Interventions for perpetrators of domestic, family and sexual violence in Australia

To support the growing policy focus on perpetrators of domestic, family and sexual violence,[1] ANROWS commissioned and published 20 relevant research reports between 2018 and 2020. This paper synthesises their key findings and the recommendations arising from these findings. The majority of these studies were funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services (DSS), through the Perpetrator Interventions Research Stream, to build an evidence base that could support the implementation of the National Outcome Standards for Perpetrator Interventions (NOSPI; DSS, 2015).

KEY FINDINGS

It has generally been accepted that the two key means for ensuring perpetrator accountability are the legal system and intervention programs for men who use violence. The body of work produced by ANROWS recognises ways in which these legal and social interventions work well, and ways in which their implementation could be improved. In particular, the research explores ways in which these interventions affect people from diverse groups such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, LGBTQ people[2] and young people.

In line with the NOSPI, ANROWS research explores how human services agencies (particularly mental health, alcohol and other drugs, and child protection services) could be recognised as essential parts of broader perpetrator intervention systems. Human services agencies could play a pivotal role in linking men into behaviour change interventions, and could work together with the legal system and men's family violence interventions to keep perpetrators' use of violence in view. This means having agencies monitor perpetrators' risk over time, sharing information and working collaboratively to manage risk.

Improving services and systems to better respond to men's use of violence will require:

- addressing trauma and inequality
- providing early and holistic support for associated issues
- supporting community-led approaches
- integrating service systems
- building workforce capacity.

Much work remains to be done to evaluate the effectiveness of perpetrator interventions. In undertaking this evaluation work, it is essential that the safety and wellbeing of victims and survivors remain the central focus.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- A national framework for building and sustaining a "web of accountability" is created with the involvement of all human services agencies together with the legal system and specialist men's family violence interventions.
- Guidance is developed for police on identifying patterns of coercive control so as to improve the accuracy of identification of the person most in need of protection.
- Guidance is developed for police and courts on trauma-informed ways of working, including recognising how trauma affects capacity to give evidence.
- Resourcing for men's behaviour change programs (MBCPs) is adequate to ensure flexible models of intervention that allow for men's longer term participation.
- Resourcing for MBCPs is adequate to build and maintain structures for supporting women and children. These should include an element of face-to-face contact and be independent of whether the man is participating in the program.
- Resourcing for MBCPs is adequate to ensure high-quality evaluations that examine outcomes for women and children.
- Worker training in the Safe & Together Model™ is supported.
- Investment is made in community-based reintegration programs for sex offenders that focus on building prosocial and law-abiding identities, not just on meeting conditions of release.
- Services co-design their programs with affected communities (including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, culturally and linguistically diverse, refugee and LGBTQ communities) and build partnerships with services that specialise in working with these diverse groups.

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1   Many of the reports cited in this paper used the terminology "domestic and family violence" rather than "domestic, family and sexual violence". Original language has been retained when discussing these reports.

2   Following the research report by Gray et al. (2020), this paper uses the term "LGBTQ people" rather than alternative terms such as "LGBTQ and intersex people", or "LGBTIQ+". The term LGBTQ reflects the populations who were engaged in the research.

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INTRODUCTION

This paper synthesises the findings of 20 ANROWS research studies, published between October 2018 and June 2020, on the topic of domestic, family and sexual violence perpetrator interventions. The majority of these studies were funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services (DSS), through the Perpetrator Interventions Research Stream, to build an evidence base that could support the implementation of the National Outcome Standards for Perpetrator Interventions (NOSPI; DSS, 2015).

The NOSPI were endorsed by all Australian state and territory governments as a means of guiding and measuring government, community and systemic interventions with male perpetrators of domestic, family and sexual violence against women and their children. The NOSPI include six headline standards:

1. Women's and their children's safety is the core priority of all perpetrator interventions.
2. Perpetrators get the right interventions at the right time.
3. Perpetrators face justice and legal consequences when they commit violence.
4. Perpetrators participate in programs and services that change their violent behaviours and attitudes.
5. Perpetrator interventions are driven by credible evidence to continuously improve.
6. People working in perpetrator intervention systems are skilled in responding to the dynamics and impacts of domestic, family and sexual violence (DSS, 2015).

The Perpetrator Interventions Research Stream funded research under four themes: effectiveness of systems; effectiveness of interventions; addressing the diversity of perpetrators; and interventions developed by, with and for Indigenous communities.

This synthesis provides a brief overview of what this body of research tells us, focusing on findings and recommendations that are relevant to policy and practice design decision-makers.

Forthcoming ANROWS research on perpetrator interventions, conducted as part of the "'What works' to reduce and respond to violence against women" project, will be published in 2022. This will include a systematic review of the national and international literature on the effectiveness of a range of different perpetrator interventions, and will be accessible through an online evidence portal.

THE CONCEPT OF PERPETRATOR ACCOUNTABILITY

"Holding perpetrators accountable" for their violence is stated as a key aim in many domestic, family and sexual violence policies. But what does this actually mean? At present, consensus is lacking, however it is generally accepted that there are two key avenues for ensuring perpetrator accountability: the legal system and intervention programs for men who use violence.

The legal system offers a form of systemic accountability that is externally imposed. Here violence is understood primarily as a criminal act that necessitates a criminal justice response.

Convictions and sentencing delivered by the courts serve to punish perpetrators and hold them to account for their past actions. The legal system can also play a role in holding perpetrators accountable for their future actions through imposing civil protection orders which can lead to criminal charges if breached.

Interventions for men who use violence, on the other hand, seek to create a different form of accountability, one that is internally cultivated. Men's family violence interventions include group-based men's behaviour change programs (MBCPs) and individual case management. The intention is that men who use violence come to develop a sense of responsibility, acknowledging the harms done by their past behaviour and committing to being accountable to their partners and children in future. Men's family violence interventions are often understood to "make men accountable", however attending a program does not necessarily mean that a man has engaged with its content, nor moved towards taking responsibility: only he can do the personal accountability work.

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A "WEB OF ACCOUNTABILITY"

Recent literature (e.g. No to Violence, 2015; Smith, 2013; Spencer, 2016, all cited in Chung, Upton-Davis et al., 2020) has proposed the concept of a "web of accountability" to protect the safety of women and children. A web of accountability includes surveillance of the perpetrator (formally, through the legal system, or informally, through the local community), effective engagement with men and appropriate referrals, and integrated service systems that can monitor and respond to risk.

The NOSPI (DSS, 2015, p. 2) capture this idea:

> Each part of our perpetrator accountability system must be part of the solution, including our police, courts, corrections, perpetrator and offender programmes and services, child protection agencies and a range of community services.

The NOSPI (DSS, 2015, pp. 4–5) further recognise the relevance of services that work with perpetrators to address issues other than violence, noting that these associated issues can "amplify the impact of his violence or affect his readiness to change". The NOSPI Standard 2 is "Perpetrators get the right interventions at the right time" (p. 8), and sharing information on victim safety and perpetrator risk between agencies is a key element of this standard.

