

Australians' attitudes to violence against women

Full technical report

**FINDINGS FROM THE 2013 NATIONAL COMMUNITY ATTITUDES
TOWARDS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN SURVEY (NCAS)**

Acknowledgements

VicHealth was commissioned by the Australian Government Department of Social Services in 2012 to undertake the National Community Attitudes towards Violence Against Women Survey (NCAS). VicHealth led the project in collaboration with the Social Research Centre (SRC) and The University of Melbourne as research partners. Details of the project team and key contributors are on p. viii.

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Full technical report

Findings from 2013 National Community Attitudes towards Violence Against Women Survey (NCAS)

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Glossary and terminology

The following terms are used in this report and are arranged in alphabetical order except where grouping conceptually related terms aids understanding:

Colonisation – in the context of this report refers to the displacement and undermining of societies, including their values, cultures, beliefs and ways of life by outside peoples. It typically includes clashes whereby the colonised people are encouraged and/or forced to take on the values and beliefs of the colonisers (Weaver 2008).

Determinant – is an attribute or exposure which increases the probability of the occurrence of a disease or other specified outcome, in this report violence against women or attitudes that are supportive of violence against women. The term **risk factor** is sometimes used interchangeably with this term in the literature.

Disability – refers in this report to persons who self-identify as having a longstanding difficulty in hearing, seeing, communicating, walking, climbing stairs, bending, learning or doing any similar activity that reduces the amount or kind of activity they can do in their daily life (Statistics Canada 2005).

Gender – refers to the economic, social and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being male or female at a particular point in time.

Gender based violence – is a term commonly used in the international arena to describe violence involving men and women, in which the female is usually the victim; it is derived from the unequal power relationships between men and women. Violence is directed significantly against a woman because she is a woman, or affects women disproportionately (WHO 2010).

Hostile sexism – seeks to justify male power, traditional gender roles, and men's exploitation of women as sexual objects through derogatory characterisations of women (Glick & Fiske 1997). **Benevolent sexism**, in contrast, relies on kinder and gentler justifications of male dominance and prescribed gender roles; it recognizes men's dependence on women (i.e., women's dyadic power) and embraces a romanticised view of sexual relationships with women. Importantly, these attitudes are objectively positive for the person holding them; they encompass feelings of protectiveness and affection towards women (Glick & Fiske 1997). **Neo-sexism**, sometimes referred to as contemporary sexism, is a manifestation of a conflict between egalitarian values and residual negative feelings towards women (Tougas et al. 1995, p. 843). It is based on the notion that women are not discriminated against and therefore that sexism does not actually exist (Martinez et al. 2010).

Human development – the process of enlarging people's choices, particularly to lead a long and healthy life, to acquire knowledge and to have access to the resources needed for a decent standard of living. Other choices commonly included in definitions of human development include political, economic and social freedom, opportunities for being creative and productive and enjoying personal self-respect and guaranteed human rights (UN 1997). Although most commonly used when referring to development at the national level, in this document, human development is also used to refer to development in particular regions and communities within nations.

Interpersonal violence – violence occurring between individuals either known or unknown to one another. It is distinguished from collective violence, such as violence occurring in the course of war and self-directed violence such as suicide and other forms of self-harm (WHO 2002).

Intimate partner violence/partner violence – any behaviour by a man or a woman within an intimate relationship that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm to those in the relationship. This is the most common form of violence against women (WHO 2010).

Primary prevention – involves seeking to prevent violence before it occurs. Interventions can be delivered to the whole population (universal) or to particular groups that are at higher risk of using or experiencing violence in the future (targeted or selective). Some primary prevention strategies focus on changing behaviour and/or building the knowledge and skills of individuals. However, the structural, cultural and societal contexts in which violence occurs are also very important targets for primary prevention. Strategies that do not have a particular focus on violence against women but address its underlying causes (such as gender inequality and poverty) are also primary prevention strategies (VicHealth 2007). **Early intervention**, sometimes referred to as secondary prevention, is targeted at individuals and groups who exhibit early signs of perpetrating violent behaviour or of being subject to violence (VicHealth 2007). **Tertiary prevention** involves providing support and treatment to women and children who are affected by violence or to men who use violence. Intervention strategies are implemented after violence occurs. They aim to deal with the violence, prevent its consequences (such as mental health problems) and to ensure that it does not occur again or escalate (VicHealth 2007).

Raunch culture – a culture that promotes overtly sexual representations of women, for example through the acceptance of pornography, stripping and nudity in advertising, especially when this is encouraged by women (Collins English Dictionary 2014; see also Levy 2005; Squires et al. 2006).

Sex – refers to the biological characteristics that typically define humans as male or female (the exception being persons who are inter-sex). The gender identity of trans-gender or bi-gender persons may be different to the sex assigned to them at birth.

Social norms – consist of rules of conduct and models of behaviour expected by a society or social group. They are rooted in the customs, traditions and value systems that gradually develop in a society or social group.

Socio-economic status – an umbrella term used in this report to refer to education, occupational status, employment and level or degree of disadvantage or advantage at the area level.

Substantive equality – Substantive equality involves correcting patterns of disadvantage faced by communities because of their differing needs and historical experiences. It recognises that policies and practices put in place to suit everyone may appear to be non-discriminatory, but may not address the specific needs of certain groups, making them indirectly discriminatory. Its emphasis is on achieving equality in outcomes (Equal Opportunity Commission WA 2012; Equal Rights Trust 2007). This is sometimes referred to as **gender equity** (WHO 2010). **Formal equality** sees equality as a matter of gender neutral treatment. Formal equality requires simply that women and men be treated exactly the same in all circumstances. This approach denies that there are any important, immutable differences between women and men. It assumes that the creation of a level playing field, of itself, will achieve equality. This approach tends to ignore differences in women's experience and consequently may reinforce the disadvantage that has flowed to women from past different treatment (Graycar & Morgan 2002). This is sometimes referred to as gender equality (WHO 2010).

Univariate analysis – is the analysis of a single variable or data item. For example, the distribution of the sample by age group. **Bivariate analysis** is the comparison between more than two variables or data items simultaneously usually to look for a relationship between the two. For example, in this report, the proportion of women cross-tabulated by the Gender Equity Scale. **Multivariate analysis** is the comparison between more than two variables, or data items, simultaneously; for example the proportion of women

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and men in each group, and whether they agree or disagree with a particular question. **Multiple linear regression analysis** allows assessment of the influence of a variable after other influences have been accounted for. It also allows the extent of the influence of one variable to be assessed relative to the influence of others.

Violence against women – 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 (UN 1993). Indigenous communities understand violence against women perpetrated by people known to them as part of the broader issue of **family violence**, defined as:

'a wide range of physical, emotional, sexual, social, spiritual, cultural, psychological and economic abuses that occur within families, intimate relationships, extended families, kinship networks and communities' (Victorian Indigenous Family Violence Task Force 2003).

