



# **Attitudes Matter:**

**The 2021 National Community Attitudes towards  
Violence against Women Survey (NCAS),**

**Findings for Young Australians**

*Coumarelos, Roberts, Weeks & Rasmussen (2023)*

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## About the 2021 NCAS

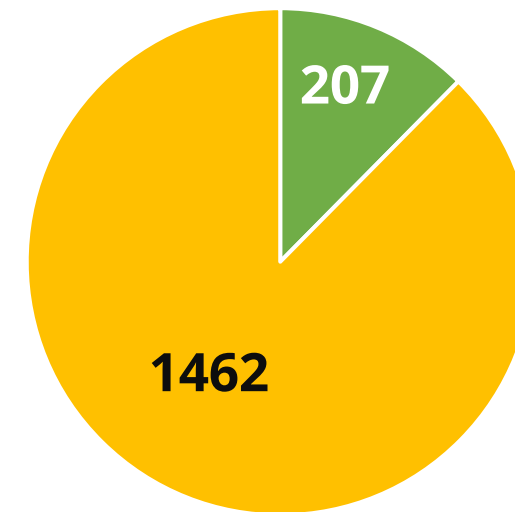
- World's longest running survey of its kind
- Every 4 years
- Measures understanding and attitudes

### **Monitors progress towards ending VAW:**

- changes over time
- gaps in understanding
- problematic attitudes
- factors that may maintain VAW

