

Young Australians' attitudes to violence against women and gender equality

Findings from the 2017 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS)

Stakeholder kit



ANROWS

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

In partnership with:



Introduction

Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety and VicHealth are proud to release findings from the 2017 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS) concerning the attitudes and beliefs of young Australians, aged 16-24 years. The findings presented in the report, 'Young Australians' attitudes towards violence against women and gender equality', are based on the responses of 1,761 young Australians. In addition, the report presents reflections of youth ambassadors associated with R4Respect (run by YFS).

The materials in this kit support individuals and organisations to understand and communicate the findings for young people from the 2017 NCAS. This kit includes key messages and supporting data from the NCAS findings, as well as a media release, social media content and standard responses to anticipated questions from the public.

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Key Messages

Key messages have been developed to assist in communication around findings from young Australians aged 16-24 years, from the 2017 NCAS. All key messages are supported by data from the report, and can be used to develop an understanding of how communications around the launch will be framed.

| Key message | Supporting messages or data |
|--|--|
| <p>1. A disturbing number of young men don't understand that controlling behaviours in relationships are a problem, and too many believe that having control is a normal part of a relationship. This includes things like sending repeated text messages, tracking their partner via their mobile phone, and following them home from work or uni.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20% of young men do not understand that repeatedly keeping track of location, phone calls or activities through mobile phone or other devices without consent is a form of violence against women • 11% of young men do not think stalking is a form of violence against women • 14% of young men do not understand that harassment by repeated emails and/or text messages is domestic violence • More than 1 in 5 (22%) of young men think men should take control of relationships and be the head of the household • Nearly a third (31%) of young people believe that women prefer a man to be in charge of a relationship • Over 2 in 5 young Australians (43%) support the statement 'I think it's natural for a man to want to appear in control of his partner in front of his male friends' |
| <p>2. Our research shows young people's lack of understanding about sexual consent is concerning and can result in victim-blaming. This is particularly worrying given the rise of digital image sharing and dating apps.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost 1 in 4 young men (24%) think women find it flattering to be persistently pursued, even if they aren't interested • Around 1 in 7 young Australians believe a man would be justified to force sex if the woman initiated it, but then changed her mind and pushed him away • Over a quarter of young Australians (28%) believe that if a woman sends a nude image to her partner, then she is partly responsible if he shares it without her permission • Nearly a third of young men (32%) believe that 'a lot of times, women who say they were raped had led the man on and then had regrets' |
| <p>3. While young people are concerned about sexism and abuse, they are less likely to say they would, or would like to act, than those ages 25-64.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of young Australians say they would be bothered by seeing verbal abuse of a woman (97%) and sexist jokes (73%); however only 71% and 37% (respectively) said they would take action • Young people were less likely than people aged 25-64 to have a 'high' intention to act as a bystander when witnessing abuse or disrespect of women |

- Young people are more likely to reject violence against women if they support gender equality. Young people who agree with rigid gender roles are more likely to hold attitudes that support violence against women.
- Problematic attitudes to violence against women and gender equality are more common among young people with mainly male friends.

Call to Action

Young people need to be empowered to take action against gender inequality and violence against women.

The good news is most young people feel they would have the support of their friends if they took a stand and called out sexist, abusive or violent behaviour. However they may feel they lack the skills or confidence to be the first to stand up.

Young men in particular need more support to overcome the social pressures that stop them from speaking up and challenging sexism. They also need more knowledge about consent and control and need the skills to have respectful relationships. Some of their beliefs are outdated and according to the research many are linked to the factors that can lead to violence against women.

Promoting gender equality is the key to changing negative attitudes to violence against women.

We want to help young people to keep improving attitudes about gender equality and be the generation to end violence against women. Violence can be prevented and it is up to all of us to play our part.

