










Quick Guide to the 2021 NCAS findings for people born in countries where the main language is not English



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■ The National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS)

The National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS) is a periodic, representative survey of the Australian population that is conducted every four years. It provides insights into the Australian community's understanding and attitudes regarding violence against women, their attitudes towards gender inequality and their intentions to intervene if witnessing violence or disrespect against women. The NCAS gauges Australia's progress towards changing the broader climate that facilitates and maintains violence against women. It can therefore help inform policy and programs aimed at the prevention of violence against women.

The report titled *Attitudes matter: The 2021 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS), Findings for Australia* ("[Main report](#)") looks at the results for all survey respondents. Following the [Main report](#), a series of reports based on the NCAS findings looks at the attitudes and understandings held by different population groups.

This Quick Guide supports the report titled *Attitudes matter: The 2021 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS), Findings for people born in countries where the main language is not English* ("[N-MESC report](#)").

Findings for people born in countries where the main language is not English

The [N-MESC report](#) provides a snapshot of the attitudes and understandings held by people living in Australia who were born in countries where the main language is not English. These countries are called non-main English-speaking countries (N-MESCs). It is important, for multiple reasons, to know more detail about the understandings and attitudes regarding violence against women and gender equality held by people born in N-MESCs.

People born in N-MESCs are a sizeable population group in Australia. Australia has the ninth-highest population of migrants globally and a considerable number are born in N-MESCs.

Women born in N-MESCs can experience unique forms and disproportionate rates of violence, exacerbated by systemic and structural factors, and face additional barriers to reporting violence, seeking support, and accessing justice and healing.

Examining the attitudes and understandings of people born in N-MESCs can provide policymakers and practitioners working with people from N-MESCs important insights into the behaviours that are recognised as forms of violence, informal and formal responses to violence, and societal expectations, as well as access to supports within those communities. This evidence can then inform tailored programs and initiatives and complement broader efforts to break down attitudes, practices, systems and structures that perpetuate violence against women in Australia.

This research takes an intersectional approach that recognises that systemic and structural forms of gender inequality, racism and other inequalities and oppressions intersect to reinforce violence against women. We know that violence against women and problematic attitudes towards this violence are not explainable by any single factor and are not “inherent” to any culture. Researching the attitudes and understandings held by people born in N-MESCs is a key step to supporting social change.

Terminology

While this report focuses on 2021 NCAS respondents born in N-MESCs, we acknowledge that there are a range of terms used in research, policy and practice. The term “respondents born in N-MESCs” is used in the [N-MESC report](#) because it accurately describes the NCAS respondents. However, we acknowledge that “culturally and linguistically diverse” (CALD) is commonly used as a broader term that includes people born in N-MESCs.

Further, the term “family violence” rather than “domestic violence” is often preferred and used by sector services and organisations as a broader term that more holistically represents the experiences of people born in N-MESCs. However, “domestic violence” is used in this report because the NCAS items focus on violence between partners rather than violence perpetrated by other family members.

How to use this Quick Guide

This Quick Guide is a shortcut resource to help policymakers, practitioners and the media to understand the [N-MESC report](#) and apply it to their work.

For more information, refer to the [N-MESC report](#), which includes discussions of the broader literature and details on the findings and implications.

The **Fast facts** section outlines the aims of the NCAS and the differences between the [N-MESC report](#) and the [Main report](#), which includes the results for all Australians.

The **What are the key messages for prevention?** section presents the key messages from the findings and implications, together with the broader literature. The key messages have relevant statistics from the [N-MESC report](#) that can be used to illustrate and support the message. These messages can be useful when using the evidence to advocate for action, inform current or future initiatives and work in this space, and to educate and raise awareness with stakeholders and the public.

The **What were the key findings?** section provides a high-level summary of the key findings. Key findings are the most important conclusions drawn from the analysis of the survey results.

Many of the key findings include a statistical range which is used where the key finding is drawn from several questions (or “items”) about a particular issue or concept. For example, for the finding that respondents born in N-MESCs were also more likely to recognise physical (72–89%) than non-physical forms (57–68%) of domestic violence, the range in brackets refers to responses on multiple questions about different types of physical and non-physical forms of violence.

The **What are the implications for prevention?** section provides evidence-based recommendations or considerations relevant to what we can do to prevent violence against women and children.

Fast facts

For fast facts about the 2021 NCAS findings for the Australian population as a whole, please see the “Fast facts about the NCAS” section of the [Quick Guide to the 2021 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey \(NCAS\)](#). For a detailed description of the 2021 NCAS methodology, please see the [2021 NCAS Technical report](#).

What were the aims?

The key purpose of the NCAS is to measure the Australian community’s understanding and attitudes regarding violence against women and gender inequality. The [N-MESC report](#) looked specifically at understandings and attitudes held by people born in N-MESCs.

The [N-MESC report](#) aims to inform violence prevention with people from N-MESCs by:

- benchmarking understanding and attitudes regarding violence against women, attitudes towards gender equality and intention to intervene when witnessing abuse or disrespect of women
- identifying gaps in understanding or problematic attitudes
- identifying demographic, attitudinal and contextual factors that are associated with gaps in understanding and problematic attitudes.

