

The Australian National Research Agenda to End Violence against Women and Children 2023–2028

The Australian National Research Agenda to End Violence against Women and Children 2023–2028 (the agenda) is a national research framework relevant for anyone working to support the safety of women, children and LGBTQI+ communities from domestic, family and sexual violence (DFS).

The agenda works as a guide, setting out research priorities and ways of working to steer investment in new knowledge development where it is most needed to inform policies and programs. It was shaped by a rigorous review of the existing research and a co-design process including partnership and consultation with victim-survivors, practitioners, policymakers and leading researchers.

Through working together and focusing on what's needed, the agenda aims to help prevent and respond to violence against women and children by addressing gaps in evidence.



How is it relevant to policymakers?

Policymakers are critical users of research findings. As service and program designers, developers and implementers, people working in policy are also at the forefront of generating new knowledge. The agenda is designed to support policy decision makers at all levels to better design and implement evidence-informed reforms.

The national research agenda is designed to support the ambition of the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032* (the National Plan) to end gender-based violence in one generation. The research priorities also align to the outcomes of the National Plan and the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2023–2025*.

Using the national research agenda in your work

Policymakers, including those working across service design and the commissioning of services, can use the national research agenda to call for and inform policy-relevant research, guide the protocols of new research and evaluations, inform the commissioning of evaluation-ready services and integrate new research into policy development. The agenda can inform research at a national, state and territory and community level.

Evidence-informed policy and law reform

Use the national research agenda to identify evidence gaps currently inhibiting the use of research in policy and law reform.

Tips

- Ensure adequate resourcing of research and evaluations in service funding agreements using the agenda.
- Reference the agenda in policy and law reform responses or papers calling for inquiries.
- Refer to the **ANROWS website**, **ANROWS Evidence Portal** and **ANROWS Register of Active Research** to review the existing evidence base and further identify knowledge gaps specific to your service or practice.

Commissioning or developing new research

Develop research proposals by leveraging the agenda's review of existing literature, evidence gap maps, and research questions for each priority area, while adhering to the guiding principles for developing new knowledge.

Tips

- Develop your own research agenda drawing from the priorities set out in the national research agenda and recognised policy priorities. This could be at a jurisdictional level, organisational level or unit level. Incorporate the ways of working into your agenda to support a consistent sector-wide approach to performing ethical and efficient research into DFSV.
- When developing research – either internally or through external research teams – consider how you can make results available to a broader audience. This could include publishing a research report, using webinars or discussion groups, and registering the research on the **ANROWS Register of Active Research**. When you register research, it becomes part of a national database of studies relevant to gender-based violence.
- Use the **ANROWS Register of Active Research** to see who else is developing new research on that topic and seek out potential partnerships.

Developing or funding evaluation-ready programs and services

The agenda calls for the prioritisation of evaluations so we can better understand what works, for whom and when. If you're working to deliver or fund services, including the development or implementation of new programs, it's important to properly plan for and fund evaluation to learn from its implementation, measure outcomes and effectiveness, and refine the service to meet service user needs.

Tips

- Build research subsidies into service commissioning contracts to support the participation of services in all parts of the research process.
- Secure funding for program and service evaluations aligned with agenda priorities, ensuring victim-survivors are compensated for their expertise in program design and development and prioritising practitioner involvement in research.
- When conducting or commissioning evaluations, share insights to inform other jurisdictions or similar programs, such as registering evaluations on the **ANROWS Register of Active Research**, exchanging learnings with trusted counterparts or reaching out to ANROWS for support in interstate or cross-program knowledge sharing.

Facilitating research and fostering collaboration

Policy units often seek new research or partnerships with research organisations to inform policy development. The agenda provides an opportunity for policymakers to enhance this collaboration by aligning policy work with agenda priorities and approaches.

