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Inaugural National Research Conference  
on Violence against Women and their Children

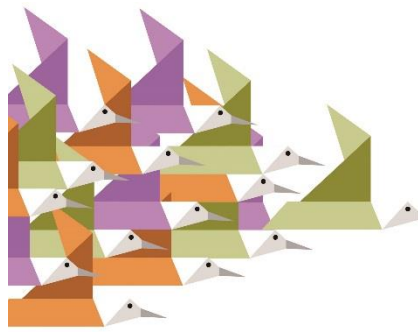
# Existing knowledge, practice and responses to violence against women in Australian Indigenous communities

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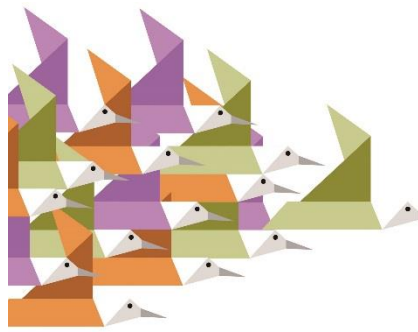


## Research aims

- Literature review
- Examine approaches to addressing and preventing violence against women in Indigenous communities

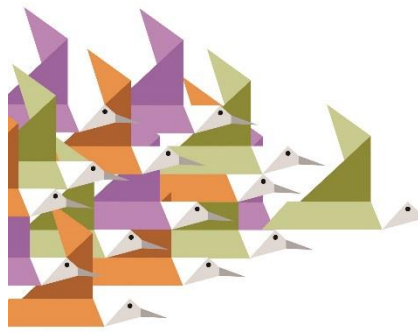
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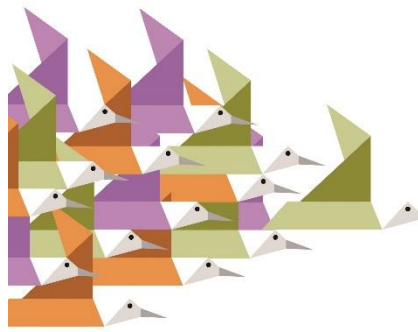
## Four areas of review

1. What is known about violence against Indigenous women?
2. How do Indigenous women and communities see and experience the issue of violence against women (including definitions of family violence)?
3. What are the current responses (programs or approaches) to violence against women in Indigenous communities?
4. What are the Indigenous viewpoints on what works and what is needed?



## Methods

- Whittemore and Knafl's integrative review framework (2005)
- Allows for:
  - incorporation of research from diverse empirical and theoretical sources (including grey or unpublished literature)
  - a comprehensive portrayal of the topic of interest
  - increased depth and breadth of conclusions



# Literature search

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- ProQuest
- Applied Social Sciences Indexes and Abstracts (ASSIA)
- PAIS International
- ProQuest Social Science Journals
- Social Services Abstracts
- Sociological Abstracts
- Web of Science
- Scopus
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) Closing the gap clearinghouse
- Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet
- Lowitja Institute
- ANROWS
- Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse
- Australian Institute of Family Studies Library





# Inclusion and exclusion criteria

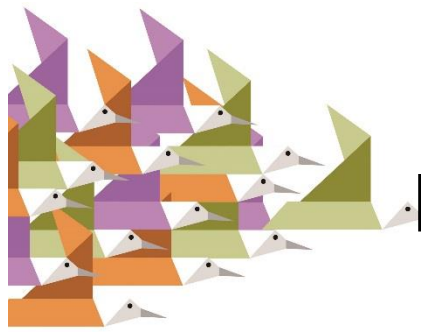
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## **Inclusion criteria:**

- Published material including peer review journal articles, reports and reviews
- Published material between 2000 and 2015
- Contain information relevant to violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women
- Contain empirical (primary or secondary) or theoretical evidence related to the topic
- English language only

## **Exclusion criteria:**

- Conference presentations
- Newspaper, magazine and editorial articles
- Books
- Full-text unavailable

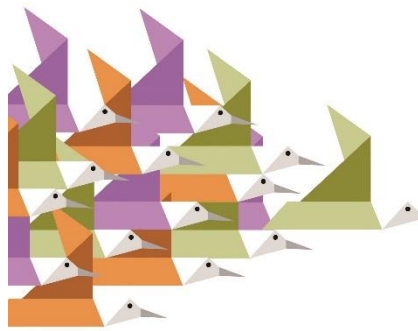


## How many?

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- 381 references
- After reviewing the literature for inclusion and exclusion criteria and eliminating duplicates there were a total of 147 articles for review