What was the sample?

The total 2021 NCAS sample was a random sample of 19,100 people aged 16 years or over who were interviewed via mobile telephone. This total sample is referred to as “all respondents” and findings based on the total sample are discussed in depth in the [Main report](#).

For the [N-MESC report](#), the total sample included 3,224 respondents born in N-MESCs, of which 116 were interviewed in the 10 most common languages other than English (LOTEs). Of the 3,224 respondents born in N-MESCs, about half were women (48%), most spoke English at home (64%) and most had lived in Australia for more than 10 years (68%), with the remainder having lived in Australia for either 0–5 years (19%) or 6–10 years (16%).

Weighting was used to align the total NCAS sample in each state and territory with population benchmarks, including the proportion of the population born in N-MESCs. This means we can be more certain that the survey results accurately represent the Australian population and take into account the proportion of the population born in N-MESCs.

Why did we choose this sample?

The [N-MESC report](#) focuses on findings for people born in N-MESCs rather than all migrants and refugees in Australia, including those born in main English-speaking countries (MESCs). This is because research shows that female migrants and refugees who were born in N-MESCs are more likely to experience unique forms of violence and barriers to reporting violence and accessing support.

In contrast, for migrants born in MESCs, the experience of migration is usually less complex and stressful as they are likely to speak English, identify as white and share certain cultural influences. They are also likely to face fewer barriers to establishing themselves due to greater recognition of their qualifications and access to employment, and less likelihood of experiencing racism and discrimination.

While people born in N-MESCs all share lived experiences of migration and may have similar support needs as a result of settling into a new country, they are not all alike. People born in N-MESCs have diverse cultural, racial and linguistic backgrounds, and have different visa, residency and citizenship statuses in Australia. In addition, they differ in terms of the year they migrated to Australia and at what stage in their lives (e.g. childhood, adulthood), how much of their education was received in Australia and the background of their parents.

Why doesn't this report make comparisons over time?

The [N-MESC report](#) *does not include changes in understanding and attitudes over time* as the demographic profiles of the samples from different years were not comparable due to changes in the immigration populations between surveys.

How does the N-MESC report differ from the findings for cultural and linguistic groups in the Main report?

The [Main report](#) does include some findings for respondents born in N-MESCs, MESCs and those who spoke a LOTE at home. These findings compare the understandings and attitudes held by these groups to those held by other Australians and are presented at a high level, identifying overall understanding of violence against women, rejection of gender inequality and rejection of violence against women (including specific types of violence).

The [N-MESC report](#) provides a more detailed analysis of the 2021 NCAS findings, specifically focused on findings for people born in N-MESCs. It includes results for individual survey questions and explores differences *within* the group of respondents born in N-MESCs. For example, the report examines the differences in understanding and attitudes within the N-MESC group based on respondents' level of English proficiency and length of time in Australia.

The [N-MESC report](#) primarily focuses on comparisons within the N-MESC group, rather than comparisons to findings for all Australians. This information will be relevant for practitioners working specifically with particular groups in the N-MESC population.

The decision was made not to compare N-MESC respondents to all Australians, except at the level of summary statistics. Such high-level comparisons with other Australians are useful for identifying the N-MESC group as an important group for violence prevention strategies, which need to be accessible and culturally safe for this group and appropriately resourced. Comparing people born in N-MESCs to the broader Australian population on numerous measures at a more detailed level has the potential to support stigmatising or discriminatory narratives about the N-MESC group, particularly when messages are communicated without context or nuance.

What's new in the 2021 NCAS?

As a long-running survey, updates to the NCAS are important to ensure that it responds to emerging evidence and evolving social norms.

New items were introduced in 2021 to examine Australians' understanding of the way perpetrators of domestic violence can leverage forms of intersectional discrimination and marginalisation to exert control. For example, respondents were asked whether threatening to deport a partner on a visa and forcing a partner to stop practising their religion are forms of domestic violence.

Additional items have also been added to the survey to allow for more detailed measurement of our understanding and attitudes about newer forms of violence, such as technology-facilitated abuse.

The 2021 NCAS was the first large-scale survey with a representative sample to implement the [2020 Australian Bureau of Statistics Standard for Sex, Gender, Variations of Sex Characteristics and Sexual Orientation Variables](#). This means the survey included demographic questions on sex recorded at birth, current gender identity, intersex status and sexuality. These additions allow for more inclusive reporting, as well as for reporting separately on the understandings and attitudes held by non-binary respondents where there are sufficient numbers of these respondents. As only five respondents born in N-MESCs identified as non-binary, it was not possible to report accurately on this group. Comparisons were only conducted if there was data for at least 30 respondents in each category.

What are we aiming for?

Respondents in all NCAS reports were classified into "advanced" or "developing" categories to highlight the proportion of the Australian population that could improve their understanding and attitudes. "Advanced" is an aspirational level that we believe all Australians can and should achieve if we are to end violence against women.

Respondents had "advanced" *understanding* if they recognised that all behaviours measured by a scale "always" or "usually" constitute domestic violence or violence against women. They had "advanced" *attitudes* if they "strongly" or "somewhat" disagreed with all problematic attitudes measured by a scale.