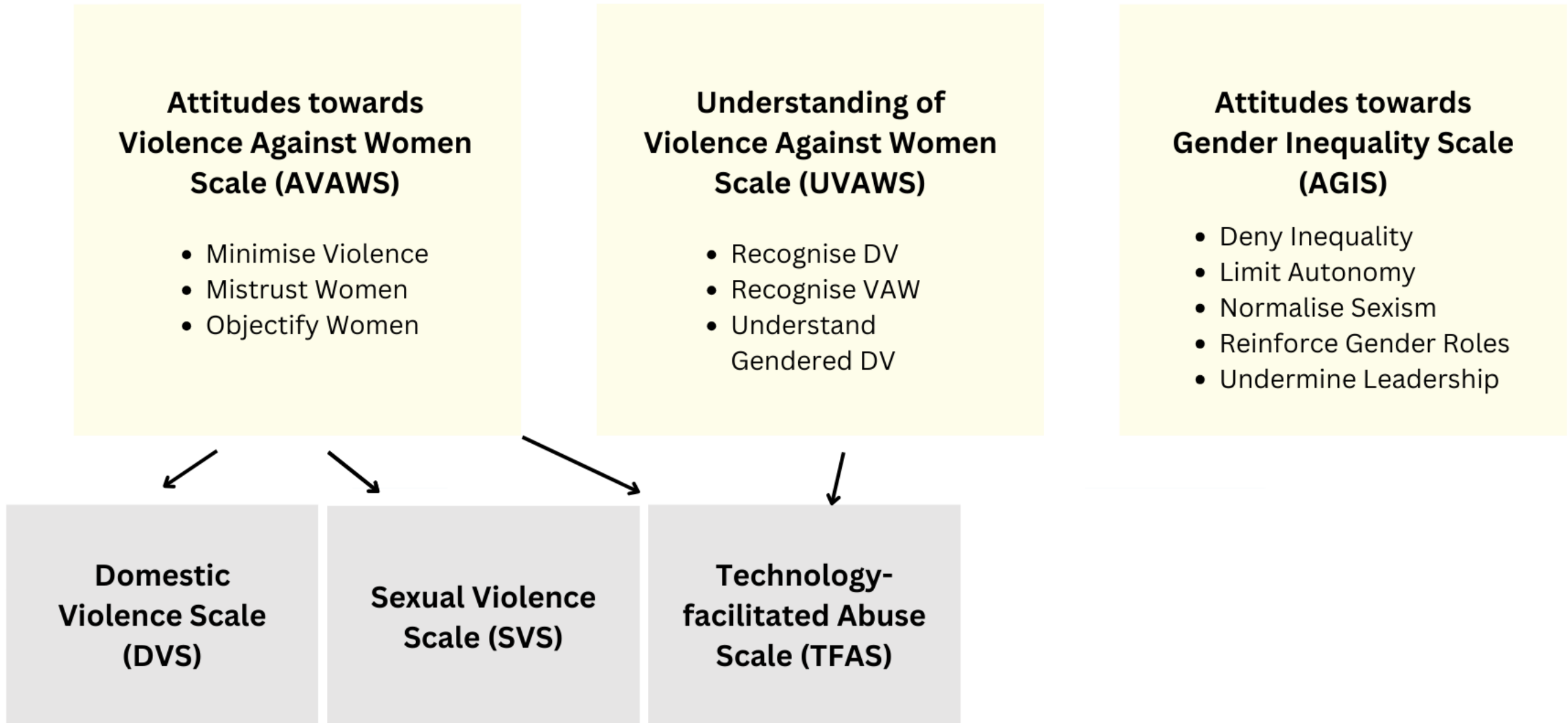
### Sample

- **19,100 Australians**
- **1,669 young people 16 to 24 years**



- 16 to 17 years
- 18 to 24 years

# NCAS scales: Understanding and attitudes





# **Benchmarking understanding and attitudes**

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# Understanding and attitudes: Change over time

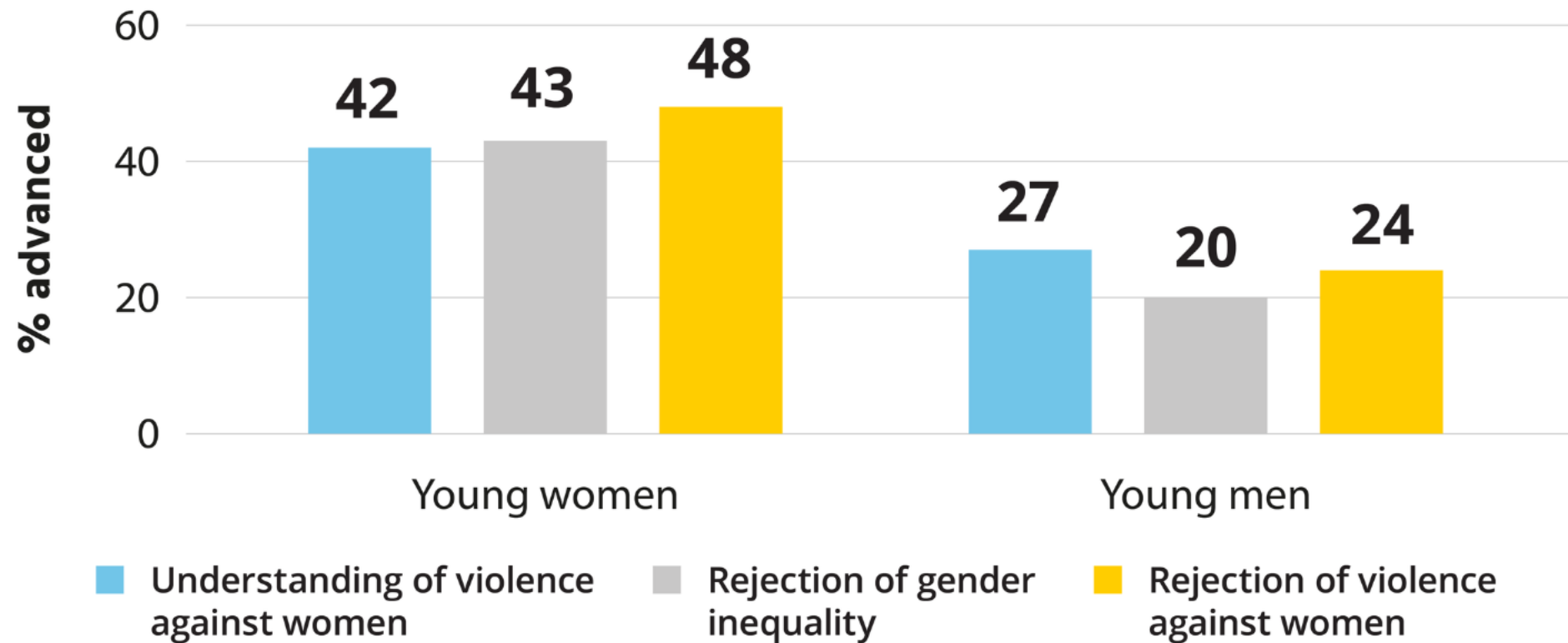
## Improvement since 2017?