This reflects the significance of extended family and kinship relationships in Indigenous communities, resulting in both a broader conceptualisation of the notion of family and a view that the consequences of violence affect all those involved. The broader definition also reflects the interrelationships between violence occurring within Indigenous communities and that perpetrated against them (Atkinson 1994).

Violence supportive attitudes – for the purposes of this report these are defined as attitudes that justify, excuse, minimise, or trivialise violence against women, or blame or hold women at least partly responsible for violence perpetrated against them. Individuals who hold such attitudes are not necessarily 'violent-prone' or would openly condone violence against women. However, the evidence presented in this report suggests that when such attitudes are expressed by influential individuals or held by a substantial number of people this can have the effect of creating a culture in which violence is at best not clearly condemned and at worst condoned or encouraged.

Personal Safety Survey definitions

This report draws extensively on data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics' survey, *Personal Safety, Australia, 2012* (PSS) (ABS 2013b). The definition of violence used in the PSS is any incident involving the occurrence, attempt or threat of either physical or sexual assault experienced by a person since the age of 15. It includes sexual violence and/or physical violence, but does not include emotional abuse. The following definitions are used in the survey and are presented in summary form below with further detail to be found at <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4906.0>.

Physical violence – the use of physical force with the intent to harm or frighten a person.

Physical threat – an attempt to inflict harm or a threat or suggestion of intent to inflict physical harm that was made face-to-face where the person believes it was able to and likely to be carried out.

Stalking – a range of activities undertaken with the intent to harm or frighten, including but not limited to loitering outside a person's home, workplace or place of leisure or social activities; following or watching a person; interfering with their property; giving or leaving offensive material and telephoning; and sending mail or contacting electronically (adapted from ABS 2013b).

Sexual assault – An act of a sexual nature carried out against a person's will through the use of physical force, intimidation or coercion, and includes any attempts to do this. This includes rape, attempted rape, aggravated sexual assault (assault with a weapon), indecent assault, penetration by objects, forced sexual activity that did not end in penetration and attempts to force a person into sexual activity (ABS 2013b).

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Sexual threat involves the threat of acts of a sexual nature, which were made face-to-face where the person believes it is able to and likely to be carried out.

Sexual harassment – occurs when a person has experienced or been subjected to behaviours which made them feel uncomfortable, and were offensive due to their sexual nature. They can include, but are not limited to, indecent phone calls, indecent text, email or post, indecent exposure, inappropriate comments; and unwanted touching (adapted from ABS 2013b).

Emotional abuse – is defined separately from physical and sexual violence as behaviours that are repeated with the intent to prevent or control a person's behaviour and are intended to cause emotional harm or fear.

A note on the use and interpretation of data from the *Personal Safety Survey*

When considering data from the *Personal Safety Survey* in this report, it is noted that the ABS advises that caution should be taken when making inferences about a person's current socio-demographic characteristics and their experience of violence. To assume a person's current socio-demographic characteristics were present at the time of the violence could be inaccurate. ABS advises that the best way to assess current socio-demographic characteristics is by a person's recent experiences (i.e. those that occurred in the last 12 months). These are much more likely to match the person's current socio-demographic characteristics rather than assessing their lifetime experiences of violence. Socio-demographic data items such as state of usual residence, remoteness area and disability status do not remain the same over a person's lifetime. It therefore cannot be assumed that these were the person's characteristics at the time of experiencing violence, emotional abuse, sexual harassment or stalking since the age of 15. Further information in the use of *Personal Safety Survey* data can be found on <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/4906.0.55.001Main%20Features52012?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=4906.0.55.001&issue=2012&num=&view=#USINGTHEFILELEVELS>

A note on terminology used in the 2013 National Community Attitudes towards Violence Against Women Survey

It is important to note that different terminology may be used in this report to refer to similar concepts to those defined above. This is necessary in some parts of the report to reflect the terms used in the survey instrument, which was first developed in 1995. While terminology has evolved since this time to reflect refinements in understanding of violence, wording in the survey instrument has been retained to enable comparisons over time. In particular the terms 'domestic violence' and 'rape' are used in the survey instrument, but are no longer in common usage in the research literature, and are generally only used in this report when referring to questions in the survey.

List of abbreviations

ATSI – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island (**ATSI** and **Indigenous** – are used interchangeably and both refer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples)

AMSRO – Association of Market and Social Research Organisations

AMSRS – Australian Market and Social Research Society

ARIA – Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia

DSS – Department of Social Services (formerly FaHCSIA)

FaHCSIA – Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (now Department of Social Services)

GE – Gender Equality

N-MESC – Non-main English speaking country

NCAS – National Community Attitudes towards Violence Against Women Survey

OSW – Office for the Status of Women (former)

PSS – *Personal Safety Survey, 2012* (officially, ABS 2013b, *Personal Safety, Australia, 2012*)

SES – Socio-economic status

SEIFA – The Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage (IRSAD) has been used in this report. IRSAD is one of the indices provided as part of the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Socio-economic Index for Areas (SEIFA) range of products (see Table 1.5 for further details).

UVAW – Understanding Violence Against Women

VicHealth – The Victorian Health Promotion Foundation

VSA – Violence Supportive Attitudes

Executive summary

Background and introduction

This is a report of the *2013 National Community Attitudes towards Violence Against Women Survey*, referred to in this report as the National Community Attitudes Survey or NCAS, conducted by VicHealth in partnership with the Social Research Centre and The University of Melbourne in 2013.

This full technical report is one of three project publications, the other two being a summary report and a report focussing on the cohort of young people (aged 16 to 24 years), both of which are available at www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/ncas.

The survey is supported by the Australian Government Department of Social Services as part of the *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Their Children 2010–22*. It is the third wave of a national survey commencing in 1995. The survey has a focus on partner violence, sexual assault, stalking and sexual harassment. Its purposes are to:

- gauge community knowledge of and attitudes towards violence against women and responses to the problem
- gauge changes over time, drawing on data from the two previous waves of the survey conducted in 1995 and 2009
- Improve understanding of factors contributing to knowledge of and attitudes towards violence against women.

A cross-section of 17,517 Australians aged 16 years and over participated in a 20-minute telephone interview. Half were contacted on land lines and half by mobile phone, the latter to maximise the participation of groups typically under-represented in landline-only surveys (e.g. young men, Indigenous Australians). Responses for a range of groups were analysed including people from Indigenous backgrounds, those born overseas and people with disabilities.

Attitudes reflect broader social norms and so are a barometer to measure progress in addressing violence against women. Knowledge of and attitudes towards violence against women influences individual women's responses to victimisation, as well as the responses of family, friends and professionals. Attitudes can also be linked with perpetration under certain circumstances. A sound understanding of attitudes towards violence is important to foster positive attitudes, to engage the wider community in preventing the problem and to ensure that policy and program responses are appropriate.

