

ANROWS
Footprints

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AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL RESEARCH
ORGANISATION FOR WOMEN'S SAFETY
to Reduce Violence against Women & their Children



Acknowledgement of Country

ANROWS acknowledges the traditional owners of the land across Australia on which we work and live. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders past, present and future; and we value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, culture and knowledge.

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ANROWSpublications

ANROWS produces and publishes new, innovative and relevant research on domestic, family and sexual violence through its suite of publications.

Subscribe

Subscribe and receive updates to your inbox, including:

- ANROWS Notepad: Our fortnightly update on the latest research on domestic, family and sexual violence, upcoming events and training, and more.
- ANROWS Footprints: Our thematic quarterly publication, communicating new, innovative and emerging research, policy and practice aimed at reducing violence against women and their children.

www.anrows.org.au/subscribe

Join our networking database

The ANROWS Networking database is a national online community bringing together, practitioners, policy makers and members of the community with an interest in reducing domestic, family and sexual violence.

Join online to share your knowledge and expertise with a national audience; find people with particular expertise, organisations working on similar or complementary projects and/or potential partners for research project grants.

www.anrows.org.au/networking-database/register

Available now

ANROWS Notepad

Fortnightly email update on the latest research, events, training, stakeholder news and issues in the media.

ANROWS Fast Facts

Key facts and figures on topics related to violence against women and their children.

ANROWS Footprints

Thematic quarterly publication focussed on communicating new, innovative and emerging research, policy and practice addressing violence against women and their children.

We warmly welcome proposals for contributions to ANROWS Footprints. Please send expressions of interest on potential content to the editors by email to enquiries@anrows.org.au

Coming soon

ANROWS Landscapes: State of knowledge papers

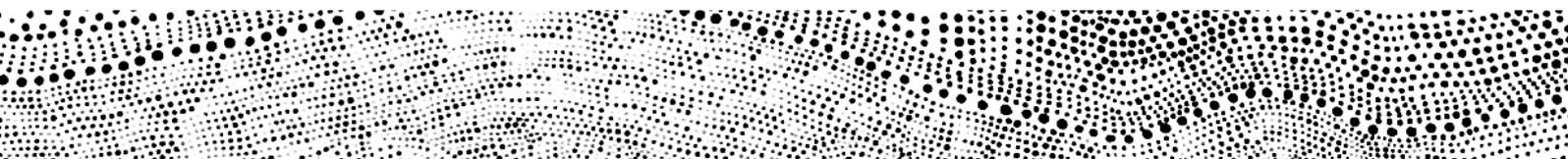
Medium length papers that scope current knowledge on an issue related to violence against women and their children. Papers will draw on empirical research, including research produced under ANROWS's Research Program, and/or practice knowledge.

ANROWS Horizons: Research papers

In depth reports on empirical research produced under ANROWS's Research Program. Papers will include state of knowledge work completed in the Landscapes paper for that project.

ANROWS Compass: Research to policy and practice papers

Concise papers that summarise key findings of research on violence against women and their children, including research produced under ANROWS's Research Program, and provide advice on the implications for policy and practice.





*this*Quarter

The theme of this edition centres on understanding gendered violence. How do we, as researchers, practitioners, policy makers and community members conceptualise, analyse and comprehend violence against women and their children?

In this edition you will find:

- A recap of ANROWS events featuring Professor Liz Kelly CBE, held in February 2015.
- Information on ANROWS research projects that look at how we understand violence against women, including a project by ANROWS Senior Research Officer (Research Program), Dr Peta Cox.
- Peta reflecting on her ANROWS research project in ANROWS *inHouse*.
- Researchers reflecting on their ANROWS research project and the significance of collaboration between academics from different disciplines in *Sidebyside*.
- A feature article from Dr Y Gavriel Ansara, Manager of Research & Policy at the National LGBTI Health Alliance, on a multidimensional and inclusive understanding of gender-based family and interpersonal violence.
- An address by Emeritus Professor Anne R Edwards AO on the international drive to achieve gender equality and the elimination of gender-based violence against women and girls.

Dr Ansara's article addresses an important, and challenging, area of research that sheds new light on our understanding of gender-based violence. While this article raises issues

outside of ANROWS's current research parameters, it provides perspectives that have relevance to policy, service provision, and academic discourses on this subject.

I also note that the contribution from both Professor Edwards and Dr Ansara consider the importance of gender as a fundamental component of social organisation in Australian society and, therefore, the drivers and determinants of violence against women. They argue that gendered expectations, roles and functions derive more from culture and socialisation than from biology. It is socially constructed gender and intersectional dimensions that determine power relations and underscore inequalities.

Their papers also intersect in their contentions that a preference to explain violence in 'neat categories' remains. Both Professor Edwards and Dr Ansara join Professor Kelly in strongly advocating for an approach to violence that is rooted in feminist scholarship.

Knowledge production is one of three core ANROWS functions. Conducting in house research is a vital part of this work. Peta's research project will improve our understanding of the complex intersections between domestic violence and sexual assault, and in doing so will help to bridge two areas of research and service response that have separate histories.

Research on the media and their representation of violence against women is an emerging but significant area of academic enquiry. Increased public interest in the causes and contributing factors of violence against women reinforces the need for research on the way it is depicted to a broader audience. ANROWS is pleased to facilitate work in this area through its inaugural research program. We look forward to working with the project's research team and Our Watch to share the results as they become available.

Finally, we are pleased to announce that ANROWS is currently preparing for its first national research conference, to be held from 23 to 25 February 2016 in Melbourne. Subscribe to ANROWS's updates to receive information on early bird rates, abstract submission details, and other information.

Heather Nancarrow
Chief Executive Officer

comingUp



15th International Symposium of the World Society of Victimology

5 - 9 July 2015. Perth, Western Australia.

Victims Support Australia in partnership with angelhands Inc. will hold the 15th International Symposium of the World Society of Victimology (WSV).

The Symposium invites International and Australian presenters from the broader discipline of Victimology and brings them together in one of Australia's most beautiful cities. Western Australia is a community that is at the forefront of victim support services.



Making history, shaping the future: The 9th Australasian Council of Women and Policing Conference

31 August - 3 September 2015. Sydney, New South Wales.

The Australasian Council of Women and Policing is calling for papers for the 9th Australasian Women and Policing Conference.

The Conference will build on previous Australian Women and Policing Conferences and continue to develop the body of knowledge around how policing is being improved for women, in particular:

- policing for women in the Pacific;
- women's leadership within policing and the leadership role that women in policing play in their local communities in Australia and globally; and
- innovative responses to violence against women.



2015 Australian Winter School Conference

22 - 24 July 2015. Brisbane, Queensland.

The Australian Winter School (AWS) is a national drug and alcohol conference presented by Lives Lived Well, one of Queensland's leading non-government support organisations for people who have problems with alcohol and other drugs.

This year two of the key topics are domestic and family violence (DFV) and child safety. With a growing impetus for a more comprehensive approach to understanding and addressing the causes of DFV and child safety, and its prevention and treatment across the broader welfare system. This includes an increased focus on the interrelationship between sectors such as alcohol and other drugs (AOD), child and family welfare, child protection and DFV.

We are looking for conference speakers and workshops to inspire delegates and introduce them to new ideas and ways of thinking and working.



Say no to domestic violence: National Indigenous Domestic Violence Conference

12 - 14 October 2015. Gold Coast, Queensland.

Indigenous Conference Services (Australia) is pleased to host this year's National Indigenous Domestic Violence Conference, focusing on a Brighter Future.

