



Domestic violence in Australia—an overview of the issues

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Introduction

Each culture has its sayings and songs about the importance of home, and the comfort and security to be found there. Yet for many women, home is a place of pain and humiliation ... violence against women by their male partners is common, wide-spread and far-reaching in its impact. For too long hidden behind closed doors and avoided in public discourse, such violence can no longer be denied as part of everyday life for millions of women.¹

This background note is a guide to research and resources on domestic violence in Australia. It is intended as an update to previous Parliamentary Library publications on this topic.² It includes an overview of research on the prevalence of domestic violence, attitudes and risk factors, at risk groups and communities and the costs of domestic violence to communities and to the economy. It also covers policy approaches designed to prevent domestic violence, a survey of current Australian Government programs and initiatives and a review of future directions in domestic violence prevention. Appendix A contains links to sources of further information on domestic violence in Australia.

Defining domestic violence

There has been much debate regarding the most appropriate terminology to use for violence between spouses and partners. Objections have been raised to both ‘domestic violence’ and ‘family violence’ (the terms most often used), as well as use of terms such as ‘victims’ of domestic violence.³ This background note generally uses the term ‘domestic violence’ and refers to ‘victims’ of domestic violence as these are the most-commonly used and best understood of the alternatives. The broader term ‘family violence’ is used in relation to Indigenous people, as it is the preferred term in many Indigenous communities.

Domestic violence refers to acts of violence that occur between people who have, or have had, an intimate relationship in domestic settings.⁴ These acts include physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse.⁵ Defining forms of violence, its perpetrators and their victims, is complicated by the many different kinds of intimate and family relationships and living arrangements present in

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1. C García-Moreno, H Jansen, M Ellsberg, L Heise and C Watts, *WHO multi-country study on women’s health and domestic violence against women: initial results on prevalence, health outcomes and women’s responses*, World Health Organization (WHO), Geneva, 2005, p. vi, viewed 26 September 2011, http://www.who.int/gender/violence/who_multicountry_study/en/
 2. K Carrington and J Phillips, *Domestic violence in Australia*, E-brief, Parliamentary Library, Canberra, 2006, viewed 24 June 2011, http://www.aph.gov.au/library/intguide/SP/Dom_violence.htm; J Phillips and M Park, *Measuring violence against women: a review of the literature and statistics*, E-brief, Parliamentary Library, Canberra, 2006, viewed 24 June 2011, <http://www.aph.gov.au/library/intguide/SP/ViolenceAgainstWomen.htm>
 3. B Fehlberg and J Behrens, *Australian family law: the contemporary context*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2008, pp. 177–179.
 4. A Morgan and H Chadwick, *Key issues in domestic violence*, Summary paper, no. 7, Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC), Canberra, December 2009, p. 1, viewed 28 October 2010, http://www.aic.gov.au/documents/5/6/E/%7B56E09295-AF88-4998-A083-B7CCD925B540%7Drip07_001.pdf
 5. Ibid.

Australian communities.⁶ Domestic violence is most commonly perpetrated by males against their female partners, but it also includes violence against men by their female partners and violence within same-sex relationships.

The traditional associations of domestic violence are with acts of physical violence within relationships occurring in the home but this understanding fails to grasp the complexity of the phenomenon. The National Council to Reduce Violence against Women and Children (NCRVWC) found that:

... a central element of domestic violence is that of an ongoing pattern of behaviour aimed at controlling one's partner through fear (for example, by using violent or threatening behaviour) ... the violent behaviour is part of a range of tactics used by the perpetrator to exercise power and control ... and can be both criminal and non-criminal in nature.⁷

Domestic violence includes:

- emotional abuse—blaming the victim for all problems in the relationship, undermining the victim's self-esteem and self-worth through comparisons with others, withdrawing interest and engagement and emotional blackmail
- verbal abuse—swearing and humiliation in private and public, focusing on intelligence, sexuality, body image or the victim's capacity as a parent or spouse
- social abuse—systematic isolation from family and friends, instigating and controlling relocations to a place where the victim has no social circle or employment opportunities and preventing the victim from going out to meet people
- economic abuse—controlling all money, forbidding access to bank accounts, providing an inadequate 'allowance', preventing the victim seeking or holding employment and taking wages earned by the victim
- psychological abuse—making threats regarding custody of children, asserting the justice system will not believe or support the victim, destroying property, abusing pets and driving dangerously
- spiritual abuse—denial and/or misuse of religious beliefs or practices to force victims into subordinate roles and misusing religious or spiritual traditions to justify physical violence or other abuse

6. For a discussion of the complexities involved in defining family and domestic violence see: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *Conceptual framework for family and domestic violence*, cat. no. 4529.0, ABS, Canberra, 2009, viewed 6 December 2010, <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4529.0/>

7. National Council to Reduce Violence against Women and Children (NCRVWC), *Background paper to Time for Action: The National Council's plan to reduce violence against women and children, 2009–2021*, Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA), Canberra, 2009, p. 13, viewed 28 October 2010, http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/women/pubs/violence/np_time_for_action/background/Documents/Background_Paper_to_Time_for_Action.PDF; Department for Planning and Community Development, *Family violence risk assessment and risk management framework*, Victorian Government, Melbourne, 2007, p. 21, viewed 19 September 2011, http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/581757/risk-assessment-risk-management-framework-2007.pdf

- physical abuse—direct assaults on the body, use of weapons (including objects), assault of children, locking the victim out of the house, sleep and food deprivation, and
- sexual abuse—any form of pressured/unwanted sex or sexual degradation, causing pain during sex, coercive sex without protection against pregnancy or sexually transmitted disease, making the victim perform sexual acts unwillingly and criticising or using degrading insults.⁸

Family violence is a broader term referring to violence between family members as well as violence between intimate partners. This term also covers a complexity of behaviours beyond that of direct physical violence. The Australian and New South Wales Law Reform Commission's review of family violence law in Australia recommended that state and territory legislation 'should provide that family violence is violent or threatening behaviour, or any other form of behaviour, that coerces or controls a family member or causes that family member to be fearful'.⁹

What do we know about domestic violence?

Given the scope of this definition of domestic violence, the private nature of the relationships within which violence occurs and the fact that most incidents of domestic violence go unreported, it is impossible to measure the true extent of the problem. We do know, however, that domestic violence in Australia is common and widespread. We know that a woman is more likely to be killed in her home by her male partner than anywhere else or by anyone else.¹⁰ We also know that most women do not report violence to police; they are even less likely to report violent incidents to police when the perpetrator is a current partner.¹¹

What information we do have on the prevalence of domestic violence in Australia is derived from surveys including the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Personal Safety Survey 2005, the Australian component of the International Violence Against Women Survey (IVAWS) conducted in 2002–03 and the ABS Women's Safety Survey 1996.¹²

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8. NCRVWC, *Background paper to Time for Action*, op. cit., pp. 13–14; S Tually, D Faulkner, C Cutler and M Slatter, *Women, domestic and family violence and homelessness: a synthesis report*, (prepared for the Office for Women), FaHCSIA, Canberra, August 2008, p. 5, viewed 17 August 2011, http://fahcsia.gov.au/sa/women/pubs/violence/synthesis_report08/Pages/default.aspx
 9. Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) and New South Wales Law Reform Commission (NSWLRC), *Family violence: a national legal response: final report, volume 1*, ALRC Report 114/NSWLRC Report 128, ALRC and NSWLRC, Sydney, 2010, p. 17, viewed 5 September, http://dpl/Books/2010/ALRC114-NSWLRC128_FamilyViolence.pdf
 10. R Alexander, 'Women and domestic violence', in P Eastal, ed., *Women and the law in Australia*, Butterworths, Chatswood, N.S.W., 2010, p. 152, viewed 14 February 2011, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22library%2Fjrnart%2F158210%22>
 11. J Mouzos and T Makkai, *Women's experiences of male violence: findings from the Australian component of the International Violence Against Women Survey*, Research and public policy series, no. 56, AIC, Canberra, 2004, p. 98, viewed 14 February 2011, <http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/current%20series/rpp/41-60/rpp56.aspx>; ABS, *Personal safety survey Australia 2005 (Reissue)*, cat. no. 4906.0, ABS, Canberra, 2006, viewed 19 September 2011, p. 21, [http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4906.02005%20\(Reissue\)?OpenDocument](http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4906.02005%20(Reissue)?OpenDocument)
 12. ABS, *Women's safety Australia, 1996*, cat. no. 4128.0, Canberra, 1996, viewed 30 September 2011, <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4128.0/>; data from a range of other sources such as Women's Health

The ABS Personal Safety Survey 2005 provided information on people's safety at home and in the community and, in particular, on the nature and extent of violence against people in Australia. Information was collected through personal interviews with approximately 16 400 people in all states and territories.¹³ The 2005 survey updates information about women's experiences of violence collected in the 1996 ABS Women's Safety Survey and also includes information on men's experience of violence. The International Violence Against Women Survey (IVAWS) was conducted across Australia between December 2002 and June 2003. A total of 6 677 women aged between 18 and 69 years participated in the survey and provided information on their experiences of physical and sexual violence.¹⁴

More recent statistics are limited; for example, the ABS regularly releases *Recorded crime—victims* data, derived from administrative systems maintained by state and territory police. While this includes information on sexual assault and the relationship of offenders to victims, it does not include analysis of other forms of domestic violence-related data.¹⁵

The Gillard Government committed \$14.9 million to repeat the Personal Safety Survey and the National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey during the 2010 election campaign.¹⁶ The next Personal Safety Survey will be in the field in 2012, with results to be released in 2013. The next National Community Attitudes Survey is likely to be in the field in 2014, with results expected in 2015.

Prevalence and types of violence

The ABS Personal Safety Survey 2005, which defined violence as any incident involving the occurrence, attempt or threat of either physical or sexual assault, found:

- since the age of 15, two percent of women (160 000) and one per cent of men (68 100) had experienced violence from a current partner
- since the age of 15, some 15 per cent of women (1 135 500) and five per cent of men (367 300) had experienced violence from a former partner

Australia, Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health, the AIC's National Homicide Monitoring Program and the ABS National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social survey 2008, are presented later in this background note.

13. ABS, *Personal safety survey Australia 2005 (reissue)*, op. cit.

14. Mouzos and Makkai, *Women's experiences of male violence*, op. cit., p. 2.

15. ABS, *Recorded crimes—victims, Australia, 2010*, cat. no. 4510.0, ABS, Canberra, 2011, viewed 27 September 2011, [http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/8612E58B8BCDCF9DCA2578B700119690/\\$File/45100_2010.pdf](http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/8612E58B8BCDCF9DCA2578B700119690/$File/45100_2010.pdf)

16. Australian Labor Party (ALP), *National plan to reduce violence against women and their children*, ALP policy document, Election 2010, viewed 15 February 2011, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22library%2Fparty%2FCGOX6%22;> This figure was later revised down to \$14.5 million, see K Ellis (Minister for the Status of Women), *Women's budget statement 2011–12*, FaHCSIA, Canberra, 2011, pp. 28–29, viewed 1 September 2011, http://resources.fahcsia.gov.au/budget/2011-12/Womens_Budget_2011.pdf

- Seven per cent of men (485 400) and three per cent of women (242 000) were physically assaulted in the 12 months prior to the survey
- of those women who were physically assaulted in the 12 months prior to the survey, 31 per cent (73 800) were physically assaulted by a current and/or previous partner compared with four per cent (21 200) of men
- almost two thirds of men who were physically assaulted in the 12 months prior to the survey (66 per cent or 319 100) nominated a stranger as the perpetrator, compared with 22 per cent of women (52 900)
- in the 12 months prior to the survey, 1.3 per cent of women (101 600) and 0.6 per cent of men (42 300) were sexually assaulted and
- of those who were sexually assaulted in the 12 months prior to the survey, 21 per cent of women (21 500) reported that the perpetrator was a previous partner; eight per cent (7 800) reported that the perpetrator was a current partner. No males reported sexual assault by a current or previous partner.¹⁷

Later ABS data on crime victimisation reflects similar patterns. Of respondents aged 15 years and over three per cent of males and two per cent of females reported being a victim of physical assault in the previous 12 months. The figures for sexual assault (of respondents aged 18 years and over) were 0.1 and 0.4 per cent respectively. Younger people were more likely to report being a victim of physical assault—6 per cent of those aged 15–24 years, dropping to one per cent of those aged 65 years and over. Most males (89 per cent) and females (67 per cent) who were victims of physical assault reported that the offender was male. One in five females (20 per cent) reported that the offender was a current or previous partner, compared with two per cent of males.¹⁸

The Australian component of the IVAWS in 2002–03 employed a broader definition of violence, measuring physical violence (including threats), sexual violence (including unwanted sexual touching) and psychological violence (including controlling behaviours such as put downs and keeping track of whereabouts). The survey found:

- 34 per cent of women who had a current or former intimate partner (including boyfriends) experienced at least one form of violence from a partner during their lifetime (since the age of 16).
- 31 per cent of women who had a current or former intimate partner experienced physical violence and an estimated 12 per cent suffered sexual violence from a partner during their lifetime.

17. ABS, *Personal safety survey Australia 2005 (reissue)*, op. cit.

18. ABS, *Crime victimisation, Australia, 2009–10*, cat. no. 4530.0, ABS, Canberra, 2011, viewed 8 August 2011, <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4530.0Main+Features12009-10?OpenDocument>; data from the 2009–10 Multipurpose Household Survey (MPHS) is not directly comparable to the Personal Safety Survey due to differences in modes of collection and changes to survey questions.