Knowledge and understanding of violence against women

The survey found that there is wide recognition that partner violence comprises a continuum of behaviours, from overt physical violence and forced sex through to emotional, social and economic forms of abuse, such as controlling one's partner by preventing them from seeing family or friends or denying them money. However, recognition of non-physical forms of abuse is somewhat lower, a concern given that these forms have been found to be equally if not more harmful. They are also often an integral part of the dynamic of partner violence. Stalking and phone and email harassment are widely recognised as forms of violence against women.

There is a high level of recognition of the law as it relates to partner violence and sexual assault. Sixty-eight percent of Australians believe that violence against women is common, a drop of 6 percentage points since 2009. Only 41% recognised that women with disabilities face a greater risk of violence. Although the majority of Australians believes, consistent with the evidence, that men are more likely to perpetrate

violence and that women are most likely to suffer physical harm, barely half of Australians (52%) believes that women are more likely to suffer fear as the result of partner violence. The trend between 1995 and 2013 is one of diminishing community understanding that partner violence primarily affects women and that its physical and psychological impacts are greater for them.

Despite women being most at risk of sexual assault by someone known to them, only 64% of the community recognises this, a drop from 2009 when 70% did so. There is also a significant gap between community understanding of the causes of violence against women and that underpinning much contemporary practice to address the problem. This is apparent both in responses to a specific question about the causes, as well as on the grounds on which the community is prepared to excuse violence (see below).

Attitudes

Attitudes, collectively referred to in this report as 'violence supportive attitudes', are those that:

- justify violence against women
- excuse violence
- trivialise violence
- minimise the impact of violence against women
- shift blame for the violence from the perpetrator to the victim.

Prior research has also shown a link between violence against women and violence supportive attitudes and attitudinal support for gender inequality and rigid gender roles and identities.

It is important to note that individuals who hold violence supportive attitudes are not necessarily 'violent-prone' or would openly condone violence against women. However, when such attitudes are expressed by influential individuals or held by a substantial number of people this can have the effect of creating a culture in which violence is at best not clearly condemned and at worst condoned or encouraged.

This survey finds that only a small proportion of Australians (up to 6% depending on the scenario) endorse attitudes that *justify* violence. However, substantial minorities are prepared to *excuse* violence, including more than one in five agreeing that partner violence can be excused if the person is genuinely regretful afterward, or if they get so angry they lose control, and two in five agreeing that sexual assault occurs because men are unable to control their sexual urges.

While significant minorities continue to *trivialise* violence against women by supporting the notions that it is a private matter or that it should be tolerated in the interests of maintaining the family, most Australians reject such statements. There has been a steady increase since 1995 in the proportion of people rejecting the view that women who are sexually harassed should sort things out themselves. An overwhelming majority supports the proposition that it is reasonable for a person who has perpetrated partner violence to be made to leave the family home. At the same time, however, a majority of Australians has a poor understanding of the barriers women face to leaving a violent relationship.

With regard to *minimising* violence it was found that the majority of Australians believe violence to be a serious issue and recognise the various behaviours put to them in the survey as serious. However, again, overt physical behaviours are more likely to be ranked as being very serious than are psychological, social, economic and indirect forms of violence (e.g. phone harassment or tracking by electronic means).

Despite evidence that false allegations of sexual violence are rare, only three in five Australians agrees that this is the case. Further, two in five agrees that women who say they were raped led the man on and later had regrets. In relation to partner violence over half (53%) believes that women often make false claims to

improve their prospects in cases involving care arrangements for children after separation or divorce. Despite community education and law reform to promote a communicative model of consent based on mutual negotiation and respect, one in 10 Australians agrees that 'if a woman does not physically resist – even if protesting verbally – then it isn't really rape'.

Additionally, substantial minorities support statements *blaming victims* for violence, from 11% believing that domestic violence can be excused if the victim is affected by alcohol to 19% believing this to be the case if a victim of sexual assault is affected by alcohol or drugs at the time.

With regard to attitudes towards gender equality, around one in 20 holds attitudes supportive of unequal gender roles in the area of education, over one in 10 for employment and almost three in 10 in political representation. A concerning proportion supports statements indicative of endorsing inequality in interpersonal relationships, a dimension of gender inequality particularly implicated in violence against women. Specifically, nearly two in 10 agrees that 'men should take control in relationships and be the head of the household' and nearly three in 10 agrees that 'women prefer a man to be in charge of the relationship'.

Responses to violence

A majority of Australians state that they would intend to act to assist a woman being assaulted by her partner. This was slightly higher if the woman was a family member or friend than if she was an unknown person. Whether or not children were present made no difference to respondent's intentions. When the woman was a known person, 41% said that they would intend to physically intervene rather than 'say or do something else to try and help' (57%). In comparison when the woman was a stranger, a greater percentage of people said that they would 'say or do something else to try and help' (64%), with only 28% indicating an intent to physically intervene. Men are more likely to say that they would physically intervene than women.

Despite extensive procedural reform by police forces across Australian jurisdictions, only 44% of people agreed that police response times had improved and there was a drop in the proportion of people agreeing that they would know where to go if they needed advice in relation to a domestic violence problem, from 62% in 2009 to 57% in 2013. There was a poor level of understanding of the barriers women with disabilities face in reporting, although this understanding improved between 2009 and 2013.

Change over time

Other than patterns for individual questions mentioned above, since the survey commenced in 1995 there has been modest change on a relatively small number of items and not always in a positive direction. Scales were developed from questions in the survey to measure overall understanding of violence and attitudinal support for gender equality, along with a construct to measure overall attitudinal support for violence against women. In the sample as whole, no meaningful change occurred on any of the three measures (understanding, attitudinal support for violence, or attitudinal support for gender equality) between 2009 and 2013. In the separate analysis undertaken of the cohort of young people (see www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/ncas), a sizeable reduction in the percentage of young men having a high level of attitudinal support for violence against women was found. Although there was no change in this cohort in level of understanding or attitudinal support for gender equality, this change is encouraging since young men have been a primary target of recent effort to prevent violence against women.

Attitudes and understanding among particular groups and in particular places

The magnitude of the differences between various groups and places varies depending on the measures being considered. The differences are important to guide targeting and to shape approaches and messages for particular groups. Overall, however, differences between groups are relatively modest.

Men are less likely than women to have a high level of understanding of violence against women, are more likely to endorse violence supportive attitudes and are less likely to hold attitudes supportive of gender equality. The largest gender differences are in the themes of minimising and trivialising violence and there are minimal gender differences in the themes of excusing and justifying violence. On most measures in the theme of victim-blaming there are no gender differences, and on two measures women are slightly more likely to support victim-blaming than are men.