In the research report *Improved Accountability – The Role of Perpetrator Intervention Systems,* Chung, Upton-Davis and colleagues (2020) reinforce the message of the NOSPI, drawing attention to the fact that human services agencies (particularly mental health, alcohol and other drugs, and child protection services) regularly come into contact with perpetrators of domestic and family violence, although men's use of violence is often invisible or secondary in these contexts.

Chung, Upton-Davis and colleagues (2020) argue that human services agencies could work together with the legal system and men's family violence interventions to create a web of accountability in which perpetrators' use of violence would remain in view. This means having agencies monitor perpetrators' risk over time, sharing information and working collaboratively to manage risk. Human services agencies could also work together to engage men in interventions that focus on them changing their violent behaviours, their violence-supportive attitudes and their use of coercive control. This shift could help to

improve the responsiveness of the system to the cycles of trauma and violence that are experienced by both victims and perpetrators. Such a shift would require appropriate training and increased information-sharing between agencies. The authors argue for a conceptual shift in which human services agencies would be recognised as essential parts of broader perpetrator intervention systems.

The report *Improving Family Violence Legal and Support Services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Men who are Perpetrators of Family Violence* (Langton et al., 2020) similarly argues that accountability is fostered through a network of agencies and people. The authors outline three "pillars of accountability": systemic and institutional accountability (such as MBCPs or legal responses), community accountability (having those surrounding the perpetrator hold him to account) and individual accountability (a perpetrator taking responsibility for violence). They argue that without these pillars working together, women will continue to carry the burden of responding to violence (for example, having to move or being shunned by a community for reporting violence).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE LEGAL SYSTEM

How the legal system holds men who use violence to account

As described above, there is a distinction between being held accountable through external sanctions and becoming accountable through the internal cultivation of a sense of responsibility. The NOSPI Standard 3 (DSS, 2015, p. 9) is "Perpetrators face justice and legal consequences when they commit violence." Chung, Upton-Davis and colleagues (2020) found that being held accountable by the legal system may, however, actually *reduce* the likelihood that a man will take personal responsibility for his violence. For example, when the court issues a protection order to hold a man accountable, the man might perceive this as being "just a piece of paper" and not comply with it. This is particularly likely for men who do not view the court as having legitimate authority, or who feel that they have not been granted procedural justice.

Moreover, the accountability imposed by the legal system is accountability to the state, which does not necessarily align with accountability to the victims and survivors who have experienced violence. Crimes are prosecuted on behalf of the state, not on behalf of the victim. This means that decisions made by the court to hold perpetrators to account may do so in ways that do not acknowledge the impact of violence on the victim, promote her safety or align with her wishes (Chung, Upton-Davis et al., 2020).

In the report *The Views of Australian Judicial Officers on Domestic and Family Violence Perpetrator Interventions* (Fitz-Gibbon et al., 2020), some judicial officers (judges and magistrates) were found to conceptualise the "success" of legal intervention broadly, in a way that included consideration of what has changed for the victim and survivor, while others held a narrower view, where success was understood in terms of perpetrator compliance with court orders.

Judicial officers are empowered to mandate individuals to attend programs, however this research found that judicial officers often lack awareness about referral options

> **RECOMMENDATION 1**
> A national framework for building and sustaining a "web of accountability" is created with the involvement of all human services agencies together with the legal system and specialist men's family violence interventions.

for men who use domestic and family violence and would welcome more information about the nature of programs, their availability and the outcomes they can achieve.

Fitz-Gibbon and colleagues' (2020) study also found that judicial officers have limited access to information about which programmatic interventions (such as MBCPs) and which justice-related interventions (such as protection orders) have been used with a particular individual in the past. Information about past interventions for that individual, and what the outcomes were, could assist judicial officers to apply legal interventions with the intention of improving safety and wellbeing for women and their children.

Chung, Upton-Davis and colleagues (2020) found that the court appears to trust that referral to an MBCP will at least result in retention in the program (if not actual behaviour change), whereas MBCPs' capacity to enforce retention is limited. Moreover, when a man disengages from a program, he can drop out of view of the system entirely.

They also note that the onus of keeping men within the system often falls upon women (Chung, Upton-Davis et al., 2020). For example, it can be up to a man's partner to alert police when she believes he has breached his protection order. This can increase her risk, as the man may blame her for his involvement with perpetrator intervention systems.

In line with a broader conceptualisation of accountability and the need for a wider systems response to protect the safety of women and children, some countries have trialled electronic monitoring as a tool for increasing perpetrator accountability. Electronic monitoring involves a tracking device (usually an ankle bracelet) worn by a defendant/offender which allows his movements to be monitored. Exclusion zones are programmed into the device, and community corrections staff receive an alert if the zones are breached.

A report titled *Electronic Monitoring in the Context of Domestic and Family Violence* (Nancarrow & Modini, 2018), commissioned by the Queensland Government, identified potential unintended consequences of electronic monitoring in the context of domestic and family violence. These include:

- the potential for the restrictions and stigma associated with electronic monitoring to compound offenders' anger and frustration, and thereby elevate risk
- continued emotional abuse and coercive control through means that are not detected by GPS tracking (including using a third party or communications technology)
- inadvertently alerting the defendant/offender to the whereabouts of the victim and survivor through the use of exclusion zones
- creating a false sense of security for victims and survivors if their expectations of the technology exceed its actual capabilities.

The study found that, overall, electronic monitoring can reduce the number of defendants/offenders who breach a no-contact condition on a court order, however the risk of harm for some individual victims and survivors may remain substantial. The researchers concluded that electronic monitoring is suitable for use in a domestic and family violence context when implemented within a broader program of intervention that addresses the risks of reoffending for each individual. They identified five principles to underpin the use of electronic monitoring, including the need for any program to be guided by safety considerations for the victim and survivor.

RECOMMENDATION 2
Guidance is developed for judicial officers about seeking and making use of a perpetrator's history of interventions (for example protection orders, prior sentences and program attendance) in all domestic and family violence matters, including in sentencing.
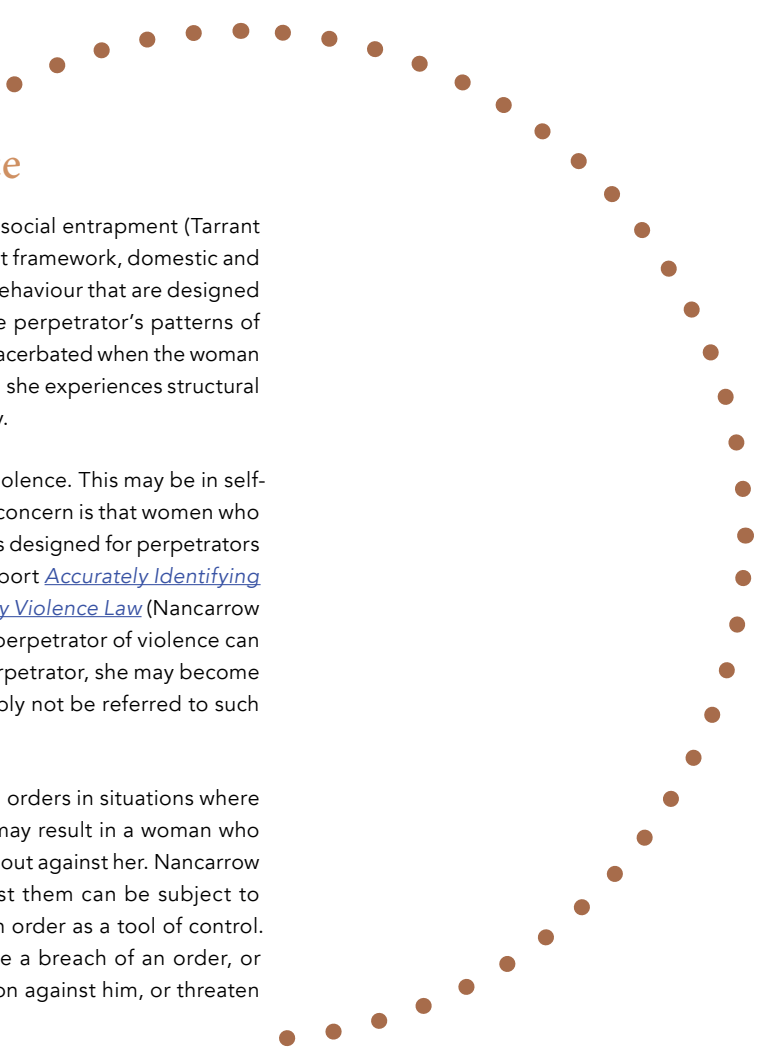
RECOMMENDATION 3
Local Courts and Magistrates Courts across Australia investigate opportunities for improving the follow-up of compliance with protection orders.