- Of the women who had a current or former intimate partner, six per cent reported that their partner had forced them to have sexual intercourse at some stage during their lifetime; this is the most common form of sexual violence perpetrated by intimate partners. A further three per cent of these women reported that their partners had *attempted* to force them to have sexual intercourse and four per cent experienced unwanted sexual touching.
- Of the women who were in a current relationship (spouse, de facto partner, or boyfriend), ten per cent reported that they had experienced violence from their current partner over their lifetime, and three per cent over the past 12 months. Physical violence was more commonly reported (nine per cent, lifetime) than sexual violence (one per cent, lifetime).
- Almost four in ten women (between 37 and 40 per cent) who were in a current relationship reported experiencing at least one type of controlling behaviour over their lifetime; six per cent experienced controlling behaviour in the past 12 months.
- Women experienced higher levels of violence from a previous partner than a current partner. Of women who have had a past relationship, 36 per cent reported experiencing violence from a previous partner over their lifetime, compared with ten per cent for a current partner.
- Previous partners were also reported as perpetrating more severe violence than current male partners. For example, less than one per cent of women in a current relationship reported that their current partner had used or threatened to use a knife or gun on them. However, six per cent of women who had a former relationship reported that their previous partner had used or threatened to use one of these weapons on them.¹⁹

Risk factors for domestic violence

While there is no single cause that leads to domestic violence, there are a number of risk factors associated with perpetrators and victims of domestic violence. For example, perpetrators' alcohol and drug use, and victims' experience of child abuse, pregnancy and separation may all increase the risk of domestic violence. Financial stress, personal stress and lack of social support are also strong correlates of violence against women. Further research is necessary, however, to determine whether these factors are primarily causes or consequences of violence against women.²⁰

Alcohol and drug use

Researchers fitted a logistic regression model to IVAWS data and found that the strongest risk factors for current intimate partner physical violence were associated with the partners' behaviour—drinking habits, levels of aggression and controlling behaviours.²¹

Alcohol is a significant risk factor for domestic violence, particularly in Indigenous communities. A longitudinal analysis of alcohol outlet density found a relationship between alcohol availability and

19. Mouzos and Makkai, *Women's experiences of male violence*, op. cit., p. 42–52.

20. D Weatherburn, 'Personal stress, financial stress and violence against women', *Crime and justice bulletin*, no. 151, NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, Sydney, 2011, viewed 26 September 2011, [http://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/bocsar/ll_bocsar.nsf/vwFiles/CJB151.pdf/\\$file/CJB151.pdf](http://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/bocsar/ll_bocsar.nsf/vwFiles/CJB151.pdf/$file/CJB151.pdf)

21. Mouzos and Makkai, *Women's experiences of male violence*, op. cit., pp. 59–62.

domestic violence. Packaged liquor outlets that sell alcohol for off-premise consumption were particularly implicated.²²

The ABS found that 49 per cent of women who had experienced an assault in the preceding 12 months where the perpetrator was male, stated that alcohol or drugs had contributed to the most recent incident.²³ The NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research found that 41 per cent of all incidents of domestic assault reported to the police between 2001 and 2010 were alcohol related. This percentage varied, however, from a low of 35 per cent in Sydney, to a high of 62 per cent in Far Western NSW.²⁴

At the most serious end of the spectrum, many intimate-partner homicides are alcohol related. Between 2000 and 2006, 44 percent of intimate-partner homicides were alcohol related. The overwhelming majority (87 per cent) of Indigenous intimate-partner homicides were alcohol related.²⁵

Child abuse

Results from both the IVAWS and ABS surveys suggest a relationship between the experience of violence as a child and subsequent victimisation as an adult. The IVAWS found that women who experienced abuse during childhood were one and a half times more likely to experience violence in adulthood than those who had not experienced abuse during childhood.²⁶ Data from the ABS Personal Safety Survey 2005 indicate that both men and women who experienced child abuse under the age of 15 years were at greater risk of partner violence as adults (since the age of 15) than those who had not experienced child abuse. Those who experienced physical abuse as children were more than twice as likely to experience violence by a partner as those who had not experienced child physical abuse.²⁷ Victims of child sexual abuse were three times more likely to report violence by a partner than those who had not experienced sexual abuse as children.²⁸ An analysis of the ABS 1996

22. M Livingston, 'A longitudinal analysis of alcohol outlet density and domestic violence', *Addiction*, no. 106, 2011, pp. 919–925.

23. ABS, *Personal safety survey Australia 2005 (reissue)*, op. cit. p. 29.

24. K Gretch and M Burgess, *Trends and patterns in domestic violence assaults: 2001 to 2010*, Issue paper, no. 61, NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, Sydney, 2011, p. 4, viewed 20 October 2011, [http://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/bocsar/ll_bocsar.nsf/vwFiles/bb61.pdf/\\$file/bb61.pdf](http://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/bocsar/ll_bocsar.nsf/vwFiles/bb61.pdf/$file/bb61.pdf)

25. J Deardon and J Payne, *Alcohol and homicide in Australia*, Trends and issues in crime and criminal justice, no. 372, AIC, Canberra, 2009, viewed 7 July 2011, <http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/current%20series/tandi/361-380/tandi372.aspx>

26. Mouzos and Makkai, *Women's experiences of male violence*, op. cit., p. 87; 78 per cent of women who experienced abuse during childhood also experienced violence in adulthood. By comparison, of women who did not experience childhood abuse 49 per cent experienced violence in adulthood.

27. ABS, *Personal safety survey Australia 2005 (reissue)*, op. cit., p. 38; 24 per cent of those who experienced child physical abuse also experienced violence by a partner. By comparison, of those who did not experience child physical abuse ten per cent experienced violence by a partner;

28. *Ibid*; 30 per cent of those who had experienced child sexual abuse also experienced violence by a partner. By comparison, of those who had not experienced child sexual abuse, ten per cent experienced violence by a partner.

Women's Safety Survey found that history of violent victimisation, whether as a child or as an adult, predicts future victimisation.²⁹

Pregnancy and separation

Pregnancy and separation may be times of vulnerability to domestic violence. Of women who experienced partner violence since the age of 15, some 36 per cent reported experiencing violence from a previous partner during pregnancy; 18 per cent experienced domestic violence for the first time while they were pregnant. Some 15 per cent reported experiencing violence from a current partner during pregnancy; eight per cent for the first time.³⁰

An analysis of the ABS 1996 Women's Safety Survey revealed that women who were separated were more likely to experience violence than married women.³¹ These findings reflect the stressful nature of separation itself. It may be the case that violence follows separation, or the decision to separate is due to violence in the relationship. Overseas studies indicate that leaving a violent partner may increase the risk of more severe, or even lethal, violence.³²

Attitudes to violence against women

Attitudes and beliefs are also central to domestic violence. They influence its prevalence and impact, and shape community responses and victims' help-seeking behaviour.³³

The most extensive national study on Australian attitudes to violence against women to date is the National Community Attitudes to Violence against Women Survey 2009.³⁴ Comparison of the findings from this survey with data from an earlier study conducted for the Office of the Status of Women in 1995 reveals some positive changes in attitudes.³⁵

- there is greater recognition of the range of behaviours which constitute domestic violence

29. C Coumarelos and J Allen, *Predicting violence against women: the 1996 Women's Safety Survey*, Crime and justice bulletin, no. 42, NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, Sydney, 1998, viewed 7 November 2011, [http://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/bocsar/ll_bocsar.nsf/vwFiles/CJB42.pdf/\\$file/CJB42.pdf#target='blank'](http://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/bocsar/ll_bocsar.nsf/vwFiles/CJB42.pdf/$file/CJB42.pdf#target='blank')

30. Ibid., p. 39.

31. Coumarelos and Allen *Predicting violence against women*, op. cit.

32. J Campbell, D Webster, J Koziol-McLain, C Block, D Campbell, M Curry, et al. 'Risk factors for femicide in abusive relationships: results from a multi-site case control study', *American Journal of Public Health*, vol. 93, no. 7, 2003, pp. 1089–1097; T Hotton, 'Spousal violence after marital separation', *Juristat*, vol. 21 no. 7, 2001, pp. 1–19, viewed 10 November 2011, <http://dsp-psd.pwgsc.gc.ca/Collection-R/Statcan/85-002-XIE/0070185-002-XIE.pdf>,

33. I Barrett Meyering, *What factors shape community attitudes to domestic violence?*, Thematic review, no. 1, Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse, Sydney, 2011, viewed 13 July 2011, http://www.adfvc.unsw.edu.au/PDF%20files/Thematic%20Review_1.pdf

34. AIC, The Social Research Centre and VicHealth, *National survey on community violence against women 2009: changing cultures, changing attitudes-preventing violence against women: a summary of findings*, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Melbourne, 2010, viewed 13 July 2011, http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/~media/ResourceCentre/PublicationsandResources/NCAS_CommunityAttitudes_report_2010.ashx

35. Office of the Status of Women, *Community attitudes to violence against women*, Australian Government Publishing Service (AGPS), Canberra 1995.

- almost all people agree that domestic violence is a crime (98 per cent in 2009, up from 93 per cent in 1995) and
- most people (81 per cent) report that they are willing to intervene in domestic violence situations.³⁶

Nevertheless, few people understand why women stay in violent relationships and a significant minority believe that domestic violence is excusable if due to perpetrators ‘getting so angry that they temporarily lose control’—18 per cent of the general community sample and 45 per cent of the respondents from selected culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (SCALD) sample. Further, 22 per cent of the general community sample and 59 per cent of the SCALD sample believed that domestic violence was excusable if the perpetrator ‘truly regrets’ what they have done.³⁷

Findings from the survey suggest that length of residence in Australia has an impact on reducing tolerance levels for violence-supportive attitudes.³⁸ Survey researchers also found that being male and having low levels of support for gender equity or equality were the strongest predictors for holding violence-supporting attitudes.³⁹

At risk groups

Domestic violence cuts across social and economic boundaries and the data on the effect of education, employment status and income are mixed. The IVAWS found that experience of current intimate partner violence during the previous 12 months varied little according to education, labour force status or household income.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, there is some evidence that women who have lived with a violent partner are more likely than other women to have low levels of education.⁴¹ ABS data indicates that unemployed women were more likely to experience both current and previous partner violence over their lifetime than those who were employed or not in the labour force. Women reliant on government pensions and allowances as their main source of household income were also at increased risk of violence by a previous partner over their lifetime.⁴²

Some women are more vulnerable to becoming victims of domestic violence and less able to leave violent relationships based on factors such as age, Indigenous status, location, disability, ethnicity, and English language abilities.

36. AIC, The Social Research Centre and VicHealth, *National survey on community violence against women 2009*, op. cit., pp. 7, 50.

37. Ibid., pp. 37, 46; The SCALD (selected culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds) sample was drawn from first and second generation members of the Italian, Greek, Chinese, Vietnamese and Indian communities.

38. Ibid., p. 57.

39. Ibid., p. 54.

40. Mouzos and Makkai, *Women’s experiences of male violence*, op. cit., p. 57.

41. Women’s Health Australia, *Partner violence and the health of Australian women*, Research Centre for Gender and Health, University of Newcastle, Newcastle, 2005, p. 1. viewed 18 August 2011, <http://www.alsw.org.au/Reports/Achievements/achievements-violence.pdf>

42. ABS, *Personal safety survey Australia 2005 (reissue)*, op. cit. pp. 34–35.

Younger women

The White Ribbon Foundation points to gender roles and relations as a key factor in young women's vulnerability to violence in relationships; inexperience, age differences in relationships, and lack of access to services compound the problem.⁴³ It should also be noted that while young women are vulnerable to violence in relationships and more likely than older women to experience violence; violence perpetrated by young women, usually against young women, is increasing.⁴⁴

In the National Survey on Community Attitudes to Violence against Women, young people had a strong understanding of the criminal nature of domestic violence. However, they were less likely than older respondents to understand complex aspects of violence in relationships such as the range and seriousness of behaviour that constitutes domestic violence, if and when it can be excused and who is most likely to be a victim of it. They were also more likely than older people to agree with some misconceptions about rape, for example that it is usually perpetrated by strangers.⁴⁵

An earlier research project on young people's attitudes to, and experiences of domestic violence, surveyed 5000 Australians aged between 12 and 20 years across Australia.⁴⁶ Researchers found that males, those with lower socioeconomic status and indigenous young people were more likely to hold pro-violence attitudes. Further, pro-violence attitudes were greatest in the youngest age group (12–14 years) and decreased with age.⁴⁷

ABS and IVAWS statistics indicate that younger women are more likely to have recently experienced physical and sexual violence than older women. The *Personal Safety Survey 2005* found that 12 per cent (117 000) of women aged 18–24 years experienced at least one incident of violence in the last 12 months.⁴⁸ Recent experience of violence decreased with age to two per cent (42 100) of women aged 55 and over. See the chart below for more detail.

43. M Flood and L Fergus, *An assault on our future: the impact of violence on young people and their relationships*, White Ribbon Foundation, Broadway, NSW, 2008, pp. 24–28, viewed 15 July 2011, http://dpl/Books/2008/WhiteRibbon_AssaultonourFutureFinal.pdf

44. R Wilson 'Girls' violence on the rise', *IQ: inside QUT*, no. 298, 2009, p. 1, viewed 7 November 2011, <http://www.marketingcomm.qut.edu.au/cmpublications/insidequt/iqut/IQ298.pdf>; K Carrington and M Pereira, *Offending youth: sex crime and justice*, Federation Press, Sydney, 2009.

45. AIC, The Social Research Centre and VicHealth, *National survey on community violence against women 2009*, op. cit., p. 56.