The event is designed to be the largest national gathering of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people with an interest in stopping domestic violence in Indigenous communities. The aim of the conference is to highlight and showcase successful community and research programs, which have led to positive impacts and outcomes within these communities.



ANROWS

National Research Conference

2016

23-25 February 2016 | Melbourne

The inaugural ANROWS national research conference will bring together delegates from research, policy and practice to examine the latest Australian research on violence against women and their children.

ANROWS funded principal investigators, project partners and co-investigators will share preliminary findings from their research projects.

Presenters from research, policy and practice will share research that corresponds to the National Research Agenda to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children.

We encourage researchers, policy makers, practitioners, and others responding to, or working to reduce/prevent violence against women, to get involved.

Subscribe to receive updates on early bird rates and call for papers for the conference open stream at www.anrows.org.au/subscribe



AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL RESEARCH
ORGANISATION FOR WOMEN'S SAFETY
to Reduce Violence against Women & their Children



ANROWS event series: **Professor Liz Kelly CBE**

In February ANROWS held several events featuring Professor Liz Kelly CBE. Professor Kelly is Co-Chair of the End Violence against Women Coalition UK (EVAW) and Professor of Sexualised Violence at London Metropolitan University, where she is also Director of the Child and Woman Abuse Studies Unit (CWASU).

Above L to R: Emeritus Professor Anne R Edwards AO, Chair of the ANROWS Board; the Hon Jay Weatherill, Premier of South Australia; Professor Liz Kelly CBE; the Hon Gail Gago, Minister for the Status of Women, South Australia; Aunty Georgina Williams, Kurna Senior Woman; Heather Nancarrow, ANROWS CEO.

Key issues in sexual assault practice: Reflections and discussions from research

On Monday 9 February, researchers, policy makers and service providers attended an ANROWS workshop conducted by Professor Liz Kelly CBE. The group included participants from every state and territory in Australia, as well as attendees from New Zealand and Timor Leste.

In opening the workshop, Professor Kelly said there was a need to focus on the freedom of women and girls. “We need to expand our sense of what our work is about, from ‘women’s safety from’ to ‘women’s freedom to’”, she said.

In the discussion that followed, Professor Kelly and workshop participants covered topics including the professionalisation of advocacy and service provision; online communities of support; the separation of domestic and sexual violence; the danger in monstifying perpetrators; and mapping pathways of perpetration to identify sites for prevention work.

Re-visiting the continuum of sexual violence in the 21st century

On Friday 13 February Professor Kelly delivered a public lecture in Adelaide. The Hon. Jay Weatherill, Premier of South Australia, opened the lecture, and Welcome to Country was performed by Aunty Georgina Williams.

Professor Kelly spoke about the original aims of her book *Surviving Sexual Violence*; including why she focused on interrogating what counts as sexual violence and what connects different experiences of sexual violence. She discussed how the concept of the continuum provided a way of acknowledging and understanding different forms of violence that may not fit into a legal or criminal framework.

Professor Kelly highlighted the online space as a site for women to share experiences of violence and strategies for resistance, while accepting its limitations as an anonymous place for men to attempt to silence women.



“Empowerment means expanding the space for action that violence constrains.”

Professor Liz Kelly CBE

In discussing the challenges to and implications of her book, Professor Kelly said the building blocks of law sometimes sit uneasily with the concept of the continuum and wider concepts of harm. She talked about ‘real rape’ arguments and pointed to the legal definition of rape in Sweden, which refers to the violation of a woman’s body rather than the use of force, to reexamine the idea that rape needs to be ‘violent’ to qualify as ‘real’. She spoke about the limitations of prevalence research in adequately depicting women’s experiences of violence, and suggested research on violence against women needed to be asking the right questions to ensure previously hidden issues were adequately addressed in policy and practice.

Finally, Professor Kelly identified research that had used the continuum as a framework for further analysis on structural and symbolic violence; men’s intrusions in public spaces; and black women’s continuum of sexualised and racialised violence. She concluded by reinforcing the intersections between violence against women and gender inequality, and reminded the audience of a study that showed strong autonomous feminist movements to be effective in challenging male dominance. She encouraged the audience to continue focussing on everyday politics in order to question, challenge and continue the discussion on ending violence against women.

A recording of the public lecture is now available on the ANROWS website.

*in*Conversation with Dr Anastasia Powell and Professor Liz Kelly CBE

Now available on the ANROWS website is the first of our *in*Conversation series, a dialogue between thought leaders on violence against women and their children. In this edition Professor Kelly speaks to Dr Anastasia Powell, Senior Lecturer in Justice and Legal Studies at RMIT University.

In a lively exchange of ideas, Dr Powell and Professor Kelly discuss:

- **Discovering research interests and contemplating future directions.** Professor Kelly on connecting her own experiences of minor intimate intrusions to the experiences of women at the rape crisis centre she helped to start in Norwich, England, and the particular insight from one volunteer who would later become a friend.
- **Research, activism and policy: how to make a difference.** Professor Kelly on 'working in between' and how it is not always a safe space to work in, but is interesting, freeing and creative.

- **Recognition of sexual violence in feminist policy and research agendas.** Considering the role of high profile sexual abuse cases and how they have impacted on public discourse; and the need to advocate for getting consent rather than giving consent.
- **Key learnings from *Project Mirabal*.** Professor Kelly's most recent research project and why this project held special significance for her and research partner Professor Nicole Westmarland.
- **Creating successful peak organisations to advocate for an end to violence against women.** How organisations can create an untempered voice that remains strategic, as well as a non-competitive space for feminist organisations.

Keep an eye out for future conversations available on the ANROWS website.

Below: Professor Liz Kelly CBE records the first ANROWS *in*Conversation with Dr Anastasia Powell



Photo: Jake Stevens



ANROWSprojects

Each edition, we examine projects from the ANROWS Research Program 2014-16 for the duration of that program, to communicate the research endeavour and its intended outcome.

Media representations of violence against women and their children

The media is a significant force in modern culture. We are bombarded with messages by mass media via television, radio, newspapers or online. Through their coverage of certain issues, media outlets promote a sense of what is and is not important. Research in other fields has demonstrated that media reporting on topics such as body image, mental health and suicide can elicit change in attitudes and behaviour. Within Australia, or indeed internationally, we have no measures of the effects on knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of news media reporting on the prevalence of violence against women and their children. In what ways do media messages reinforce or challenge public perceptions? In what way can we guide media production towards more accurate and socially responsible reporting with the ultimate goal of shifting the 'national conversation' towards prevention? Answering these questions is critical to effect change.

The *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022 (the National Plan)* and academic literature identify the importance of engaging the media in efforts to prevent violence against women and their children. The media have a powerful role to play in helping to shape attitudes, perceptions and behaviours that enable, minimise or excuse violence against women and their children. One of the objectives in the Second Action Plan of the National Plan is to "...improve media engagement on violence against women and their children..." We need nationally representative data to build the evidence base to understand the intersection between media and violence against women – both to guide engagement with media outlets and against which we can measure change.

In collaboration with Our Watch, this project will provide a robust analysis of news media reporting of violence against women, which will be used as the basis of building industry engagement with the issue. Underpinning this project is recognition that the onus for improved reporting of violence against women does not lie exclusively with the media industry. Responsibility also falls with violence-prevention agencies and those called on by the media to provide 'expert' opinion and information in a way that facilitates effective and quality reporting.

The overarching aim of this project is to establish a baseline picture of the extent and nature of reporting of violence against women and their children in Australian news media. It is intended to inform future strategies to effectively engage the media to report in a way that supports prevention efforts and does not cause further harm. This work will inform and support work being done by a number of organisations across Australia to work with media to prevent and respond appropriately to violence against women.