RECOMMENDATION 4
Electronic monitoring for domestic and family violence offenders is considered as part of a broader program of intervention that always prioritises the safety of the victim and survivor.

How the legal system can cause harm for women who use violence

Domestic and family violence may be understood as a form of social entrapment (Tarrant et al., 2019; Tolmie et al., 2018). According to a social entrapment framework, domestic and family violence is characterised by a perpetrator's patterns of behaviour that are designed to isolate, coerce and instil fear in the victim and survivor. The perpetrator's patterns of behaviour are tailored to the woman's responses. His abuse is exacerbated when the woman lacks support from family, community and institutions, and when she experiences structural inequities associated with her gender, class, race and disability.

Women experiencing social entrapment may themselves use violence. This may be in self-defence, or perhaps in anticipation of future harm. A particular concern is that women who use these types of violence may become subject to interventions designed for perpetrators of domestic and family violence. Evidence from the research report *Accurately Identifying the "Person Most in Need of Protection" in Domestic and Family Violence Law* (Nancarrow et al., 2020) highlighted that being inaccurately identified as a perpetrator of violence can elevate risk to a woman's safety: having been identified as a perpetrator, she may become ineligible for services that exist to support victims, or may simply not be referred to such services.

A particular issue is the use of cross-applications for protection orders in situations where there are conflicting claims of intimate partner violence. This may result in a woman who has been experiencing violence having a protection order taken out against her. Nancarrow et al. (2020) found that women with protection orders against them can be subject to systems abuse from their partners, who can use the protection order as a tool of control. For example, a man can threaten to contact police and allege a breach of an order, or pressure the woman to withdraw her own protection application against him, or threaten to contact child protection services.

Supporting the accurate identification of the person most in need of protection requires guidance for police as well as courts. When responding to a call relating to domestic and family violence, police have a responsibility to make a scene safe, and may have limited time to consider the history and dynamics of a relationship. The research by Nancarrow and colleagues (2020) highlights that this focus on isolated incidents of violence (rather than on patterns of power and control) does not always support accurate application of domestic and family violence legislation.

Policing practice is also influenced by stereotypes about "real victims", that is, ideas that women who are real victims would not fight back, and would cooperate with police (Nancarrow et al., 2020). Nancarrow et al. (2020) found that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are particularly vulnerable in this regard, as prior negative experiences with police may have forged mistrust which can leave them reluctant to engage with police assistance, and therefore open to being perceived as uncooperative.

Research with incarcerated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women demonstrates how the safety of women can be compromised in situations when entrenched community mistrust of authorities intersects with inaccurate identification of the person most in need of protection. In line with the findings of Nancarrow and colleagues (2020), Bevis and colleagues (2020) found that women with orders against them who experienced violence were reluctant to contact police for fear of being reported for breaches. Their report, titled *Kungas' Trauma Experiences and Effects on Behaviour in Central Australia,* further found that women with orders against them were reluctant to even contact health and other support services, for fear that these services would contact police.

A woman interviewed for this research study said:

> The male judge who sentenced me spoke wrong way about me. He said I was really dangerous, not a responsible person, and not a responsible person for my children. He did not listen to my history and why I did things, I wouldn't just be violent for nothing. That judge should have listened to my story and given me help in prison – given me rehab and counselling. I am a young woman, and not a violent person until violence is done to me. (Quoted in Bevis et al., 2020)

Together, the studies cited here demonstrate that when legal system professionals are not supported to recognise and understand domestic and family violence as social entrapment, women who use violence in response to social entrapment may become subject to interventions designed for perpetrators. Rather than increasing the safety of victims and survivors – which is the principle underpinning perpetrator interventions – this can instead increase risk.

How the legal system can cause harm for adolescents who use violence

Adolescent violence in the home is defined as a pattern of abusive behaviour that is used by adolescents against parents or other caregivers and siblings. Despite substantial underreporting, this type of violence comprises a significant proportion (around 10%) of police callouts to family violence incidents (State of Victoria, 2016).

As seen above in the discussion of women who use resistive violence, the legal system is designed to deal with people either as victims or as perpetrators, but rarely as both. However, adolescents who use violence in the home have commonly experienced childhood trauma and are victims and survivors of violence themselves.

The research report *Positive Interventions for Perpetrators of Adolescent Violence in the Home: The PIPA Project* (Campbell et al., 2020) identified that families experiencing adolescent violence generally have very little service support, and intervention often does not occur until a situation reaches crisis point and police are called. Young people can then be subject to legal interventions which are designed for adult perpetrators of domestic and family violence and which can cause harm when applied to a young person.

For example, the study found that interim exclusion orders (which remove the violent person from the home) were issued in almost a third of cases involving adolescent respondents in Victoria. Now labelled as "perpetrators", these adolescents have few options in terms of crisis accommodation or out-of-home care. Police therefore have no choice but to place adolescents with another family member, which potentially just displaces the risk, rather than addressing it.

The study also found that many adolescents facing court for the use of violence in the home have a psychosocial disability. This raises questions about their capacity to understand or comply with protection orders, particularly when the protected person is their primary caregiver.

A practitioner who was interviewed for the PIPA study said:

> A lot of the time with my cases … always the young person is identified as the perpetrator, where I have some cases where it's both the parents are the perpetrators, not even realising they're the perpetrators and which is why the young person is retaliating but instead of the parents being parents and going,

RECOMMENDATION 5
Guidance is developed for police on identifying patterns of coercive control, so as to improve the accuracy of identification of the person most in need of protection.

RECOMMENDATION 6
Awareness-raising work is undertaken with judicial officers, lawyers and corrective services staff regarding the safety implications for women when orders are made against them.

RECOMMENDATION 7
Guidance is developed for police and courts on trauma-informed ways of working, including recognising how trauma affects capacity to give evidence.