46. Crime Prevention Branch, Attorney-General's Department, *Young people and domestic violence: national research on young people's attitudes to and experiences of domestic violence—full report*, Attorney-General's Department, Canberra, 2001.

47. D Indermaur, *Young Australians and domestic violence*, Trends and issues in crime and criminal justice, no. 195 AIC, Canberra, 2001, viewed 7 November 2011, <http://www.aic.gov.au/documents/C/8/B/%7BC8BCD19C-D6D0-4268-984F-B6AF9505E5EA%7Dti195.pdf>

48. ABS, *Personal safety survey Australia 2005 (reissue)*, op. cit., p. 6.



Source: ABS, *Personal safety survey Australia 2005 (Reissue)*, cat. no. 4906.0, ABS, Canberra, 2006, p. 20.

Some seven per cent (65,800) of women aged 18 to 24 years experienced physical assault and 3 per cent (28 700) experienced sexual assault in the last 12 months. Experience of physical and sexual assault decreased with age to less than one per cent of women aged 55 and over. Crime victimisation data from the ABS 2009-10 Multipurpose Household Survey (MPHS) also indicate that the risk of physical assault decreases with age.⁴⁹ While IVAWS employed broader definitions of violence, the pattern was the same: younger women were victimised disproportionately.⁵⁰ Current intimate partner violence in the last 12 months was highest for women aged 15 to 24 years (five per cent), dropping to one per cent of women aged 55 to 69 years.⁵¹

Earlier research found that about one in three young people aged 12 to 20 years who had had a boyfriend or girlfriend, reported physical violence in their personal relationships. Reports of such physical violence increased with age to 42 per cent of women aged 19 to 20 years. While rates for male victimisation were similar, females were at least four times as likely as males to have been frightened by the experience. Some 14 per cent of females, compared with three per cent of males, indicated that they had been sexually assaulted. The figure is highest amongst young women aged 19 to 20 years (20 per cent).⁵²

49. ABS, *Crime victimisation, Australia, 2009–10*, op. cit.

50. Mouzos and Makkai, *Women's experiences of male violence*, op. cit., pp. 28–29.

51. *Ibid.*, pp. 57.

52. Indermaur, *Young Australians and domestic violence*, op. cit.

Indigenous women

'Family violence' is the preferred term in many Indigenous communities, as it encompasses all forms of violence in intimate, family and other relationships of mutual obligation and support.⁵³ Indigenous family violence may differ from the stereotypical image of a passive victim battered behind closed doors. It often takes place in public and can involve a number of people. Indigenous women may be more likely to fight back when confronted with violence than non-Indigenous women.⁵⁴

There are significant deficiencies in the availability of statistics and research on the extent and nature of family violence in Indigenous communities. What data exists suggests that Indigenous people suffer violence, including family violence, at significantly higher rates than other Australians.⁵⁵ A high proportion of violent victimisation is not disclosed to police and rates of non-disclosure are higher in Indigenous than non-Indigenous communities.⁵⁶

In addition to more general reasons for non-disclosure that are shared with the wider community, there are reasons specific to Indigenous communities:

- fear of repercussions and consequences, particularly in small, interconnected and isolated communities where anonymity cannot be maintained
- fear and distrust of police, the justice system and other government agencies; many Indigenous people experience anxiety when they are compelled to engage with police and welfare agencies
- cultural considerations and coercion—the interconnectedness of Indigenous society and the rules and obligations that are part of it may also operate against disclosure; factors such as shame and responsibility for maintaining families may lead to Indigenous women internalising their suffering and
- lack of awareness of or access to support services.⁵⁷

Indigenous people experience violence at rates that are typically double or more those experienced by non-Indigenous people, and this can be much higher in some remote communities. Indigenous women in particular are far more likely to experience violent victimisation, and suffer more serious

53. NSW Department of Health, *Aboriginal family health strategy 2011–2016: responding to family violence in Aboriginal communities*, NSW Department of Health, Sydney, 2011, p. 7, viewed 5 August 2011, http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/pubs/2011/pdf/aboriginal_family_health_.pdf

54. H Blagg, 'Restorative justice and Aboriginal family violence: opening a space for healing,' *Restorative justice and family violence*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002, pp. 191–205.

55. Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC), *Ending family violence and abuse in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, key issues: an overview paper of research and findings by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission 2001–2006*, HREOC, Canberra, 2006, p. 6, viewed 21 July 2011, http://www.hreoc.gov.au/social_justice/familyviolence/index.html

56. M Willis, *Non-disclosure of violence in Indigenous communities*, Trends and issues in crime and criminal justice, no. 405, AIC, Canberra, 2011, viewed 29 July 2011, <http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/current%20series/tandi/401-420/tandi405.aspx>

57. *Ibid.*, pp. 4–8.

violence, than non-Indigenous women.⁵⁸ For example, NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research data from 2001–2010 indicate that the rate of domestic assault reported to police is more than six times higher for Indigenous women than for non-Indigenous women. Indigenous males are also over-represented as victims when compared to non-Indigenous males, with a rate four times higher.⁵⁹

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey (NATSISS) 2008 provides the most current data on violence (actual and threatened) in the Indigenous population. While it gives an indication of the level of violence, no question in the NATSISS collects information about the individual's experience of family violence specifically.⁶⁰ Almost one in five (23 per cent) Indigenous Australians aged over 18 years reported that they were a victim of physical or threatened violence in the previous 12 months.⁶¹ Compared with non-Indigenous males, Indigenous males were 1.6 times as likely to report being a victim of physical or threatened violence; Indigenous females were 2.5 times as likely as non-Indigenous females.⁶² In the same survey, one in four reported that family violence was a neighbourhood/community problem. This was substantially higher in remote areas (37 per cent) than non-remote areas (21 per cent).⁶³ As highlighted above, the actual rate of violence is likely to be much higher than these reported figures suggests.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) compared hospitalisation due to assaults for Indigenous and other Australians in 2003–04.⁶⁴ A slightly higher number of Indigenous females (2 513) than males (2 014) were hospitalised for assaults. For females, 41 per cent of these hospitalisations were a result of spouse/domestic partner violence, compared with only seven per cent for males. One-half (50 per cent) of the hospitalisations for females for assaults were as a consequence of family violence, whereas the corresponding proportion for males was 19 per cent. Indigenous males were hospitalised for spouse/domestic partner inflicted assaults at 27 times the

58. Ibid., p. 1.

59. Gretch and Burgess, *Trends and patterns in domestic violence assaults: 2001 to 2010*, op. cit., p. 8.

60. ABS, *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social survey, 2008*, cat. no. 4714.0, ABS, Canberra, 2010, viewed 21 July 2010, <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mf/4714.0/>

61. Ibid.

62. Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council (AHMAC), *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health performance framework report 2010*, AHMAC, Canberra, 2011, p. 100, viewed 14 October 2011, [http://www.health.gov.au/internet/publications/publishing.nsf/Content/health-oatsih-pubs-framereport-toc/\\$FILE/HPF%20Report%202010august2011.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/publications/publishing.nsf/Content/health-oatsih-pubs-framereport-toc/$FILE/HPF%20Report%202010august2011.pdf)

63. ABS, *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social survey, 2008*, op. cit.

64. F Al-Yaman, M Van Doeland and M Wallis, *Family violence among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples*, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), Canberra, 2006, pp. 54–55, viewed 21 July 2011, <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publication-detail/?id=6442467912>; To allow comparison of the levels of violence for Indigenous and other Australians, the data have been age-standardised to adjust for the different age structure of the two populations. Data are presented for Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory (NT) (public hospitals only in NT). Hospitalisation data in these four jurisdictions—which represent approximately 60 per cent of the Indigenous population of Australia—are considered to have adequate identification of Indigenous people. Hospitalisation data for these four jurisdictions should not be assumed to represent the hospitalisation experience in the other jurisdictions.

rate of other males, while Indigenous females experienced 38 times the rate of hospitalisation of other females for spouse/domestic partner inflicted assaults.⁶⁵

Women living in rural and remote areas

While there is some evidence that women living in rural and remote areas are more likely to experience domestic violence, the picture is far from clear. Domestic violence may be less likely to be disclosed in rural and remote areas due to the ideology of self-reliance, and informal sanctions and social control.⁶⁶ Researchers also point to narrowly constructed notions of masculinity that emphasise traditional gender roles and the physicality of rural men's labour, plus patterns of alcohol consumption, as risk factors pertinent to rural and remote areas.⁶⁷ In a study of domestic assaults reported to the police in NSW, from 2001 to 2010, 19 out of the top 20 NSW Local Government Areas for domestic assault were in rural or regional Local Government Areas (LGAs). The top five LGAs were all remote (Bourke, Walgett, Moree Plains, Coonamble and Wentworth).⁶⁸ A literature review prepared in 2000 concluded that where comparable data exists, they indicate that there is a higher reported incidence of domestic violence in rural and remote communities than in metropolitan settings, with remote communities experiencing the highest rates.⁶⁹

Women in rural and remote areas may also find it harder to seek help or leave a violent relationship. Factors such as access to services, a perceived lack of confidentiality and anonymity, stigma attached to the public disclosure of violence and lack of transport and telecommunications may compound the isolation victims of domestic violence already experience as part of the abuse.⁷⁰ There is overlap between the rural and remote, and the indigenous populations; many of the same issues apply.

Data from the 2005 ABS Personal Safety Survey on the prevalence of violence indicate similar rates of physical and sexual assault in the past 12 months between capital cities and balance of state. The likelihood of experience of violence by current partner since the age of 15 was similar whether respondents lived in, or outside capital cities. However, experience of previous partner violence since the age of 15 was higher for those living outside the capital cities, particularly for females. Some 18 per cent of females living outside capital cities experienced violence by a previous partner since the age of 15, compared with 13 per cent of females in capital cities.⁷¹

65. Ibid.

66. R Hogg and K Carrington, *Policing the rural crisis*, Federation Press, Annandale, 2006, pp. 149–159.

67. K Carrington, 'Violence and the architecture of rural life', in E Barclay, J Donnermeyer, J Scott and R Hogg (eds.), *Crime in rural Australia*, Federation Press, Annandale, 2007, pp. 86–99.

68. Gretch and Burgess, *Trends and patterns in domestic violence assaults: 2001 to 2010*, op. cit., pp. 4–5.

69. The Women's Services Network (WESNET), *Domestic violence in rural Australia: a literature review*, Department of Transport and Regional Services, Canberra, 2000, viewed 7 November 2011, communities.
<http://dpl/Books/2000/DomesticViolenceRegional.pdf>

70. Morgan and Chadwick op. cit, *Key issues in domestic violence*, pp. 4–5.

71. ABS, *Personal safety survey Australia 2005 (reissue)*, op. cit., pp. 34–35.

Women with disability

The full extent of violence against people with disabilities is unknown. However, there is evidence that women with disabilities are more likely than those without disabilities to experience domestic violence.⁷² Women with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to physical, sexual and psychological violence due to their situation of social and cultural disadvantage, and increased dependence.⁷³ Poverty, low education and low employment perpetuate the power imbalances that enable domestic violence to thrive.⁷⁴ There are particular forms of abuse that are unique to people with disabilities, such as removal of an accessibility device, withholding medication and threatening institutionalisation.⁷⁵ Adults with intellectual or psychiatric disabilities are particularly at risks of sexual assault and exploitation.⁷⁶ When the abuser is the main carer, individuals suffer neglect, isolation and intense vulnerability to abuse; it may be impossible for them to get help.⁷⁷

As a broad indicator, ABS data indicate that experience of physical or threatened violence in the last 12 months was more common among 18–64 year olds with a core activity restriction (18 per cent) or a schooling/employment restriction only (19 per cent), compared with those with no disability or long-term health condition (ten per cent).⁷⁸ More specific data on domestic violence against people with disabilities in Australia is lacking. A 2003 study examined the nature and extent of violence against women with disabilities who accessed services for family and domestic violence in Western

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72. L Healy, K Howe, C Humphreys, C Jennings and F Julian, *Building the evidence: a report on the status of policy and practice in responding to violence against women with disabilities in Victoria*, Victorian Women with Disabilities Network Advocacy Information Service, Melbourne, 2008, viewed 29 July 2011, pp. 33–34, <http://www.wvda.org.au/buildingevidence1.pdf>; L Bartels, *Emerging issues in domestic/family violence research*, Research in practice report, no. 10, AIC, Canberra, April 2010, viewed 29 July 2011, p. 5, <http://www.aic.gov.au/en/publications/current%20series/rip/1-10/10.aspx>; D Brownridge, 'Partner violence against women with disabilities: prevalence, risk, and explanations.' *Violence Against Women*, vol. 12, no. 9, 2006, pp. 805–822.
73. K Howe, *A framework for influencing change: responding to violence against women with disabilities 2007–2009*, Victorian Women with Disabilities Network Advocacy Information Service, Melbourne, n.d., viewed 29 July 2011, pp. 7–9, http://dpl/Books/2008/VIC_WWDN_influencingchange.pdf; International Network of Women with Disabilities (INWWD), *Document on violence against women with disabilities*, INWWD, n.p., 2010, viewed 29 July 2011, <http://www.wvda.org.au/inwwdviol2010.pdf>
74. S Salthouse, *Completely knocked out: Australian perspectives on disability, disempowerment and domestic violence*, paper presented to Domestic Violence, Disability and Cultural Safety National Forum 2007 *Diverse and inclusive practice: redrawing the boundaries*, Women with Disabilities Australia, Hobart, 2007, viewed 4 August 2011, <http://www.wvda.org.au/salthousedv07.pdf>
75. Healy, Howe, Humphreys, Jennings and Julian et. al., *Building the evidence*, op. cit., p. 34; Howe, *A framework for influencing change*, op. cit. p. 7.
76. S Murray and A Powell, *Sexual assault and adults with a disability: enabling recognition, disclosure and a just response*, Issues: Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault, no. 9, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Canberra, 2008, viewed 7 November 2011, http://www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/pubs/issue/acssa_issues9.pdf
77. G Hague, R Thiara, A Mullender and P Magowan, *Making the links: Disabled women and domestic violence*, Women's Aid (UK), 2008, viewed 29 July 2011, pp. 35–42, <http://www.wvda.org.au/hague1.pdf>
78. ABS, *2006 General social survey summary results Australia*, cat. no. 4159.0, ABS, Canberra, 2007, viewed 27 July 2011, p. 40, [http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/9EBEEE90D2746F45CA2572E20013BD17/\\$File/41590_2006.pdf](http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/9EBEEE90D2746F45CA2572E20013BD17/$File/41590_2006.pdf)