Key components of this project include a 'state of knowledge' (literature review) report on media representations of violence against women; content analysis of media representations of violence against women; and a discourse analysis of media representations of violence against women.

The project uses two main methodological approaches, content and discourse analysis. The objective of the content analysis is to establish the extent and nature of reporting of violence. The objective of the discourse analysis is to illustrate a deeper understanding of the way media articulates and transmits powerful narratives, images and ideas that perpetuate or challenge public opinion about violence against women and their children.

Ultimately this project will provide evidence to understand and improve how violence against women is reported in the media and how services can work more effectively with the media.

Principal chief investigator

Dr Georgina Sutherland, Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Mental Health, Melbourne School of Population and Global Health, The University of Melbourne.

Chief investigators

Professor Jane Pirkis, Centre for Mental Health, Melbourne School of Population and Global Health, The University of Melbourne; Dr Kate Holland, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Faculty of Arts and Design, University of Canberra; Dr Cathy Vaughan, Lecturer, Gender and Women's Health Unit, Centre for Health Equity, Melbourne School of Population and Global Health, The University of Melbourne; and Professor Patricia Easteal, Professor of Law, School of Law and Justice, Faculty of Business, Government and Law, University of Canberra.

Approximate project length 1 year

Maximum budget \$150,000 (ANROWS contribution \$75,000 and Our Watch contribution \$75,000)



Dr Georgina Sutherland (far left) is Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Mental Health, Melbourne School of Population and Global Health, The University of Melbourne.

Professor Patricia Eastel AM (near left) is Professor of Law, School of Law and Justice, Faculty of Business, Government and Law, University of Canberra.

Sidebyside

Partners on the ANROWS Research Program project *Media representations of violence against women and their children*, Dr Georgina Sutherland and Professor Patricia Eastel AM, speak with us about how their project was conceived and why collaboration between researchers from different disciplines are so important.

What attracted you to this project?

GS The abduction, rape and murder of Jill Meagher happened not far from my home and it has had a lasting impact on me. Not the act itself – unspeakably brutal though it was - but why this rare crime led to such a public outpouring of grief when domestic, family and sexual violence is so common. Violent crimes against women and their children happen in my street... definitely in my suburb; but there are no public vigils or solidarity marches or candles or floral tributes. At the time I felt uncomfortable to express such cynicism but in the intervening years I now understand that being truly concerned by violence is more than buying flowers for a stranger.

It's about taking a closer look at our society and what simmers beneath the surface. The media can do this – it can connect us with women and children who experience violence every day. In just the same way as it drove our connection to Jill Meagher – by making us connect, understand and feel an overriding sense of urgency to prevent such crimes from happening again.

PE I first became aware of the media's power as a socialiser when my four children were young and yes, watching TV. In a literature review published earlier this year, my co-authors Keziah Judd, Kate Holland and I identified some disturbing findings concerning how media portrays violence against women. Our sample revealed that media messages concerning violence against women seemed to be “essentially conservative”.¹

The media use “several framing techniques to distance acts of violence from their underlying social causes”. In this way, and as we argued in the paper, “the status quo is perpetuated” by leaving a somewhat misleading impression of the dynamics and drivers of violence against women. In short, “if the media indeed creates its own ‘reality,’ it presents a problematic picture of gendered violence”.

I am therefore very keen to be involved in a project that can further identify such trends and the need for change to facilitate effective and quality reporting.

You have dedicated your career to researching gender and social justice issues, what brought you here?

PE Over 20 years ago in my book *Voices of the Survivors*, I wrote about my personal journey. A few lines from the book seem pertinent here:

“As it may be clear by now, this writer has also been a victim of sexual assault. It would not have been possible to have done this work and kept one's own secrets. The pain of such hypocrisy would have far exceeded the pain of reading the letters and comments, editing them, writing bits and pieces, and coming out publicly as a survivor”.

How fortunate I am that I have been able to channel the awareness and anger from my experiences of witnessing and surviving violence to action through research, writing, advocacy and activism!

¹ All references in relation to Patricia Easteal's co-authored work are from Easteal, P., Judd, K., Holland, K. (2015). Enduring themes and silences in media portrayals of violence against women. *Women Studies International Forum* 48: 103-113.

“It’s about taking a closer look at our society and what simmers beneath the surface. The media can do this.”

Dr Georgina Sutherland

The media have a powerful role to play in helping to shape attitudes, perceptions and behaviours that enable, minimise or excuse violence against women and their children. What are some of the key issues in relation to this that your project aspires to explore?

GS The purpose of the research is to establish a nationally relevant picture of the nature and extent of reporting on violence against women and their children. Starting from a position that is neither condemnatory nor laudatory, our project aspires to be educative.

We hope it will provide an opportunity to reflect on current practice to inform responses to the challenges faced by those reporting on gender-based violence. We also hope to explore the development of strategies to encourage informed and insightful reporting on violence against women and their children.

PE My co-authored research into media portrayals of violence against women identified a recurrent theme of mutuality of responsibility for violence against women, including victim-blaming in the narratives of domestic violence, rape and sexual harassment and reporting that can sometimes be “simplistic, misleading, and overly reliant on clichéd characters”. Therefore the importance of engaging the media in efforts to prevent violence against women cannot be overstated.

The media have a ‘transformative potential’ and a profound effect on how perpetrators and the wider community

perceive violence against women. This project will explore ideas about the kinds of interventions that could be made by both legal and media professionals, and feminists to prevent violence against women and their children.

How will your project inform and support work being done by a number of organisations across Australia to work with media to prevent and respond appropriately to violence against women?

GS It’s exciting to be part of a broad and comprehensive program of work – Our Watch’s National Media Engagement Project – that aims to engage media to be part of the solution to stopping violence against women.

This project will provide insights to inform the media on how to approach issues related to violence against women and children and tell the stories of family, domestic and sexual violence in a way that promotes open and honest reflection from the community. Equally, the project will aim to equip those who work to prevent violence against women with insights into how they might engage with the media to achieve the same outcome.

PE There is a great deal of potential (as well as challenges) for bodies such as ANROWS, Our Watch, feminist legal theorists and researchers, and victims/survivors in seeking to shape journalistic storytelling about violence against women.

This is a relatively under-researched area and so it’s fantastic that ANROWS and Our Watch have recognised that gap. It is an avenue of inquiry that could produce valuable insights into how different players and processes are implicated in the media framing of violence against women.

Our research could increase dialogue between researchers and journalists. It could hopefully result in more nuanced portrayals of sexual assault and family violence. This could be beneficial for changing community attitudes particularly those concerning

victim-blaming and minimising of harm. Improved media portrayal could also facilitate improved law reform.

How do strong partnerships between researchers at different institutions and with different disciplinary expertise contribute to the evidence base on violence against women and their children?

GS I have no doubt that violence against women is a ‘wicked’ problem – not in the sense of evil, but in the context of it being inherently complex and highly resistant to resolution. While society and governments may crave a ‘silver bullet’ response, violence against women and children requires us to think outside disciplinary-based research. While single disciplines can provide insight into certain aspects of the problem, this traditional way of working is limited. Our responses need to be informed by multi-disciplinary partnerships.

On a personal level, I feel extremely privileged to be working alongside such an incredible group of women who each brings a different perspective to this project. In particular, Professor Jane Pirkis and Dr Kate Holland, who have both been enormously influential in changing media practices around reporting mental illness and suicide.