Understanding of violence against women (UVAWS)	✓
Attitudes towards violence against women (AVAWS)	✓
Attitudes towards gender inequality (AGIS)	✓
Attitudes towards violence against women (AVAWS)	✓
Attitudes towards domestic violence (DVS)	<i>No change</i>
Attitudes towards sexual harassment (SHS)	✓
Attitudes towards sexual assault (SAS)	✓

Young people's understanding and attitudes have improved over time ... but progress is slow

# Understanding and attitudes:

Young women had more “advanced” attitudes and understanding compared to young men



“Advanced” is an aspirational level of attitudes and understanding that we are aiming to achieve across the Australian population.



# Understanding and attitudes: Age differences

**Younger people (16 to 24 years) compared to 18- to 24-year-olds often had:**

- lower understanding of VAW
- lower rejection of problematic attitudes.



**Younger people (16 to 24 years) compared to 18- to 24-year-olds had:**

- lower understanding of VAW overall, but higher understanding on some measures
- similar rejection of problematic attitudes towards VAW and gender inequality.



# **Understanding of violence against women**

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# Understanding: Behaviours constituting violence

Young Australians had high recognition that DV and VAW can manifest as a diverse range of behaviours

Young Australians have higher recognition of physical forms of DV than:

## non-physical forms

- emotional abuse
- financial abuse
- technology-facilitated abuse
- controlling behaviours

## forms targeting a partner's identity or experience

- disability, sexual orientation, religion, migrant status

# Understanding: Gendered nature of DV

“Who is more likely to experience fear as a result of domestic violence?”

**54% “Women”**



**1% “Men”**

**45% “Both equally”**



**25% of 25+ year-olds**

# Understanding: Most young people recognised that violence is a problem in all communities...

**91%**



of young respondents  
**agreed** that violence  
against women **is a  
problem in Australia**

**91%**

of 25+ year-olds

and

**53%**



**agreed** that it **is a  
problem in their own  
suburb or town**

**46%**

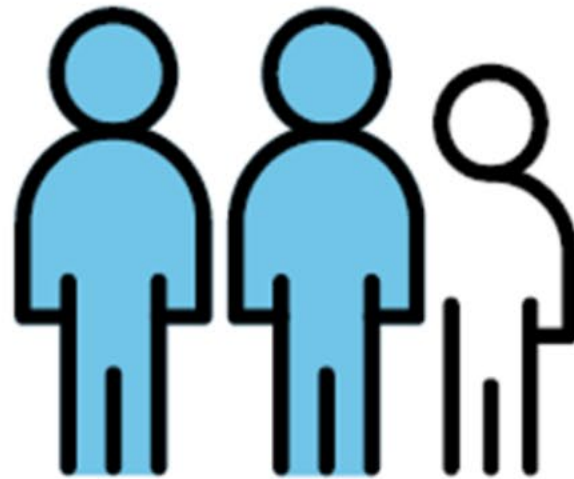
of 25+ year-olds

# Understanding: Many young Australians know where to get help...



About

**2 in 3**



**64%** of young respondents

**55%** of 25+ respondents

young respondents knew how to  
access domestic violence services



# **Attitudes towards gender inequality**


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# Attitudes: Gender inequality

Young people had high rejection of many problematic attitudes



**Higher rejection:**  
rigid gender roles



**Lower rejection:**  
limiting personal women's  
autonomy in relationships

than


- deny gender inequality experiences
- normalise sexism
- undermine women's leadership