People born overseas in a country in which English is not the main language spoken (compared with those born in Australia) have a lower level of understanding of violence, a greater propensity to endorse violence supportive attitudes and a lower level of attitudinal support for gender equality. Variation from the sample as a whole was more marked for men than for women and is consistent across most measures in the survey. Among the overseas born, understanding and attitudes to gender equality strengthen and violence supportive attitudes lessen with the length of time settled and proficiency in English, so that they more closely resemble those of the wider community. A similar pattern is apparent across generations.

ATSI respondents have a higher level of understanding of violence against women than non-ATSI respondents¹ and there are no differences between these two groups in their level of support for gender equality. When level of disadvantage is taken into account, only disadvantaged ATSI men are more likely to endorse violence supportive attitudes. There are no statistically significant differences between ATSI women and non-ATSI women experiencing similar levels of advantage/disadvantage. However, both ATSI men and women are more likely than their non-ATSI counterparts to endorse justifications and excuses for violence.

When age and gender are taken into account, men with disabilities and women with disabilities who are over the age of 65 years are more likely to hold violence supportive attitudes.

Younger and older cohorts are less likely than the sample as a whole to reject attitudes supportive of violence against women. The youngest cohorts also have a lower level of understanding of violence against women.

There are very few differences based on the remoteness of the areas in which respondents live. Understanding of violence against women among respondents with secondary education or below and those living in the most disadvantaged areas is comparable to the general community, but support for gender equality among these groups is lower and they are more likely than those living in more advantaged areas and those with post-secondary education to endorse attitudes supportive of violence. However, these differences are very small both in absolute terms and when compared with differences on other demographic indicators, such as age and gender.

Factors affecting understanding and attitudes

Analysis undertaken to assess the extent of the influence of various factors, and their relative influence, shows that the main factors influencing *understanding* (in order of influence) are attitudinal support for gender equality, age, gender, birthplace and employment status. The main factors influencing *attitudes* are (again in order of influence) understanding of violence, attitudinal support for gender equality, birthplace and generation, age and gender. Relative to understanding and attitudes to gender equality, demographic factors make only a small contribution. This is particularly the case for socio-economic status factors (occupation, employment, education and area disadvantage).

¹ Statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

The factors included in the survey do not explain all the influences on the formation of attitudes, suggesting the importance of including additional factors identified in other research in future surveys to determine the importance of these factors at a population level in Australia.

Discussion and implications

Violence against women is a prevalent problem with serious consequences for women, children, communities and the economy. Data from the ABS' *Personal Safety Survey, 2012* indicates there has been no statistically significant reduction in the prevalence of violence against women between 2005 and 2012 (ABS 2013b). Knowledge and attitudes are among a range of factors contributing to the problem. The fact that the NCAS finds negative change in some areas and only modest progress in others suggests the importance of maintaining efforts to prevent and reduce violence against women, including strengthening attitudes. The findings of this research, together with other studies, indicate that attitudes are influenced by social context. This suggests that it is possible to achieve change by focussing prevention effort on factors in the social environment found to influence attitude formation.

There would be benefits in targeting future activity to environments that shape the knowledge and attitudes of young people and men, in particular men with disabilities and Indigenous men, as well as new arrivals from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

However, while socio-demographic variables are influential and can be a useful guide to targeting, they do not provide a full explanation for poor understanding of and negative attitudes towards violence against women. Many people who are not in the above groups also have a poor understanding of violence and hold violence supportive attitudes. This suggests the importance of prevention strategies that reach the whole population.

The factors found to be most influential in shaping attitudes are levels of understanding of violence against women and attitudes to gender equality. This confirms prior research indicating a link between understanding and attitudes, and showing that broader social norms, especially those related to gender relations, are influential. This means that it will be important both to increase understanding of the problem as well as to make gender related social norms a focus of prevention efforts.

The literature on which this study was based shows that while there may be some value in community and professional education and campaigns to strengthen attitudes, sustained change is most likely to be achieved by changing the family, social, community and organisational environments that shape attitudes, and influence whether they are manifest in violent or violence supportive behaviour or not.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background and objectives

The Australian Government Department of Social Services (DSS) (formerly the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA)) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) to undertake the *2013 National Community Attitudes towards Violence Against Women Survey* (referred to herein as the National Community Attitudes Survey or NCAS). VicHealth, in turn, entered into a collaborative survey partnership with the Social Research Centre and the University of Melbourne to deliver all aspects of the survey program.

The 2013 NCAS is the second national survey of community attitudes towards violence against women to be funded by the Australian Government and administered by VicHealth – the previous survey was in 2009. Both the 2009 and the 2013 surveys draw heavily on a 2006 Victorian survey (funded by VicHealth) and all these surveys (2006, 2009 and 2013) have elements in common with a 1995 violence against women survey conducted by the then Office for the Status of Women (OSW), which drew on a 1987 survey. For the purposes of this report, only national time series data for 1995, 2009 and 2013 are included.

The overall aim of the NCAS project is to develop and extend the evidence and knowledge base required to foster community attitudes that support women to live free from exposure to violence, including threats of or fear of violence. The intended outcomes from the survey program are to contribute to an improved understanding of:

- The methodology required to provide an ongoing survey platform for understanding community attitudes to violence against women in Australia.
- The magnitude and nature of change in community attitudes to violence against women between 1995, 2009 and 2013.
- Contemporary factors leading to the formation of community attitudes towards violence against women, to inform future violence prevention efforts across sectors.
- Areas of community attitudes towards violence against women requiring attention in future violence prevention efforts.
- Specific segments of the population to which future violence prevention should be targeted.

This report adopts the definition of violence against women in the United Nations *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (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'. The term 'violence against women' is inclusive of the range of forms of violence experienced by women. Violence against women includes men's physical and sexual violence against women in intimate relationships and families, but also encompasses other forms of violence perpetrated in other settings or circumstances. The survey focuses on community attitudes towards interpersonal forms of gender-based violence as they affect women including:

- partner violence, also referred to as domestic violence in the survey and family violence or relationship violence in some other contexts
- sexual assault, sometimes referred to as rape in the survey
- sexual harassment

- stalking.

1.2. Research design

The 2013 NCAS comprised a 20-minute national telephone survey of 17,517 persons aged 16 years and over. The survey used a dual-frame sample design such that approximately half of the respondents were interviewed via randomly generated (RDD) landline telephone numbers and approximately half were interviewed via randomly generated mobile phone numbers. This dual-frame design enabled the mobile phone-only population (i.e. those without a residential landline telephone connection but nonetheless contactable via their mobile phone) to be included in the sample. As such, all persons aged 16 years and over and contactable via telephone, that is approximately 99% of the population (Taylor & Dal Grande 2011) were in-scope for this survey. Further details regarding the survey methodology are provided in section 2 and Appendix B – technical and methodological notes.