PE I am excited to be working with such an outstanding team of academics from other disciplines. Cross-institutional and multi-disciplinary research will enable insights and perspectives otherwise not available. Our individual knowledge and experience is complementary. As with intersectionality and violence against women, our research and its findings will be different from and greater than the sum of its parts. ●

State of knowledge on the co-occurrence, intersection and differences between forms of, and responses to, violence against women and their children.

Research literature reveals a range of intersections between the experiences of domestic and family violence, sexual assault and child abuse in the context of violence against women. Research and service responses in Australia however have typically been fragmented and sector-specific, most likely due to differences in the nature of the forms of violence, the contexts in which they occur and the historical development of responses to each issue.

This project, one of two being completed in house at ANROWS by Dr Peta Cox, will review and provide critical analysis of current national and international research on the co-occurrence, intersection and differences between forms of, and responses to, violence against women and their children.

The project will examine the overlap in lived experience of domestic violence and sexual assault and the impacts of multiple victimisations. It will explore how such an overlap demonstrates the need for domestic violence and sexual assault services to be sensitive to the complexity of experiences of violence. These topics are particularly important in the Australian context, where there has historically been a separation of domestic violence and sexual assault services.

A repeatable Boolean search, adapted for a range of academic databases including those within the EBSCO, JSTOR, ProQuest and Informit interfaces, was used to produce select relevant articles for this state of knowledge paper.

The initial search came up with over 6500 articles. After removing duplicates, a three phase screening process using inclusion and exclusion criteria (by title, by abstract and by categorisation) reduced the number of articles to approximately 260 relevant articles, although final screening is ongoing.

Broadly speaking, this project will focus on two main bodies of research; those examining re-victimisation (experiences of violence across the life course) and those examining co-occurrence (experiences of multiple forms of violence within the same context). There is significant overlap in the findings for the two types of poly-victimisation, however there are distinct patterns of impact as well. Teasing out the nuance of these similarities and differences is likely to be the bulk of the work of the review.

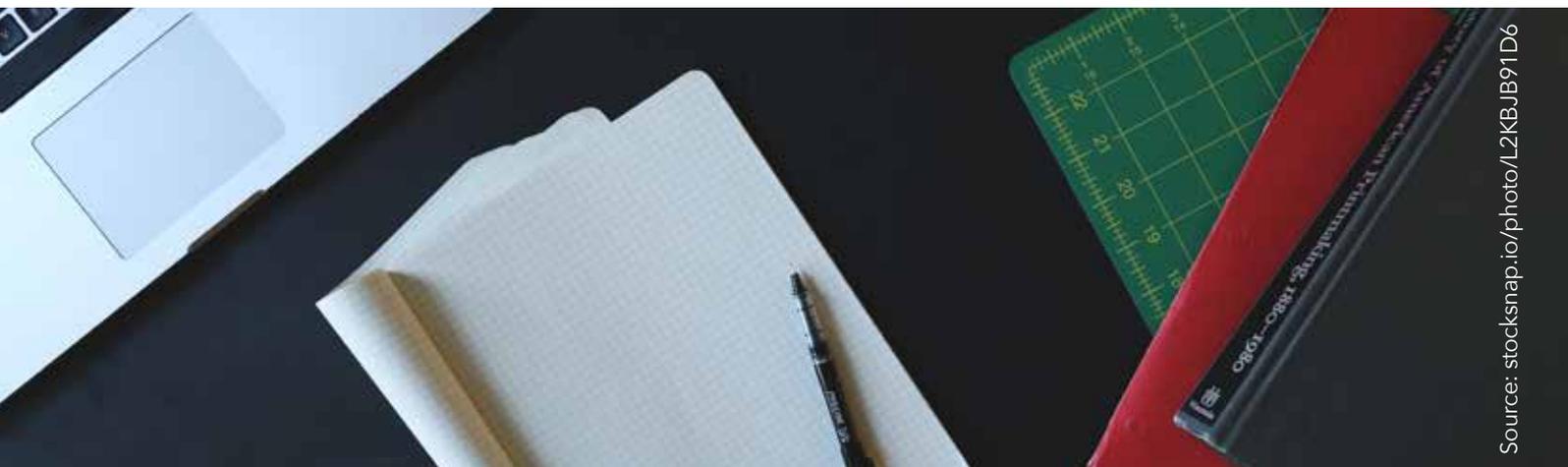
Ultimately this project aims to assist in understanding the complexities of the intersection between domestic violence and sexual assault and inform future research and service delivery where the two issues overlap.

Researcher

Dr Peta Cox, Senior Research Officer (Research Program), ANROWS.

Approximate project length 6 months

Maximum budget \$40,000





inHouse

Two projects in the ANROWS Research Program 2014-16 (Part 1) will be completed in house. Dr Peta Cox, ANROWS's Senior Research Officer (Research Program), is currently working on the project *State of knowledge on the co-occurrence, intersection and differences between forms of, and responses to, violence against women and their children* (see opposite). Peta speaks to us about the project's early findings and why it is important for ANROWS to conduct its own research.

What brought you to ANROWS? How do your research interests relate to research on violence against women and their children?

I initially felt drawn to working at ANROWS because of my ongoing commitment to social equality and non-violence. I have worked with a range of marginalised populations to help address issues that have particular impact for them. For me, working at ANROWS is a natural extension of a career based in thinking about the complexities of disadvantage and marginalisation.

What do you like about this project?

I think that this research comes at a really important time. Media attention on domestic violence (DV) has sky rocketed in the last year or so, but sexual violence (SV) that occurs in intimate relationships is still largely ignored in these accounts. Understanding the linkages between DV and SV is important as they articulate the complexity and multifaceted nature of the abusive aspects of these experiences.

On an intellectual level, this project pushes me to think critically about how we conceptualise violence. Some of the literature on sexual violence by an intimate partner is particularly challenging in this regard as a continuum of consent - from fully consensual to rape, via a range of experiences including putting up with sex, feeling social pressure to have sex, acquiescing to pressure, verbal coercion and threats - is more apparent in this context.

ANROWS will complete this research project in house. Why is it important for ANROWS to do its own research as part of the ANROWS Research Program 2014-16?

It's important for ANROWS to do this type of research for a couple of reasons. First, it means that we maintain our own skills and knowledge about both research content and research methods. Second, it means that we can be confident that we are aware of the literature when we are responding to queries from researchers, policy makers, service providers and the public.

Finally, it keeps us, and especially me, humble. As the Senior Research Officer (Research Program), a significant part of my role is working with researchers to ensure that our projects are on track. By doing my own research, I am reminded of the magnitude of the work that we ask of our researchers, and this helps me to do the other parts of my job with sensitivity.

This research project will review research on the co-occurrence, intersection and differences between forms of, and responses to, violence against women and their children. Why is this type of analysis important and how do you think it will help in the development of policy and practice?

In Australia we often think about, and respond to, domestic violence and sexual assault as separate issues. The reality is, however, that they often happen at the same time and/or to the same person. Lived experience just doesn't fit the silos that can sometimes arise between DV and SV services. This research will highlight the complexities of those lived experiences. Its value will be to encourage policymakers and practitioners to think about the way in which our structures may, or may not, be the best ones for helping the women that they are set up to support.

Work on this research project is now underway. What have you observed in the preliminary stages of this research?

The majority of the papers that will be included in this review are quantitative cross-sectional self-report surveys, predominately from the US and often based on college populations. Research on marginalised communities is very limited. Sadly, these sample and methodological characteristics limit the applicability of current research to the Australian context. Therefore one of my key challenges will be articulating what is known, while simultaneously acknowledging the extent to which this information is actually useful. I hope this project will also identify areas for further research on these issues. ●



spotLight

A multidimensional and inclusive understanding of gender-based family and interpersonal violence: Findings from the National LGBTI Health Alliance 2014 investigation.