NCAS 'Cheat Sheet'

As a quick reference point, you can use the 2017 NCAS Cheat Sheet to answer any questions about the survey itself, and specific information about the findings for young Australians.

| Query | Key information |
|---|--|
| What is the NCAS youth report, and how is it different to the main report? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 2017 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey randomly sampled 17,500 Australians. The youth report presents the results of that survey for 1,761 young Australia aged 16-24. |
| When are NCAS surveys conducted, and how many people responded? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The survey was initially developed on behalf of the Australian Government in 1995, drawing on an earlier 1987 survey. The past two National surveys took place in 2009 and 2013 (led by VicHealth). ANROWS led the 2017 in collaboration with research partners. |
| Method and sample size | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The survey interviews over 17,500 people aged 16 and over by landline and telephone. Interviewing was available in 12 community languages. The proportion of telephone numbers called that resulted in an interview (the response rate) was 17%. This is comparable to other similar surveys across the world. Sample weighting was used to correct the impact of any known imbalances. The survey accurately reflects the diversity of the Australian population. It is census matched and weighting is used to correct any imbalances. Cognitive testing of the questions was undertaken to be sure they were well and easily understood by respondents. Tests of statistical significance and were applied to change over time data. Test of statistical significance and effect size were applied in the analysis of differences between groups (e.g. men vs. women) to ensure differences were both significant and meaningful. Groups of individual questions were validated and used to measure overall concepts. |
| Scope | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The survey does not ask about individuals' experiences of violence, only about their attitudes and knowledge. The Personal Safety Survey gives the most comprehensive information on prevalence of violence available in Australia. |

- The NCAS survey instead four overall measures (referred to as composite measures) to gauge overall levels of:
 - Understanding that violence against women can involve non-physical forms of violence and coercion (not just physical violence and forced sex)
 - Endorsement of gender equality
 - Attitudinal support for violence against women
 - Intention to act if witnessing abuse or disrespect of women

Collaboration and review

- The survey is done collaboratively and in partnership with a broad range of national experts and stakeholders. The survey has been peer-reviewed by national and international experts

How does the NCAS define violence against women?

- Violence against women is defined by the United Nations (1993) as:

Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.

Although this violence can take many forms, NCAS focuses on four: sexual assault, partner violence, sexual harassment and stalking. This is because they are the most prevalent forms of violence against women in Australia.

Terminology around 'domestic violence'

- Many of the questions in the survey use the term 'domestic violence' because this is the term used when the questions were first asked nationally in 1995. The term was retained in 2013 to enable the 2017 results to be compared with previous NCAS waves.

What about Aboriginal and Torres Strait people, and those from non-English speaking backgrounds?

- From the 2017 NCAS results, findings from young people, people from non-English speaking backgrounds and Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders were compiled into separate reports. The youth report reflects the responses of young Australians aged 16-24.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

With a nationwide response expected to the NCAS research, it is important to be prepared for comments from readers that question findings, or spread misinformation. The below responses have been developed in anticipation of potentially complex or aggressive lines of questioning.

Where possible, responses should also link to where to find out more information – i.e. the summary report housed on the [ANROWS website](#).

| Question/statement | Suggested response |
|---|--|
| <p>What were the concerning findings of the latest NCAS youth report?</p> | <p>Our latest research shows a disturbing number of young people – and in particular young men – don't fully understand consent and think controlling relationships are normal.</p> <p>Nearly a third of young men believe many women who've said they'd been raped had instead led the man on and then had regrets.</p> <p>Young people are also confused about the sharing of nude images, with over a quarter blaming the woman for sending the image, instead of her partner for sharing it without her consent.</p> |
| <p>What are the differences between young men and young women's attitudes?</p> | <p>Our research showed key differences in how young men and women viewed violence against women and gender equality.</p> <p>Men were more likely to mistrust women's reports of violence, such as believing women who said they'd been raped just had regrets about consensual sex.</p> <p>Young men were also more likely to think men should be in charge of relationships and that women prefer it that way. Or that women find it flattering to the persistently pursued.</p> |
| <p>Are young people better or worse than other generations?</p> | <p>While young people's attitudes weren't dramatically different to those of older Australians, there were some real areas of concern. In particular, young people have lower levels of understanding about violence against women compared to people aged 25-64 years.</p> <p>Young men in particular showed a lack of knowledge about controlling behaviours. They weren't aware that behaviour like stalking and tracking their partner online is considered violence against women.</p> |

Despite being bothered by it, young people were also less likely to take action if they saw someone abusing their partner or telling a sexist joke.

This tells us we need to better educate young people about violence against women and empower them to take action.

Why are these findings a concern?

Although there have been improvements in attitudes it's concerning that a significant number of young Australians still victim-blame, mistrust women's reports of violence and don't see controlling behaviours as forms of domestic violence.

We need to support young people to overcome social pressures and to have better relationships, which will be healthier for everyone.

So how are some of these views manifesting themselves, particularly around technology?