1.3. Research context

Since the 1980s Australian jurisdictions have done much to respond to and prevent violence against women (National Council to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2009c). However, as is the case across the globe, sexual and physical violence against women remains unacceptably common in Australia.

Australia's most recent population survey on experience of violence, the ABS' *Personal Safety Survey, 2012*, found that:

- More than one in three women (39%) over the age of 18 years has experienced violence by a man since the age of 15 (ABS 2013b). Thirty-two percent has experienced physical violence by a man and 19% has experienced sexual violence by a man (ABS, customised report, 2014).
- One-quarter of women aged 18 years and over has experienced emotional abuse by a current and/or previous partner since the age of 15 (ABS 2013b).
- Seventeen percent of women aged 18 years and over has experienced stalking by a male perpetrator in their lifetime (ABS 2013b).

Twenty-two percent of women aged 15–64 years reports having experienced sexual harassment (McDonald & Flood 2012, p. 1).

Young women, that is those aged 18 to 25 years, are particularly vulnerable to violence (ABS 2013b). Violence is not a problem confined to those directly subject to it. The fear of such violence extends to a much larger group of women. As illustrated in Table 1.3 overleaf women are considerably more likely than men to report feeling unsafe about waiting for or using public transport, walking alone in their local area, or being alone at home at night, and to curb their activities as a result of that fear (based on ABS data, customised report, 2014).

There has been very little population-level research asking men about their perpetration of violence and existing studies have been conducted outside of Australia. They have used a range of methodologies and definitions of violence, working against comparisons being made between them. Two recent population-based studies conducted by the United Nations across nine Asia-Pacific countries found that between:

- 26% and 80% of men disclosed having perpetrated physical or sexual intimate partner violence (Fulu et al. 2013)
- 3% and 27% disclosed non-partner rape (Jewkes et al. 2012).

US studies among college students find that between 25% and 33% of men report engaging in some form of sexual aggression since age 14 (Loh et al. 2005), while 10% report that they have been physically aggressive

towards their most recent female dating partner at least once in the relationship (Luthra & Gidycz 2006). In a US community sample of unmarried men, 25% reported having perpetrated at least one act of attempted or completed rape since the age of 14, while a further 39% reported that they had engaged in some form of forced sex or verbal coercion (Abbey et al. 2006).

It is possible that this research under-represents the problem owing to both social desirability biases (that is men being reluctant to admit to behaviour they believe others may find unacceptable) and some men not perceiving their behaviour as constituting violence.

Table 1.3: Feelings of safety in the last 12 months in selected settings by sex, 2103 (%).

		Total males	Total females	Total persons
		17,201,700	8,466,200	8,735,400
		%	%	%
Feelings of safety using public transport alone at night	Used and felt safe	27.8	15.1*	21.3
	Used and felt unsafe	5.7	6.6	6.2
	Did not use because felt unsafe	4.9	18.2*	11.6
	<i>Total felt unsafe (used and did not use)</i>	<i>10.6</i>	<i>24.8*</i>	<i>17.8</i>
	Did not use for other reasons	61.6	60.1	60.8
Feelings of safety waiting for public transport alone at night	Waited and felt safe	26.8	11.8*	19.2
	Waited and felt unsafe	6.8	9.9*	8.3
	Did not wait alone at night	66.5	78.4*	72.5
Feelings of safety walking in the local area alone at night	Walked alone and felt safe	61.5	30.2*	45.6
	Walked alone and felt unsafe	5.1	7.8*	6.5
	Did not walk alone because felt unsafe	5.2	26.5*	16.0
	<i>Total felt unsafe (walked alone and did not walk alone)</i>	<i>10.3</i>	<i>34.3*</i>	<i>22.5</i>
	Did not walk alone for other reasons	28.1	35.5*	31.9
Feelings of safety when at home alone at night	Felt safe	94.0	83.3*	88.6
	Did not feel safe	2.7	10.3*	6.6
	Was not home alone at night because felt unsafe	0.0	0.3*	0.1
	<i>Total felt unsafe (home alone and did not stay home alone)</i>	<i>2.7</i>	<i>10.6*</i>	<i>6.7</i>
	Was not home alone at night for other reasons	3.3	6.1*	4.7

*Difference between males and females is statistically significant, $p \leq .05$.

Source: Based on data from Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Personal Safety, 2012*, Customised report, 2014

#Estimate has a relative standard error between 25% and 50% and should be used with caution,.

While violence against women occurs across the social spectrum, women affected by the intersecting impacts of gender and other forms of discrimination and determinants of social inequality may be particularly vulnerable both to violence itself and/or to its consequences (Brownridge 2009). Indigenous women are widely understood to experience some of the highest rates of violence against women in Australian society (Al-Yaman et al. 2006; Cripps et al. 2009; Mouzos & Makkai 2004; Taylor & Putt 2007). While estimates vary, women with a disability are around twice as likely as those without disabilities to experience partner violence (Hyman et al. 2006; Smith 2007; Stockl, Heise & Watts 2011), and up to four times more likely to experience sexual violence (Martin et al. 2006).

As a group, women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds appear no more likely to experience violence in Australia than Australian-born women (Mitchell 2011; Mouzos & Makkai 2004). However, international research suggests that there is likely to be variability between women from different cultural backgrounds, with some facing an elevated risk, and others less likely to face increased risk (Alaggia et al. 2009; Du Mont et al. 2012; Fanslow et al. 2010; Garcia-Moreno et al. 2006; Yoshihama 2009).

Groups of women vulnerable to experiencing violence have also been found to be exposed to more severe forms of violence and to face particular barriers to seeking protection and safety (Al-Yaman et al. 2006; Nixon & Cripps 2013; Plummer & Findley 2012; Powers et al. 2009). For this reason persons born overseas in a country in which English is not the main language spoken, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, and persons with a disability are particular foci of the NCAS.

Violence against women has serious consequences for women themselves, their children, national economies and civic society. Homicides of women by a male partner made up 73% of all intimate partner homicides between 2008 and 2010 and just over half of all homicides against women (compared with only 9% of all homicides of men) (Chan & Payne 2013). The experiences of partner violence and sexual assault are associated with substantially increased odds of developing a range of health problems (Rees et al. 2011; VicHealth 2004; WHO 2013). At a population level, partner violence alone has been found to contribute 8% to the total disease burden among women aged 15–44, a larger proportion than many other well-known risk factors (VicHealth 2004).

Violence perpetrated against young women is of particular concern in this regard, as it occurs at a stage of development when negative influences may affect mental health into adulthood, and have consequences for future relationships and for women's progress in education and employment (Flood & Fergus 2008). In addition many women affected by violence have children in their care. Children's exposure to violence perpetrated against their mothers increases the risk of problems in their cognitive, emotional and social development, as well as their likelihood of developing behavioural, mental health and social problems later in life (Edleson & Nissley 2006; Flood & Fergus 2008; Holt et al. 2008; Humphreys 2008; Richards 2011).