Australia. By far the most common perpetrators of violence against these women were male partners, accounting for 43 per cent; with a further 11 per cent experiencing violence by a female partner.⁷⁹

Women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

Migration is currently the key driver of Australia's population growth and, as a result, almost half of the Australian population are now either born overseas or the child of a migrant.⁸⁰ Drawing conclusions regarding the nature and extent of domestic violence in culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) communities is difficult as studies and surveys have produced mixed findings.⁸¹ Immigrant and refugee populations are diverse and cultural values and immigration status increase the complexities normally involved in domestic violence.⁸² Immigration can cause social and cultural dislocation and intensify domestic violence.⁸³

ABS data indicate that rates of physical assault victimisation were highest for Australian-born persons, followed by those born in the main English-speaking countries (comprising the United Kingdom, Ireland, New Zealand, Canada, United States of America and South Africa) than those born in other countries.⁸⁴ In the ABS Personal Safety Survey, Australian-born women were more likely to report experiencing both physical and sexual assault in the previous 12 months than those born overseas.⁸⁵ Experience of current partner violence since the age of 15 varied little according to whether women were Australian-born, born overseas in main English-speaking countries or born in other countries (two per cent in each case). However, 19 per cent of women born overseas in main English-speaking countries reported previous partner violence since the age of 15, compared with 16 per cent of Australian-born women and 7 per cent of those born in other countries.⁸⁶

Similarly, the IVAWS indicated that women from English-speaking backgrounds reported higher levels of physical, sexual and any violence compared to non English-speaking background (NESB)⁸⁷ women over their lifetime. However, it is possible that personal, cultural, religious and language

79. J Cockram, *Silent voices: women with disabilities and family and domestic violence*, A joint project of People with Disabilities (WA) Inc., the Ethnic Disability Advocacy Centre and the Centre for Social Research, Edith Cowan University, People with Disabilities (WA), Nedlands, 2003, p. 25, viewed 29 July 2011, <http://www.wvda.org.au/cockram2.pdf>

80. Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC), *Population flows 2009–10 at a glance*, DIAC, Canberra, 2011, viewed 9 August 2011, p. 1, <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/statistics/popflows2009-10/population-flows-at-a-glance.pdf>

81. Morgan and Chadwick, op. cit., *Key issues in domestic violence*, p. 5.

82. B Pease and S Rees, 'Theorising men's violence towards women in refugee families: towards an intersectional feminist framework', *Just Policy*, no. 47, 2008, pp. 39–45, viewed 5 August 2011, <http://search.informit.com.au/fullText;dn=200803925;res=APAFI>

83. N Ghafournia, 'Battered at home, played down in policy: migrant women and domestic violence in Australia', *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, vol. 16, 2011, pp. 207–213.

84. ABS, *Crime victimisation, Australia, 2009–10*, op. cit.

85. ABS, *Personal safety survey Australia 2005 (reissue)*, op. cit.

86. Ibid.

87. While the current preferred term is LBOTE (language background other than English), NESB (non-English speaking background) was the term used in the IVAWS.

factors may have resulted in NESB women who had experienced violence not participating in the survey, or those who did participate being less likely to report incidents of physical and sexual violence or openly discuss such information with survey interviewers.⁸⁸ This would be consistent with findings that women from CaLD backgrounds are less likely to report domestic violence to police or access mainstream services.⁸⁹

Reporting to police and seeking help

In terms of identifying violence as a crime, victims differentiate between strangers and partners. The IVAWS found that stranger-perpetrated incidents were perceived as ‘crimes’ (42 per cent) more often than incidents from intimate partners (26 per cent). Only one in ten women (11 per cent) who experienced violence from a current husband or partner considered the most recent incident to be a crime compared to almost four in ten women who experienced violence from a former husband or partner (38 per cent). For women who experienced violence from a current boyfriend, 18 per cent considered the most recent incident to be a crime compared with 22 per cent who experienced violence from a former boyfriend.⁹⁰

Using ABS data, the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research found that less than half of all respondents who had been the victim of a domestic assault in the previous 12 months reported the incident to the police. Older victims, those who were married and victims of assaults that did not involve weapons or serious injury were less likely to report to police.⁹¹

Women appear to be particularly reluctant to report current partners. According to ABS data, of females who experienced physical assault or sexual assault by a male in the previous 12 months, there was greatest reluctance to report incidents to police when the perpetrator was a current partner.⁹² Only 17 per cent of those physically assaulted by a current partner in the latest incident told police, compared with 24 per cent of those assaulted by a boyfriend or date and 61 per cent of those assaulted by a previous partner. In terms of sexual assault, none of those assaulted by a current partner in the latest incident told police, compared with 30 per cent of those assaulted by a boyfriend or date and 21 per cent of those assaulted by a previous partner. Researchers note that women seem better able to identify Intimate Partner Sexual Violence (IPSV) from a previous, rather than current partner. They may feel confused, loyal and forgiving about a current partner. A more accurate assessment of the violence might emerge on leaving the relationship, with the passage of time and the benefits of safety and hindsight.⁹³

88. Mouzos and Makkai, *Women’s experiences of male violence*, op. cit., pp. 31–32.

89. M Bonar and D Roberts, *A review of literature relating to family and domestic violence in culturally and linguistically diverse communities in Australia*, Western Australia Department for Communities, Perth, 2006, in Morgan and Chadwick, *Key issues in domestic violence*, op. cit., p. 5.

90. Mouzos and Makkai, *Women’s experiences of male violence*, op. cit., p. 96.

91. Gretch and Burgess, *Trends and patterns in domestic violence assaults: 2001 to 2010*, op. cit.

92. ABS, *Personal safety survey Australia 2005 (reissue)*, op. cit., p. 21.

93. J Duncan and D Western, *Addressing ‘the ultimate insult’: responding to women experiencing intimate partner sexual violence*, Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse stakeholder paper, no. 10, Australian Domestic and

Few women who were victims of domestic violence sought help from a specialised agency. Only 16 per cent of women who experienced intimate partner violence contacted an agency such as a shelter, crisis centre or hotline, counsellor or women's centre.⁹⁴ However, those who had experienced violence from some other male (not their partner or previous partner) were even less likely to seek assistance from one of these agencies, with only nine per cent making contact with any kind of specialised agency. Women were more likely to talk to someone else about a violent incident than they were to tell police or contact a specialised agency. Some 75 per cent of women spoke to someone else about a violent incident involving an intimate partner.⁹⁵ Most spoke to a friend, a neighbour or an immediate family member.

Of those women who had experienced current partner violence at any time since the age of 15, only 10 per cent had a violence order issued. For women who had experienced previous partner violence since the age of 15, some 25 per cent had a violence order issued.⁹⁶

Police response to domestic violence offences

Since the mid-1980s increased attention has been focused on the role of police in intervening and preventing domestic violence.⁹⁷ The police and criminal justice systems in Australia are commonly criticised for not treating domestic violence matters seriously enough.⁹⁸ Low charge and conviction rates are at odds with policy positions that 'domestic violence is a crime.'⁹⁹ The police response is not only vital for the immediate safety of the victim but also conveys an important social message about the way in which violence against women and children is regarded by society.¹⁰⁰

The policing of domestic violence appears to be improving over time. The NSW Ombudsman's 2006 report, *Domestic violence — improving police practice*, highlighted significant improvements since the earlier review of policing domestic violence in 1999, but also focused on the need for further reforms in three critical areas: enhanced support for victims of domestic violence, better

Family Violence Clearinghouse, Sydney, 2011, p. 4, viewed 17 August 2011,
http://www.austdvclearinghouse.unsw.edu.au/PDF%20files/Stakeholder_Paper_10.pdf

94. Mouzos and Makkai, *Women's experiences of male violence*, op. cit, p. 100.

95. Ibid, p. 101.

96. ABS, *Personal Safety Survey Australia 2005 (reissue)*, op. cit., p. 37.

97. Queensland Crime and Misconduct Commission, *Policing domestic violence in Queensland: meeting the challenges*, CMC, Brisbane, March 2005, viewed 12 August 2011, pp. 10–13,
<http://www.cmc.qld.gov.au/data/portal/00000005/content/73653001131400781353.pdf>

98. R Holder and J Caruana, *Criminal justice intervention in family violence in the ACT: the Family Violence Intervention Program 1998–2006*. Canberra: Office of the Victims of Crime Coordinator, 2006, pp. 5, 6, 13; NSW Ombudsman, *Domestic violence: improving police practice*. Sydney: NSW Ombudsman, 2006, p. i, viewed 30 August 2011,
<http://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/publication/PDF/specialreport/DV%20Improving%20police%20practice%20dec%202006.pdf>

99. Ibid. p. 5.

100. E García, F, García, and L Marisol, 'Police involvement in cases of intimate partner violence against women the influence of perceived severity and personal responsibility', *Violence Against Women*, vol. 14, issue 6, 2008, pp. 697–714 quoted in G Marcus, *Better policing, better outcomes: changing police culture to prevent domestic violence and homicide*, Issues paper, no. 18, Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearing House, Sydney, 2009, viewed 12 August 2011, p. 1, http://dpl/E-ancats/ADFVC_IssuesPapers/No.18.pdf

cooperation between police and other agencies with key responsibilities and more effective frontline policing responses.¹⁰¹ In 2011, the NSW Auditor General echoed these concerns about the lack of coordination between agencies in order to provide a lasting solution for victims and perpetrators.¹⁰²

The policing of domestic and family violence is now ‘an Australasian policing priority’.¹⁰³ The *Australasian Policing Strategy for Preventing and Reducing Family Violence* was launched by police commissioners across Australia in November 2008. The strategy aims to ensure that responses by Australasian jurisdictions are based on more consistent policies and practices; it outlines priorities for action to improve information and intelligence sharing between police, as well as between partner agencies.

While legal reforms of the late 1980s and 1990s strengthened police powers to deal with domestic violence, the trend towards pro-arrest policies has only recently begun to influence operational policing in Australia. In general, Australian police agencies have adopted policies that promote arrest as the primary intervention where there is a belief on reasonable grounds that an offence has been committed.¹⁰⁴

At the same time there is a shift towards collaboration with a broader range of partner agencies to provide referral and support for victims.¹⁰⁵ The Queensland Crime and Misconduct Commission, for example, found that police officers believe that the complex social and health issues involved in domestic violence mean that police can only be effective when working in conjunction with other community agencies.¹⁰⁶

A good example of these changes, which draws heavily on programs developed overseas, is the ACT Family Violence Intervention Program (FVIP) which is a proactive, multi-agency approach to family violence in the ACT. The ACT has a pro-arrest, pro-charge policy on domestic and family violence; such cases are fast tracked through the courts. The FVIP integrates the activities of the police, prosecution, courts and corrections and coordinates with other key agencies, such as domestic violence advocacy services.¹⁰⁷ The Program showed substantial increases in the arrest rate for

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101. NSW Ombudsman, *Domestic violence: improving police practice*, NSW Ombudsman, Sydney, 2006.
<http://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/publication/PDF/specialreport/DV%20Improving%20police%20practice%20dec%202006.pdf>
 102. Audit Office of NSW, *Responding to domestic and family violence: NSW Auditor-General's report performance audit*, Audit Office of NSW, Sydney, 2011, viewed 9 November 2011,
<http://www.audit.nsw.gov.au/Publications/Performance-Audit-Reports/2011-Reports/Responding-to-domestic-and-family-violence>
 103. Australasian Police Leaders, *Australasian policing strategy on the prevention and reduction of family violence*, Commonwealth of Australia and New Zealand, Sydney, 2008, viewed 12 August 2011, p. 2,
<http://www.police.qld.gov.au/Resources/Internet/programs/crimePrevention/documents/AAFV%20Strategy%20Nov%202008.pdf>
 104. Queensland Crime and Misconduct Commission, *Policing domestic violence in Queensland*, op. cit., p. 13.
 105. Marcus, *Better policing, better outcomes*, op. cit., p. 2.
 106. Queensland Crime and Misconduct Commission, *Policing domestic violence in Queensland*, op. cit., p. 67.
 107. Holder and Caruana, *Criminal justice intervention in family violence in the ACT*, op. cit.

domestic violence, from six per cent in 1993 to 30 per cent in 2003–04. There was a 464 per cent increase in the number of family violence matters handled by the Department of Public Prosecutions (DPP) over the eight years from 1998–99 to 2005–06.¹⁰⁸ In addition, the percentage of successful convictions increased from 76 percent in 2003–04 to 85 percent in 2007–08.¹⁰⁹