Using apps like Snapchat or Tinder to harass, intimidate and stalk women or sending sexual photos without consent isn't recognised as violence by a concerning number of young people.

The technology itself isn't the problem – we need to do more to teach young people, particularly young men, about what consent looks like. Swiping right is not consent, kissing is not consent and saying yes to one sexual act doesn't give blanket consent to everything.

We also need to educate young people about the non-physical forms of violence – things like logging into their partner's emails or social media accounts without consent, sending repeated text messages or using location services to track their partner's movements.

The survey measures attitudes. How do they lead to actual violence?

The NCAS shows that when people have negative views about gender equality, they are also more likely to hold attitudes supportive of violence against women.

While these attitudes don't necessarily cause violence, they lead to people normalising and excusing violence against women.

Are young people's attitudes going backwards?

No. We have seen significant improvement in young people's attitudes to violence against women and gender equality since the 2013 survey.

Even so, young people's responses overall show they still don't really understand the problem of violence against women: including that women are most often victims, and men most often perpetrators of domestic violence.

There was also a worrying lack of understand that stalking is a form of violence against women.

We also need to target young people's understandings of consent, particularly when it comes to the non-consensual sharing of sexual images, and the fact that rape is never a result of a woman "having regrets".

Young people also have low support for gender equality with some – especially young men – still thinking men should be in control of relationships.

We also found that while young people are bothered by things like sexist jokes, they are less likely to take action, and under-estimate the support they would have from friends to do so.

While there has been some progress it's concerning that young people still hold some disturbing views about consent and control.

The good news is attitudes have gotten better, but there's still a long way to go. We can educate young people to better understand all forms of violence against women and that controlling behaviour isn't part of a healthy relationship.

Are we making any progress/what action can be taken to change these attitudes?

The research shows most young Australians are concerned by sexism and disrespect towards women but don't necessarily have the confidence or skills to take action.

We need to help young people to take action and be the generation to end violence against women. Violence can be prevented and it's up to all of us to play our part.

Changing attitudes is hard and takes time.

Why aren't young people's attitudes better than those of older generations – especially now we have things like respectful relationships education?

Young people's attitudes don't exist in a vacuum and reflect the broader society around them including the attitudes of older people.

It's up to all of us to ensure that we continue to raise awareness about violence against women and do our part to correct harmful and false attitudes about gender equality and violence.

Every person has a right to be safe from violence, especially in our own homes and when we're with loved ones.

Why is the research focused on violence against women? What about violence against men?

The fact is that the vast majority of cases of family violence are perpetrated by men against their female partners.

The facts show that women are nearly three times more likely than men to experience intimate partner violence, and four times more likely than men to experience sexual violence.

Approximately one in four Australian women over the age of 18 have experienced intimate partner violence since the age of 15, and one in five have experienced sexual violence.

One in six Australian women have experienced stalking and more than half have experienced sexual harassment.

Violence against women is the leading contributor to death and disability for women aged 15-44 in Australia. It has enormous impacts on the physical and mental health of victims, and their children.

Violence against women and girls is serious, common and preventable. It is one of the most pervasive human rights abuses of our times, affecting more than one in three women globally. That's not acceptable.

Are you blaming young men and boys?

The results show that young men and boys are less likely to understand violence against women, less likely to support gender equality, and more likely to hold attitudes that support violence against women.

We also know that problematic attitudes to violence against women are more common among young people with mainly male friends.

This clearly shows we need to better educate and empower young men and boys to call out family violence and gender inequality.

Treating men and women as equal, building a culture of respectful relationships between men and women and encouraging people – men and women – to call out sexism and discrimination when they see it: each of these will ultimately help reduce violence against women.

Why do some young people endorse the myth that domestic violence is 'gender equal' or that gender inequality is no longer a problem?

The survey can't definitively answer this, but we suspect this is due in part to young people believing that improvements in gender equality mean that men and women are now equal.

This may lead to the mistaken belief that men and women are now equally likely to be victims of domestic violence, and that the impacts of this violence are the same for both men and women.

There has also been backlash from some in the community who are threatened by ideas of gender equality and women having equal opportunities to men.

What does gender equality have to do with violence against women?

Gender inequality sets the scene for family violence – and specifically violence against women and their children.

As a key driver of violence against women, gender inequality has a direct impact on the health and mental wellbeing of Australian women.