We recognise that the terms "advanced" and "developing" can have derogatory and racist connotations when referring to people from N-MESCs. This is not the intended meaning of these terms. These terms were used throughout the other NCAS reports and are maintained here for consistency across the reports. These terms refer to the extent to which respondents understand violence against women and reject harmful attitudes towards this violence and gender equality.

What are the key messages for prevention?

Key messages combine the findings and implications for prevention from the [N-MESC report](#) and are underpinned by relevant supporting evidence and statistics. These key messages provide high-level guidance for policymakers and practitioners.

Key message	Supporting evidence and statistics
<p>Despite widespread rejection of violence against women and gender inequality, there are opportunities for improving understandings and attitudes among individuals from N-MESCs and the broader Australian population.</p> <p>The NCAS paves the way for tailored and community-led programs and interventions that address specific challenges for people from N-MESCs. This work needs to co-occur with efforts to challenge sexist and racist stereotypes in the wider Australian community, including its structures and systems.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respondents born in N-MESCs had significantly lower understanding of violence against women and rejection of problematic attitudes compared to respondents born in Australia.• However, only one fifth to half of respondents born in N-MESCs, MESCs and Australia met the aspirational goal for “advanced” understanding of violence against women and “advanced” rejection of problematic attitudes towards gender inequality and violence against women.• It is important that prevention approaches foster positive identities of people from migrant and refugee backgrounds and support them to reject rigid stereotypes about gender and race within their communities.
<p>Raising awareness about the different forms and the gendered nature of violence can support women from N-MESCs to identify violence and seek help, increase broader community intolerance of violence and challenge racialised representations of violence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Most respondents born in N-MESCs recognised that a range of violent, abusive and controlling behaviours are “always” forms of domestic violence (57–89%).• Most respondents recognised physical forms of domestic violence or threats of physical violence as “always” violence, such as:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ threatening family members (89%)◦ slapping or pushing a partner to cause fear or harm (72%).• There was less recognition that non-physical forms of domestic violence are “always” violence, such as:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ repeatedly criticising a partner (57%)◦ controlling a partner by denying them money (58%)◦ repeated electronic tracking of a partner (62%).

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Key message

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Attitudes that normalise sexism and reinforce rigid gender roles intersect with racist attitudes and systemic and structural inequalities to increase the risk of violence for women from N-MESCs.

Interventions need to challenge specific community and cultural attitudes as well as address *all* Australians' problematic attitudes towards gender and how they intersect with race.

Supporting evidence and statistics

- Most respondents born in N-MESCs recognised forms of violence that are particularly relevant to the CALD community in Australia as “always” forms of domestic violence, such as:
 - repeatedly threatening to deport a partner who is on a temporary visa (67%)
 - forcing a partner to stop practising their religion (63%).

However, a substantial minority of respondents (18% and 25% respectively) did not recognise these behaviours as forms of domestic violence, were unsure if they are domestic violence or felt they are only “sometimes” domestic violence.
- Around 1 in 5 (18–23%) respondents born in N-MESCs did not recognise sending unwanted intimate images, in-person and electronic stalking, abusive messages on social media and harassment via technology as violence or thought they were only violence “sometimes”.
- Substantial proportions of respondents born in N-MESCs, like other survey respondents, incorrectly believed that:
 - domestic violence is equally committed by men and women (50%)
 - men and women are equally likely to suffer physical harm from domestic violence (23%)
 - men and women are equally likely to experience fear as a result of domestic violence (32%).

- Respondents born in N-MESCs “strongly disagreed” with most attitudes that normalise sexism, reinforce rigid gender roles or undermine women’s leadership. For example:
 - 89% of respondents “strongly disagreed” with the statement “I think it’s OK for men to joke with their male friends about being violent towards women.”
 - 74% of respondents “strongly disagreed” that it is embarrassing for a man to have a job that is usually held by a woman.
- However, there was still room for improvement. For example, only:
 - 41% of respondents “strongly disagreed” that women prefer a man to be in charge of the relationship
 - 28% of respondents “strongly disagreed” that many women exaggerate how unequally women are treated in Australia
 - 21% “strongly disagreed” that many women mistakenly interpret innocent remarks or acts as being sexist.