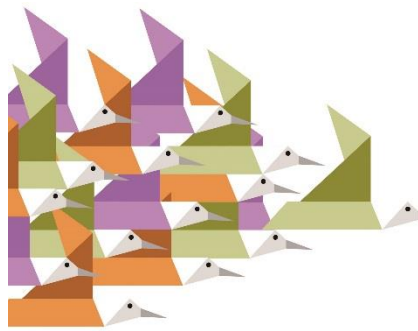




## Limitations

- Literature review (no primary research/new data)
- Significant work and perspectives are not always published
- Broad reviews can reduce evidence to risk and dysfunction, overlooking strength and resilience
- Broad reviews can overgeneralise the issue to all Indigenous people and communities
- Cannot do justice to the hard work and lived experience of real people





## Benefits

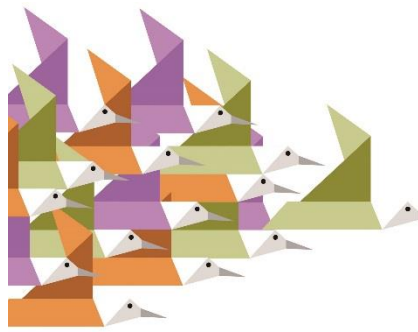
- Provide an overview of the data, issues and responses
- Highlight not only data but how violence is defined and experienced
- Comprehensively review program approaches currently in action
- Useful tool to assess the progress that has been made and the work that is still needed



# Indigenous viewpoints on 'what works'

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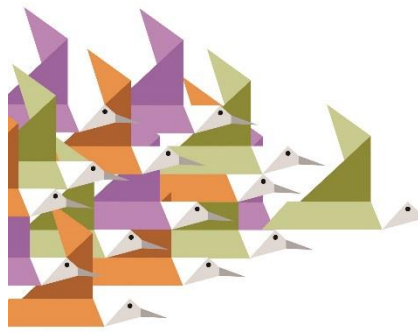
- Concept of violence as a family and community issue
- Holistic approaches
- Indigenous-led solutions



## Family or domestic violence?

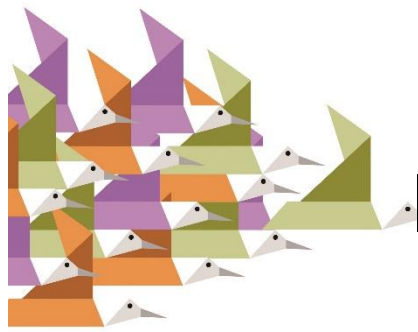
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- In general, the term family violence, rather than domestic violence, is preferred by Indigenous communities
- Violence against women is conceptualised within extended families and the wider community
- Family violence is understood to be the result of, and perpetuated by, a range of community and family factors, rather than one individual's problematic behaviour within an intimate partnership.



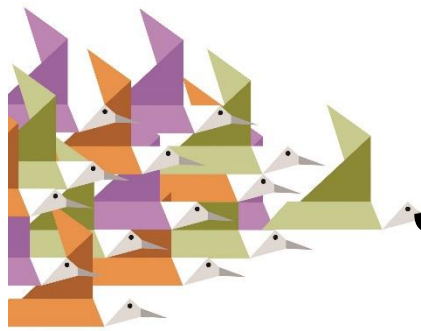
## Holistic approaches

- Connection between Indigenous family violence and breakdown of traditional culture and kinship practices
- Rebuilding of family and kinship ties
- Prevention of intergenerational trauma
- Family violence is understood as a multi-dimensional problem connected to other health and social problems (drug and alcohol use, unemployment and the continued impacts of colonisation and dispossession)
- In addition to family violence focused services, a much larger effort is required to improve the wider social, economic and health status of Indigenous communities



## Indigenous-led

- Indigenous communities want to play a more significant role in shaping program and service responses
- Generalised services and programs can be considered effective if they are operated in a culturally sensitive way and/or run in partnership with Indigenous organisations
- Indigenous-led solutions tend to focus on community healing, restoration of family cohesion and processes that aim to let both the victim and perpetrator deal with their pain and suffering



## Justice approaches

- Mainstream responses to family violence focused on removing women from the domestic situation and legal repercussions for perpetrators
- Mainstream justice approaches can provide options however are not regarded as the most effective way of responding
- Preference for Indigenous sentencing courts which allow for Indigenous Elders and community representatives to be part of the process
- Justice approaches that aim at healing relationships and rehabilitating offenders
- Note the complexity (and inability) of some of these approaches to deal with violence/assault



## Appropriate funding and support

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- Programs to cater for small, remote communities as well Indigenous people who live in urban centres.
- Ongoing planned and consistent funding for service provision is considered a major issue