Safe at Home, the Tasmanian Government’s response to family violence, is another example of an integrated criminal justice response to family violence where the safety of the victim is considered paramount.¹¹⁰ The first point of contact is through the police. This program represented ground-breaking reform when it was initiated in 2004. An independent review of Safe At Home found four key strengths of the program:

- increased public awareness of family violence
- improved legal recognition for family violence—there is an improved recognition of the seriousness and criminal nature of family violence
- victim is not the driver of the response—now the police take responsibility for pressing charges and victims have the prospect of respite from the offender, and
- improved police response to family violence—the clarity of the police procedures has led to increasing confidence within police in relation to their role and their responsibilities in family violence situations.¹¹¹

During the first three years of Safe at Home the total incidents attended by police increased, before declining marginally in 2007–08. The average number of family violence incidents per month increased from 279 to 310 (11 per cent) between 2004–05 and 2006–07, and then decreased to 284 in 2007–08.¹¹² There was an approximate four-fold increase in the total number of new applications for family violence related orders between 2003–04 and 2004–05 (69 orders to 294 orders). The number of new applications then declined in 2005–06 (to 222 orders) and was relatively steady across the following two financial years.¹¹³

Recent crime statistics also reflect a changing approach in Victoria. In August 2004 the *Code of Practice for the Investigation of Family Violence*, was introduced to improve police responses to

108. Holder and Caruana, *Criminal justice intervention in family violence in the ACT*, op. cit, pp. 2–3.

109. ACT DPP annual reports, quoted in K Rollings and N Taylor, *Measuring police performance in domestic and family violence*, Trends and issues in crime and criminal justice, No. 367, AIC, Canberra, 2008, viewed 12 August 2011, p. 2, <http://www.aic.gov.au/documents/4/A/5/%7B4A582EF8-2F13-4B01-8F24-A1EB9A0247EE%7Dtandi367.pdf>

110. Safe at Home website, viewed 9 November 2011, http://www.safeathome.tas.gov.au/about_us

111. Success Works, *Review of the integrated response to family violence: final report*, Tasmania Department of Justice, Hobart, 2009, pp 31–32, viewed 9 November 2011, http://www.safeathome.tas.gov.au/review_of_safe_at_home_services

112. Ibid, p. 77.

113. Ibid, p. 79. In 2003–04, the only order available to the courts was a Restraining Order. Police Family Violence Orders and Family Violence Orders (issued by the court and sought in cases which police assess as high risk) became available in 2005 with the introduction of the Tasmanian *Family Violence Act 2004*.

family violence incidents and encourage community confidence to report these offences to police.¹¹⁴ Prior to August 2004, approximately 15 per cent of assaults were family violence related. Since then this figure has risen steadily and in 2010–11, family violence assaults accounted for 30 per cent of all assaults.¹¹⁵ Crime against the person offences that arise from family incidents accounted for 26 per cent of all crime against the person offences during 2010–11. The number of these offences increased by 26 per cent between 2009–10 and 2010–11.¹¹⁶ In 2010–11, there were 11 717 family incidents attended by police which resulted in charges being laid against one or more parties involved. This was a 25 per cent increase from the previous year.¹¹⁷ Support agencies say the figures are starting to reflect the true extent of the problem in the community as the increases are likely to be because of increased reporting of traditionally under-reported crimes.¹¹⁸

A number of factors influence police officers' decisions when they respond to domestic violence incidents. In the ACT, a longitudinal statistical analysis of over 4000 incidents of domestic violence reported to the police from 2001 to 2004 revealed some of the situational factors influencing the arrest decision: the allegation of conduct that suggests an offence, especially physical violence; the presence of injury and use of a weapon and whether the suspect is at the scene.¹¹⁹ Similarly, the Queensland Crime and Misconduct Commission found that factors strongly influencing officers in favour of charging domestic violence offenders with a criminal offence are: the seriousness of injuries to the aggrieved, the use of a weapon and the fact that an indictable offence (that is, a serious criminal offence) has been committed.¹²⁰

At present, comparisons across jurisdictions are virtually impossible.¹²¹ There are differences in how domestic violence is defined and categorised both between, and within jurisdictions and police data are also limited in their descriptions of the outcomes of incidents reported. To know whether there are changes in practice and in outcomes over time, there is a need to develop indicators of police performance that are both practical and useful.¹²² Researchers have identified a number of

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114. Victoria Police, *Code of Practice for the investigation of family violence: supporting an integrated response to family violence in Victoria*, Victoria Police, Melbourne, 2004, viewed 31 August 2011, http://www.police.vic.gov.au/files/documents/464_FV_COP.pdf
115. Victoria Police, *Crime statistics 2010–2011*, Victoria Police, Melbourne, 2011, viewed 31 August 2011, p. 28, http://www.police.vic.gov.au/content.asp?a=internetBridgingPage&Media_ID=72176
116. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
117. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
118. 'Vic crime stats show big jump in reports of family violence,' *PM*, transcript, Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), 30 August 2011, viewed 31 August 2011, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22emms%2Femms%2F219907%22>
119. R Holder, *Police and domestic violence: an analysis of domestic violence incidents attended by police in the ACT and subsequent actions*, Research paper, no. 4, Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearing House, Sydney, 2007, viewed 11 August 2011, p. 25 http://www.austdvclearinghouse.unsw.edu.au/research_reports.htm
120. Queensland Crime and Misconduct Commission, *Policing domestic violence in Queensland: meeting the challenges*, op. cit., p. 55.
121. R Holder, *Police and domestic violence: an analysis of domestic violence incidents attended by police in the ACT and subsequent actions*, op. cit.
122. K Rollings and N Taylor, *Measuring police performance in domestic and family violence*, Trends and issues in crime and criminal justice, no. 367, AIC, Canberra, 2008, viewed 12 August 2011, p. 5, <http://www.aic.gov.au/documents/4/A/5/%7B4A582EF8-2F13-4B01-8F24-A1EB9A0247EE%7Dtandi367.pdf>.

performance indicators that could be used by police to measure their effectiveness in responding to and reducing family violence.¹²³ A number of these are included in *Australasian policing strategy for preventing and reducing family violence*, for example

- a recorded increase in the number of family violence incidents reported
- a recorded increase in the amount of successful family violence prosecutions processed by the courts and
- the development of better working relationships between the police and family violence support services.¹²⁴

The impact of domestic violence

Homicide

Domestic violence may end in homicide. Through the National Homicide Monitoring Program (NHMP), the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) monitors trends and patterns in homicide across Australian jurisdictions.¹²⁵ The NHMP data are the most comprehensive collection on homicide in Australia, providing details of victims, offenders and the circumstances of incidents. Of the 260 homicide incidents in 2007–08, the majority (52 per cent) were classified domestic homicides involving one or more victims who shared a family or domestic relationship with the offender. Thirty-one per cent were intimate partner homicides. Fifty-five per cent of female homicide victims were killed by an intimate partner compared with 11 per cent of male homicide victims. Indigenous people were overrepresented in intimate partner homicides; one in five (20 per cent) victims were Indigenous, as were nearly one in four offenders (24 per cent).¹²⁶

Most Australian homicides in 2007–08 occurred in a residential location (70 per cent)—most often the victim’s home (53 per cent). A large proportion of domestic homicides occurred at residential locations (84 per cent)¹²⁷. Hence, the most likely scenario for the homicide of an Australian woman is at home at the hands of an intimate partner.

123. Ibid.

124. Australasian Police Leaders, *Australasian policing strategy on the prevention and reduction of family violence*, op. cit., p. 4.

125. M Virueda and J Payne, *Homicide in Australia: 2007–08: National Homicide Monitoring Program annual report*, Monitoring report, no. 13, AIC, Canberra, 2010, viewed 13 July 2011, http://www.aic.gov.au/documents/8/9/D/%7B89DEDC2D-3349-457C-9B3A-9AD9DAFA7256%7Dmr13_003.pdf

126. AIC, unpublished data, National Homicide Monitoring Program, 2007–08.

127. Virueda and J Payne, *Homicide in Australia: 2007–08*, op. cit.

Health impacts

Domestic violence has severe and persistent effects on physical and mental health. Using burden of disease methodology, VicHealth determined that domestic violence is the leading risk factor contributing to death, disability and illness in Victorian women aged 15 to 44.¹²⁸

Physical injury is common as a result of domestic violence. Two in every five women in the IVAWS who experienced intimate partner violence reported that they were injured in the most recent incident of violence.¹²⁹ The most common types of injuries were bruises and swelling, cuts, scratches and burns. However, ten per cent suffered broken bones or noses, six per cent sustained head or brain injuries and six per cent internal injuries. Some 29 per cent of those who sustained injuries were injured badly enough to require medical attention and 30 per cent of women felt that their life was in danger in the most recent incident. This was more likely for incidents involving previous partners (35 per cent) than for current partners (15 per cent).¹³⁰

The health consequences of domestic violence endure after the violence has stopped.¹³¹ The Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health found that women who have experienced domestic violence rate their health as poorer and use health services more frequently than other women, even after they are no longer exposed to the violence.¹³²

The effects of domestic violence also have a cumulative impact on the mental health of the victim.¹³³ One analysis of ABS data examined mental health associations with gender-based violence (GBV), including intimate partner physical violence.¹³⁴ Lifetime prevalence of intimate partner physical violence, measured by the question: "Were you ever badly beaten up by a spouse or romantic partner?" was 8 per cent. Women who experienced GBV reported a higher level of severity and co-morbidity of mental disorders, increased rates of physical disorders, greater mental-health related dysfunction, general disability and impaired quality of life. Women who had experienced GBV also reported higher rates of past suicide attempts.

128. VicHealth, *The health costs of violence: measuring the burden of disease caused by intimate partner violence*, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Melbourne, 2004, p. 8, viewed 18 August 2011, <http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/~media/ProgramsandProjects/MentalHealthandWellBeing/DiscriminationandViolence/IntimatePartnerViolence/ipv.ashx>; Domestic violence is responsible for more ill-health and premature death in Victorian women aged 15 to 44 than any other of the well-known risk factors, including smoking, alcohol, obesity and high blood pressure.

129. Mouzos and Makkai, *Women's experiences of male violence*, op. cit., p. 53.

130. Ibid., pp. 54–55.

131. I Evans, *Battle-scars: long-term effects of prior domestic violence*, Centre for Women's Studies and Gender Research, Monash University, Melbourne, 2007, pp. 5–6., viewed 18 August 2011, http://www.sdgp.com.au/client_images/124158.pdf

132. Women's Health Australia, *Partner violence and the health of Australian women*, op. cit.

133. NCRVWC, *Background paper to Time for Action*, op. cit., p. 38.

134. S Rees, D Silove, Tien Chey, L Ivancic, Z Steel, and M Creamer, et al., 'Lifetime prevalence of gender-based violence in women and the relationship with mental disorder and psychosocial function', *Journal of the American Medical Association*, vol. 306, no. 5, 3 August 2011, pp. 513–521, viewed 4 August 2011, <http://jama.ama-assn.org/content/306/5/513.full.pdf+html>

Domestic violence also has a detrimental impact on the mental health of men who experience it. Some suggest that the stigma associated with being a victim of domestic violence may be particularly marked for men and that men experience significant psychological symptoms. Domestic violence is associated with Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression and suicidal ideation.¹³⁵

Children

Children and adolescents living with domestic violence are at increased risk of experiencing emotional, physical and sexual abuse.¹³⁶ Researchers identify domestic violence, along with parental substance abuse and parental mental health problems as the factors most commonly associated with child abuse and neglect.¹³⁷ Families in which parents present with these problems often live with multiple disadvantages and it is difficult to isolate the impact of any single factor.

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that domestic violence has an impact not only on adults, but also children who may witness the violence. Children's witnessing, or exposure to domestic violence has been increasingly recognised as a form of child abuse, both in Australia and internationally.¹³⁸ Forcing a child to live with sustained violence against a primary caregiver constitutes both emotional and psychological abuse.¹³⁹

Research on children exposed to domestic violence indicates that there are a range of impacts that such children are likely to experience, among them:

- mood problems including depression
- anxiety
- trauma symptoms
- increased aggression
- antisocial behaviour
- lower social competence
- temperament problems
- low self-esteem
- the presence of pervasive fear
- loneliness

135. A Randle and C Graham, 'A review of the evidence on the effects of intimate partner violence on men', *Psychology of Men and Masculinity*, vol. 12, no. 2, 2011, pp. 97–111.

136. S Holt, H Buckley, and S Whelan, 'The impact of exposure to domestic violence on children and young people: a review of the literature', *Child Abuse and Neglect*, vol. 32, no. 8, 2008, pp. 797–810.