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Key message	Supporting evidence and statistics
<p>Challenging attitudes that mistrust women’s reports of violence is a crucial step towards women accessing support and feeling believed.</p> <p>Creating this trust is particularly important for services working with women from N-MESCs who face additional barriers and racism. These can make reporting violence, accessing services and leaving violent situations even more difficult.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most respondents born in N-MESCs “strongly disagreed” with items stating that women who report sexual assault or harassment are probably lying or shouldn’t be taken too seriously (56–77%). For example, respondents “strongly disagreed” that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ women who wait weeks or months to report sexual harassment are probably lying (66%) ◦ if a woman claims to have been sexually assaulted but has no other physical injuries she probably shouldn’t be taken too seriously (77%). • However, only a minority “strongly disagreed” with other items about mistrusting women’s reports of violence, including that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ many allegations of sexual assault made by women are false (47%) ◦ it is common for sexual assault accusations to be used as a way to get back at men (35%) ◦ a lot of times, women who say they were raped had led the man on then had regrets (38%) ◦ many women exaggerate the extent of men’s violence against women (34%).
<p>While the nature of domestic violence is generally well understood by people from N-MESCs, many damaging myths and misconceptions that blame women and excuse perpetrators persist.</p> <p>Working in partnership with communities, interventions should challenge the normalisation of domestic violence, raise awareness that domestic violence is never acceptable and demonstrate the severe and wide-ranging impacts that violence can have on families and communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of respondents born in N-MESCs “strongly disagreed” with many myths or misconceptions about domestic violence, including that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ women should keep quiet about domestic violence to protect their family’s reputation (88%) ◦ it’s a woman’s duty to stay in a violent relationship to keep the family together (82%) ◦ domestic violence can be excused if the offender is heavily affected by alcohol (79%) ◦ domestic violence can be excused if the victim is heavily affected by alcohol (74%). • However, a sizeable minority of respondents born in N-MESCs endorsed some items describing domestic violence as a private or family matter. For example, respondents “agreed” (strongly or somewhat) that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ domestic violence is a private matter that should be handled in the family (21%) ◦ it’s a woman’s duty to stay in a violent relationship to keep the family together (11%).

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Key message	Supporting evidence and statistics
<p><i>Continued from previous page</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 in 5 respondents born in N-MESCs “agreed” (strongly or somewhat) that a female victim who does not leave an abusive partner is partly responsible for the abuse continuing (40%). • About 1 in 5 “agreed” (strongly or somewhat) that it’s easy for a woman to leave an abusive relationship (19%) and that if a woman keeps going back to her abusive partner then the violence can’t be very serious (19%).
<p>To prevent men from all backgrounds perpetrating violence against women from N-MESCs, we must challenge views throughout the Australian community about men’s entitlement to sex.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of respondents born in N-MESCs “strongly disagreed” that a man was justified in forcing sex when he had initiated intimacy with a woman. • However, fewer “strongly disagreed” when the man and woman in the scenario were married (73%) than when they were acquaintances (83%). • Concerningly, more than 1 in 7 respondents born in N-MESCs “agreed” (strongly or somewhat) that the man would be justified in forcing sex if the woman had initiated intimacy (19% for the married couple scenario; 15% for the acquaintance scenario). • Most respondents born in N-MESCs (72%) recognised that it is a criminal offence for a man to have sex with his wife without her consent, but a concerning minority incorrectly thought that it is not a criminal offence (16%) or were unsure (11%).
<p>Sexual harassment is serious, unacceptable and can uniquely impact women from N-MESCs in the workplace. It intersects with attitudes about race and religion and structural factors such as immigration policies and limited opportunities for these women to seek other employment.</p> <p>Cultural change that challenges sexism and racism is needed throughout the community so that women from N-MESCs are safe and supported. We need everyone to have the confidence to intervene when they witness sexism or abuse of women.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most respondents born in N-MESCs (51–83%) “strongly disagreed” with all the problematic attitudes regarding sexual harassment measured by the 2021 NCAS. • However, a minority of respondents born in N-MESCs “agreed” (strongly or somewhat) with myths that sexual harassment is flattering or benign, including that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ women find it flattering to be persistently pursued even if they are not interested (18%) ◦ women should be flattered by wolf-whistles or cat-calls in public (14%). • Most of the respondents born in N-MESCs who said that they would show disapproval upon witnessing disrespect or abuse of women felt that their friends would support them (67–68%).

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Key message	Supporting evidence and statistics
<p>Despite generally good knowledge of Australian laws, victim-blaming attitudes persist across all types of in-person and online violence.</p> <p>We need to reinforce the message that perpetrators should be held accountable.</p>	<p>Most respondents recognise in-person and online violence as criminal offences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most respondents born in N-MESCs (91%) recognised that it is a criminal offence to post or share a sexual picture of an ex-partner on social media without their consent. However, about 1 in 10 incorrectly thought that it is not a criminal offence (5%) or were unsure (4%). • Most respondents born in N-MESCs (72%) recognised that it is a criminal offence for a man to have sex with his wife without her consent. However, a concerning minority did not (16%) or were unsure (11%). <p>However, concerning minorities of respondents still showed victim-blaming attitudes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While most respondents born in N-MESCs “strongly disagreed” that a woman is partly responsible if her partner shares a naked picture without her permission (59%), a concerning minority “agreed” (strongly or somewhat) with this statement (29%). • Although most respondents born in N-MESCs “strongly disagreed” that a woman is partly responsible if a man she met on a mobile dating app forces sex on her (75%), a minority “agreed” (strongly or somewhat) with this statement (15%).
<p>Not everyone recognises stalking as violence. When women from N-MESCs wish to seek help for stalking, the barriers to reporting and pursuing a complaint in the criminal justice system are onerous.</p> <p>Raising awareness about the patterns and serious impacts of stalking, alongside improving support for women from N-MESCs experiencing stalking, is needed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most respondents born in N-MESCs (62–66%) recognised technology-facilitated and in-person stalking as “always” constituting violence, but a minority did not. • For example, a minority of respondents born in N-MESCs did not recognise the following stalking behaviours as violence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ 10 per cent thought electronic tracking of a partner is not a form of domestic violence ◦ 8 per cent thought in-person stalking by repeatedly following or watching someone at home or work is not a form of violence against women.