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This is a revised version of a paper presented by Dr. Ansara at the *Inaugural Asia-Pacific Conference on Gendered Violence and Violations*, coordinated by the Gendered Violence Research Network at the University of New South Wales on 12 February 2015.

About the National LGBTI Health Alliance

Founded in 2007, the National LGBTI Health Alliance (the Alliance) is Australia's national peak body for the health and wellbeing of people of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex experience, including people beyond these letters. The Alliance has 89 member organisations and over 100 individual members. Our members include the major providers of services to LGBTI populations in urban, rural, regional and remote locations in all states and territories across Australia. The Alliance provides a representative national voice on improved data collection, research, policy, and service delivery. We also build the capacities of LGBTI organisations through a variety of national projects in collaboration with local state and territory partners. These projects include but are not limited to Qlife, a national teleweb counselling service; Silver Rainbow, a national ageing and aged care awareness training project; and MindOUT!, a national mental health and suicide prevention project.

The Alliance's Research and Policy Team leads on the development of evidence-based policy documents, submissions to inquiries, and national consultations on Australian policy issues. The Manager also serves as the Alliance's external liaison on a range of national advisory groups; provides advice on LGBTI inclusion to government,

researchers, and service providers; and oversees the gathering and use of national data to improve health and wellbeing of LGBTI populations. The Research and Policy section of the Alliance hosts the Research Ethics & Standards Team, a geographically diverse group of LGBTI scholars with academic and community-based expertise working to improve Australian research ethics and to promote inclusive and ethical research design.

2014 national consultation

In 2014, the Australian Finance and Public Administration References Committee announced a Senate Inquiry to investigate the prevalence and impact of domestic violence in Australia. In July and August 2014, the Alliance invited members and non-members from across Australia to contribute to a national consultation on the distinct needs and concerns of LGBTI populations who had experienced violence in their family and interpersonal relationships. The Alliance received a heavy volume of responses from diverse geographical regions by email, phone, and text-based media—more responses to this consultation than for any inquiry to date. We heard from prolific senior scholars and from people who did not read or write.

This article is based on the responses we received and provided in our full report¹, itself abridged due to the sheer volume of responses we received.

1 Ansara, Y. G. (2014). *National LGBTI Health Alliance Submission to the Senate Inquiry on Domestic Violence in Australia*. Newtown: National LGBTI Health Alliance. Available at: <http://lgbtihealth.org.au/>

All narratives have been de-identified for privacy and safety reasons. Respondents are described using the language they provided about themselves. Where respondents described the experiences of another person, we use the language which best approximates our understanding of how the person would wish to be described; this respect for people's own understanding of themselves is fundamental to our work.

Where is the 'domestic' in 'domestic violence'?

One of the first insights we gained from this investigation was that the assumption of cohabitation in the 'domestic violence' model did not accurately describe the living situations of many respondents. We heard from numerous people in committed, long-term relationships who were unable to cohabit with their partners due to disability labels and/or impairment, cultural norms, and/or violence by biological relatives.

In our consultation, we heard from 'Jan', a butch lesbian who is unable to cohabit with her partner due to her own impaired mobility and her concerns for her partner's safety:

My partner is from overseas. We have been together for many years. English is not her first language. She has no family living in Australia except for her abusive and violently homophobic parents. She has several degrees, but cannot find work in Australia even after years of searching. Some of this is because of her ethnicity. She left her last job after the stress and family violence she was experiencing made it impossible to continue working. Because I have a disability that limits my mobility and require a personal attendant, and because of the fear and significant risks my partner must take to see me, my partner and I can only see each other once every few weeks. We are just as committed as partners who live together.

We also heard from 'Hamid', a gay man whose partner lives with his abusive parents:

We believe his mum knows or suspects that he is gay but that she is desperate to keep it a secret out of shame and fear of his dad. On a number of occasions, his mum has completely gone through his belongings and trashed his room. Everything that remotely hints at my partner being gay is thrown out. Inevitably, this cycle of violence culminates in his mum telling him that she is kicking him out and that he better be gone by the time she gets home and that she never wants to see him again. For many years my partner has often kept all of his belongings packed up ready to go just in case. The cycle continues with his mother telling him the next day that she was just trying to teach him a lesson and that he should be grateful.

Other respondents explained the challenges presented by intersecting aspects of culture, gender, and sexuality. 'Pamela', a lesbian woman in her 40s from a refugee family, explained the dilemma she faced when considering future cohabitation with her partner:

I do not want to leave my mum alone with my abusive dad, but I know she will reject me if I come out as gay. In my culture, we are expected to live together and care for each other. I am supposed to live with my parents until I marry (a man of course). If I ever move out, I want my mum to come live with us, but obviously that is impossible because of how much she hates gay people and would hate my partner.

What makes a 'family'?

The word 'family' is often treated as synonymous with biology. The feminist tenet that biology is not destiny has yet to alter colloquial uses of 'family', even in many ostensibly feminist contexts. This definition of 'family' privileges biological relatives and devalues non-biological kinship ties. People who have experienced marginalisation on the basis of their sexuality, relationships, gender experience or expression, or physical characteristics often need protection from biological relatives and may need support from their non-biological kin.

This dynamic is illustrated in the experience shared by 'Lilian', a care worker in a rural hospital:

We had this woman over 60 who was intersex and who was in intensive care after a bad fall. When she was admitted the family told us not to let her talk to anyone. They were ashamed because her body was different. Some of the nurses felt bad, but didn't know what to do. They told us not to bathe her or change her linen. The family got very aggressive when we tried to do our jobs. She did not have any friends visit her because the family had banned them. She was totally alone. They did not even want her to use the phone. Finally, another family member came who let her friends visit her.

As demonstrated in Lilian's narrative, definitions of family are not about mere semantics. Care staff made a functional distinction between the authority granted to biological relatives, whom they recognised as 'family', and non-biological kin, who were able to be barred from providing supportive contact by those considered 'family'. Lillian's experience highlights the need to re-evaluate the ubiquitous distinction between 'friends' and 'family' to ensure that the non-biological kinship ties of people from LGBTI populations are given equal status. This experience also reveals some distinct manifestations of violence against people with intersex characteristics, whose needs and experiences should not be subsumed within an LGBTI alphabet soup.

What do genders and bodies have to do with it?

Forms of gender-based violence against LGBTI populations have yet to receive sufficient inclusion within existing models and research. In our consultation, we received reports directly from service providers and workplace diversity trainers who felt unable to meet the needs of people with intersex characteristics, women and men of trans experience, and people with non-binary genders.

'Lori', a community services director, told us:

A women's shelter that admitted someone whom they described to me as a 'very newly transitioning woman' (whatever they meant by that). They said this woman was removed from the shelter, because she caused disruption amongst the other residents. I didn't ask for any details as to what the disruption was. Later, I heard from some other sources in my professional network that her physical characteristics and gender were the 'disruption'.

A second transitioning woman was sent to a men's shelter – again I didn't ask for more details, but apparently it all went bad and the police were called. Apparently, the woman was not told she was being sent to a men's shelter. The men there sexually assaulted her and she ended up attempting suicide. Nobody seemed to think that any of us – the service providers – were responsible for what happened.

Lori's account exposes a form of gender-based violence seldom acknowledged in most research on 'gender-based' violence. People with same-gender partners can be affected by additional forms of gender-based violence.