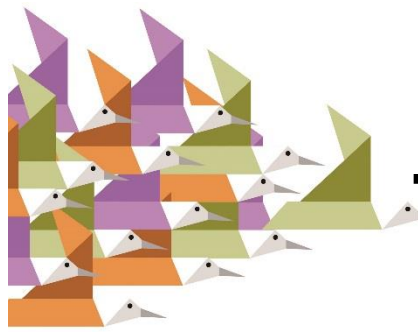


# Evaluation of programs and approaches

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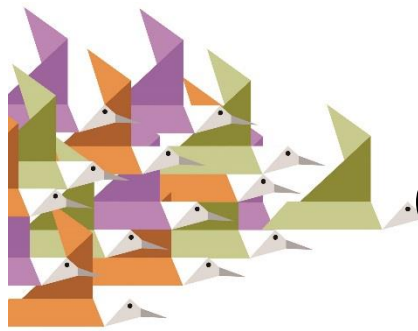
- Patchwork of responses to family violence in Indigenous communities
- Provided by federal, state and territory governments as well as local initiatives in services and community groups
- Over 100 documents addressing programs and responses were assessed for evidence





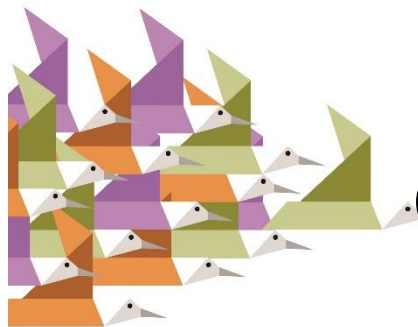
## Types of programs

1. Support programs (counselling, advocacy)
2. Strengthening identity programs (sport, education, arts, cultural activities, group therapy)
3. Behavioural reform programs (men's and women's groups)
4. Community policing and monitoring programs (night patrols, wardens)
5. Shelter/protection programs (refuges, sobering-up shelters)
6. Justice programs (community justice groups)
7. Mediation programs (dispute resolution)
8. Education programs (tertiary courses, miscellaneous courses, media)
9. Situational crime prevention (good street lighting, appropriate housing design, and availability of relevant amenities, closed circuit television and reduced access to alcohol)
10. Composite programs drawing on many of the above areas



## Quality of evaluation/evidence

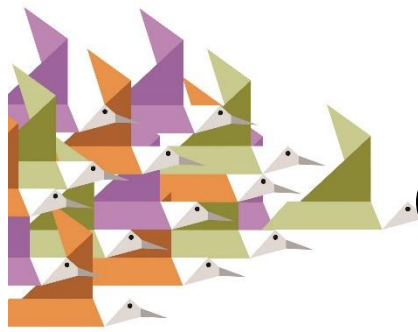
- All literature identified as a program or approach was evaluated using the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality method (Berkman et al., 2013)
- Assess quality of the evaluation
- Slightly adapted to include “Indigenous viewpoint” (an important aspect of quality in this area of research)
- Level of evidence assessed by:
  - study limitations
  - directness
  - precision
  - reporting bias
  - consistency
  - Indigenous viewpoint



# Quality of evaluation/evidence

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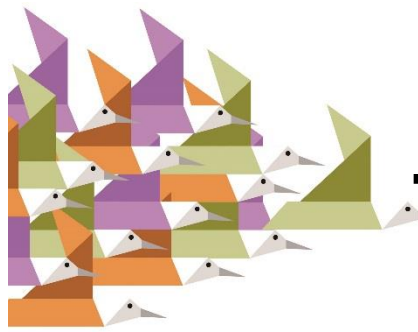
Levels of evidence	Number of programs/approaches	Corresponding literature
<b>Strong</b>	2	(Fitzgerald, 2008; Kinnane et al., 2010)
<b>Moderate</b>	10	(Arney & Westby, 2012; Australian Institute of Criminology et al., 2011; D'Abbs & Togni, 2000; Gibbons & Paterson, 2000; Hennessy & Willie, 2006; Kowanko & Power, 2008; Laming et al., 2011; Lauw et al., 2013; Morgan & Louis, 2010; Rawsthorne et al., 2010; Rees et al., 2004; Schineanu et al., 2010)
<b>Sufficient</b>	4	(McCalman et al., 2006; Janya McCalman et al., 2010; O'Connor & Fisher, 2005; Wendt & Baker, 2013)
<b>Insufficient</b>	8	(Allan & Dawson, 2004; Carnarvon Family Support Service Inc, 2003; Karahasan, 2014; Laing & Toivonen, 2012; Nickson et al., 2011; Office of Evaluation and Audit (Indigenous Programs), 2007; Poelina & Perdrisat, 2004; Pugh, 2006)