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Key message	Supporting evidence and statistics
<p>Just like most Australians, most people from N-MESCs recognise disrespect towards women. Intervening, however, depends on the context. For example, a person may not intervene if there is a power imbalance, such as when their boss is behaving disrespectfully. This intersects with additional compounding factors, such as fear of consequences, for both men and women from N-MESCs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most respondents born in N-MESCs said they would be bothered by a work friend telling a sexist joke, a boss telling a sexist joke and a friend verbally abusing a woman he is in a relationship with (75–95%). • However, the responses of respondents born in N-MESCs to witnessing disrespect or abuse varied by context. For example, responses depended on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ barriers to intervention, with most respondents who would be bothered but would not intervene citing fear of negative consequences (75–88%) and discomfort with speaking up (75–78%) ◦ demographic factors, with men born in N-MESCs (69–84%) being significantly less likely than women born in N-MESCs (81–94%) to report that they would be bothered by sexist jokes.
<p>All demographic groups have room for improvement in understanding and attitudes regarding violence against women and attitudes towards gender inequality.</p> <p>Violence prevention interventions and resources aimed at supporting people from N-MESCs should respond to their unique needs and experiences. These include the particular forms of violence they may face and the challenges related to settling in a new country, not speaking English and adapting to a new culture, employment and social structures.</p> <p>Tailored interventions can help to improve community understandings and attitudes and can also increase the accessibility, safety and utility of services, systems and structures for women from N-MESCs experiencing violence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The strongest demographic factors influencing attitudes towards violence against women were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ English proficiency (explaining 4% of the variation) ◦ formal education (2%) ◦ length of time in Australia (2%) ◦ age (1%) ◦ socioeconomic status of area (1%) ◦ gender (1%).

What were the key findings?

The 2021 NCAS findings indicate that most people born in N-MESCs, like most Australians from all backgrounds, generally reject violence against women and gender inequality. However, the findings, like those for all Australians, also identify gaps in understanding and problematic attitudes in some areas.

Understanding and attitudes

Understandings of violence against women, such as the likelihood that it occurs in your own local area, the non-physical forms of violence and that men are more likely to commit domestic violence than women, could be improved.

Respondents born in N-MESCs were more likely to recognise that violence against women is a problem in Australia (82%) than to recognise that it is a problem in their own local area (40%). Like the results for all Australians, this notable gap suggests that violence against women is seen as a problem that happens to other people, in other communities.

Respondents born in N-MESCs were also more likely to recognise physical or threats of physical domestic violence (72–89%) than non-physical (57–68%) forms of domestic violence. This extended to forms of violence that are particularly relevant to the CALD community in Australia, such as being forced to stop religious practices or being threatened with deportation by a partner (63% and 67%, respectively, recognised these as forms of domestic violence).

There is also room for improvement in understanding the gendered nature of domestic violence among people born in N-MESCs. Half of the respondents born in N-MESCs believed that domestic violence is equally committed by men and women (50%) despite global evidence that men are the main perpetrators and women the main victims of domestic violence. Further, a minority of respondents believed that men and women are equally likely to suffer physical harm (23%) or fear (32%) as a result of domestic violence.

Women in the CALD community can be vulnerable to being misidentified as perpetrators of domestic violence. This misidentification may contribute to misperceptions that domestic violence is equally perpetrated by men and women.

Some sexist attitudes were strongly rejected, such as those that reinforce gender roles and stereotypes. However, there is still room for improvement across all aspects of attitudes towards gender inequality.

Gender inequality is still a pervasive issue in Australia. Problematic attitudes towards gender inequality include attitudes that deny the existence of gender inequality, limit women's personal autonomy, normalise sexism, reinforce rigid gender roles and norms, and undermine women's leadership. Gender inequality can intersect with racist attitudes and with systemic and structural inequalities related to racism to increase the risk of violence against women from CALD backgrounds.

Respondents born in N-MESCs broadly disagreed with many attitudes that support gender inequality. For example, most respondents born in N-MESCs "strongly disagreed" with attitudes that normalise sexism (59–89%), reinforce gender roles and stereotypes (53–75%) and undermine women's leadership in public life (59–77%).

However, there is room for improvement. For example, in response to the following statements that condone limiting women's personal autonomy or deny gender inequality experiences, fewer than half of respondents "strongly disagreed" that:

- women prefer a man to be in charge of the relationship (41%)
- many women don't fully appreciate all that men do for them (30%)
- many women exaggerate how unequally women are treated in Australia (28%)
- many women mistakenly interpret innocent remarks or acts as being sexist (21%).

Further improvements could be made to all types of attitudes towards gender inequality.

Attitudes that minimise violence or mistrust or objectify women were strongly rejected, but some respondents agreed with these damaging myths and stereotypes.