137. L Bromfield, A Lamont, R Parker and B Horsfall, *Issues for the safety and wellbeing of children in families with multiple and complex problems: the co-occurrence of domestic violence, parental substance misuse, and mental health problems*, National Child Protection Clearinghouse (NCPC) issues, no. 33, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, 2010, viewed 19 July 2011, http://dpl/Books/2011/NCPC_ChildrenFamiliesMultipleProblems.pdf

138. K Richards, *Children's exposure to domestic violence in Australia*, Trends and issues in crime and criminal justice, no. 419, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra, June 2011, viewed 18 July 2011, <http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/current%20series/tandi/401-420/tandi419.aspx>

139. C Goddard and G Bedi, 'Intimate partner violence and child abuse : a child-centred perspective', *Child Abuse Review*, vol. 19, no. 1, January–February 2010, pp. 5–20 viewed 18 July 2011, <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?vid=3&hid=21&sid=f6e59af1-d1b1-4260-add4-fbbb3ec43502%40sessionmgr11&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtGjI2ZQ%3d%3d#db=aph&AN=47805836>

- school difficulties
- peer conflict
- impaired cognitive functioning and
- increased likelihood of substance abuse.¹⁴⁰

Researchers note that such social, behavioural, cognitive and emotional effects may also have a lasting impact on education and employment outcomes.¹⁴¹

There are a number of difficulties associated with assessing the extent of children's exposure to domestic violence, so estimates of prevalence vary. The ABS found that 49 per cent of persons who experienced violence by a current partner reported that they had children in their care and 27 per cent (60 700) said that children had witnessed the violence. Some 61 per cent of persons who experienced violence by a previous partner had children in their care at some time during the relationship and 36 per cent (489 400) reported that children had witnessed the violence.¹⁴² From the IVAWS, excluding the women who indicated that they had no children living with them at the time, over a third of women who experienced intimate partner violence reported that their children had witnessed a violent incident (36 per cent).¹⁴³ An earlier study found that 23 per cent of young people aged 12 to 20 years had witnessed violence against their mother or step-mother; 42 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) young people.¹⁴⁴

Homelessness

Domestic violence is one of the typical pathways into homelessness for Australian women.¹⁴⁵ The definition of homelessness used in the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP), the major government program for homelessness in Australia, recognises the safety of an individual's or family's home as a factor in determining homelessness, as well as other factors such as whether housing damages a person's health, is affordable and provides an adequate level of amenity.¹⁴⁶ The population of women who are homeless because of domestic and family violence is increasingly

140. Richards, *Children's exposure to domestic violence in Australia*, op. cit.

141. Flood and Fergus, *An assault on our future*, op. cit., pp. 12–15.

142. ABS, *Personal safety survey Australia 2005 (reissue)*, op. cit., p. 40.

143. Mouzos and Makkai, *Women's experiences of male violence*, op. cit., p. 90.

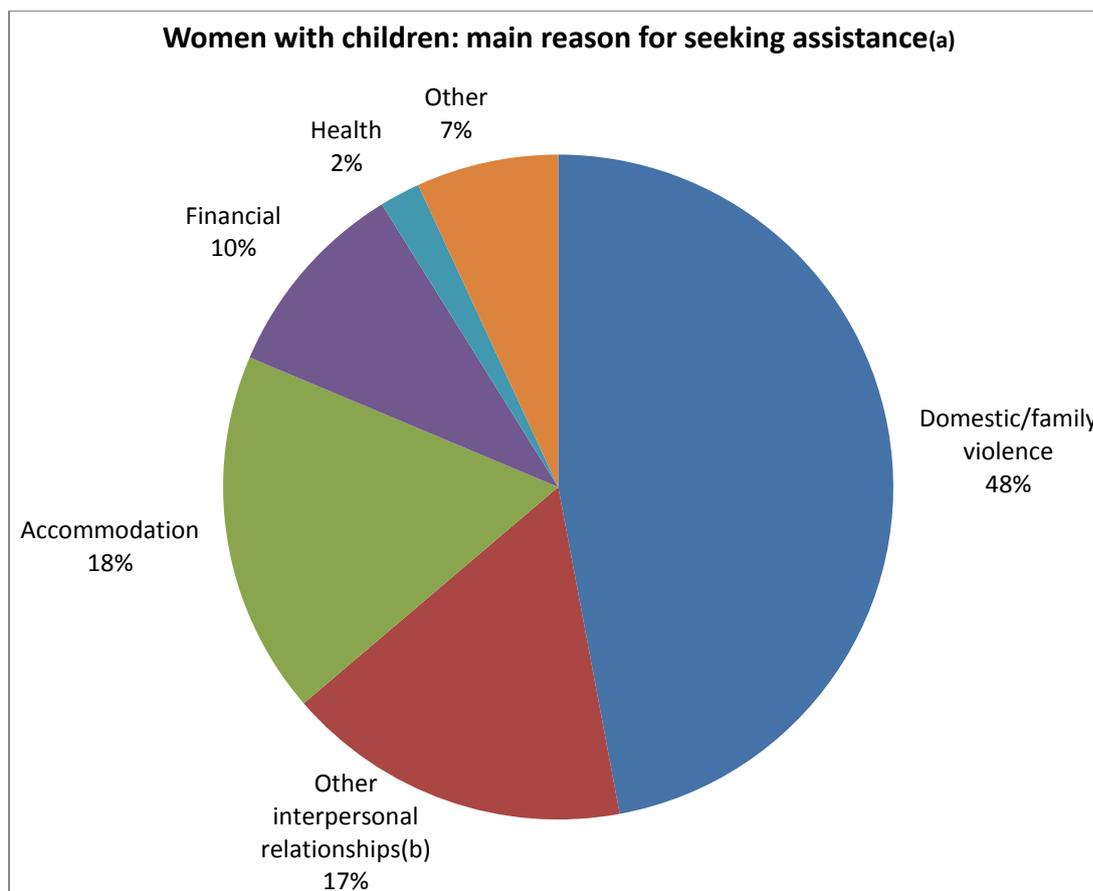
144. Indermaur, *Young Australians and domestic violence*, op. cit.

145. G Johnson, H Gronda and S Coutts, *On the outside: pathways in and out of homelessness*, Australian Scholarly Publishing, North Melbourne, 2008; Homelessness Australia, *Remembering homeless women on International Women's Day*, media release, Canberra, 8 March 2010, viewed 19 August 2011, <http://www.homelessnessaustralia.org.au/UserFiles/File/Media%20Release/2009/IWD%20media%20release%20March%202010.pdf>

146. Tually, Faulkner, Cutler and Slatter, *Women, domestic and family violence and homelessness*, op. cit., pp. 6–7. This definition is also spelt out in the *Supported Accommodation Assistance Program Act 1994*. On 1 January 2009, the SAAP V Agreement between the Commonwealth and the states and territories was replaced by the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) and the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH). Funding to specialist homelessness agencies is now provided under the NPAH and the Australian Government intends to introduce new legislation to replace the *Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994*. While the funding arrangements have changed, a majority of the already existing services under SAAP have continued under the NPAH.

becoming a group with complex and multiple needs, that is, due to drug and alcohol dependency, mental health issues and disability.¹⁴⁷

The single greatest reason people present to SAAP is domestic or family violence, accounting for 22 per cent of support periods.¹⁴⁸ While SAAP clients do not represent the whole homeless population, for women with children, domestic or family violence accounted for 48 per cent of SAAP support periods.¹⁴⁹ See the chart below for more detail.



(a) Percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding.

(b) Includes interpersonal relationships reasons other than domestic/family violence, e.g. relationship/family breakdown.

Source: AIHW, *Government-funded specialist homelessness services SAAP National Data Collection annual report 2009–10, Australia Appendix*, cat. no. HOU 238, AIHW, Canberra, 2011, p. 11.

147. Ibid., p. 20.

148. AIHW, *Government-funded specialist homelessness services: SAAP national data collection annual report 2009-10: Australia*. cat. no. HOU 246, AIHW, Canberra, 2011, pp. 4–13, viewed 16 August 2011, <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publication-detail/?id=10737419170>; a support period is a discrete period of time over which a person receives ongoing support from a government-funded specialist homelessness agency. A person may have one or more periods of support within a year.

149. Ibid., p. 15.

Indigenous women are overrepresented in SAAP. In 2008–09 Indigenous women accounted for one in four (25 per cent) support periods for women escaping domestic violence, an alarmingly high figure given they account for around two per cent of the Australian female population.¹⁵⁰ Other Australian-born clients accounted for 52 per cent of support periods, while women born in predominantly non-English-speaking countries accounted for 19 per cent and those born in predominantly English-speaking countries, four per cent.

Some researchers consider that domestic violence-related homelessness differs from other forms of homelessness, as cycling in and out of homelessness is a more common pattern for many women affected by domestic violence than those in the broader homeless population.¹⁵¹ Many women in abusive relationships return to the perpetrator of the violence and try to reconcile. The ABS found that 37 per cent of women who experienced violence from a current partner had separated and returned.¹⁵²

Domestic violence is also a factor in youth homelessness. The National Youth Commission Inquiry into Youth Homelessness found that family breakdown and conflict, including domestic violence, were common factors precipitating homelessness.¹⁵³ Of unaccompanied young people aged under 25 years who sought SAAP assistance, interpersonal relationship issues were the most common reason.¹⁵⁴ Young females sought assistance because of domestic or family violence in 18 per cent of their support periods and young males sought assistance because of domestic or family violence in three per cent of their support periods.¹⁵⁵ In a longitudinal study of Melbourne homeless young people, aged 12 to 20 years, researchers found one third of young people left home because of family violence, which in most cases had occurred over a long period of time.¹⁵⁶

Housing is critical for survivors of domestic violence. In a study of women's economic wellbeing during and following domestic violence, women nominated finding safe, affordable, appropriate

150. AIHW, unpublished data: SAAP support periods for women escaping domestic violence by cultural and linguistic diversity, Australia, 2008–2009.

151. Tually, Faulkner, Cutler and Slatter, *Women, domestic and family violence and homelessness*, op cit., p. 16.

152. ABS, *Personal safety survey Australia 2005 (reissue)*, op. cit., p. 39.

153. National Youth Commission, *Australia's homeless youth: a report of the National Youth Commission Inquiry into Youth Homelessness*, National Youth Commission, Brunswick Victoria, 2008, viewed 10 November 2011, pp., 7, 89, 92, http://www.nyc.net.au/files/Australias_Homeless_Youth.pdf

154. AIHW, *Government-funded specialist homelessness services: SAAP national data collection annual report 2009-10: Australia Appendix*. cat. no. HOU 238, Canberra, AIHW, 2011, p. 11, viewed 11 November 2011, <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publication-detail/?id=10737419179>; Interpersonal relationship issues include: time out from family/other situation, relationship/family breakdown, interpersonal conflict, sexual abuse, domestic/family violence and physical/emotional abuse.

155. AIHW, *Government-funded specialist homelessness services: SAAP national data collection annual report 2009-10: Australia*. op. cit., p. 15, AIHW, *Government-funded specialist homelessness services: SAAP national data collection annual report 2009-10: Australia Appendix*. op. cit., p. 11.

156. S Mallett, D Rosenthal, D Keys, and P Myers, *Moving out, moving on: key findings*, Key Centre for Women's Health in Society in partnership with the Office of Housing, Department of Human Services, Melbourne, 2004 quoted in National Youth Commission, *Australia's homeless youth*, op. cit. p. 80

accommodation post separation as their single biggest concern.¹⁵⁷ Costs associated with leaving the family home were substantial, including relocation and storage costs. Women's housing difficulties also had flow on effects for other aspects of their financial situation. Trying to find accommodation is time consuming and stressful and must necessarily take priority over other needs, such as education and employment.

Economic impacts

At a national level, the costs of domestic violence are enormous. Access Economics estimated the cost of domestic violence in Australia at \$8.1 billion in 2002-03, including \$3.5 billion in costs attributable to pain, suffering and premature mortality.¹⁵⁸ The NCRVWC estimated that violence against women and their children, including both domestic and non-domestic violence, cost the Australian economy \$13.6 billion in 2009.¹⁵⁹ Without action to address violence against women and their children, an estimated three-quarters of a million Australian women will experience and report violence in the period of 2021–2022, costing the Australian economy an estimated \$15.6 billion, with domestic violence accounting for \$9.9 billion of this figure, including \$3.9 billion attributable to pain, suffering and premature death.¹⁶⁰

On an individual level, domestic violence creates complex economic issues for women and their children and disrupts their lives over the short and long term. Regardless of their prior economic circumstances, many women experience financial risk or poverty as a result of domestic violence. These difficulties hamper their recovery and capacity to regain control over their lives.¹⁶¹ Domestic violence directly affects women's financial security in key areas of life: debts, bills and banking, accommodation, legal issues, health, transport, migration, employment, social security and child support.¹⁶²

Gaining and maintaining paid work is pivotal in creating a secure financial future for victims of domestic violence and their families. However, participation in employment can be seriously undermined by ongoing abuse and its subsequent effects. Australian researchers, for example,

157. R Braaf and I Barrett Meyering, *Seeking security: women's economic wellbeing during and following domestic violence*, Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse, Sydney, 2011, pp. 7–8, 43–45, viewed 19 August 2011, http://www.austdvclearinghouse.unsw.edu.au/research_reports.htm

158. Access Economics, *The cost of domestic violence to the Australian economy*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2004, viewed 22 August 2011, http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/women/pubs/violence/cost_violence_economy_2004/Pages/default.aspx

159. NCRVWC and KPMG management consulting, *The cost of violence against women and their children*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2009, viewed 7 July 2011, http://fahcsia.gov.au/sa/women/pubs/violence/np_time_for_action/economic_costs/Pages/default.aspx;

The cost estimate methodology in this report broadly adopts the same approach as that taken by Access Economics in 2004. However, Access Economics assessed only the cost of domestic violence and included violence against men.

160. NCRVWC and KPMG management consulting, *The cost of violence against women and their children*, op. cit., p. 66. The NCRVWC estimates included six other cost categories: health, production, consumption, administrative and other, second generation and transfer costs.