'Craig', a bisexual man in his 30s, described the gender-based challenges of seeking help for intimate partner violence:

I managed to find one of the few shelters for men that was reachable from my town, but the shelter was 'male only'. This meant that I could not bring my young daughter with me, even though I have been her primary caretaker since she was a baby. My partner was able to get into the men's shelter by lying about his situation, so I wasn't safe there. The staff seemed to have no idea how to handle my situation. 'We haven't had any cases like yours before. We just don't know what to do here,' they told me. They were apologetic and tried to be nice about it, but that didn't change my feeling that I wasn't safe there.

Gender-based violence also affects men of trans experience. 'Sharon', a mental health clinician in a remote community, described the gender-based access barriers faced by an elderly man seeking shelter services:

An elderly trans man who was not eligible for hormone treatment due to a heart condition privately lived as one gender and kept a professional appearance as another. When his girlfriend who was also his carer assaulted him, he had no idea where to go for help.

Our investigation documented additional experiences of gender-based violence that are seldom acknowledged in Australian research on gender-based violence.

- People with non-binary genders reported being threatened with loss of child custody due to their genders.
- Women and men of trans experience reported being ridiculed and misgendered by police when reporting experiences of family and interpersonal violence.

- Lesbian women and gay men described how stereotypes about butch and femme gender presentation were used to deny appropriate help in response to intimate partner violence.
- Bisexual people of all genders described the invisibility and stigma they experienced when trying to report violence against them.
- People with intersex variations described having been coerced by medical professionals and biological relatives into unwanted 'normalising' medical interventions that caused irreversible damage. Some of the medical procedures that are routinely inflicted on these respondents are identical to those criminalised as 'Female Genital Mutilation' when imposed on people whose bodies are classified as 'female'.
- Gay men, lesbian women, and bisexual people in mixed orientation marriages (i.e. marriages between a gay, lesbian, and bisexual person and a heterosexual person) reported being threatened by their spouses with 'outing' and loss of child custody.

Revisiting the 'power and control wheel'

Our findings highlight the need for a *multidimensional understanding of gender-based violence*. Delia Quigley, the current president of our member organisation Diversity ACT Community Services, spoke about the need for broader recognition of violence beyond the 'man perpetrator/woman victim' model in her response:

There is a general misunderstanding in the field regarding the diversity of types of violence and the dynamics of the cycle of violence. Models] used by most family violence trainers, especially those who come from a feminist background, are outdated and does not address diverse communities. People who want to find alternate information that is more inclusive have to search hard for it.

Delia is a former Sergeant in the Australian Federal Police, where she spent 14 years as a Gay and Lesbian Liaison Officer (GLLO), and the former Family Violence Intervention Project Officer in the ACT.

We heard a similar critique from 'Jacob', a gay man who is a police officer:

I see a lot of cases based on stereotypes. Like where a butch woman calls us for protection. If her girlfriend is more feminine, then it's assumed that the feminine one is being abused and the masculine one is lying. Sometimes this gets so ridiculous that physical evidence is ignored. There is only so much I can do about it without outing myself.

Unfortunately, many leaders and professionals in the 'domestic violence' sector still refuse to even begin the conversation about these exclusions. Delia recounted:

When I tried to have greater discussion regarding same-

gender family violence under-reporting with the CEO of a service provider, she would not have broader discussions and said she did not view same-gender family violence as an issue. The language used in family violence service provision also assumes that people are straight, which means that same-gender couples believe the services do not welcome them or meet their needs. Events such as White Ribbon Day that are designed to raise awareness about family violence still focus narrowly on heterosexual women as victims. Expanding this marketing would increase knowledge about the diversity of family violence.

Even LGBTI social networks and community environments often have limited understanding of family and interpersonal violence. As a result, violence perpetrated within LGBTI contexts often goes unreported and unaddressed.

‘Tracy’ told us about one such experience with a widely respected therapist who was part of the LGBTI communities:

I was very vulnerable, new to exploring my sexuality and my relationship with a trans woman. Did this make me a lesbian? I had always identified as heterosexual and still do. My therapist told me I could explore with her and practice having sex in the therapy room. I had never tried therapy before, so I didn't know how bad this was until it was too late. Then I found myself falling in love with my therapist. When she started hitting me, I didn't feel I could tell anyone. She was widely loved in the community and some people said I had seduced her. Who would believe me? Nobody in the community seemed to realise just how wrong this was. When I told a friend who was a therapist, she was shocked. Now I'm too afraid to try therapy again.

Moving beyond ‘the big blob’ theory of gender-based violence

These narratives illustrate the need to recognise distinct forms of gender-based violence when formulating theories, policies, and professional practice standards. Violence can take distinct forms and has distinct correlates. A *multidimensional approach* to such problems can be grounded in feminist scholarship. In her groundbreaking text, *Nonsexist research methods: A practical guide*, feminist sociologist Margrit Eichler observed:

Most analyses of sexism in research focus either on one discipline or subject area or else on one type of sexism. Indeed, we do not tend to speak of “types of sexism”, but of “sexism”, pure and simple. The term “sexism” suggests that we are dealing with *one* problem that may manifest itself in different areas differently, but which nevertheless is a single basic problem – what one might call the “big blob” theory of sexism (p.3)².

Eichler’s text provided a new approach that classified forms of sexism into seven distinct types. She provided distinct strategies to address distinct manifestations. As Eichler noted, the most important aspect of her approach was ‘recognizing that sexism is multidimensional rather than unidimensional, identifying a sexist problem as such, and rectifying it’ (p. 4)³. Subsequent researchers have adopted similarly precise approaches to delineating forms of sexism and identifying distinct potential strategies for challenging each form of sexism⁴. A similar shift toward multidimensionality and precision is needed to promote greater understanding by researchers, policy makers, and service providers of the full range and diversity of gender-based family, domestic, and interpersonal violence.

Conclusion

Understanding and effectively reducing domestic and family violence will require a multidimensional approach that considers the needs and experiences of the distinct but sometimes overlapping populations of lesbian women, gay men, bisexual people of all genders, women and men of trans experience, people with non-binary or culturally specific genders, and people with intersex characteristics. An inclusive, multidimensional approach will challenge the structural exclusion of LGBTI populations from gender-based violence models by avoiding assumptions about ‘domestic’ cohabitation; rejecting definitions of ‘family’ that privilege biological relatives and devalue non-biological kinship ties; and ensuring that an awareness of the specific gender-based forms of violence that affect LGBTI populations is integrated into research design, data collection, policy, and service delivery.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all of those who shared their stories with me during and after our investigation. Thank you for the gift of your trust. I pray I have done justice to your voices.