Many respondents born in N-MESCs strongly rejected attitudes associated with violence against women. Specifically, many "strongly disagreed" with attitudes that minimise violence against women (46–88%), objectify women and disregard their consent (50–83%), and mistrust women's reports of violence (22–77%).

However, a concerning minority "agreed" (strongly or somewhat) with problematic attitudes that minimise violence (4–33%), mistrust women (8–40%) and objectify women (7–30%).

Problematic attitudes, including that domestic violence is a private issue and sexual harassment can be flattering, indicate a need for improving understandings and attitudes regarding all types of violence.

Many respondents born in N-MESCs recognised different types of violence and rejected problematic attitudes about domestic violence, sexual assault and harassment, technology-facilitated abuse and stalking.

Types of violence

Domestic violence

Many respondents born in N-MESCs "strongly disagreed" with attitudes that blame victims and survivors for domestic violence (40–72%) and that normalise or excuse domestic violence (46–79%).

However, a sizeable minority of respondents born in N-MESCs endorsed some problematic attitudes towards violence against women. For example, some respondents "agreed" (strongly or somewhat) that domestic violence should be handled in the family (21%), that women are partially to blame if they stay in abusive relationships (40%) and that women going through custody battles often make up or exaggerate claims of domestic violence (37%).

These findings are important given the broader context that women from N-MESCs may experience difficulties separating or divorcing partners due to religious rules and cultural norms. For example, these difficulties include the perception of divorce as taboo and gender roles that pressure women to maintain family cohesion, tolerate violence and remain in the abusive relationship. Women may also fear being ostracised from their community if they do not stay in the relationship.

Sexual assault

At least half of the respondents born in N-MESCs rejected attitudes that excuse sexual assault and "strongly disagreed" that a man was justified in forcing sex after a woman pushed him away (50–83%). However, they were less likely to "strongly disagree" if the woman had initiated kissing (50–60%) or if the couple was married (50–73%).

Most respondents born in N-MESCs (72%) recognised that it is a criminal offence for a man to have sex with his wife without her consent, but a concerning minority did not (16%) or were unsure (11%).

Problematic attitudes around consent were also borne out in small, albeit concerning, minorities of respondents who agreed that “If a woman meets up with a man she met on a mobile dating app, she’s partly responsible if he forces sex on her” (15%) and that “If a woman is drunk and starts having sex with a man, but then falls asleep, it is understandable if he continues having sex with her anyway” (7%).

Sexual harassment

Most respondents born in N-MESCs “strongly disagreed” with problematic attitudes about sexual harassment (51–83%). However, a minority “agreed” (strongly or somewhat) with myths that sexual harassment is flattering or not serious (9–18%), including that:

- women find it flattering to be persistently pursued even if they are not interested (18%)
- women should be flattered by wolf-whistles or cat-calls in public (14%)
- since some women are so sexual in public, it’s understandable that some men think they can touch women without permission (9%).

These types of attitudes are particularly concerning given the evidence that shows that sexual harassment is commonly experienced by migrant and refugee women in Australia, with almost half of all reported incidents occurring in workplaces. These experiences are compounded by workplace policies and industry regulations that limit women’s options to choose other types of employment and leave them at risk of exploitation.

Technology-facilitated abuse

Most respondents born in N-MESCs recognised technology-facilitated abuse as “always” a form of violence (62–67%) and “strongly disagreed” with problematic attitudes towards this type of violence (59–75%). A small minority did not recognise some forms of technology-facilitated abuse and answered “no” when asked whether this was a form of violence against women, including:

- a man sending an unwanted picture of his genitals to a woman (8%)
- harassment via repeated emails and text messages (7%)
- abusive messages or comments targeted at women on social media (7%).

The majority of respondents recognised that it is a criminal offence to post or share a naked picture of an ex-partner on social media without their consent (91%).

Most respondents “strongly disagreed” with problematic attitudes that position women as responsible for technology-facilitated abuse that is perpetrated against them. For example, most respondents “strongly disagreed” with the belief that a woman is partly responsible:

- if her partner shares a naked picture without her permission (59%)
- if a man she met on a dating app forces sex on her (75%).

However, a concerning minority “agreed” (strongly or somewhat) with these statements (29% and 15% respectively).

Improving understanding in the N-MESC community of technology-facilitated abuse is important as emerging research suggests that CALD women may be one of the groups most at risk of this violence. These women also face additional barriers to accessing support, such as having limited or no English-language skills. These barriers are heightened when women are isolated from social and familial networks and their abusive partners control or restrict their use of digital technologies.

Stalking

Most respondents born in N-MESCs recognised stalking (in person or online) as a form of violence against women, but about 1 in 10 did not (8% and 10% respectively).

Bystander responses

Witnessing disrespect or abuse of women was concerning for most respondents. Respondents' willingness to intervene depended on the context.