RECOMMENDATION 8
More time is allocated within the legal system for communicating with and listening to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, and trauma-informed and culturally safe processes, including alternatives to sentencing, are developed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

well let's look at why, they press charges. So, these young people are getting in trouble with the law for behaviours that are just laid upon them every day. (Quoted in Campbell et al., 2020)

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PROGRAMS FOR MEN WHO USE DOMESTIC, FAMILY AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Programs for men who use violence include behaviour change group programs, affiliated partner contact programs and individual case management. In Australia, these programs are founded on recognition of the gendered drivers of domestic and family violence and the need to address these drivers within an intersectional framework. Programs also include specialised interventions for sex offenders, which may be delivered in corrective settings or in the community.

The NOSPI Standard 4 (DSS, 2015, p. 9) is "Perpetrators participate in programmes and services that enable them to change their violent behaviours and attitudes." ANROWS research has drawn attention to a number of components essential to effective programs, which are outlined below.

Engaging men

Engaging men in a conversation about change is one of the key challenges for practitioners working with men who use violence. These men often minimise or justify their violent behaviour and can be defensive when challenged. Engagement is the first step towards attitudinal and behavioural change, and program effectiveness is contingent upon it.

The research report *Engaging Men who use Violence: Invitational Narrative Approaches* (Wendt et al., 2019) explored invitational narrative ways of working that seek to create self-generated and personally meaningful change, which is likely to be sustainable. The research found that invitational narrative approaches are successful in engaging men through:

- curious inquiry, where practitioners are curious about men's stories and the contradictions within them, and are careful to avoid confrontational approaches that tend to shut down conversations
- supporting men to explore and articulate their "ethical preferences", or how they wish to live
- supporting men to identify what restrains them from living in accordance with their ethical preferences
- creating a non-judgemental and safe environment in which men can experience their shame.

The study found that invitational narrative practitioners must be influenced by feminist and intersectional thinking and be ready to acknowledge their work with individual men as part of a larger political project focusing on gender equality and the safety of women and their children. The study emphasised the need for practitioners to receive ongoing training, supervision and support.

RECOMMENDATION 9

Investment is made in crisis and long-term accommodation options for adolescents who use violence in the home.

RECOMMENDATION 10

Trauma-informed interventions are developed for adolescents who use violence in the home. These should include capacity for outreach, case management and whole-of-family restorative engagement.

RECOMMENDATION 11

Therapeutic treatment orders are considered in cases featuring adolescents with complex needs who use violence in the home.
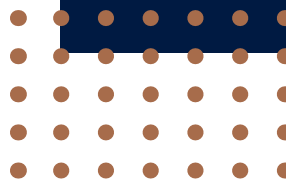
A subsequent research report, *Exploring the Client–Worker Relationship in Men's Behaviour Change Programs* (Reimer, 2020), examined how facilitators of MBCPs forged trust with men participating in the groups by building personalised relationships based on empathy and appropriate self-disclosure.

The research found that these personalised client–worker relationships could create an environment conducive to behavioural and attitudinal change. However, the stronger the facilitators' emotional investment in participants, the greater the risk that they could collude with them. The research identified a number of actions that facilitators can take to prevent collusion:

- regularly make clear statements about the professional purpose of the relationship
- challenge participants' attempts to collude
- maintain good relationships with supervisors, where the challenges of the client–worker relationship can be openly discussed.

A female facilitator who participated in the research by Reimer said:

> It's slippery work, because you're kind of wanting to create that really safe place that is compassionate and respectful, and nurturing. And yet, at the same time, be really alert to any of the stuff that's going to slip them away back into that space, or create an environment where they're colluding together, where it gets really difficult to do the work. (Quoted in Reimer, 2020)

Developing an appreciation of the different elements of perpetrators' lives can assist facilitators to engage them as individuals and better understand potential barriers to engagement. The report *Best Practice Principles for Interventions with Domestic and Family Violence Perpetrators from Refugee Backgrounds* (Fisher et al., 2020) highlighted that when working with men from refugee backgrounds, it is essential to undertake accountability work in a context that recognises the impacts of refugee trauma and settlement challenges.

Engaging men who are fathers

Men who use violence and are fathers may have contact with child and family services, even if they are not engaged in a specialist program for men who use violence. For child and family services, engaging with men as fathers can be important for ensuring a focus on children's safety.

Two recent reports investigated how a range of different services engage with fathers who use violence. *Invisible Practices: Intervention with Fathers who use Violence* (Healey et al., 2018) and *STACY for Children* (Humphreys et al., 2020) were both the results of action research projects investigating services that were implementing a whole-of-family approach called the Safe & Together™ Model. This model entails three core principles, of equal importance:

- keeping the child safe and together with the non-offending parent
- partnering with the non-offending parent as the default position
- intervening with the perpetrator to reduce risk and harm to the child.

Invisible Practices engaged domestic and family violence, child protection and family support workers in the action research, finding that for these services, the implementation of the Safe & Together principles generally required a shift in focus from mothers' parenting behaviours to perpetrators' patterns of behaviour, described as "pivoting to the perpetrator".

RECOMMENDATION 12

Investment is made in MBCPs as a means of improving the safety of women and children.

RECOMMENDATION 13

Facilitators of MBCPs – and their supervisors – have access to evidence-informed professional development opportunities on effective client–worker relationships, including ways to establish rapport while avoiding collusion.

RECOMMENDATION 14

Resourcing for MBCPs is adequate to ensure flexible models of intervention that allow for men's longer term participation.

STACY for Children engaged domestic and family violence, mental health, and alcohol and other drugs workers, finding that for these services, the implementation of the Safe & Together principles ensured that children remained visible as victims and survivors of domestic and family violence. Implementing the Safe & Together principles also ensured that a focus was maintained on adult clients as parents, and that attention was given to the impact of coercive tactics on each member of the family.

These reports highlighted that paying attention to fathers who use violence gives workers the opportunity to gain a detailed understanding of men's patterns of violent behaviour, which is invaluable in informing risk assessments and safety planning. When services do not engage with fathers who use violence, more focus is placed on mothers, which can result in mothers being held responsible for failing to protect their children, instead of fathers being held responsible for exposing their children to harm.

Invisible Practices found that for domestic and family violence, child protection and family support workers, making referrals to programs for men who use violence required particular knowledge and skills, and organisational support and practitioner capacity-building were essential for staff to feel supported in pivoting to the perpetrator.

The *Invisible Practices* and *STACY for Children* reports underscored the need for workers to focus on parenting when talking with fathers. If the father turns the conversation to blaming or describing the behaviour of others (particularly his partner or ex-partner), workers need to return to the subject of his parenting behaviour.

In the *STACY for Children* report, a domestic and family violence worker described drawing attention to violence as a fathering choice:

> We worked a lot with dads where they feel justified by abusing their partner, spitting in her face, calling her degrading names and things like that, but when you start to reframe it, where were the kids? What was the impact on the kids? What was your child doing when it happened … When you bring the child into the room and you bring it back to a parenting choice, you get a different response from fathers. (Quoted in Humphreys et al., 2020)

The studies cited in this section all point to the need to engage men in a way that balances empathy with accountability. For men who have children, the desire to be a better father can be a powerful motivator for change.