Both partner violence and workplace sexual harassment have a negative impact on women's economic participation. They contribute to impaired job performance and productivity, high job turnover and unemployment (Banyard et al. 2011; Kimerling et al. 2009; Lindhorst et al. 2007; McDonald & Flood 2012; Staggs et al. 2007). Intimate partner violence is the single most common reason for persons seeking assistance through government-funded programs to support homelessness (Tually et al. 2008), and women who are exposed to violence are more likely to report experiencing social isolation (Wright 2012) and poverty (Lindhorst et al. 2007).

At a broader level, gendered hate speech and harassment along with the fear of violence may compromise women's participation in social and civic activity (Boeckmann & Turpin-Petrosino 2002; Neilson 2002; Summers 2013), and impacts on women's freedom of movement, use of public spaces such as parks and sporting facilities, as well as their full participation in economic activity (Koskela 1999).

These impacts in turn have implications for both individual businesses and the Australian economy. This is evident in the costs associated with partner violence alone. In 2009, the last year for which these costs were calculated, they amounted to some \$13.6 billion. By the year 2021–22, if there is no change in violence, the cost will be an estimated \$15.6 billion (National Council to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2009b).

Reducing violence against women has been a significant concern of both national and international communities. In 1993 violence against women was made the subject of a specific human rights instrument, the *1993 Declaration of the Elimination of Violence against Women*, to which Australia is a signatory (UN

1993). It has also been canvassed in successive meetings monitoring the progress of nations in realising the *1979 Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (Htun & Weldon 2012).

The issue has also been addressed in comprehensive studies by the UN (UN 2006, 2012c) and the World Health Organisation (Garcia-Moreno et al. 2005, 2006; WHO 2010, 2013; WHO & London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine 2010). The impact of this violence on the rights of Indigenous women and girls has been the subject of a recent UN study (UNICEF et al. 2013) and of a special workshop of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, with specific recommendations subsequently being accepted by the Forum (UN 2012d; 2012e). Two recent inquiries have been conducted into the impacts of violence against women on the human rights of women with disabilities (UN 2012a, 2012b).

To date the focus in policy effort has been on responding to violence once it has occurred. While much work remains to be done, substantial investments have been made in alternative accommodation and counselling and support services for women, treatment programs for men who use violence, and in reforming the law and criminal justice systems to strengthen their capacity to protect women and children and hold perpetrators accountable for their use of violence (National Council to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2009a & c).

However, there is also growing evidence that population-level factors contribute to the problem, such as inequalities of power between men and women, the ways in which men and women are socialised, community attitudes that are supportive of violence and cultural support for the denigration of women in the media and popular culture (UN 2006; UN 2012c; VicHealth 2007; WHO 2010; WHO & London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine 2010). Since many of these factors can be modified or eliminated there has been increasing recognition that there are sound prospects for primary prevention of violence against women. That is, for preventing violence before it occurs (WHO 2010, 2013).

In Australia, reducing violence against women is a commitment encapsulated in specific plans across a number of Australian jurisdictions (National Council to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2009c). Nationally, it is addressed in the *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2010 - 2022*, to which all Australian states and territories are signatories (Council of Australian Governments 2010).

Consistent with international evidence, community attitudes are identified in the *National Plan* as important to preventing violence against women. They are also important to the effective delivery of services to those affected by violence and to the operation of laws designed to protect women and children. As attitudes are shaped by influences around us, they are also an important 'barometer' of how we are progressing as a society in addressing the factors that contribute to violence against women, and a means of identifying groups in the population to which efforts to reduce violence need to be particularly targeted.

There is a commitment in the *National Plan* to monitor attitudes every four years in the life of the plan through the implementation of the NCAS. The attitudes survey is one of two such monitoring mechanisms. The second survey, the *Personal Safety Survey* is conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and monitors the prevalence and experience of violence.

1.4. Why a focus on violence against women?

Interpersonal violence can take many forms, involving violence perpetrated against men, children (child abuse), abuse of the aged and violence between individuals in same-sex relationships. All such violence has serious consequences and warrants the attention of communities and governments (WHO 2002). However, there are distinct gender differences in the patterning of both the perpetration of violence and victimisation. These in turn have implications for the strategies and policies needed to prevent and respond

to different forms of violence. The most recent national Australian survey of experiences of violence, the ABS *Personal Safety Survey 2012*, indicates that overall, violence experienced by both men and women is most likely to be perpetrated by a man. In 2012, 42% of persons (aged 18 years and over) had experienced violence since the age of 15 years by a male perpetrator, compared with 12% who had experienced violence by a female perpetrator (ABS 2013b).

While men are also more likely to be the victims of violence than are women (ABS 2013b), the difference is not large. In 2012, 49% of men aged 18 years and over reported that they had experienced violence since the age of 15, compared with 41% of women². Most of the violence experienced by men is accounted for by physical assault, with men being less likely than women to be subject to sexual violence. Since the age of 15, 4.5% of men reported experiencing sexual violence, compared with 19% of women (ABS 2013b)³.

Men are more likely to be assaulted by a stranger than a known person. The perpetrator was a stranger in 73% of violence reported by men, and this was more likely to be a male stranger (72% of all violence experienced by men) than a female stranger (7% of all violence experienced by men). When men experienced violence by a known person, this was most commonly an acquaintance or neighbour (accounting for nearly 40% of all violence against men by known persons). In the most recent incident of physical assault experienced by men, only a small proportion took place in the respondent's home (8.4%). Most physical assaults by a male against men occurred in a public place. The most common locations for physical assault by a male perpetrated against men were places of entertainment or recreation (34%) or on the street, in a park or laneway (27%) (ABS 2013b).

This data suggests that violence is a significant issue for men, in that they are more likely to both perpetrate violence and to be subject to it. All forms of violence against men are harmful and warrant attention. However, the main challenge involved in preventing violence against men is to reduce violence perpetrated by other men in public places such as in pubs, sports clubs and on the street.

While women are slightly less likely than men to be the victims of violence overall, as indicated above, they are substantially more likely than are men to experience sexual violence (ABS 2013b). Violence against women is more likely to be perpetrated by someone known to them (87% of all women who experienced violence) than a stranger (30% of women who had experienced violence). In the great majority of cases the perpetrator will be a male (94% of all assaults against women), most of whom will be known (88% of all violence perpetrated against women by a male)⁴. In a substantial proportion of cases the male perpetrator will be a current and/or previous partner (44% of all women who experienced violence by a male perpetrator) or a boyfriend or date (29% of all women who experienced violence by a male perpetrator) (ABS 2013b). Not surprisingly, given this pattern, women most commonly experience violence in either their own home (62% of women who experienced physical assault by a male) or that of their perpetrator (10% of women who experienced physical assault by a male). Only a small proportion of women reported that their most recent incident of physical violence occurred in a place of entertainment or recreation (5%) or outside (8%) (ABS 2013b). Partner violence is often repeated, as opposed to being a once-off incident (Flood 2006). In the *Personal Safety Survey*, 65% of women experiencing current partner violence and 73% experiencing previous partner violence reported that they had experienced more than one incident of

² This includes violence perpetrated by either a man or a woman and is slightly larger than the figure given earlier (see section 1.3) which was for the percentage of women experiencing violence by a man

³ Sexual violence involves any incidents of sexual assault and/or sexual threat (ABS, 2013b).