## Quality of evaluation/evidence

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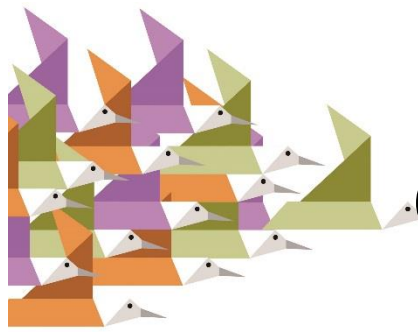
- The two programs assessed as having a strong level of evidence:
  - Fitzroy Valley Alcohol Restriction Report (Kinnane et al., 2010)
  - Evaluation of the Metropolitan Family Violence Court and Evaluation of the Barndimalgu Court (Research and Analysis Branch, Department of the Attorney General, 2014)
- Benefits to participants and the community when compared to other mainstream approaches



# The need for quality evidence

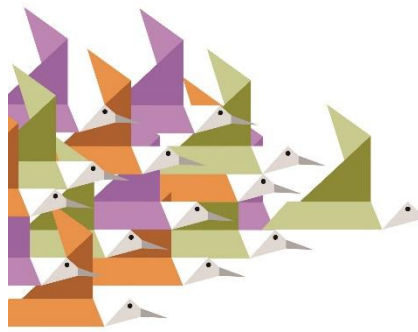
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- Quantitative metrics
  - Randomised control trials (RCTs) are often inappropriate for family violence programs and other pragmatic designs such as longitudinal and pre-post designs should be used instead
- Qualitative data
  - Contextualise and complement quantitative metrics
  - Uncover unintended consequences or outcomes of programs (such as the building of trust and confidence)
- Information sharing about the positive progress being made in Indigenous communities should be encouraged through the appropriate resourcing of program evaluation



## Conclusions

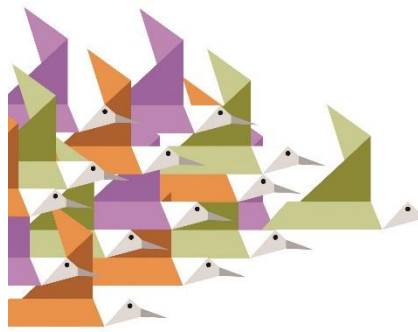
- Funding for services and programs should include resources for Indigenous community input and, where possible, community delivery
- Multi-component programs are likely to be most effective as are programs that address the broader wellbeing of Indigenous families and communities, including the ongoing impacts of colonisation
- Funding for services and programs for Indigenous communities should include resources to implement quality evaluation including both qualitative and quantitative research.



## Messages for practice

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- Indigenous opinions and viewpoints should be included in programs and initiatives
- Recognition of historical and cultural reasons for Indigenous approaches to family violence
- Importance of family and community cohesion
- Multifaceted and holistic approaches needed

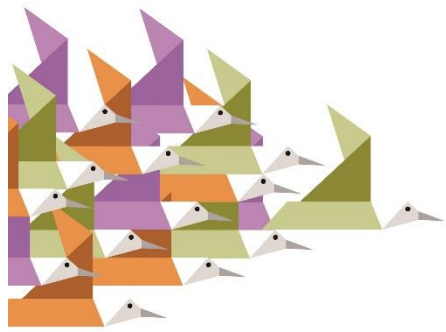


## Messages for policy

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- Limited evaluation data for current programs
- Include resources for Indigenous community input and, where possible, community delivery
- Multi-component programs that address the broader wellbeing of Indigenous families and communities
- Include resources to implement quality evaluation including both qualitative and quantitative research

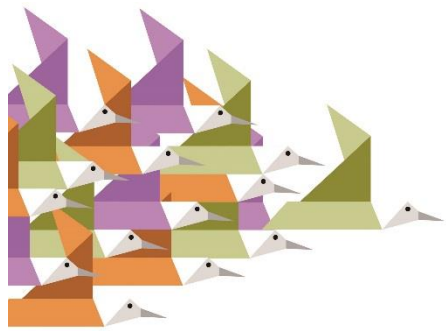




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This material was produced with funding from the Australian Government and the Australian state and territory governments. Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) gratefully acknowledges the financial and other support it has received from these governments, without which this work would not have been possible. The findings and views reported in this paper are those of the authors and cannot be attributed to the Australian Government, or any Australian state or territory government.



# Thank you

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