Partner contact

NOSPI Standard 1 is "Women and their children's safety is the core priority of all perpetrator interventions" (DSS, 2015, p. 8), and the NOSPI emphasise that effective programs for perpetrators must also have mechanisms for supporting women and children. Research continues to highlight the need to balance a focus on engaging men in MBCPs with the need to engage directly with their partners.

The research report *Prioritising Women's Safety in Australian Perpetrator Interventions: The Purpose and Practices of Partner Contact* (Chung, Anderson et al., 2020) documented the ways that partner contact is operating in Australia and the experiences of women who receive support through a partner contact program. This study highlighted that partner contact work can lead to positive outcomes for women, irrespective of the extent to which their partner engages in the program.

RECOMMENDATION 15
Workforce development for workers who engage with men includes developing skills and confidence in working with people from diverse groups.

RECOMMENDATION 16
Worker training in the Safe & Together Model is supported.

Women reported greater understanding of domestic and family violence, feelings of validation (particularly in relation to non-physical forms of violence), feelings of security from knowing there is oversight of the perpetrator, increased confidence, and improved physical and mental health:

> … validating my experiences – [domestic and family violence] is such an isolating experience and it was positive to have someone to speak to who was able to reflect the common experiences of other women. The worker also allowed me to check in about what was healthy/unhealthy/abusive behaviour by my partner as I learned to redevelop and assert healthy boundaries – there was so much gaslighting and projection by my partner that this was really helpful to be able to regularly "reality check" with someone; she could also incorporate this into the MBCP. (Sophie,[3] New South Wales; quoted in Chung, Anderson et al., 2020)

Chung, Anderson and colleagues (2020) confirmed earlier studies finding that without partner contact, risk for women and their children can increase, as a perpetrator can use his participation in the program to perpetuate his abuse. For example, a man can tell his partner that the MBCP facilitator had said that she was the problem, or coerce his partner into completing his MBCP homework (see McLaren et al., 2020). Partner contact also helps to manage risk by giving facilitators access to women's perspectives on group participants' progress, allowing triangulation of what the men are reporting.

This study suggests that a helpful benchmark for good practice in partner contact is ensuring that there is an initial face-to-face encounter which is then supplemented by telephone and/or email communication, with at least occasional face-to-face contact thereafter. Achieving this is resource-intensive: a large number of calls are often required to establish contact (particularly as women are not expecting to be contacted), and further resourcing is then required to meet their needs. The work that goes into partner contact is often not captured within reporting mechanisms. Consequently, this work remains invisible, and this makes securing funding difficult. At present funding levels for partner contact are highly variable.

Chung, Anderson and colleagues (2020) found that most partner contact programs are only funded to support women for the period during which their partners are participating in an MBCP. If the man drops out, partner contact usually ceases (though it may continue at the service's own expense). Even if the man completes the program, partner contact does not often continue beyond the program's end date. Both practitioners and women who were interviewed for the study reported that making partner contact contingent upon men's participation in a program inadvertently allows women to be further controlled, as they are made dependent on perpetrators for access to support. It is therefore essential that support to both partners be delivered independently, with coordination.[4] Further guidance about the delivery of partner contact services is available through the practice guide that was produced as part of this research project.

RECOMMENDATION 17
Resourcing for MBCPs is adequate to build and maintain structures for supporting women and children. These should include an element of face-to-face contact, and be independent of whether the man is participating in the program.

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3   Not her real name.

4   The importance of coordination when working with both partners separately was also highlighted in *STACY: Safe and Together Addressing ComplexitY* (Healey et al., 2020), a project funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services that preceded ANROWS's *STACY for Children* project.

High-quality evaluations

NOSPI Standard 5 (DSS, 2015, p. 10) is "Perpetrator interventions are driven by credible evidence to continuously improve." Measuring program outcomes is crucial for quality improvement and for demonstrating success so as to ensure sustainability of programs. To date in Australia, program evaluations have commonly been process-orientated, with success being defined in terms of outputs, such as the number of participants completing the program. The outcomes of the program in relation to achievement of program goals have rarely been measured. The most recent published report against the NOSPI (DSS, 2018) recognises that the six indicators it reports on are all output indicators, and that outcome indicators may be created in future as data development improves.

The research report *Evaluation Readiness, Program Quality and Outcomes in Men's Behaviour Change Programs* (Day et al., 2019) described how the evaluation of program outcomes depends on a clearly articulated theory of change, represented in a program logic model. However, as this study identified, MBCPs at present rarely articulate their program logic in any formalised way. Determining readiness for outcome evaluation is therefore a challenge.

In the research report *Evaluating Behaviour Change Programs for Men who use Domestic and Family Violence*, Nicholas and colleagues (2020) recognise that the question of how program "success" should be defined remains highly contested. Ultimately, the goal of MBCPs is to keep women and children safe. However, defining safety in a way that can be measured is not a straightforward task. Commonly used measures can be problematic. For example:

- Measures of violence that are linked to police or justice records do not capture incidents that escape police attention. Nor do these measures capture the range of non-criminal tactics[5] that perpetrators may use to control women and children, for example emotional and financial abuse, or sabotaging women's relationships with their support networks (Nicholas et al., 2020).
- Program completion may be used as a measure of success, however this is a process measure which does not assess whether the goals of participation have been achieved. Merely completing a program does not demonstrate that a man's violent and controlling behaviour has changed, or that his partner's safety and wellbeing have improved (Day et al., 2019; Nicholas et al., 2020).
- Perpetrators' self-reporting of their behaviour may be used to measure the success of a program. However, the reliability of this measure is doubtful, as there are often vast differences between the self-report ratings given by perpetrators and those given by their partners. Moreover, changes that are observed at the end of a program may not necessarily be sustained after the program ends (Day et al., 2019; Nicholas et al., 2020).

Addressing women's safety is a broader issue than just "stopping the violence", since women's fears are broader than just fear of their partner or fear of the violence, and fear can continue even after the violence has "stopped". The research report *Defining Quality of Life Indicators for Measuring Perpetrator Intervention Effectiveness* (McLaren et al., 2020) found that women's fears included fears for the safety of children, fears related to engagement with formal systems and processes, fears related to imagined futures and socio-economic fears (for more detail see the poster developed as part of this project). McLaren and colleagues (2020) found that women's top priorities for quality of life were *autonomy*, *informal relationships* and *emotional health*. They argued that women's quality of life should be a central consideration in both program design and program evaluation.

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> The question of how program "success" should be defined remains highly contested.

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5   Note that economic and emotional abuse were criminalised in Tasmania in 2004 and at the time of publication of this synthesis the criminalisation of coercive control was under consideration in other jurisdictions.

Nicholas and colleagues (2020) pointed out that high-quality evaluations require a significant level of resourcing and expertise to allow for the following:

- a program logic describing the program and its mechanisms to be developed
- evaluation questions relevant to the purpose and users of the evaluation to be generated
- indicators and data collection methods appropriate to the evaluation questions to be selected
- careful consideration to be given to ethical and safety issues.