Men who don't respect women are contributing to a culture of inequality, and in that culture violence against women is more likely to happen.

Conversely, men who respect women are supporting a culture of equality, where violence against women is less likely to occur.

All of us can support a culture of equality by standing up to sexism and disrespect for women.

Why is it important to focus on young women's experiences of violence?

The latest evidence shows young women aged 18-24 are most likely to experience violence in the 12 months. Young women also experience sexual violence at twice the national average and double that of men of the same age.

International research has shown that the risk of men perpetrating violence against women is higher when they are young, which makes it all the more important to educate young men and boys that violence is never ok.

How is this harming women/stopping them from going about their lives?

It's not just physical violence that harms women – sexist and derogatory comments are incredibly harmful as well.

They stop women from exercising in public, going for a promotion or being assertive with their partner and/or friends.

We need to realise the importance of stamping out the sexism and harassment that stops too many women from achieving their full potential. It hurts them, it hurts us and it hurts our community.

Maybe women do lie about sexual assault

Studies have consistently found that false allegations of sexual assault are rare.

For women, there is little to be gained from lying. They're often not believed, their choices intensely scrutinised, and they risk being publicly shamed for speaking out.

In fact, 9 out of 10 women who have been sexually assaulted do not report to the police. Our attitudes that blame victims and excuse violence contribute to women's reluctance to report.

One of the risks of not taking women's claims seriously is that a perpetrator will go on to offend against other women.

Why are jokes a concern? Is inaction a reflection that young people aren't bothered by them?

Sexist jokes and attitudes lead to a culture that supports gender inequality. In turn, research has found that gender inequality is a key driver of violence against women.

The good news is almost all young people are bothered by verbal abuse of women (97%) and most by sexist jokes (73%).

Yet over half wouldn't take action, or would feel uncomfortable but not act. Another 16% would like to act but don't know how.

We need young people to be aware that if they speak out, they are likely to have the support of their friends to back them up. This is important because we are more likely to take action if we know we have the support of our friends.

If young people's attitudes are getting better, why isn't the problem of violence against women getting any better?

The relationship between attitudes and behaviour is not direct, but rather is complex. It takes considerable time to change such entrenched human behaviours.

While the NCAS did find some positive change among young people, we do still have a long way to go.

It is important that we continue to build on the momentum for change shown in the NCAS results.

How does research into violence against women and gender equality change anything? Why don't we put the money into support services instead?

Certainly responding to violence against women is of critical importance, so too is preventing this violence before it starts.

Attitudes play an important role in shaping the world around us, and therefore play an important role in prevention.

We need to change people's attitudes in order to stop violence against women before it starts.

This research is biased.

This survey is world's longest running of its kind. It is led by Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) in close partnership with leading Australian research institutions: The University of Melbourne, RMIT University, the Social Research Centre, and VicHealth.

It uses rigorous and widely-accepted methodologies.

The research has also been peer reviewed by national and international experts.

Why are we spending time on exploring attitudes to domestic violence and gender inequality, when Australia has so many other important issues to

On average, one woman a week is killed by her intimate partner.

The problem of violence and disrespect towards women is prevalent and has significant health, social and economic costs for women and society as a whole.

tackle? (e.g. cost of living, immigration, the federal election etc.)

Attitudes are important because they play a role in shaping the world around us, including how we respond to this important problem. We have a role to play in shifting this landscape.

How to Australians' attitudes compare to the rest of the world?

Direct comparisons cannot be made (as different questions are asked internationally), but where comparisons can be made, Australians do fairly well compared to countries around the world.

What about [insert location] – are some areas, states or territories doing better than others?

The NCAS has shown that attitudes to violence against women and gender equality are consistent across Australia – regardless of location or socio-economic status.

No matter who we are or where we come from, we all have a role to play in changing these negative attitudes.

Only very minor differences have been found between states and territories and are reported in the main NCAS report released late last year.

Where can we send people to get help?

If you or any other person is in immediate danger, call 000. There are also a range of services to help - including 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732) the national sexual assault, domestic and family violence information and support service.

Additionally, you can contact the Victorian family violence crisis response service (available 24/7) called Safe Steps: 1800 015 188.

If you need other crisis support or suicide intervention, call Lifeline on 13 11 14.