161. Braaf and Barrett Meyering, *Seeking security*, op. cit.

162. Ibid.

found that some women had not been allowed to work while in a violent relationship and found it difficult to enter or re-enter the workforce post separation.¹⁶³ These findings are echoed in overseas studies, which highlight how domestic violence not only acts as a barrier to education, training, and employment but also can escalate when survivors seek or participate in such activities. In order to maintain control over their partners, abusers may interfere with women's efforts to become self-sufficient.¹⁶⁴

Women affected by domestic violence are also more likely to have a disrupted work history and are more likely to occupy casual and part-time work than women with no experience of violence. In short, women escaping and experiencing domestic violence are often the most disadvantaged and vulnerable in the labour market.¹⁶⁵ Some researchers argue that the dominant approaches to domestic violence in Australia have been crisis oriented and focused on providing accommodation, welfare assistance, and emergency support services to women and children without looking towards job search and training to facilitate financial security independent of social service agencies.¹⁶⁶

The policy response to domestic violence

Government responses to domestic violence take different forms including preventive programs, support for victims/survivors and their families and law enforcement. Each jurisdiction in Australia has in place a variety of laws, programs and policies responding to, and attempting to prevent domestic violence. Each jurisdiction funds its own programs and systems, but there are also some Australian Government funded programs operating in the states and territories, particularly supported accommodation, safe houses and the Northern Territory Emergency Response. However, most programs and services aimed at preventing domestic violence and supporting the victims/survivors are administered by states and territories through their community service/human services and health departments along with police, attorney general and other agencies.

Building on the women's refuge movement of the 1970s, Australian federal, state and territory governments have pursued policy on violence against women since the 1980s.¹⁶⁷ In 1988, the Hawke

163. Ibid., p. 10.

164. L McKean, *Addressing domestic violence as a barrier to work*, Centre for Impact Research, Chicago, 2004, viewed 23 August 2011, <http://www.impactresearch.org/documents/DVpractitionerreport.pdf>; J Swanberg and T Logan, 'Domestic violence and employment: a qualitative study', *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, vol. 10, no. 1, 2005, pp. 3–17, viewed 23 August 2011, [http://www.caepv.org/membercenter/files/Domestic%20Violence%20and%20Employment%20-%20A%20Qualitative%20Study%20\(2005\).pdf](http://www.caepv.org/membercenter/files/Domestic%20Violence%20and%20Employment%20-%20A%20Qualitative%20Study%20(2005).pdf)

165. S Franzway, C Zufferey and D Chung, *Domestic violence and women's employment*, University of South Australia, presented at 'Our Work, Our Lives 2007: National Conference on Women and Industrial Relations', 20–21 September 2007, p. 5, viewed 23 August 2011, <http://www.sapo.org.au/pub/pub12343.html>

166. M Costello, D Chung and E Carson, 'Exploring alternative pathways out of poverty: making connections between domestic violence and employment practices', *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 40, no. 2, pp. 253–267, 2005, <http://search.informit.com.au/fullText;dn=200508185;res=APAF>

167. J Theobald, 'A long history: the National Plan in context,' *Parity*, September 2011, viewed 11 November 2011, http://www.chp.org.au/parity/articles/results.chtml?filename_num=00446, also see S Murray and A Powell (forthcoming) *Domestic violence: Australian public policy*, Australian Scholarly Publishing, Melbourne.

Labor Government's National Agenda for Women aimed for an 'Australia which is free from violence in the home.'¹⁶⁸ The Hawke/Keating Government's National Committee on Violence Against Women ran for three years from March 1990 and delivered the National Strategy on Violence Against Women. The Hawke/Keating Government also made contributions internationally, recognising violence against women as a human rights violation.¹⁶⁹ In 1993, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously passed the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women.¹⁷⁰ Within a year of taking office in 1996, the Coalition Government of John Howard convened the National Domestic Violence Summit, which resulted in the Partnerships Against Domestic Violence (PADV) initiative.¹⁷¹ PADV was the Coalition Government's response to domestic violence, until it was replaced by the Women's Safety Agenda in July 2005.¹⁷²

In May 2008, the Australian Government established the National Council to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children (the National Council) to advise on measures to reduce the incidence and impact of violence against women and their children. In a background paper the National Council concluded that there was considerable scope for greater cooperation and collaboration between the Australian Government and the states and territories in developing a unified, national approach to one of Australia's most pressing social issues.¹⁷³ The main challenges it identified were:

- existing systems to deal with domestic violence are fragmented
- gaps between policy intent and implementation
- failure to invest in primary prevention
- inadequate funding of services
- responses are not tailored and accessible
- lack of evidence regarding what works in prevention, services, legal responses and early intervention and

168. Office of the Status of Women, *A say, a choice, a fair go: the Government's agenda for women*, AGPS, Canberra, 1988, p. 67 cited in S Murray, 'An impossibly ambitious plan? Australian policy and the elimination of domestic violence', *Just Policy: A Journal of Australian Social Policy*, no. 38, December 2005, pp 28–33, viewed 11 November 2011,

<http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22library%2Fjrnart%2FGSBI6%22>

169. S Murray, *More than refuge: changing responses to domestic violence*, University of Western Australia Press, Perth 2002, pp. 154-155.

170. United Nations General Assembly, 'Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women', United Nations website, 1993, viewed 11 November 2011, <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r104.htm>

171. Murray, *More than refuge: changing responses to domestic violence*, op. cit., pp. 156–157.

172. Carrington and Phillips, *Domestic violence in Australia*, op. cit.

173. NCRVWC, *Background paper to Time for action* op. cit.

- inadequate monitoring and reporting.¹⁷⁴

The National Council's *Plan of Action* set a framework for social change and proposed the introduction of sweeping changes between 2009 and 2021.¹⁷⁵

The Australian Government released its response to the National Council's report in April 2009 and announced that it would invest \$42 million immediately to address urgent recommendations.¹⁷⁶ These included the establishment of a new national telephone and online counselling service '1800 RESPECT' for Australians who have experienced or are at risk of physical or sexual violence, the implementation of 'Respectful Relationships' programs in schools and other youth settings, the development of 'The Line' social marketing campaign targeted at young people and parents, research on perpetrator treatment and the greater harmonisation of national and state and territory laws.¹⁷⁷

Later in 2009 the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) endorsed the *National Plan to reduce violence against women and their children*.¹⁷⁸ The National Plan will be implemented through a series of four three-year Action Plans. The first Action Plan, 'Building a Strong Foundation' for 2010 to 2013, is published in the National Plan. It seeks six national outcomes:

- communities are safe and free from violence
- relationships are respectful
- Indigenous communities are strengthened
- services meet the needs of women and their children experiencing violence
- justice responses are effective and
- perpetrators stop their violence and are held to account.

The National Plan also includes a range of Australian Government, state and territory initiatives.

174. NCRVWC, *Time for Action: the National Council's plan for Australia to reduce violence against women and their children, 2009–2021: a snapshot*, FaHCSIA, Canberra, 2009, pp. 4–5, viewed 31 August 2011,

http://fahcsia.gov.au/sa/women/pubs/violence/np_time_for_action/snapshot_summary/Pages/default.aspx

175. NCRVWC, *Time for Action: the National Council's plan for Australia to reduce violence against women and their children, 2009–2021*, FaHCSIA, 2009, viewed 22 August 2011,

http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/women/pubs/violence/np_time_for_action/national_plan/Pages/default.aspx

176. FaHCSIA, *The National Plan to reduce violence against women immediate Government actions, April 2009*, Australian Government, Canberra, 2009, viewed 1 September 2011,

http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/women/pubs/violence/np_time_for_action/immediate_government_actions/Documents/FACS_37004_Violence_Against_Women.pdf

177. For '1800RESPECT' see 1800RESPECT website, viewed 1 September 2011, <http://www.1800respect.org.au/> For 'Respectful relationships' and 'The Line' see FAHCSIA, 'Primary prevention activities', FAHCSIA website, viewed 1 September 2011,

http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/women/progserv/violence/primary_prevent/Pages/default.aspx.

178. Council of Australian Governments (COAG), *National Plan to reduce violence against women and their children including the first three-year action plan*, COAG, Canberra, 2011, viewed 25 August 2011,

http://fahcsia.gov.au/sa/women/progserv/violence/nationalplan/Documents/national_plan.pdf

The Australian Government committed a further \$44 million in August 2010, including:

- \$3.75 million over three years for Community Action Grants
- \$8.8 million over three years to provide support for frontline workers, such as allied health, child care and paramedics, to better assist clients who have experienced violence
- \$4.8 million over three years for projects to improve services for women with children who are experiencing domestic and family violence
- \$6.9 million over four years to establish a National Centre of Excellence for the Prevention of Violence against Women and
- \$14.5 million over four years to conduct the Personal Safety Survey and a National Community Attitudes Survey to ensure that there is accurate and up-to-date information about the prevalence of violence against women in the Australian community and to track the impact of the National Plan on a four-year cycle.¹⁷⁹

In 2011 the Australian Government committed to an expansion of primary care projects, a national register for domestic and family violence orders, funding for fighting alcohol and drug abuse in Indigenous communities and a family violence project through the Child Support Program in the Human Services portfolio.¹⁸⁰

Future directions

Prevention has become a central focus of community and government efforts to address violence in relationships and families. In preventing violence against women, VicHealth identified three interrelated themes: promoting equal and respectful relationships between men and women; promoting non-violent social norms and reducing the effects of prior exposure to violence (especially on children) and improving access to resources and systems of support.¹⁸¹ Many emerging domestic violence prevention programs focus on one or more of these themes.

Perpetrator programs

Perpetrator programs aim to reduce the risk of known perpetrators committing further offences. They aim to prevent violence by changing attitudes and behaviour. A range of different approaches

179. K Ellis (Minister for the Status of Women), *Women's budget statement 2011–12*, op. cit., pp. 28–29, viewed 1 September 2011, http://resources.fahcsia.gov.au/budget/2011-12/Womens_Budget_2011.pdf

180. Ibid., pp. 30–31.

181. VicHealth, *Preventing violence before it occurs: A framework and background paper to guide primary prevention of violence against women in Victoria*, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Melbourne, 2007, p. 14, viewed 7 September 2011, <http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/~media/ProgramsandProjects/MentalHealthandWellBeing/DiscriminationandViolence/PreventingViolence/framework%20web.ashx>

are employed in perpetrator programs including goal setting, solution focused approaches, counselling, behaviour change, narrative therapy, and anger management.¹⁸²

Early Australian work in this area, such as the Gold Coast Domestic Violence Integrated Response (GCDVIR), has been heavily influenced by development work in Minnesota in the United States, commonly referred to as the Duluth Model.¹⁸³ This model emphasises the importance of interagency cooperation, victim safety and offender accountability.¹⁸⁴ The Australian Attorney-General's Department asserts that approaches must be multi-pronged, integrated and collaborative and outlines the following factors as essential for the effectiveness of perpetrator programs:

- systemic, integrated responses which are co-ordinated, appropriate and consistent and aimed at victim safety, reducing secondary victimisation and holding abusers accountable
- therapeutic alliances between client and therapist that are collaborative and have agreement on goals
- trust, respect and confidentiality
- acceptance of responsibility and accountability to the needs of victims
- adequate measurement of outcomes
- acknowledgment of diversity and individuality of participants and
- cross cultural competency and ability to work with interpreters.¹⁸⁵

There is limited research into perpetrators of domestic violence in Australia. While perpetrator programs may be part of the prevention picture, the research evidence in this area is inconclusive.¹⁸⁶

182. Australian Attorney-General's Department AVERT Family Violence: collaborative responses in the family law system, *Prevention strategies: involving and engaging perpetrators*, Australian Government, Canberra, 2010, pp. 5–6, viewed 5 September 2011,

http://avertfamilyviolence.com.au/en/Topics/LegalFramework/~/_media/RASA/AVERT/materials/discussion-papers/Prevention_Strategies.ashx

183. A Day, D Chung, P O'Leary, D Justo, S Moore, E Carson and A Gerace, *Integrated responses to domestic violence: legally mandated intervention programs for male perpetrators*, Trends and issues in crime and criminal justice, no. 404, AIC, Canberra, 2010, viewed 2 September 2011,

<http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/current%20series/tandi/401-420/tandi404.aspx>; For the Duluth Model see Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs (DAIP), 'The home of the Duluth Model' website, viewed 12 September 2011, <http://www.theduluthmodel.org/>

184. Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) and the New South Wales Law Reform Commission (NSWLRC), *Family violence: improving legal frameworks—consultation paper summary*, ALRC and NSWLRC, Sydney, 2010, p. 223, viewed 12 September 2011,

<http://www.alrc.gov.au/sites/default/files/pdfs/publications/Collated%20summary%20paper.pdf>

185. Australian Attorney-General's Department AVERT Family Violence: collaborative responses in the family law system, *Prevention strategies*, op. cit., p. 9.

186. *Ibid.*, p. 6; K Heseltine, A Day and R Sarre, *Prison-based correctional offender rehabilitation programs: the 2009 national picture in Australia*, Research and public policy series, no. 112, AIC, Canberra, 2011, pp. 21–23, viewed 5 September 2011, <http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/current%20series/rpp/100-120/rpp112.aspx>

Without studying larger populations, comparing programs and following the respondents and their families over time, we lack evidence for the development of sound preventive programs.¹⁸⁷

The NSW Domestic Abuse Program (DAP), which won a 2011 Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Award, is showing promising results.¹⁸⁸ It is a 20 session rehabilitative group intervention program for offenders serving community-based orders or custodial sentences for domestic and family violence related offences which is run by the Department of Corrective Services. At the end of June 2011 more than 2 500 offenders throughout New South Wales had commenced a DAP. The program has a relatively low attrition rate, with close to 80 percent of participants completing treatment. Evaluation of the program has shown significant reductions in reoffending rates in the DAP treatment group and a longer time to reoffend, compared with a matched control group. It is also effective for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men.