Day and colleagues (2019) and Nicholas and colleagues (2020) emphasise the need to build the capacity of the MBCP workforce to allow for better program design and evaluation. Nicholas and colleagues (2020) developed an evaluation guide for MBCP workers to support the planning of high-quality evaluations, and identified a number of validated tools that could be used to evaluate men's behaviour change as well as women's and children's safety. Nicholas and colleagues (2020) recommend that program providers be supported to conduct periodic process evaluations that can help to identify when an MBCP is outcome evaluation ready.

Systematically building the evidence base: A proposed MBCP minimum data set and a methodology for assessing the cost-effectiveness of interventions

At present, participant information that is routinely collected by MBCPs is inconsistent across Australia, making it difficult to aggregate data to build the evidence base from which future policy and programming can be developed. With the participation of service providers, Chung, Upton-Davis and colleagues (Chapter 8; 2020) developed a national minimum data set which could help to establish predictors of program attrition. This in turn could help determine the suitability of different types of referrals to MBCPs.

Closely related to the question of the effectiveness of MBCPs is the question of their cost-effectiveness. Chung, Upton-Davis and colleagues (Chapter 9; 2020) developed and piloted a scenario-based methodology for evaluating the return on investment for domestic and family violence perpetrator interventions. Unlike traditional methods which present data on the *average* costs to women of domestic and family violence, this scenario-based method gives visibility to the *diversity* of costs borne by women and highlights that, for some, the costs are extreme.

This study found that even programs with only a very small chance of success can show a positive return to the economy, since the costs of domestic and family violence are immensely high. Even when costs to the state only (rather than costs to the entire economy) are taken into consideration, programs still show positive returns both when they involve the more severe forms of domestic and family violence, and in the scenarios where probabilities of program success are higher.

Community-based programs for sex offenders

Providing support to high-risk sex offenders can reduce the risk that they will reoffend, yet there is little evidence about how Australian community-based sex offender

RECOMMENDATION 18
Resourcing for MBCPs is adequate to ensure high-quality evaluations that examine outcomes for women and children.

RECOMMENDATION 19
The minimum data set is trialled, in agreement with Commonwealth, state and territory governments, to assist with policy decisions and resource allocation.

RECOMMENDATION 20
The return on investment methodology is trialled, in agreement with Commonwealth, state and territory governments, to assist with policymaking and resource allocation.

programs function. The research report *Community-Based Approaches to Sexual Offender Reintegration* (Richards et al., 2020) explored the ways in which two different community-based, non-therapeutic programs worked to reduce sexual recidivism. The programs studied were the Townsville-based Cultural Mentoring Program, which uses a model of Aboriginal cultural and spiritual support and mentorship, and the Adelaide-based Circles of Support and Accountability, which uses a model of practical support and accountability provided by trained community volunteers.

A key finding was that both programs worked to build new, non-offending identities among participants – the Cultural Mentoring Program through the development of a positive, strong and healthy Aboriginal cultural identity, and Circles of Support and Accountability through the development of life goals and participation in a range of community activities.

As part of this study, the researchers interviewed victims and survivors of sexual violence, exploring their needs at the time of the offender's release. They found that victims' and survivors' views were predominantly pragmatic rather than punitive: their focus was on preventing future offending, rather than punishing past offending. Victims and survivors strongly recommended that they be kept informed about the release and reintegration process of offenders, so that they could be empowered to make informed decisions about their own safety.

A victim and survivor of sexual violence interviewed for the study said:

> I feel like I was kept in the dark a bit about his exact parole conditions, what his rights and responsibilities were upon being released. I feel like I would have liked that real concrete assurance that he wasn't going to come near me – because I don't feel like I really got that because at the end of the day, it was in his parole conditions that he wasn't to contact me – because beyond the piece of paper, I couldn't really see what they could do to stop him approaching me, or what sort of consequences would arise should he try. I would have liked more concrete assurance that he was going to be stopped if he came anywhere near me. (Quoted in Richards et al., 2020)

IMPROVING SERVICES AND SYSTEMS

ANROWS research into perpetrator interventions highlights five key aspects to improving services and systems:

- addressing trauma and inequality
- providing early and holistic support for associated issues
- supporting community-led approaches
- integrating service systems
- building workforce capacity.

Addressing trauma and inequality

Men who use violence may themselves have experienced trauma and discrimination, particularly if they are members of structurally marginalised groups such as refugee, LGBTQ or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. In undertaking behaviour change work with men who use violence, it is essential that the gendered drivers

RECOMMENDATION 21

Investment is made in community-based reintegration programs for sex offenders that focus on building prosocial and law-abiding identities, not just on meeting conditions of release.

RECOMMENDATION 22

Victims and survivors of sexual offences are kept informed about the release and reintegration process of offenders, so that they can be empowered to make informed decisions about their safety.

of violence be explored in the context of men's own experiences, including their experiences of trauma.

EXAMPLE:

Addressing trauma and inequality in work with men from refugee backgrounds

Best Practice Principles for Interventions with Domestic and Family Violence Perpetrators from Refugee Backgrounds (Fisher et al., 2020) identified the following contextual aspects of relevance to men from refugee backgrounds:

- *pre-migration experiences* including torture, political unrest, conflict, environmental degradation, oppressive governments, death of family members, famine, loss of personal property, and detention or time in refugee camps (sometimes spanning many years)
- *post-settlement experiences* including learning English, finding accommodation, securing employment, navigating the Australian service system, managing racism and discrimination, and undertaking a process of acculturation to a society which is more individualistic and has greater gender equality.

These stresses can increase the frequency and severity with which men perpetrate domestic and family violence. Fisher and colleagues (2020) emphasise the need for perpetrator programs to acknowledge the impact of men's pre-migration and post-settlement experiences while taking care not to allow men to use their experiences of trauma as an excuse to avoid taking responsibility for their violent behaviours. In this research project, Fisher and colleagues (2020) developed a set of best practice principles for working with men from refugee backgrounds who use violence.

Providing early and holistic support for associated issues

Alongside recognising trauma and inequality, effective responses to men's use of violence should include support for associated issues such as alcohol or other drug use, mental health or disability – in particular, neurological or psychosocial disability. Integrated service provision is key. It is also important that supports are provided as early interventions, rather than as crisis or post-crisis responses.

Supporting community-led approaches

In general, perpetrator interventions have been developed around the prototype of a white, heterosexual, adult and cisgender male who is perpetrating violence against his female intimate partner. For people whose identity and/or pattern of behaviour do not match this prototype, legal and community-based interventions to increase accountability or responsibility can have unintended consequences. The NOSPI recognise that perpetrator interventions must be designed to respond effectively to perpetrators from diverse cultures, communities and circumstances and must engage effectively with perpetrators with diverse needs.

RECOMMENDATION 23
Services recognise the effects and impact of trauma and inequality on the perpetration of violence. Where necessary, services work collaboratively to provide holistic support to men to ensure that histories of trauma and experiences of inequality are not used to excuse violence.

EXAMPLE:

Improving access to and suitability of services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men who use violence

The ANROWS research report *Improving Family Violence Legal and Support Services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Men who are Perpetrators of Family Violence*, by Langton and colleagues (2020), found that most interventions for men focus on crisis and post-crisis response.