Most people born in N-MESCs said they would be bothered by witnessing disrespect or abuse of women (75–95%). However, their intention to intervene was dependent on the context in which the disrespect or abuse occurred. This context included the type of behaviour, presence of a power differential, anticipated peer support or criticism, barriers to intervention and demographic factors as follows:

- Significantly more respondents would be bothered by witnessing verbal abuse (95%) compared to witnessing sexist jokes (75–89%).
- Respondents who were bothered by overhearing a sexist joke were less likely to speak up then and there if the joke was told by a boss (31%) than a work friend (48%).
- Most respondents who said that they would show disapproval when witnessing disrespect or abuse also thought that their friends would support them (67–68%).
- Most respondents who would be bothered but not intervene said they feared negative consequences (75–88%) or felt uncomfortable with speaking up (75–78%).
- Men born in N-MESCs (69–84%) were significantly less likely than women born in N-MESCs (81–94%) to report that they would be bothered by sexist jokes.

The findings of the [Main report](#) for all Australians similarly showed that large proportions of respondents who would be bothered but would not intervene when witnessing disrespect or abuse feared negative consequences (75–91%) or felt uncomfortable speaking up (75–79%).

Factors associated with understanding and attitudes

Respondents' attitudes towards violence against women were strongly related to their attitudes towards gender inequality.

The N-MESC respondents' attitudes towards gender inequality explained 34 per cent of the variation in their attitudes towards violence against women. Understanding of violence against women explained 13 per cent of the variation in attitudes towards this violence.

These findings suggest that attitudes towards gender inequality and attitudes towards violence against women need to be addressed together, because they influence each other.

Understanding the relationship between the community's attitudes towards gender inequality and violence against women is a pivotal step in identifying how we can improve and shift those attitudes and ultimately prevent the violence from being perpetrated.

There was a modest relationship between attitudes and certain demographic characteristics.

Demographic factors were modestly related to respondents' attitudes towards violence against women. Overall, the demographic factors measured by the 2021 NCAS explained 18 per cent of the variation in attitudes towards violence against women.

The demographic factors most strongly related to attitudes towards violence against women were English proficiency (explaining 4% of the variation), formal education (2%), length of time in Australia (2%), age (1%), socioeconomic status of area (1%) and gender (1%).

The respondents born in N-MESCs who had higher rejection of violence against women were identified as belonging to one or more of the following groups: those who spoke English at home, had a university education, had lived in Australia for at least six years, were aged 16 to 24 and 25 to 34 years, lived in the highest socioeconomic areas and/or were women.

Notably, some of these groups, in particular young people, do not hold much influence in their communities. Research has shown spiritual leaders are among the first individuals that migrant and refugee women disclose experiences of violence to. At the same time, other research has shown that very few women disclose violence to religious leaders for fear that the disclosure would make the situation worse.

People from N-MESCs are a priority population for supporting improvements in understanding and attitudes towards violence against women.

When compared to respondents born in Australia, respondents born in N-MESCs had lower understanding of violence against women and lower rejection of problematic attitudes towards gender inequality and violence. Based on these findings and broader research about barriers that women from N-MESCs face in getting help for domestic violence situations, people from N-MESCs are a priority population for supporting improvements in understanding and attitudes towards violence against women.

However, it is important to recognise that there is still substantial work to be done to improve community understanding and attitudes regarding violence against women and gender inequality for **all** Australians. Only one fifth to one half of respondents born in N-MESCs, MESCs and Australia met the aspirational goal of “advanced” understanding and attitudes.

■ What are the implications for prevention?

The 2021 NCAS findings for people born in N-MESCs indicate focus areas for prevention initiatives to improve understanding and attitudes regarding violence against women for people born in N-MESCs.

The implications listed below are those that are specific to supporting the improved understanding and attitudes held by people born in N-MESCs. Many of the high-level 2021 NCAS findings for respondents born in N-MESCs are similar to those for Australians from all backgrounds. As such, implications from the [Main report](#) are also relevant for people born in N-MESCs and are not included here.

Overarching implications

- Consider people born in N-MESCs as a priority population for violence prevention initiatives that support improvement in understanding and attitudes.
- Tailor prevention initiatives targeted at all Australians to be culturally appropriate, adapted to community and faith-based contexts, and available in different languages.
- Engage whole communities and leverage cultural strengths to address domestic violence, including interventions aimed at changing attitudes through community campaigns and perpetrator intervention programs.
- Increase recognition and awareness of the different forms of violence that impact women from N-MESCs and the greater risks they face because of the multiple intersecting factors that compound and exacerbate the violence. Also increase recognition of, and make more accessible, the different pathways women from N-MESCs can take to seek support.
- Address the structural factors that influence violence against women from N-MESCs and CALD backgrounds, drive sector-level cultural change and challenge racist attitudes against people from N-MESCs and CALD backgrounds.

Implementing programs and initiatives

- Incorporate multilingual violence awareness-raising initiatives into immigration processes for people from N-MESCs.
- Support the development of peer education and mentoring for people born in N-MESCs.
- Improve service responses to women from N-MESCs through cultural responsiveness training and organisational reform that addresses systemic racism and discrimination.
- In partnership with N-MESC communities, address access barriers and raise awareness of where to access support for people from N-MESCs witnessing, experiencing or perpetrating domestic violence.
- Improve information and service accessibility for women from N-MESCs who are experiencing technology-facilitated abuse. Offer culturally responsive and practical support for women to seek help and report incidents of stalking.
- Adopt an intersectional approach within workplace and community initiatives to prevent sexual harassment.
- Tailor interventions to address the diverse range of needs and circumstances for people from N-MESCs, such as the languages they speak at home, their education level, how long they have lived in Australia, and their age and gender.