Tips

- Use the agenda to highlight alignments between research priorities and your policy or program reform agenda. Seek partnerships with researchers in your field to share information, fostering new research opportunities and collaborations. ANROWS can help facilitate these relationships.
- Identify your existing data and assess its accessibility to researchers. Explore ways your organisation can make this data available to develop insights into the issue of DFSV and identify potential solutions.

Integrating emerging research into policy development

The agenda can also help you be a more effective user of research and evidence. Use the agenda to familiarise yourself with known gaps and the areas where there is a push for national investment. If these priority areas align with your work, use the tips below to follow emerging research and seek opportunities to contribute to its development.

Tips

- Use the **ANROWS Register of Active Research** to see what research is happening across key themes and jurisdictions.
- Sign up to receive the **ANROWS monthly newsletter** to see updates in ANROWS-led and commissioned research and summaries of new and emerging research across the agenda's priorities.
- Contact ANROWS about our research, including research currently underway, to get early access to briefings and findings.
- Follow ANROWS's social media channels for regular research summaries, new research-informed resources and tools and information about upcoming events where active or newly published research will be discussed.
- Consult with ANROWS on relevant policy development or reform, including on how to integrate emerging research to support evidence-informed policymaking.

A closer look at the agenda

Take a closer look at the national research agenda. The agenda is divided up into nine research priorities. These priorities are grouped by theme: systems and society, populations in focus, and types and patterns of violence. This is the third national research agenda developed by ANROWS. Each new agenda identifies priorities through an extensive review of the existing evidence to identify areas of significant research investment.

RESEARCH PRIORITIES

EVIDENCE GAPS

Systems and society

Structural inequities

- Address structural inequities within mainstream services.
 - Identify specific government policies that can prevent people at risk of marginalisation from experiencing DFSV, by delivering improved health, social and economic benefits.
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Gender relations, gender norms and attitudes

- Evaluate existing prevention programs.
 - Establish new methods of engagement.
 - Increase understanding about healthy and respectful relationships.
 - Identify local factors driving and sustaining backlash to gender equality in Australia and how to counteract it.
 - Address and counteract the needs of boys and men from a variety of demographic and socio-economic backgrounds to use controlling behaviours.
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Trauma- and DFSV-informed, victim-centred systems

- Identify the specific changes to policies, processes and competencies required to reform DFSV service (police, courts, child protection, housing, as well as frontline DFSV agencies).
 - Understand the extent of misidentification, including the characteristics of those most affected; the data will help to identify potential biases and other factors that are influencing this practice.
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A closer look at the agenda

RESEARCH PRIORITIES

EVIDENCE GAPS

Populations in focus

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

- Explore what effective, respectful and culturally sensitive policing of DFSV could look like and the problem of victim-survivors being misidentified as predominant aggressors.
 - Develop more robust data and research on domestic and family violence (DFV) as a key driver of child removal and people who use DFSV, while including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men as partners in the conversation.
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Children and young people

- Trial and evaluate therapeutic and psychosocial interventions for children who have experienced DFV to help them recover and heal from violence and prevent future cycles of victimisation and perpetration.
 - Invest in longitudinal studies to provide the evidence base to determine how effective recovery interventions are in preventing further DFSV across the life course.
 - Identify effective ways to encourage young people towards non-violent behaviour, respectful attitudes and to appropriately negotiate consent.
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People who use DFSV

- Analyse the role of systems, institutions and norms in enabling DFSV, as well as the influence of factors such as mental illness, childhood trauma, pornography, substance abuse and problem gambling.
 - Identify critical intervention points when the opportunity for prevention and behaviour change is greatest.
 - Identify pathways out of perpetration; specifically, there is a need to develop and evaluate behaviour change programs that have a dual focus on accountability and healing.
 - Update and better use data about the extent of perpetration against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children and the characteristics of people who use DFSV.
 - Update and better use data about the extent of perpetration against LGBTQI+ people.
 - Investigate how and why DFSV is used against migrant and refugee women (including forced marriage and dowry abuse), women with disability and older women, to better identify methods for screening and opportunities for early intervention.
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A closer look at the agenda