Through focus groups, interviews and participant observation, the researchers consistently heard about three intersecting issues as contributors to violence: mental health, substance use and neurological conditions. The findings suggest that all three issues create barriers to men accessing services, and are associated with higher levels of incarceration. All three issues can also affect efforts to ensure accountability is taken for violence: for example, if a perpetrator is subjected to a protection order that he does not understand because of a neurological condition, it will not encourage accountability.

The lack of support and rehabilitation services was frequently raised by service providers and community members throughout the research. Appropriate treatment and diversion options were seen as fundamental to preventing violence, and to diverting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men away from the criminal legal system and inappropriate incarceration.

The suite of research commissioned by ANROWS included examinations of interventions for:

- perpetrators from LGBTQ communities (Gray et al., 2020)
- perpetrators from refugee backgrounds (Fisher et al., 2020)
- perpetrators from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities (Blagg et al., 2020; Langton et al., 2020)
- adolescents who use violence in the home (Campbell et al., 2020)
- young people with harmful sexual behaviours (Quadara et al., 2020).

These studies draw attention to the tension that exists between the need to recognise the characteristic experiences of people within each of these groups while at the same time recognising the heterogeneity that exists within each group. That is, there is a need to recognise and respond to the specific needs and experiences of people from these groups without stereotyping or marginalising them.

This body of research also points to the importance of robust community engagement in order to address domestic, family and sexual violence in a way that recognises diversity. When engaging with structurally marginalised groups, it is important to bear in mind that interventions that are community-led are more likely to be appropriate and acceptable to their target groups (see "Supporting community-led approaches in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities", below).

Supporting community-led approaches means building connections between the broader domestic and family violence service system and community organisations that work with diverse groups, and working together with communities to co-design programs.

RECOMMENDATION 24:
Interventions for perpetrators encompass early support for mental health, alcohol and other drug use, and disability, in particular neurological or psychosocial disability.

EXAMPLE:

Supporting community-led approaches in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have advocated for community-led approaches to family violence that are culturally safe and recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Law and Culture. In the report *Understanding the Role of Law and Culture in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities in Responding to and Preventing Family Violence*, Blagg and colleagues (2020) explored the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Law and Culture in preventing, intervening in and healing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family violence.

Working closely with individuals and yarning groups in six different Aboriginal communities, the researchers found an almost universal belief that Law and Culture are the only way forward for communities taking ownership of addressing family violence. Research participants argued that responses to men who use violence should move away from the mainstream legal system towards responses led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. In particular, research participants emphasised the need for diversionary programs to channel individuals away from the criminal legal system and towards healing programs that could address intergenerational trauma, alcohol and other drug use, gambling and other issues that stem from colonisation. This research highlighted the extent to which such issues shape family violence, and the limits of gender inequality as an explanatory framework.

On-country healing camps were particularly recommended for addressing intergenerational trauma.

The research drew attention to the way mainstream legal systems undermine the practice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Law and Culture. Research participants recommended that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dispute resolution processes be employed first, with mainstream legal systems second. The research also recommended greater dialogue between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, police, judicial officers and government regarding the role of traditional justice mechanisms.

In this research, Blagg and colleagues (2020) highlighted the need for strategies that engage the whole family (both men and women) together. Many mainstream approaches do not take into account familial and community obligations or connections. For example, common police responses to family violence involve separating the victim from the perpetrator, often with the woman being taken to a shelter, together with her children (if they are under 13 years of age). However, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, this can be perceived as being banished from Country and from community. For many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, leaving permanently is not an option, or not without considerable long-term support, and research participants therefore emphasised the need for policies that can strengthen families, rather than break them up. Participants suggested that Aboriginal community organisations need funding to provide ongoing support to women who choose to rebuild their relationships, and to support men to find a space where they can be more than just "perpetrators". The research underscored the importance of supporting men and women simultaneously with issues related to trauma and addiction – there is no point getting one partner to recovery without the other, as this is likely to lead to relapse.

Integrating service systems

Collaborative interagency work is necessary for work with perpetrators for a number of reasons:

- Perpetrators of violence usually have a range of needs that are best addressed by a range of services.
- Good practice in behaviour change work requires that victims and survivors be engaged – this may involve partnerships with specialist women's services.
- Working well with diversity means engaging with services that specialise in meeting the needs of individuals from particular groups (such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, LGBTQ people and young people).
- Creating a web of accountability requires the involvement of all human services agencies, including those who engage with men who use violence around issues other than their violence.

RECOMMENDATION 25

Services co-design their programs with affected communities (including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, culturally and linguistically diverse, refugee and LGBTQ communities) and build partnerships with services that specialise in working with these diverse groups.

EXAMPLE:

Working collaboratively to meet the needs of young people with harmful sexual behaviours

Young people who engage in harmful sexual behaviours against children and other young people share some commonalities with adolescents who use violence in the home. They often have their own history of childhood trauma, and they also require holistic interventions that involve specialist and multiple partner agencies. The research report *Good Practice in Responding to Young People with Harmful Sexual Behaviours* (Quadara et al., 2020) found that navigating the service system was difficult for young people and their families.

In this study, Quadara and colleagues (2020) found that services engaging with young people with harmful sexual behaviours included schools, child protection services, out-of-home care services, police, youth justice, family support services, and sexual assault and family violence services, and that collaborative work in this complex environment is challenging. Given the potential for considerable clashing of different priorities, rules and procedures in the delivery of interventions, Quadara and colleagues (2020) developed a set of principles of good practice that practitioners can apply in their work with young people with harmful sexual behaviours. One key principle was engaging broader system agencies. This requires the building of partnerships across agencies to ensure coordinated care and the successful implementation, monitoring and adjustment of treatment progress.

RECOMMENDATION 26

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dispute resolution processes are employed first, with mainstream legal services second.
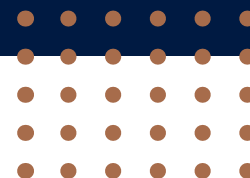
Building workforce capacity

It is clear that implementing the service improvements described in this paper will require an increase in practitioner capacity.

As described earlier, in order to build a web of accountability, practitioners working in all human services agencies need to be skilled to identify and respond to perpetrators of violence. This is in line with NOSPI Standard 6 (DSS, 2015, p. 10): "People working in perpetrator intervention systems are skilled in responding to the dynamics and impacts of domestic, family and sexual violence."

In particular, it is important that:

- practitioners in the legal system develop skills and competency at recognising and working with the impacts of trauma
- practitioners facilitating behaviour change programs become highly skilled at building rapport while managing attempts to collude
- all workers build capacity to work well with diversity.

RECOMMENDATION 27

A public repository of information about services available for young people with harmful sexual behaviours is established.

EXAMPLE:

Building capacity to identify and respond to violence in LGBTQ communities

The research report *Developing LGBTQ Programs for Perpetrators and Victims/Survivors of Domestic and Family Violence* by Gray and colleagues (2020) found that LGBTQ people, as well as the professionals who work with them, sometimes had difficulty identifying violence in LGBTQ relationships due to the "heterosexual face" of domestic violence.

In LGBTQ communities, violent and controlling behaviours are sometimes interpreted as manifestations of trauma and minority stress, rather than as abuses of power. In this study by Gray and colleagues (2020), participants who had experienced many forms of violence due to their LGBTQ identity tended to empathise with the traumatic histories of LGBTQ people who used violence and struggled to see them as "perpetrators". Although study participants did not interpret trauma to be *causative* of violence, their perceptions that others' abusive behaviours emanated from a place of victimhood and pain could lead them to excuse these behaviours.