Additional information

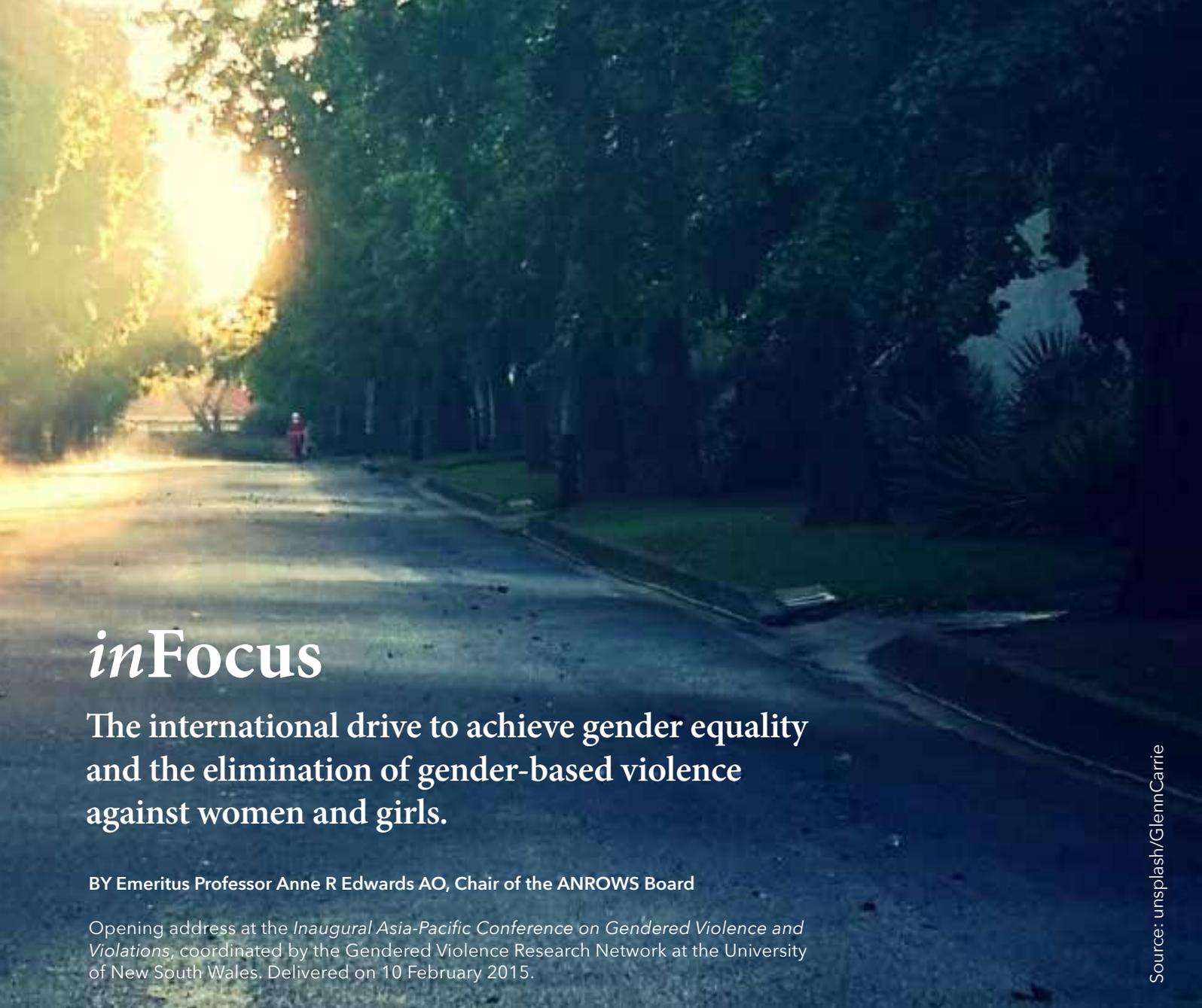
The full report from the national consultation on which this article is based is available for free download from the Knowledge Hub at the Alliance website.

<http://lgbtihealth.org.au/>

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inFocus

The international drive to achieve gender equality and the elimination of gender-based violence against women and girls.

BY Emeritus Professor Anne R Edwards AO, Chair of the ANROWS Board

Opening address at the *Inaugural Asia-Pacific Conference on Gendered Violence and Violations*, coordinated by the Gendered Violence Research Network at the University of New South Wales. Delivered on 10 February 2015.



We are all too well aware of the seriousness, the pervasiveness, and the apparent intractability of gender-based violence against women and girls in all countries of the world. Our media constantly reports on particularly horrific instances whether in armed conflicts, in terrorist raids, in particular cultural groups or localised settings, or in everyday life and in private homes. The UN Commission on the Status of Women has produced a comprehensive and authoritative analysis of the historical and structural causes of gender-based violence and discrimination, and an ambitious program of actions for governments and civil society to counter such violence. What can we learn from this and how is Australia tackling this complex and deep-rooted phenomenon?

In every known society differences between males and females at all ages from birth to death are a fundamental component of social organisation. While observable biological differences are a significant factor, social roles and functions are assigned to the members of these two categories of human beings with associated personality characteristics, abilities, needs and desires, which derive more from culture than biology. It is gender, and the culturally-defined attributes and aspects of gender that are the dominant forces in shaping the lives of women and men, girls and boys, and in determining the power relations and inequalities between members of the two sexes.

From the late 1960s modern feminists have focused attention on the greater impact of gender (rather than sex) in the social structure as a whole and on the differential experiences, positions, opportunities and access to resources provided to females and males. They point to the negative consequences of the gender-based power imbalance in causing women's oppression, manifested in male control over women's bodies, sexuality and reproduction, domestic violence, rape and sexual exploitation, women's economic dependence on men and a pervasive culture of gender stereotypes that reproduces, perpetuates and legitimises the inequalities. It is within this framework that research has been undertaken and practical campaigns for social and political change have been conducted over the last forty to fifty years. In the current discourse in Australia and other western countries, however, this interpretation is still not universally recognised or accepted. There remains a preference for explanations in individual biological or psychological terms rather than sociological.

Over this period, the theories about inequality and its relationship to male violence against women have broadened beyond the focus solely or mainly being on gender and patriarchy to encompass other sources of social division – class, race, ethnicity, religion, nationality (recognising intersectionality) – and to entertain the notion of multiple and intersecting social systems, in particular capitalism, colonialism, and globalisation as well as patriarchy. This has extended the analysis so that poverty, lack of education, limited or no access to income, property or employment, are seen as being core features of particular economic systems. The absence of recognition and protection of individual rights and freedoms for all is a condoned or at least unchallenged feature of the operation of many official legal and other institutions including government agencies. Far from being a protector of universal individual rights and a source of mechanisms for redressing societal inequalities, the so-called liberal-democratic modern state has operated alongside and in conjunction with, existing power structures, often without questioning their roles in perpetuating social divisions and systemic social disadvantage. This in societies where, for at least the last hundred years, by contrast with many

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non-western societies, neither religion nor secular belief systems have provided moral justification for gender and other forms of discrimination.

The prime targets of 1970s western feminism are the very same targets as those of the more recent international efforts to mount a concerted attempt to tackle discrimination and violence against women in all its forms within a framework of human rights and gender equality. This is most clearly represented by the 2013 report of the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

These days we are all too well aware of the seriousness, the pervasiveness, and the apparent intractability of gender-based violence against women and girls in all countries of the world. Our media constantly reports on particularly horrific instances whether in armed conflicts, in terrorist raids, in particular cultural groups or localised settings, or in everyday life and in private homes.

Entitled *Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls*, the UN Commission on the Status of Women document is a sociologically sophisticated and comprehensive analysis of the causes and consequences of gender inequality. Despite variations in the nature, scale, settings and circumstances of the range of types of violence perpetrated on women and girls across and within societies, the common underlying features are the cultural and structural bases of gender and gender-based power relationships. Pointing to the complex, deeply-entrenched and inter-connected institutions, cultural beliefs, values, and social practices that underpin gender and power, the report offers a fundamental critique of the structural arrangements that continue to exist in all countries. It goes on to advocate a range of strategies and mechanisms to address these deep-rooted problems.