Some argue that services for perpetrators are actually services for perpetrators *and* their victims, all of whom may gain from services to perpetrators.¹⁸⁹ However, others contend that funding should be directed to victims of violence and that men's violence prevention must be linked to the promotion of gender equality.¹⁹⁰

Engaging men and boys

While men have a long history of involvement in public action against men's violence,¹⁹¹ the White Ribbon campaign has become a global male-led movement to stop men's violence against women.¹⁹² The increasing focus on men as targets of prevention efforts represents a significant shift; while men have long been seen as perpetrators, they are now also being seen as 'partners' in prevention.¹⁹³ The White Ribbon Foundation asserts:

It is a men's issue because a minority of men treat women and girls with contempt and violence, and it is up to the majority of men to create a culture in which this is unacceptable.¹⁹⁴

187. T Brown and R Hampson, *An evaluation of interventions with domestic violence perpetrators*, The Family Violence Prevention Foundation of Australia, Melbourne, 2009, pp. 48–49,

<http://www.violencefreefamilies.com.au/Intervention%20Domestic%20Violence%20Perps%20Web.pdf>

188. AIC, '2011 Australian Crime & Violence Prevention Awards', AIC website, viewed 10 November 2011,

http://www.aic.gov.au/en/crime_community/acvpa/2011.aspx

189. *Ibid.*, p. 49.

190. B Pease, *Engaging men in men's violence prevention: exploring the tensions, dilemmas and possibilities*, Issues paper 17, Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse, 2008, p. 8, 13–14 viewed 5 September 2011,

http://dpl/E-ancats/ADFVC_IssuesPapers/No.17.pdf

191. *Ibid.*

192. White Ribbon Foundation, 'How it all started', White Ribbon website, viewed 10 November 2011,

<http://www.whiteribbon.org.au/how-it-started>; White Ribbon began in Australia in 2003 as part of UNIFEM (now UN Women).

193. Vichealth, *Preventing violence before it occurs*, op. cit., p. 50.

194. White Ribbon Foundation, 'Why engage men in White Ribbon?', White Ribbon website, viewed 15 September 2011,

<http://www.whiteribbon.org.au/why-engage-men>

This approach is based on the premise that men can play a positive role in helping to stop violence against women and builds on the fact that most men are not violent.¹⁹⁵

Some advocate a role for men in educating other men. When conducting violence prevention work with all-male audiences, there are a number of good reasons to use men as facilitators and peer educators, including:

- men's attitudes and behaviour are shaped by their male peers
- all-male groups can provide the space and the safety for men to talk
- male educators act as role models for other men by practising non-violent expressions of masculinity and demonstrating respect for women
- men are likely to be perceived by other men as more credible and persuasive, and
- when men work with men, they are demonstrating responsibility for action against men's violence against women.¹⁹⁶

Violence prevention education for children and young people

The rationale for fostering respectful relationships among children and young people is clear. Many children and young people are exposed to, and influenced by violence in relationships and families, and violence-supportive attitudes, norms, and relations are already visible among young people.¹⁹⁷ Respectful relationships education can prevent violence and reduce harm.¹⁹⁸ Early interventions with children and young people can have a lasting effect on their relationships in the future.¹⁹⁹

Australian researchers have produced guidelines on best practice in violence and sexual assault prevention through education, stressing the importance of a coherent conceptual framework; relevant, inclusive and culturally sensitive practice; comprehensive development and delivery and effective evaluation.²⁰⁰

195. M Flood, 'Involving men in efforts to end violence against women', paper presented to *From margins to mainstream: 5th world conference on the promotion of mental health and the prevention of mental and behavioural disorders*, 10–12 September 2008, Melbourne, viewed 15 September 2011,

http://www.ncdsv.org/images/Flood_InvolvingMeninEffortstoEndVAW_3-18-08.pdf

196. M Flood, 'Changing men: best practice in sexual violence education', *Women Against Violence: an Australian Feminist Journal*, no. 18, 2005–2006, pp. 29–31, viewed 6 September 2011,

<http://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=458538196906209;res=IELHSS>

197. Flood and Fergus, *An assault on our future*, op. cit.

198. M Flood, L Fergus and M Heenan, *Respectful relationships education: violence prevention and respectful relationships education in Victorian secondary schools*, Victoria, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Melbourne, 2009, viewed 7 September 2011,

http://www.sexualethics.org.au/Publications/VIC_Schools_Report_Respectful-Relationships.pdf

199. Flood and Fergus, *An assault on our future*, op. cit., pp. 3, 29–34.

200. Flood, Fergus and Heenan, *Respectful relationships education*, op. cit.; M Carmody, S Evans, C Krogh, M Flood, M Heenan, and G Ovenden, *Framing best practice: national standards for the primary prevention of sexual assault*

The Australian Government is funding Respectful Relationships education projects nationally. The primary focus of the program is to develop the skills young people need to treat their partners with respect through the provision of education to young people aged 12-24 years. Project outcomes are to work with young people to raise their awareness of ethical behaviour, develop protective behaviours and develop their skills in conducting respectful relationships.²⁰¹ The Government is also working through the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) to support the inclusion of respectful relationships education in Phase Three of the Australian Curriculum.²⁰²

Safe at home programs

Safe at home programs are a relatively new model that works as part of an integrated, multi-agency approach. This model assumes that the perpetrators of violence should be held accountable for their actions and removed from the family home, allowing women and children to stay.²⁰³ All Australian jurisdictions now have laws which provide for exclusion orders as a condition of domestic violence orders, allowing the person seeking protection from domestic violence to remain in the family home, while the perpetrator is required to seek other accommodation.²⁰⁴ When women are supported to remain in their homes and communities they are better able to maintain social support networks, employment and educational opportunities and stability of care for their children, all of which support them in their recovery.²⁰⁵

Safe at home programs are unsuitable for women and children at extreme risk of violence from their partner or family member.²⁰⁶ For those who are able to remain in their homes, risk management options that employ an integrated, multi-agency response to family violence are essential.²⁰⁷ For example, the recently completed Victorian Bsafe pilot provided a risk management option for victims of family violence where they had obtained an intervention order and where there was a risk of the order being breached. Bsafe is a personal alarm system; when pressed an alarm is sent to a VitalCall response centre and 000 alerted for police to respond. The service applied to 72 women

through education, National Sexual Assault Prevention Education Project for NASASV, University of Western Sydney, Sydney, 2009, p. 23, viewed 7 September 2011, http://www.nasasv.org.au/PDFs/Standards_Full_Report.pdf

201. FAHCSIA, 'Respectful relationships', FAHCSIA website, viewed 7 September 2011, http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/women/pubs/general/RespectfulRelationshipsApplicationGuidelines/Pages/app_guidelines_section_one.aspx
202. FAHCSIA, 'Primary prevention activities', FAHCSIA website, viewed 1 September 2011, http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/women/progserv/violence/primary_prevent/Pages/default.aspx
203. Tually, Faulkner, Cutler and Slatter, *Women, domestic and family violence and homelessness*, op. cit., p. 35.
204. Bartels, *Emerging issues in domestic/family violence research*, op. cit., p. 7.
205. NCRVWC, *Time for action*, op. cit. quoted in E Taylor and R Mackay, *BSAFE pilot project 2007–2010 [final report]*, Women's Health Goulburn North East, Wangaratta, 2011, viewed 5 September 2011, http://www.whealth.com.au/documents/work/Bsafe_final_report_2011.pdf
206. Tually, Faulkner, Cutler and Slatter, *Women, domestic and family violence and homelessness*, op. cit., p. 37.
207. E Taylor, *Bsafe pilot project 2007–2010 interim evaluation report*, Women's Health Goulburn North East, Goulburn, 2010, p. 4, viewed 5 September 2011, http://www.familyviolenceservices.com.au/documents/Bsafe_interim%20_evaluation_report.pdf

and more than 140 of their children over the past three years.²⁰⁸ Bsafe was effective in reducing the incidence and severity of family violence. The enhanced police response served as a deterrent for some perpetrators and increased the likelihood of detection and prosecution.²⁰⁹ As a result of Bsafe, women and their children experienced increased feelings of safety; the additional level of support enabled them to remain in their homes and communities.²¹⁰

Conclusion

Domestic violence is a long standing, complex social issue. Since the 1990s, however, there has been a profound transformation in public awareness about this problem.²¹¹ Domestic violence is no longer beyond the reach of governments or the sanction of communities.²¹² The move towards integrated, multi-agency responses and coordination across levels of government is positive. A greater evidence base, in terms of what works in violence prevention, is necessary for further progress.

208. 'Funding row over domestic violence alarm', 7.30, ABC, 31 August 2011, viewed 2 September 2011, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22emms%2Femms%2F220088%22>

209. Taylor, *Bsafe pilot project 2007–2010 interim evaluation report*, op. cit., p. 45.

210. E Taylor and R Mackay, *Bsafe pilot project 2007–2010 [final report]*, Women's Health Goulburn North East, Wangaratta, 2011, p. 35–45, viewed 6 September 2011, http://www.whealth.com.au/documents/work/Bsafe_final_report_2011.pdf

211. WHO Multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence against women, *Summary report: initial results on prevalence, health outcomes and women's responses*, WHO, Geneva, 2005, p. 1, viewed 16 September, http://www.who.int/gender/violence/who_multicountry_study/summary_report/summary_report_English2.pdf

212. NCRVWC, *Background paper to Time for Action* op. cit., p. 22.

Appendix A: resources and further reading

Key journals

[Journal of family violence](#)

[Journal of interpersonal violence](#)

[Violence against women](#)

Key sites

The Australian Government, [National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children](#)

The Australian Government, [Indigenous Family Safety Agenda](#)

[The Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault](#)

[The Australian Institute of Criminology – family/domestic violence page](#) and [sexual assault page](#)

[Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse](#)

[Women's Services Network \(WESNET\)](#)

[National Network of Women's Legal Services](#)

[National Women's Justice Coalition \(NWJC\)](#)

[Australian Institute of Family Studies Domestic violence and child abuse and neglect bibliography](#)

[Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet - Family Violence \(including child protection\)](#)

NSW

[NSW Women's Refuge Resource Centre](#)

[NSW Office for Women's Policy](#)

NSW Attorney General's Department, Crime Prevention Division's [Safe Women Project](#)

[NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research](#)

[Violence Prevention Coordination Unit](#)

NSW Domestic and Family Violence Action Plan, [Stop the Violence: End the Silence](#)

[Staying Home Leaving Violence](#)

Victoria

[Victoria Office of Women's Policy](#)

[Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria \(DVRCV\)](#)

[Women's Health Victoria – Violence against Women](#)

[Victoria Police - Family Violence](#)

[Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service](#)

[A Right to Respect: Victoria's Plan to Prevent Violence against Women 2010 – 2020](#)

Department of Planning and Community Development, [Family Violence](#)

[Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families: Towards a safer future for Indigenous families and communities.](#)

[Victorian Sexual Assault Reform Strategy \(SARS\)](#)

Queensland

[Queensland Office for Women](#) including [Violence against Women](#)
Queensland Government Office of Economic and Statistical Research, [Crime and Justice](#)
Queensland Government, [Domestic and Family Violence Prevention](#)
[Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research](#)
[For our Sons and Daughters: A Queensland Government Strategy to reduce domestic and family violence 2009-2014](#)

Western Australia

[Women's Interests](#)
Government of Western Australia, [Domestic Violence](#)
University of Western Australia, [Crime Research Centre](#)
[Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services WA](#)
[Freedom From Fear](#), part of the WA Action Plan on Family and Domestic Violence
[Sexual Assault Resource Centre \(SARC\)](#)
[WA Strategic Plan for Family and Domestic Violence, 2009—2013](#)
[Safe at Home Program](#)

South Australia

[South Australia Office for Women](#)
[South Australia Office of Crime Statistics and Research \(OSCAR\)](#)
Government of South Australia, [Domestic Violence and Abuse](#)
[Women's Safety Strategy 2005 -2010](#)

Tasmania

[Women Tasmania](#) including [Family and Community Violence](#)
Department of Premier and Cabinet, [Family Violence Services](#)
Department of Premier and Cabinet, [Directory of Domestic Violence Services](#)
[Sexual Assault Support Services](#)
[Safe at Home](#), the Tasmanian Government's response to family violence

Northern Territory

[Stop Family Violence - Information about Domestic and Family Violence in the Northern Territory](#)
[The NT Office of Women's Policy](#) including [Domestic Violence](#) and [Sexual Assault Referral Services](#),
[Building on our Strengths: a Framework for Action for Women in the Northern Territory 2008-2012](#)
[Closing the Gap on Indigenous Disadvantage – a Generational Plan of Action](#)

Australian Capital Territory

[Australian Capital Territory Office for Women](#)

Women's Directory, [Domestic and Family Violence Domestic Violence Crisis Service A.C.T.](#)
[ACT Prevention of Violence against Women and Children Strategy, 2011-2017](#)
[Family Violence Intervention Program \(FVIP\)](#)
[ACT Sexual Assault Reform Program \(SARP\)](#)

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W Leonard, A Mitchell, S Patel and C Fox, [Coming forward: the underreporting of heterosexual violence and same sex partner abuse in Victoria](#), Monograph series, no. 69, Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University, Melbourne, 2008.

B Lumby and T Farrelly, [Family violence, help-seeking and the close-knit Aboriginal community: lessons for mainstream service provision](#), Issues paper, no. 19, Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse, Sydney, 2009.

L McFerran, [Taking back the castle: how Australia is making the home safer for women and children](#), Issues Paper, no. 14, Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse, Sydney, 2007.

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