RESEARCH PRIORITIES

EVIDENCE GAPS

Types and patterns of violence

Sexual violence

- Explore the deterrent effects of sentencing outcomes.
 - Identify and analyse the factors and systems that enable people to sexually harass others.
 - Investigate the motives for sexual harassment, as they are still not well understood.
 - Explore police competency on sexual violence and the reasons why rates of charging and conviction are so low, as well as why sentences – even for serial and serious offending – are often not custodial.
 - Understand the influence of community attitudes on jury trials, as well as what education might be required for juries and the judiciary in sexual violence matters.
 - Trial and evaluate alternative justice mechanisms co-designed with victim-survivors, to better support victim-survivor safety, recovery and sense of justice.
 - Evaluate practical education programs and resources that help people of all ages to negotiate sexual consent and power in their intimate encounters and relationships.
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Coercive control

- Evaluate the impacts of the coercive control criminalisation on victim misidentification, prevalence of DFV, and victim-survivor safety and recovery.
 - Identify and test effective models for responding to people who use coercive controlling behaviours, including whether this behaviour is adequately dealt with in men's behaviour change programs.
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Economic abuse

- Explore how public and private systems can better identify and respond to economic abuse, how to support victim-survivors and develop safeguards to prevent economic abuse.
 - Assess government and the private sector partnerships to build evidence for how to effectively prevent economic abuse.
 - Explore older women's experiences of economic abuse perpetrated by children and how this overlaps with other forms of abuse, as well as the influence traditional gender roles have on risk of victimisation and the effects that this abuse can have on an older person's economic security.
 - Explore the prevalence, characteristics and motivations for dowry abuse in Australia; it is important to first consult with migrant and refugee communities on how to collect data safely and appropriately.
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Ways of working and ways of knowing

It is not just the research that we do, but how we do it, that matters. The following ways of working and ways of knowing are principles for a new standard of research in DFSV. Upholding these principles requires a collaborative effort between researchers, knowledge holders, funders and data custodians.



Centre connection and address power imbalances through Indigenous research methodologies

Indigenous research methodologies are sets of principles and values developed by Indigenous peoples in response to their own ways of being, thinking and doing. These methods can be used by Indigenous or non-Indigenous researchers working with Indigenous knowledge.



Create space for pilots and evaluations of community-led interventions

Community members can participate in and lead research in their own communities, for their own communities.



Make better use of existing data

Many services, agencies and departments collect vast amounts of data. By improving what data is collected, connecting data across existing datasets and investing in better data analysis, we can learn more and design more effective responses.



Work with the knowledge of experts by experience

Ensure the voices of experts by experience are featured in your work. Aim for co-design wherever feasible. This collaboration between traditional researchers and those with lived experience of DFSV can begin at the development of research questions and continue to the dissemination of findings.



Listen to children when they are children

Listening to children and young people as part of research design, development and analysis shows respect and helps better design system responses and services to accommodate and appropriately respond to their needs.



Value practitioners' expertise

As research participants, practitioners bring a critical lens to how services operate and the opportunities for improvement. As research partners, practitioners build enough safety to support victim-survivor participants and ethically and effectively work with people who use violence.

Key resources



Explore **the agenda** in full



Speak to us about how we could support your work aligning to the agenda



Explore existing **ANROWS research** through our syntheses



Use the **ANROWS Register of Active Research** to find live local research projects



Use the **ANROWS Evidence Portal** to see the results of intervention evaluations – just go to “Intervention Finder” and search by type



Use the **ANROWS Evidence and Gap Maps** to see where there are gaps in interventions across prevention, early intervention, response, recovery and healing



Learn more about best practice in evaluations through the following resources:

[What is evaluation?](#)

[Indigenous Evaluation Strategy](#)

[BetterEvaluation.org](#)