of women during times of crises effectively and in a timely manner

What researchers might ask

- What is the impact of COVID-19 on the nature and prevalence of DFV?
- How is the impact of COVID-19 different from the impact of natural disasters, for example bushfires?
- What are the service needs of women who experience DFV during COVID-19?
- What are the drivers of increased VAW during times of crisis?
- How can an increase in VAW during health pandemics and natural disasters be prevented?
- What service responses support victims/survivors of DFV during and after health pandemics and natural disasters?
- What innovative measures could improve service responses during times of crises?

To understand what works to respond to the impacts of COVID-19 and natural disasters	
How this is best achieved	<p>Priority research gaps can be best addressed through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evaluations of service preparedness and responses • studies that centre the perspectives of victims/survivors • evaluation of innovative approaches and emerging good practice, such as emergency court lists • analysis of administrative data • economic evaluations • studies that incorporate feminist intersectional approaches (intersectionality) as the framework
Expected outcomes and impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To inform policy • to inform service responses and develop best practice standards • to inform prevention programs
Current research	<p>External research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Gender-based violence and help-seeking behaviours during the COVID-19 pandemic”, led by Dr Pfitzner (Monash University), is examining women’s experiences of violence and help-seeking under the COVID-19 restrictions as well as the impact on health and social care workers who provide support • “Weathering the storm: Australia’s responses to domestic and family violence during the COVID-19 pandemic”, led by Professor valentine (University of New South Wales) is building critical knowledge on innovative, effective strategies used by support services to protect both families and the DFV workforce • “COVID-19: Understanding the sex and gender dimensions on women’s health and wellbeing”, led by Professor Chappell (University of New South Wales) is mapping health and frontline DFV service activity, capacity and regulatory responses during COVID-19 • Families in Australia Survey: Life during COVID-19, led by AIFS, is exploring how Australians are coping with the COVID-19 pandemic

Acronyms, abbreviations and key terms

Acronyms and abbreviations

ANRA	<i>Australia's National Research Agenda to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children</i>
ANROWS	Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety
CALD	Culturally and linguistically diverse
DFV	Domestic and family violence
FGC	Female genital cutting/circumcision
IPV	Intimate partner violence
LGBTIQ	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex, queer and questioning
National Plan	<i>National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2010-2022</i>
NCAS	National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey
NPSOs	National Plan Senior Officials
TFA	Technology-facilitated abuse
VAW	Violence against women

Key terms

Violence against women	Any act of sexual or gender-based violence that causes or could cause physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of harm or coercion, in public and private life. ¹⁶⁸ This definition encompasses all forms of violence that women experience (including physical, sexual, emotional, cultural/spiritual, financial and others) that are sexual and gender-based.
Domestic violence/ intimate partner violence	Refers to acts of violence that occur between two people who are, or were, in an intimate relationship. It includes physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and financial abuse. While there is no single definition, the central element of domestic violence is behaviour motivated by gendered drivers of violence that can involve controlling a partner through fear, coercion and intimidation—for example by using behaviour that is violent and threatening. In most cases, the violent behaviour is part of a range of tactics to exercise power and control over women and their children, and can be both criminal and non-criminal.
Family violence	Refers to violence between family members, as well as between intimate partners. It involves the same sorts of behaviours as described for domestic violence, but includes the broader range of marital and kinship relationships in which violence may occur. For this reason, it is the most widely used term to identify the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as it captures the broader issue of violence within extended families, kinship networks and community relationships, as well as intergenerational issues. Family violence is also a relevant term when referring to complex forms of violence where family and in-laws, as well as other family members of the abusive spouse, can arrange for violent acts to be committed against the victim or are themselves abusive toward the victim.
National Plan Senior Officials	Senior officials in relevant Commonwealth, state and territory government departments with responsibility for policy and/or programs relevant to the National Plan.
Sexual violence	Refers to sexual actions without consent. This can include coercion, physical force, rape, sexual assault with implements, being forced to watch or engage in pornography, enforced prostitution, or being made to have sex with other people. The distinction between different types of VAW is often not clear-cut and it is common for victims/ survivors to experience multiple forms of violence at once.

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