⁴ Percentages may sum to greater than 100 as respondents may have experienced violence by more than one type of perpetrator. Respondents are counted separately for each perpetrator type they experienced violence by but are counted only once in any aggregated totals.

violence (ABS 2013b). Other research demonstrates that partner violence frequently takes the form of a pattern of abusive and controlling behaviours designed to intimidate, belittle and control the victim (Krebs et al. 2011; Stark 2009, pp. 198–227).

The dynamics that distinguish men's violence against women from the main forms of interpersonal violence affecting men have particular consequences for women's mental health (Lewis et al. 2006; Postmus et al. 2011), their risks of further victimisation (Hand et al. 2009), for the ways in which others respond to violence and for preventing ongoing victimisation (Stark 2009).

The fact that all forms of interpersonal violence are significantly more likely to be perpetrated by men suggests that efforts to prevent violence will need to be targeted towards men and boys and to engage men as partners in prevention (Fabiano et al. 2003; Flood 2010b). There are some common factors that underpin men's violence, whether this violence is directed towards men or women (WHO 2002). However, studies suggest that there are also factors underlying men's violence towards women that are particular to this form of violence. As discussed in this report these are inextricably linked with the different and unequal status of men and women, with the ways in which men and women are socialised to play their roles and the manner in which these roles are supported by societal institutions and cultural norms.

Together these differences suggest that while preventing all forms of interpersonal violence is vital, there are some unique challenges in ending violence against women. There is a need to tailor efforts to reflect particular causal factors and the very different context in which much of this violence occurs.

1.5. Reading this report

This report is designed to provide methodological and theoretical detail related to the NCAS, and to report detailed findings. It is written for a research and policy audience with a specialised interest in the prevention of violence against women. A separate summary report and an analysis of findings pertaining to young Australians (i.e. those aged 16 to 24) have been prepared and can be found at www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/ncas. Key findings relating to young Australians are summarised herein.

The broad areas covered in this report are:

- A description of the methodology used for the survey and the approach to analysis (section 2).
- A review of the contemporary literature in the three key areas on which the survey focuses: knowledge, attitudes and community responses. This literature helped to inform the analysis and interpretation of the survey findings (section 3).
- A review of the literature and presentation of survey findings on attitudes to gender equality (an established correlate of attitudes to violence against women) (section 4).
- Findings on community knowledge of violence against women (section 5).
- Findings on violence supportive attitudes including situations where violence may be justified, excused, minimised, trivialised or blame assigned to the victim (Sections 6 and 7).
- Self-reported intentions of the community should they be bystanders to violence against women, and knowledge of key resources (section 8).
- An investigation of specific populations of interest – people born, or with a parent born, in a non-main English speaking country (N-MESC), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and persons with a disability (Sections 9 to 11).

- An overall summary of the findings and an analysis of their implications for practice and policy (section 12).
- Concluding remarks (section 13).

In sections 5 to 8, results are presented according to a common format: survey items are contextualised in the relevant literature. This is followed by results for the whole sample and changes over time. Third, a summary of the analysis undertaken against key variables (see below) is presented.

Several points should be kept in mind when considering the findings presented in this report.

- Firstly, unless otherwise noted, all figures included in this report are based on weighted survey estimates (see section 2.1.11 and Appendix B). This applies to all results expressed as percentages and means but not to the bases (n) shown in the tables and graphs. The survey estimates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been independently weighted for age, gender, Remoteness Area and State/territory (see section 2.1.11 and Appendix B).
- The advances in survey methodology between 2009 and 2013 means that the 2013 survey benefits from adopting a dual-frame design and a Raking approach to weighting the survey data. Survey data are typically weighted so as to align with the distribution of the population by gender, age and location. A Raking approach enables additional independent variables to be included in the weighting routine, in the case of NCAS, birthplace and educational attainment are included (see Sections 2.1.11 and Appendix B). The adoption of these methods improves our ability to make general community inferences from the 2013 results. Given these changes in methodology, the decision was taken to re-weight the 2009 data using the same Raking approach as adopted for 2013 thereby enabling the 2009 results to better reflect the birthplace and educational profile of the population at that time. This means that a revised set of 2009 results are presented in this report and that these results vary slightly from the original 2009 results. Better aligning the 2009 sample with the birthplace and educational profile of the population at that time provides the most robust basis for time series comparisons.⁵
- As the results presented in this report are based on a sample rather than a census of the Australian population aged 16 years and over, some variation between the results from the 1995, 2009 and 2013 surveys (and between subgroups within each survey, since they too are samples of larger populations) will occur by chance. To help decide whether differences are meaningful (that is, whether they represent genuine changes or differences rather than just random variation), testing of the statistical significance of these differences has been carried out on the *effective base* (i.e. the underlying sample size after adjusting for the impact of the weights) for each statistic using the column proportions with overlap adjustment t-test available within the IBM:SPSS Data Collection Survey Reporter 6.0.1.

Throughout the report, ** has been used to indicate results which are statistically significantly different from the comparative benchmarks such as the 2009 result, 'the total population', etc. at the 99% confidence level ($p \leq .01$). On occasion, when analysing smaller samples a 90% or 95% confidence level has been used. This is noted in the text and annotated with an asterisk *. Unless otherwise noted all comparisons are between the subgroup of interest and the total sample for that analyses

⁵ 1995 data was not available for re-weighting.