Social Media Content #NCAS

These social media tiles can be used to promote the NCAS youth report through your organisations or personal social media channels. High-resolution versions of the images and links to videos can be retrieved from ncas.anrows.org.au



Sexual consent

ncas.anrows.com.au

 ANROWS



Image-based abuse

ncas.anrows.com.au

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Knowledge of the prevalence of violence against women

ncas.anrows.com.au

 VicHealth ANROWS

¹Since the age of 15, intimate partner includes current and former partners and people in dating relationships. Source: ABS 2017.



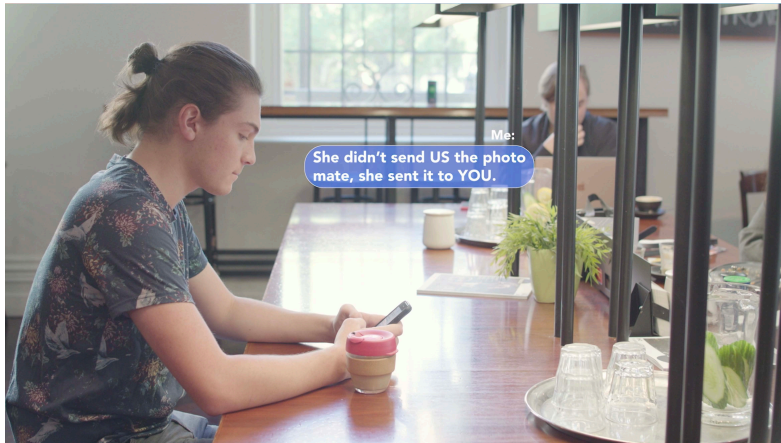
Knowledge of the gendered pattern of domestic violence

ncas.anrows.com.au

 VicHealth ANROWS

¹Cox, P. (2016). Violence against women: Additional analysis of the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Personal Safety Survey, 2012. Sydney: ANROWS.

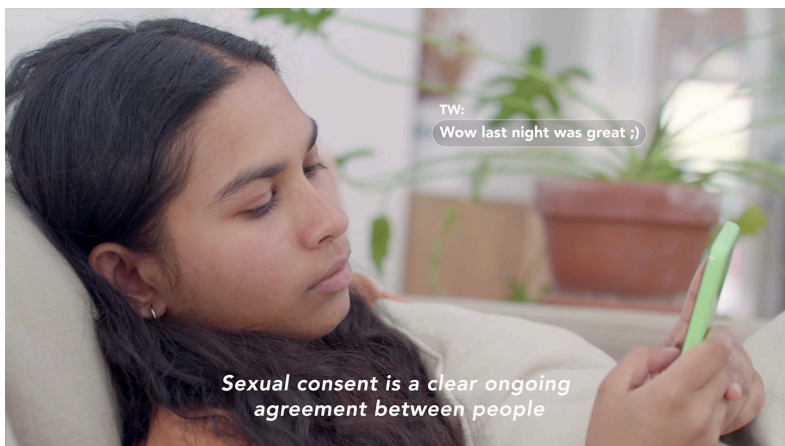
ANROWS and VicHealth, in partnership with R4Respect (run by YFS), produced videos based on three themes identified by youth advisors as areas of concern for Australians aged 16-24 years. For each theme, two videos were produced. One shorter video (approx 1 minute), ideal for social media, and a longer version (approx 2 minutes).



Standing up

[Link to full video](#)

[Link to social media short](#)



Understanding consent

[Link to full video](#)

[Link to social media short](#)



Recognising controlling behaviour

[Link to full video](#)

[Link to social media short](#)

Media Release

YOUNG AUSTRALIANS CONFUSED ABOUT CONSENT AND CONTROL IN THE AGE OF TINDER AND SNAPCHAT

Embargoed until 12:01am, Wednesday 22 May 2019

A major new research study has found a disturbing number of young Australians blame women for being raped and having their nude images shared without consent.

The National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS) [Youth report](#) released today by Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) and VicHealth has found nearly a third of young men aged 16-24 years believe many women who've said they'd been raped had instead led the man on and then had regrets.

Young people were also confused about the sharing of nude images, with over a quarter blaming the women for sending the image instead of her partner for sharing it without her consent.

Controlling behaviour in relationships was also an area of concern – particularly for young men – with one in five not understanding that using technology* to track their partner's movements, such as logging into her social media accounts or installing spyware on her phone, is abusive behaviour.

