

Wednesday 24 May 2023

## **Although rejection of violence against women has improved across all states and territories, there is still a long way to go.**

The *2021 National Community Attitudes Survey (NCAS) States and Territories report*, released today by ANROWS, found that every state and territory has improved in their attitudes towards violence against women over the last decade, despite a plateau for NSW, Queensland, and Victoria since 2017.

Following on from the release of the 2021 NCAS main report on Australia as a whole, which surveyed 19,100 Australians, this sub-report breaks down the findings for each state and territory, to consider how each jurisdiction is tracking in comparison to the Australian population.

The *2021 NCAS States and Territories report* found that rejection of violence against women had reached a comparable level in all jurisdictions in 2021, except for the ACT. The ACT had a significantly higher rejection of domestic and sexual violence, including sexual harassment and sexual assault, and a significantly higher trust in women's reports of violence, compared to the rest of Australia.

Launched today alongside the Minister for Women Ros Spence, Our Watch CEO Patty Kinnerly and Respect Victoria CEO Emily Maguire in Victoria, the report found that since 2009 Victoria and Australia have significantly improved in their understanding and rejection of violence against women.

Although improvement has occurred across all states and territories less than half the respondents in each jurisdiction had "advanced" rejection of violence against women in 2021.

Padma Raman PSM, CEO of ANROWS, said that the *2021 NCAS States and Territories report*, is the first of many sub-reports which will unpack the findings of the 2021 NCAS.

"The states and territories sub-report has shown that while positive change is occurring across Australia, there is significant room to improve understanding and attitudes towards violence against women in every state and territory," Ms Raman said.

"The *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032* provides the blueprint, and each jurisdiction should take stock of their policies, frameworks, and systems, in light of the 2021 NCAS, to consider solutions to end violence against women."

"Changing attitudes is a slow process. Significant work still needs to be done in each state and territory to change the culture that underpins violence against women. All jurisdictions should consider how they can continue to do so."

Assistant Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence Justine Elliot said the NCAS gave critical insights that would help to achieve a future free from violence.

“The National Plan recognises that ending violence against women and children is everybody’s responsibility and business, and the NCAS highlights that more needs to be done to build community awareness and understanding,” Assistant Minister Elliot said.

“This is a national priority, and our government is proud to have just announced a further \$589.3 million for women’s safety and implementation of the National Plan, building on the record investment of \$1.7 billion through the October 2022 Budget.”

Victoria’s Minister for Prevention of Family Violence, Ros Spence, said the NCAS States and Territories report show that Victorian’s attitudes towards violence against women are improving.

“The Victorian data shows we are heading in the right direction, whilst also reminding us how critical it is we continue our work towards ending gendered violence,” Ms Spence said.

“The Victorian Government’s significant investment in preventing family violence, and our ongoing nation-leading reform of the family violence system means we are well-placed to continue the long-term work of changing the attitudes that allow gendered violence to occur.”

Patty Kinnersly, CEO of Our Watch, said the NCAS shows the harmful attitudes that need to be addressed.

“The NCAS findings highlight where continued effort is needed to improve people’s understanding of violence against women, and to challenge the harmful attitudes that drive gender-based violence,” Ms Kinnersly said

“For women to be safe they must be equal, and to stop violence against women before it starts, we need to address harmful attitudes and help Australians understand that violence against women and gender equality are closely connected”.

CEO of Respect Victoria, Emily Maguire, welcomed the findings that Victorians’ attitudes to violence against women are improving.

“Victorians’ attitudes to violence against women and gender inequality are improving. Those improvements show us that there’s an appetite for change, that long-term attitude shifts are possible,” Ms Maguire said.

“Preventing violence against women is long-term work. Milestones like this survey show us where progress has been made, and where we need to go next. Victoria is moving in the right direction, but we need to keep pushing forward. Because the transformational change we’re seeking is possible.”

Some notable findings from *the 2021 NCAS States and Territories report*:

- All jurisdictions increased in their rejection of violence against women over the longer term, despite a plateau between 2017 and 2021 for some jurisdictions (NSW, Queensland and Victoria).
- All jurisdictions improved in their understanding of violence against women and rejection of sexual assault and sexual harassment, and most jurisdictions improved in their rejection of gender inequality since 2017.
- In 2021 most states and territories had a comparable level of understanding of violence against women, and rejection of violence against women and gender inequality

- In 2021, most respondents in Australia agreed that violence against women is a problem in Australia, but significantly more NT respondents (70%) than other Australian respondents (38-54%) agreed that violence against women is a problem in the suburb or town where they live.
- More ACT respondents than Australian respondents demonstrated “advanced” rejection of domestic violence (51% versus 40%) and “advanced” rejection of sexual violence (51% versus 40%).
- People in the ACT, South Australia, Tasmania and Western Australia improved in their rejection of all aspects of gender inequality, including rejection of attitudes that undermine women’s leadership and decision-making in the workplace and in public life, which plateaued in Australia as a whole.

To read the 2021 NCAS States and Territories report visit: [ANROWS 2021 NCAS Findings for states and territories](#)

Key findings from the 2021 NCAS main report on Australia:

- 41% of respondents mistakenly believed that domestic violence is equally committed by men and women, a significant increase from 23% of respondents in 2009.
- Even though 91% of respondents believed violence against women is a problem in Australia, only 47% of respondents believed it is a problem in their own suburb or town.
- Australians’ overall rejection of domestic violence plateaued between 2017 and 2021.
- Australians’ rejection of sexual violence significantly improved between 2017 and 2021. For example, 81% of respondents in 2021 disagreed that women find it flattering to be persistently pursued, even if they are not interested, compared to 68% in 2017.

To read the full findings from the National Community Attitudes Survey 2021 and to access all reports and resources visit: [ANROWS 2021 NCAS](#)

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#### **About the NCAS**

The National Community Attitudes Survey (NCAS) is the world’s longest running survey of community attitudes towards violence against women, using representative sample methodology to track changing attitudes over time. Running every four years, now in its sixth iteration, the NCAS provides a snapshot in time of Australia’s progress in understanding violence against women, attitudes towards it, what influences attitudes, as well as examining attitudes towards gender equality and bystander responses. Funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services (DSS), the NCAS provides a means of measuring progress against some of the key goals of the *National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022-2032*. The 2021 NCAS collected data from a sample of 19,100 Australians aged 16 years and over and was available in 10 languages. Random sampling was used to achieve a

sample of respondents who had similar demographics to the Australian population. To ensure comparability between survey waves, most items were retained. However, new items examined understanding and attitudes regarding issues such as technology-facilitated abuse and forms of violence experienced by diverse groups who may face intersectional forms of inequality.

### **About ANROWS**

Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety Limited (ANROWS) is a not-for-profit independent national research organisation. ANROWS was established as an initiative of Australia's *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022* and is continuing under the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032*. ANROWS was established by the Commonwealth and all state and territory governments of Australia to produce, disseminate, and assist in applying evidence for policy and practice addressing violence against women and their children. ANROWS is the only such research organisation in Australia.