Gray et al. (2020) found that violence in LGBTQ relationships can involve unique tactics of abuse, including identity-based abuse. This type of violence capitalises on a person's fear of exposure ("outing") or their prior experience of discrimination and internalised homophobia to threaten, undermine or isolate them.

> But I think where I've seen or experienced violence in an intimate partner relationship because if you're both queer or you're both trans, you're both trying to survive in a world that wants to kill you, basically. And by exposing your partner, even if they're being abusive or violent towards you, by exposing them to interactions with police or the criminal legal system, or prison, it could, could basically … be the death of them. And it's far worse than the sort of abuse or violence that is being done within that relationship. (Scout, queer, transgender woman, community member, 30s; quoted in Gray et al., 2020)

CONCLUSION

It has generally been accepted that the legal system and men's family violence interventions are the two key means for ensuring perpetrator accountability. The body of work produced by ANROWS recognises ways in which these legal and social interventions work well, and ways in which their implementation could be improved. In particular, the research explores ways in which these interventions affect people from diverse groups such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, LGBTQ people and young people.

ANROWS research proposes that human services agencies (particularly mental health, alcohol and other drugs, and child protection services) could be recognised as essential parts of broader perpetrator intervention systems. With appropriate training and increased information sharing between agencies, human services agencies could work together with the legal system and men's behaviour change programs to keep perpetrators' use of violence in view, and to engage men in interventions that focus on them changing their violent behaviours, their violence-supportive attitudes and their use of coercive control.

While the forthcoming ANROWS research on "'What works' to reduce and respond to violence against women" (due to be published in 2022) will further contribute to the evidence base in relation to the effectiveness of perpetrator interventions,

RECOMMENDATION 28

Recognition and understanding of violence in LGBTQ communities is improved among mainstream service providers as well as within LGBTQ communities.

RECOMMENDATION 29

Confidence and skills for engaging with LGBTQ people who use or experience domestic and family violence are increased among the domestic and family violence sector and the police workforce.

RECOMMENDATION 30

Tailored programs to ensure that unique and diverse needs among LGBTQ populations are addressed are developed and trialled.

the research conducted to date has identified that improving services and systems will require:

- addressing trauma and inequality
- providing early and holistic support for associated issues
- supporting community-led approaches
- integrating service systems
- building workforce capacity.

Much work remains to be done to evaluate the effectiveness of perpetrator interventions. In undertaking this evaluation work, it is essential that women's and children's safety and wellbeing remain the central focus.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1:
A national framework for building and sustaining a "web of accountability" is created with the involvement of all human services agencies together with the legal system and specialist men's family violence interventions.

RECOMMENDATION 2:
Guidance is developed for judicial officers about seeking and making use of a perpetrator's history of interventions (for example protection orders, prior sentences and program attendance) in all domestic and family violence matters, including in sentencing.

RECOMMENDATION 3:
Local Courts and Magistrates Courts across Australia investigate opportunities for improving the follow-up of compliance with protection orders.

RECOMMENDATION 4:
Electronic monitoring for domestic and family violence offenders is considered as part of a broader program of intervention that always prioritises the safety of the victim and survivor.

RECOMMENDATION 5:
Guidance is developed for police on identifying patterns of coercive control, so as to improve the accuracy of identification of the person most in need of protection.

RECOMMENDATION 6:
Awareness-raising work is undertaken with judicial officers, lawyers and corrective services staff regarding the safety implications for women of having orders against them.

RECOMMENDATION 7:
Guidance is developed for police and courts on trauma-informed ways of working, including recognising how trauma affects capacity to give evidence.

RECOMMENDATION 8:
More time is allocated within the legal system for communicating with and listening to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, and trauma-informed and culturally safe processes, including alternatives to sentencing, are developed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

RECOMMENDATION 9:
Investment is made in crisis and long-term accommodation options for adolescents who use violence in the home.

RECOMMENDATION 10:
Trauma-informed interventions are developed for adolescents who use violence in the home. These should include capacity for outreach, case management and whole-of-family restorative engagement.

RECOMMENDATION 11:
Therapeutic treatment orders are considered in cases featuring adolescents with complex needs who use violence in the home.

RECOMMENDATION 12:
Investment is made in MBCPs as a means of improving the safety of women and children.

RECOMMENDATION 13:
Facilitators of MBCPs – and their supervisors – have regular access to evidence-informed professional development opportunities on effective client–worker relationships, including ways to establish rapport while avoiding collusion.

RECOMMENDATION 14:
Resourcing for MBCPs is adequate to ensure flexible models of intervention that allow for men's longer term participation.

RECOMMENDATION 15:
Workforce development for workers who engage with men includes developing skills and confidence in working with people from diverse groups.

RECOMMENDATION 16:
Worker training in the Safe & Together Model is supported.

RECOMMENDATION 17:
Resourcing for MBCPs is adequate to build and maintain structures for supporting women and children. These should include an element of face-to-face contact, and be independent of whether the man is participating in the program.

RECOMMENDATION 18:
Resourcing for MBCPs is adequate to ensure high-quality evaluations that examine outcomes for women and children.

RECOMMENDATION 19:
The minimum data set is trialled, in agreement with Commonwealth, state and territory governments, to assist with policy decisions and resource allocation.

RECOMMENDATION 20:
The return on investment methodology is trialled, in agreement with Commonwealth, state and territory governments, to assist with policymaking and resource allocation.

RECOMMENDATION 21:
Investment is made in community-based reintegration programs for sex offenders that focus on building prosocial and law-abiding identities, not just on meeting conditions of release.

RECOMMENDATION 22:
Victims and survivors of sexual offences are kept informed about the release and reintegration process of offenders, so that they can be empowered to make informed decisions about their safety.

RECOMMENDATION 23:
Services recognise the effects and impact of trauma and inequality on the perpetration of violence. Where necessary, services work collaboratively to provide holistic support to men to ensure that histories of trauma and experiences of inequality are not used to excuse violence.

RECOMMENDATION 24:
Interventions for perpetrators encompass early support for mental health, alcohol and other drug use, and disability, in particular neurological or psychosocial disability.

RECOMMENDATION 25:
Services co-design their programs with affected communities (including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, culturally and linguistically diverse, refugee and LGBTQ communities) and build partnerships with services that specialise in working with these diverse groups.

RECOMMENDATION 26:
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dispute resolution processes are employed first, with mainstream legal services second.

RECOMMENDATION 27:
A public repository of information about services available for young people with harmful sexual behaviours is established.

RECOMMENDATION 28:
Recognition and understanding of violence in LGBTQ communities is improved among mainstream service providers as well as within LGBTQ communities.

RECOMMENDATION 29:
Confidence and skills for engaging with LGBTQ people who use or experience domestic and family violence are increased among the domestic and family violence sector and the police workforce.

RECOMMENDATION 30:
Tailored programs to ensure that unique and diverse needs among LGBTQ populations are addressed are developed and trialled.

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ANROWS acknowledgement

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.

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