# **Attitudes towards violence against women**

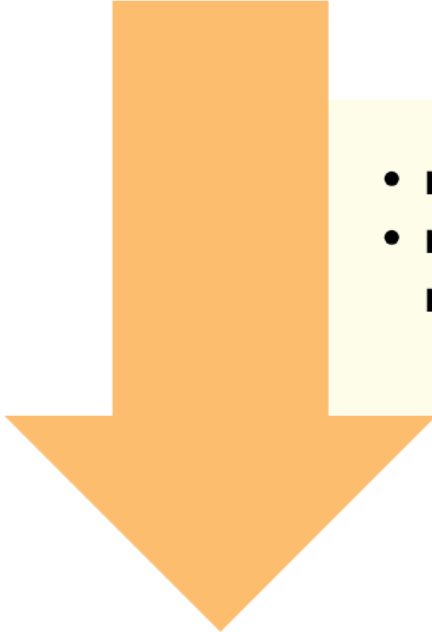
# Attitudes: Violence against women

Young Australians strongly reject many problematic attitudes



Higher rejection:

- objectify women and disregard consent

- 
- minimise VAW
  - mistrust women's reports of violence



# Consent

Most young Australians recognise that  
**consent must be active  
and ongoing**



... but there is still room for improvement

Fewer young respondents strongly disagreed that a man was justified in forcing sex when **the woman had initiated kissing** and then pushed the man away, compared to when **the man had initiated kissing**

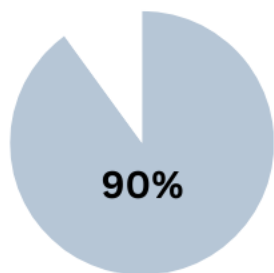
# Consent: Mixed results when alcohol or drug use is involved

Rejection of the following problematic attitudes about rape were, when compared to people 25 years and over was...

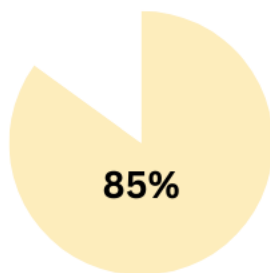
... lower for young people

*I strongly disagree...*

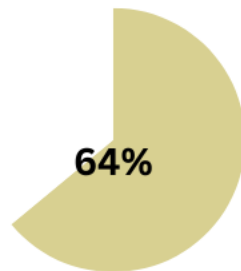
**A man is less responsible for rape if he is drunk or affected by drugs**



25+ years



18-24 years

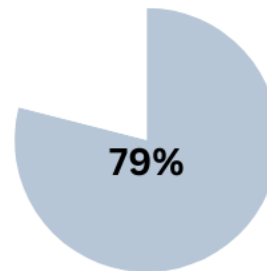


16-17 years

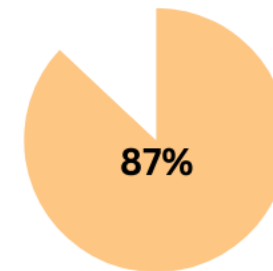
... higher for young people

*I strongly disagree...*

**It is understandable if a man continues having sex with a woman who was drunk and fell asleep**



25+ years



16-24 years



# Bystander responses

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## Bystander responses: Context is everything...

Scenario	Who would be bothered?	Of those who were bothered, who would intervene?
Friend verbally abuses their partner	98%	96%
Boss tells a sexist joke	89%	63%
Friend tells a sexist joke	78%	88%



# Key messages

# ■ Key messages: High-level implications

- **Begin violence prevention early and continue through the formative years**
- **Work across genders and particularly with men and boys**
- **Strengthen co-design with young people and victims and survivors**



# ■ Key messages: Understanding

- **Reframe “care and concern”**
- **Learn from and support young people’s:**
  - **recognition that violence is a problem in their local area**
  - **knowledge about accessing services**
- **Challenge gender-ignoring biases by highlighting pervasive gendered differences in norms, structures and systems**



# Key messages: Attitudes

- **Adopt gender-transformative approaches to break down rigid gender norms**
- **Challenge young people's acceptance of male power in intimate relationships and dating scripts**
- **Implement education about ongoing consent**
- **Dispel myths and misconceptions that fuel mistrust of women**





# ■ Key messages: Bystander responses

- **Increase young people's knowledge, skills and confidence to act as prosocial bystanders**
- **Remove barriers to speaking up, including barriers involving power dynamics**





**Thank you**

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