Attitudes and understandings in focus

- Raise awareness about the seriousness and unacceptability of sexual harassment, technology-facilitated abuse, and online and in-person stalking behaviours. Disseminate the information in a variety of ways that will effectively reach women from N-MESCs and raise community awareness.
- Challenge victim-blaming narratives, problematic norms and gender roles that justify domestic violence, dismiss it as a family matter and position men as entitled to sex, particularly in married relationships.
- Increase community understanding of affirmative and ongoing consent, and the seriousness of sexual harassment, and address barriers to reporting.
- Increase bystander capacity to identify and respond to disrespect and abuse towards women in workplaces and the broader community.
- Promote positive family relationships and gender equality in non-judgemental spaces for men from N-MESC backgrounds.

Although the 2021 NCAS results could vary somewhat between different CALD backgrounds, the findings for the whole N-MESC sample provide a useful starting point for considering the key areas that are likely to be important for prevention efforts with people from many CALD backgrounds.

Implications for *how* prevention initiatives should be implemented

While the 2021 NCAS findings indicate focus areas for prevention initiatives, they cannot tell us *how* these strategies should be implemented. The [N-MESC report](#) collates evidence-based recommendations from the wider literature about best practice, and culturally responsive and linguistically appropriate approaches to implementing initiatives with N-MESC communities. These recommendations should be applied when using the 2021 NCAS findings to develop initiatives.

Implications for *how* prevention initiatives should be implemented include the need to:

- **Adopt an intersectional approach to prevention design and delivery** that recognises that violence can be experienced differently depending on the intersecting oppressions experienced by a person or group (e.g., discrimination based on race, religion, socio economic status and gender).
- **Adopt a participatory approach and invite community members to partner in designing and delivering prevention initiatives** to help increase the relevance of interventions to communities and to promote community and participant engagement. Adopting a participatory approach also creates opportunities for mutual learning and relationship building between communities and those working to end violence against women and children.
- **Tailor interventions to specific communities' needs, norms and readiness to participate in prevention.** The N-MESC population in Australia is diverse, and interventions may be more effective if tailored to specific CALD groups.
- **Engage men from N-MESCs in violence prevention using strengths-based and aspirational language** that increases their willingness to participate.
- **Disseminate information in languages commonly spoken by people from N-MESCs and CALD backgrounds residing in Australia** to ensure prevention initiatives are available to all Australians.
- **Use multiple sources to provide information on women from N-MESCs' rights to safety, visa rights, access to support services and reporting pathways** to ensure that women have diverse and strong sources of information related to violence prevention and support.

Further reading and resources

2021 NCAS

Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety. (2023). *Quick Guide to the 2021 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS)* [Fact sheet]. ANROWS. <https://www.anrows.org.au/publication/quick-guide-to-the-2021-ncas/>

Coumarelos, C., Honey, N., Ward, A., Weeks, N., & Minter, K. (2023). *Attitudes matter: The 2021 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS), Technical report* (Insights 02/2023). ANROWS. <https://www.anrows.org.au/publication/attitudes-matter-the-2021-national-community-attitudes-towards-violence-against-women-survey-ncas-technical-report/>

Coumarelos, C., Roberts, N., Weeks, N., Bernstein, S., & Honey, N. (2023). *Attitudes matter: The 2021 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS), Findings for Australian states and territories* (Research report, 05/2023). ANROWS. <https://www.anrows.org.au/publication/attitudes-matter-the-2021-national-community-attitudes-towards-violence-against-women-survey-ncas-findings-for-australian-states-and-territories/>

Coumarelos, C., Rasmussen, V., & Weeks, N. (2024). *Attitudes matter: The 2021 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS), Findings for people born in countries where the main language is not English* (Research report, 05/2024). ANROWS. <https://www.anrows.org.au/publication/ncas-2021-nmesc/>

Coumarelos, C., Roberts, N., Weeks, N., & Rasmussen, V. (2023). *Attitudes matter: The 2021 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS), Findings for young Australians* (Research report, 08/2023). ANROWS. <https://www.anrows.org.au/publication/ncas-2021-findings-for-young-australians>

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2017 NCAS

Qualitative research studies based on 2017 NCAS findings

Carlisle, E., Coumarelos, C., Minter, K., & Lohmeyer, B. (2022). *"It depends on what the definition of domestic violence is": How young Australians conceptualise domestic violence and abuse*. ANROWS. <https://www.anrows.org.au/publication/it-depends-on-what-the-definition-of-domestic-violence-is-how-young-people-conceptualise-domestic-violence-and-abuse/>

Minter, K., Carlisle, E., & Coumarelos, C. (2021). *"Chuck her on a lie detector": Investigating Australians' mistrust in women's reports of sexual assault*. ANROWS. <https://www.anrows.org.au/publication/chuck-her-on-a-lie-detector-investigating-australians-mistrust-in-womens-reports-of-sexual-assault/>



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