According to this analysis, the mechanisms that reinforce and reproduce gender inequality operate at multiple levels: at the level of political and legal systems, economic systems and market forces, belief systems (including religions as well as cultural norms) at the level of institutions, organisations and professional bodies; and at the level of civil society

and local communities. The report recognises many of these mechanisms operate at the international as well as the national level, highlighting the growing importance globally of technology, trade and environmental pressures, and the dramatic impact of recent armed international and national conflicts and terrorism, in contributing to increased incidence and new forms of violence against women and girls. If we are to more effectively address such violence, the report argues, we must develop strategies that tackle the multiple levels of structures and processes that are responsible for producing and perpetuating this violence, as well as those that protect and assist women directly exposed to such violence; and strategies that work through both national and international agencies and instruments. It presents a plan of action under three broad headings: strengthening the implementation of legal and policy frameworks and accountability; addressing structural and underlying causes and risk factors so as to prevent violence against women and girls; and strengthening multisectoral services, programs and responses to violence against women and girls. The report also calls for a greater emphasis on 'strengthening the evidence base': conducting research, developing indicators and collecting and disseminating data and findings.

This provides a comprehensive overview but the responsibility for the actions that need to be undertaken lies with various international bodies and with national governments taking leadership. This conference is designed to give participants who are closely involved in theory, research and practice in the field of violence against women and girls, and who are working within this broad framework, the opportunity to share knowledge and experience from different countries in the Asia Pacific region. We have a diversity of papers, covering a wide span of topics including: revisiting the theory and the relationships between gender and other forms of structural inequality; exploring methodological questions; and examining the evidence relating to the effectiveness of interventions of various kinds.

I would like to conclude this opening address by describing in general terms what approach Australia has taken domestically in recent times, which aligns closely with the strategic approach of the UN Commission on the Status of Women document, and then finally acknowledge the challenges we all face to making progress in seeking to overturn the historical and structural causes of gender-based inequality, discrimination and violence.

In 2011, following a nation-wide consultation initiated by the federal Labor government, all nine governments in Australia agreed to take a national approach to addressing domestic, family and sexual violence against women and committed to a twelve-year national plan for the period 2010-2022. A detailed Implementation Plan for

the first three-year action plan was issued in 2012, and, notwithstanding a change of federal government in 2013 and changes in other jurisdictions, the second action plan was issued in 2014.

The commitment reflected in the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women 2010-2022 (the National Plan), and its related activities, and the associated visibility have significantly increased political and public attention to this major social issue across the states and territories, recent examples being the announcement of a Royal Commission into Family Violence in Victoria, a taskforce in Queensland and the choice of a highly articulate domestic violence survivor Rosie Batty as Australian of the Year for 2015.

The National Plan has six outcomes:

- Communities are safe and free from violence.
- Relationships are respectful.
- Indigenous communities are strengthened (recognising specific cultural and community issues for Indigenous Australians).
- Services meet the needs of women and their children experiencing violence.
- Justice responses are effective.
- Perpetrators stop their violence and are held to account.

There was an explicit emphasis given to primary prevention as well as intervention and to overcoming structural and cultural barriers to gender equality. The plan also recognises the need for more effective means of achieving service coordination and system integration within and across the states and territories and for supporting research and building a strong evidence base to inform policy and practice. A specific proposal was that a research centre, the National Centre of Excellence to reduce violence against women and their children was to be set up as part of the first action plan. Also during the life of the first action plan, a separate organisation, Our Watch, was established to lead national efforts in the field of primary prevention and to complement the ongoing work with men of White Ribbon Australia that predates the National Plan.

My involvement with the National Plan started early in 2013 when I was appointed the inaugural chair of the research centre, now renamed Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS). I came to this role as a feminist, sociologist and researcher with university management experience, all of which have proved to be invaluable to the task of setting up this new organisation.

In 2014 ANROWS produced in consultation with funders, service providers, practitioners and the research community, first a three to five year comprehensive National Research Agenda and then the first round of its Research Program of priority projects to be funded to the total value of \$3.5m. This year there will also be a set of research projects which are to



L to R: Emeritus Professor Anne R Edwards AO; Rashida Manjoo, UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its Causes and Consequences (SRVAW); and Aunty Millie Ingram, Elder, at the *Inaugural Asia-Pacific Conference on Gendered Violence and Violations*.

be undertaken for the purpose of evaluating the effectiveness of male perpetrator programs across the country.

ANROWS has been given a key role in assisting the realisation of the National Plan. It is responsible not only for initiating and managing research projects designed to advance the objectives of the plan but it also acts as the principal source of research commentary, research translation, knowledge dissemination and exchange not only on the subject of the causes and consequences of violence against women but also on strategies, policies, programs and services to reduce violence and to assist women affected by such violence. This is a developing area of increasing value with the widespread use of new media and communication technologies.

We are all fully aware that we are tackling a formidable task. Social structures that have been around for a long time and are well-embedded are very hard to dislodge. Cultural attitudes and beliefs that are part of people's everyday world and often taken for granted rather than being deliberately or rationally developed are not easily brought to consciousness and exposed to critical assessment. Not only men but some women continue to subscribe to precisely the same traditional gender expectations of men's and women's roles and capacities that can limit women's spheres of life and access to independence at the same time as enabling and excusing physical and sexual

violence by men including by male partners. Changing attitudes and stereotypes is an essential but slow and difficult process and will meet resistance. The current power imbalance between men and women is built into the way our institutions and our organisations function and serves the interests of those with more power. And this applies in the political system, business, the law and public administration, the professions, the media, etc. It has to be continually challenged in each case.

Some enlightened policies, a few well-intentioned men in leadership positions and the pressure of women's organisations and public campaigns are not enough to force fundamental change. But we have to believe it can and will happen. We have seen some significant change in countries across the world. We have international commitment to enforcing the principles of individual rights and social justice and adopting comprehensive plans of action. We now have a sophisticated understanding of how societies work and we have experience of successful movements and strategies that have led to social change including shifts in the power relations between men and women. So we know more about what are effective levers to pull and we are better equipped to plan and implement coordinated strategies and campaigns to achieve specific ends. It may seem a contradictory position to hold, but I remain a realist and an optimist. ●

latestLiterature

Latest publications on understanding violence against women and their children. The ANROWS Research Database contains a comprehensive collection of resources.

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Violence against women: key statistics

Research from the 2012 ABS Personal Safety Survey and Australian Institute of Criminology shows that both men and women in Australia experience substantial levels of violence.

Domestic and sexual violence is overwhelmingly committed by men against women.

89 women were killed by their current or former partner between 2008-10. **This equates to nearly one woman every week.**

Rates of violence against women and men

Since the age of 15:

1 in 5 Australian women had experienced **sexual violence**

1 in 6 Australian women had experienced **physical or sexual violence** from a current or former partner

1 in 4 Australian women had experienced **emotional abuse** by a current or former partner

1 in 3 Australian women had experienced **physical violence**

1 in 22 Australian men had experienced **sexual violence**

1 in 19 Australian men had experienced **physical or sexual violence** from a current or former partner

1 in 7 Australian men had experienced **emotional abuse** by a current or former partner

1 in 2 Australian men had experienced **physical violence**

It is more likely for a person to experience violence from a male rather than a female perpetrator.

Over 3 times as many people experienced violence from a male.

For more information on how to prevent violence against women, or for media comment visit www.preventviolence.org.au

For more information and research about violence against women visit www.anrows.org.au

If you are experiencing domestic and family violence, or have experienced sexual assault, seek support, call **1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732)**.

FOUNDATION TO PREVENT VIOLENCE
against women and their children

ANROWS AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL RESEARCH ORGANISATION FOR WOMEN'S SAFETY
to Reduce Violence against Women & their Children



Original artwork Christine Blakeney (2014)

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