Other key findings included:

- Around 1 in 7 young Australians believe a man would be justified to force sex if the women initiated it, but then changed her mind and pushed him away.
- Almost a quarter of young men think women find it flattering to be persistently pursued, even if they aren't interested.
- 14% of young men don't understand that harassment by repeated emails or text messages is domestic violence.
- Over 2 in 5 young Australians (43%) support the statement 'I think it's natural for a man to want to appear in control of his partner in front of his male friends'
- More than one in five young men (22%) think men should take control of relationships and be the head of the household. Overall young people are more likely to support gender equality in public life (e.g. workplaces or politics) than in their intimate relationships.
- Problematic attitudes to violence against women and gender equality are more common among young people with mainly male friends.

ANROWS CEO Dr Heather Nancarrow said while there had been improvements in young people's understanding of violence against women over the last ten years, it was worrying that many still held disturbing attitudes.

"Our NCAS research shows we have a long way to go in educating young people about the difference between a healthy relationship and abusive behaviour," Dr Nancarrow said.

"The good news is attitudes can change. We can educate young people to better understand all forms of violence against women and that controlling behaviour isn't part of a healthy relationship."

Lead researcher Dr Anastasia Powell from RMIT said the research showed many young people – and in particular men – blamed women for sexual assault and failed to fully understand consent.

"We need to do more to teach young men about what consent looks like. Swiping right is not consent, kissing is not consent and saying yes to one sexual act doesn't give blanket consent to everything," Dr Powell said.

"It's highly problematic that young men think it's sometimes OK to force sex on a woman, or believe that women want men to persistently pursue them even after they've said they're not interested.

"It's also disturbing that some young men still resort to victim blaming when it comes to sexual abuse, such as blaming women for being raped, or holding a woman responsible when a nude image is shared without her consent."

Dr Powell added the results also highlighted that too many young men didn't see controlling behaviours in relationships as violence against women.

"While young men demonstrated a strong understanding of physical violence against women, they were less likely to recognise that things like checking their partners' emails without permission or following her home from uni are also forms of violence," Dr Powell said.

VicHealth Acting CEO Dr Lyn Roberts said despite young people being more supportive of gender equality in the workplace and in public life than older Australians, many still held outdated views about men and women's roles in the home.

"It's reassuring that young Australians think men and women should be treated equally in the workplace but many still think men should be in charge when it comes to a relationship," Dr Roberts said.

“It’s clear that young people need more support in order to have healthy and respectful relationships. This research shows us that young men feel pressured to appear in control which is harmful for the young men and their partners.

“We need to support young people to overcome social pressures and to have better relationships, which will be healthier for everyone.”

Dr Nancarrow said although the report showed areas of concern, young people are troubled by sexism and disrespect towards women.

“The research shows that while 73% of young Australians aren’t comfortable with sexist jokes only 37% would take action,” she said.

“We want to help young people to take action and be the generation to end violence against women. Violence can be prevented and it is up to all of us to play our part.

“Young people’s attitudes don’t exist in a bubble, the world around them impacts their views and behaviour – from sexist advertising to the lack of women in leadership roles in business and politics. We need to continue to push for gender equality to change harmful attitudes and behaviours that are hurting our young people.”

Media please include the following information in all reports: If you or someone you know is impacted by sexual assault or family violence, call 1800RESPECT on 1800 737 732 or visit www.1800RESPECT.org.au. In an emergency call 000.

Notes to editors:

ANROWS and VicHealth’s report *Young Australians’ Attitudes to Violence against women and gender equality* surveyed 1,761 young Australians aged between 16 and 24 about their views on violence against women and gender equality as part of the larger 2017 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women survey.

***Examples of modern technology used to harass women and control their movements and communications activity without consent include:**

- checking a woman’s mobile phone call register, messages and contacts
- installing and using mobile phone and computer tracking software to enable keystroke logging or computer monitoring (e.g. spyware)
- using technologies such as webcams to record, and subsequently digitally transmit, information about a woman’s movements and activities

- checking a woman's instant messaging, chat room and browser activity
- sending a nude or intimate image of a woman to others without permission.

ANROWS was commissioned by the Australian Government Department of Social Services in 2016 to undertake the National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey. ANROWS led the project in partnership with VicHealth, RMIT, the Social Research Centre, the University of Melbourne, and UNSW. More information about the National Community Attitudes Survey is available at ncas.anrows.org.au