- Where the 1995, 2009 and 2013 results are presented together, # indicates a significant difference between 1995 and 2013, and ^ indicates a significant difference across all three years at the 99% confidence level ($p \leq .01$).
- Results for sub-populations, measures and indicators are reported for each question following the presentation of the sample-level data and changes over time. However, results are only described as changed or different if a statistically significant difference exists. Generally differences are also only noted when they are substantial in size. This is because a large sample size is involved and as a result a small change in a result over time or a small difference between subgroups may be statistically significant but is so small that it is of little practical importance. For example, reference to Table 6.1.1a (Appendix A) shows a statistically significant difference between the 93% of 35 to 44 year olds disagreeing that a man is justified in using violence against his partner if she admits to having sex with another man compared with 91% of the general community. Given that these relatively small differences will sometimes be statistically significant, the commentary in this report does not mention every statistically significant difference in either the time series or subgroup analyses, but rather draws out the main themes, trends and relationships in the data. Where there are no differences that are both statistically significant *and* substantial in size, these are generally not reported.
- Where figures have been rounded in this report, discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals. Nett percentages are calculated prior to rounding of the figures and therefore some slight discrepancy may exist between these percentages and those that could be calculated from the rounded figures shown in the tables or charts.
- The sample numbers (n) given in the tables and figures are the number of people asked the questions concerned, rather than the number of responses.
- In sections 5 to 8 results are presented for each of the sub-samples of interest (ATSI Australians, people born in a N-MESC and people with disabilities) for each of the samples as whole. These results should be considered in conjunction the dedicated chapters for each of these sub-samples since there are substantial within-sample differences.
- In the body of the report and Appendix A, the data for people with a disability are presented in two age cohorts: people 16 to 64 years and those 65 years and over. This is because of the relationship between disability and age. A comparison of the results for the disabled and non-disabled age cohorts was made and where a significant and substantial difference was found, it is noted in the text.

Many of the tables in this report examine the survey data by a range of standard analytic/descriptive variables. For those variables for which it is not self-evident as to how they have been constructed the definitions/derivations used to create them are shown below:

Table 1.5: Description of derived variables.

Variable	Question	Description
Birthplace	Dem3a	Australia Main English Speaking Countries or MESC (New Zealand, North America, United Kingdom and Ireland). Other countries or N-MESC (Non-Main English Speaking Countries).
Disability status	Dem17 Dem17b	To be classified as having a disability respondent needed to have a long term difficulty resulting in them always, often, sometimes or rarely having difficulty hearing, seeing, communicating, walking, climbing stairs, bending, learning or doing any similar activity AND that this reduces the amount or kind of activity they can do in their daily life This measure is an impairment measure adapted from the 2004 Canadian Social Survey (Statistics Canada 2005: 327-327). Impairment measures are suited to defining disability in order to measure equalisation of opportunity (Palmer and Hartley 2011). This was thought to be the best fit for the purposes of the survey.
Gender Equality (GE)	ATT4a-h	An eight item question series used as a scale to classify respondents according to whether they have a low, moderate or high level of support for gender equality. See Section Appendix D – Scales and Constructs for a more detailed explanation.
Highest education	Dem8	University degree or higher (codes 8 & 9). Trade / certificate / diploma (codes 5, 6 & 7). Secondary or below (codes 1, 2, 3 & 4).
Indigenous status	Dem2	Based on self reported status.
Language proficiency	Dem5a	Based on self report. Only asked of those who speak a language other than English at home (Dem5).
Generation	Dem3a	If overseas born, migration status was counted as First generation. If Australian born and either parent born overseas migration status was counted as Second generation. If Australian born and both parents Australian born then was counted as Third-plus generation.
Migration Status	Dem11	Coded to the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO Version 1.2).
Remoteness Area	Postcode	Based on the postcode provided by respondents. Respondents were classified as living in a major city, inner regional, outer regional, remote or very remote area. Refer to the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) Volume 5 – Remoteness Areas, July 2011 (cat. no. 1270.0.55.005).

Table 1.5: Description of derived variables (cont.)

Socioeconomic status	External source:ABS	The Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage (IRSAD) has been used in this report. IRSAD is one of the indices provided as part of the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Socioeconomic Index for Areas (SIEFA) range of products. This index summarises information about the economic and social conditions of people and households within an area, including both relative advantage and disadvantage measures. Quintiles have been used with a low score indicating most disadvantaged and a high score most advantaged. This index takes into account area-based factors such as occupational status, educational attainment, home ownership, employment status, jobless households, disability status, lone parents, etc.
Understanding violence against women (UVAW)	DV2g/k/m, SV1a, SV2a/c	An aggregated measure based on responses to six questions measuring the extent to which more subtle non-physical forms of violence are regarded as constituting domestic violence or violence against women. Those classified as 'low' on this scale are regarded as having a lesser appreciation of the nuanced nature of violence against women and those classified as 'high' on this scale are regarded as having a more informed appreciation of the nature of violence against women.
Violence Supportive Attitudes (VSA)	VAW4, DV2b/d/f/h/j/l/n, DV6d/f-l/n/o, DV7aa-ac, DV9b_1/_2, SV1b/d/f, SV3b-d/f/g/i/k/l	An overall amalgam of these questionnaire items which measure violence supportive attitudes developed in order to provide an overarching summary variable measuring overall violence supportive attitudes.

2. Survey methodology

2.1. Methodological overview

2.1.1 Overview of the methodology used for NCAS 2013

The main point of differentiation between the methodological approach for the previous (2009) survey (see section 2.1.2) and the current (2013) survey was the use of a dual-frame sample design for the 2013 survey.

Dual-frame telephone surveys (i.e. surveys using both randomly generated landline telephone numbers and randomly generated mobile phone telephone numbers) were introduced into Australia by the Social Research Centre in 2010 (Pennay 2010). The subsequent development of this methodology in recent years led to its adoption for NCAS 2013.

The main reason a dual-frame survey was used for NCAS 2013 is that it is now well documented that only interviewing persons contactable via landline telephone numbers can result in biased survey estimates (Link & Lai 2011). This is due to the exclusion of an increasing proportion of the population residing in 'mobile phone-only' households (estimated at around 19% at the time of the survey) (ACMA 2011). Surveys of randomly generated mobile phone samples are also known to improve the representation of young persons, overseas-born persons and Indigenous Australians (Pennay & Vickers 2013), thereby making this approach even more attractive for NCAS 2013. Given these advantages, instead of generating three separate samples and conducting three separate surveys as was the case in 2009 (see below) – that is, surveys of the general community, selected Culturally and Linguistically Diverse groups and Indigenous communities – the decision was taken to conduct an expanded general community survey (increased to over 17,500 persons aged 16 years and over) using a dual-frame sample design. This provides a more robust probability sample for making general population inferences as compared with the nonprobability sample design used for elements of NCAS 2009.

Given the Commonwealth's intention to fund NCAS in 2017 and 2021, adopting a more robust probability sampling method also future-proofs the survey against anticipated increases in the size of the mobile phone-only population over time. Using a telephone survey for the Indigenous component of the 2013 survey also means that the survey mode effects (Dillman & Christian 2005)⁶ which limited comparisons between the 2009 Indigenous sample (face-to-face) and the 2009 general community sample (telephone) have been avoided.

The decision to conduct one expanded dual-frame telephone survey rather than three stand-alone surveys also resulted in substantial cost savings.

Table 2.1.1 shows the unweighted profile of the landline sample, the mobile phone sample and the mobile phone-only sample by selected characteristics. These findings clearly demonstrate the demographic, socio-economic and cultural differences between respondents interviewed via the landline frame and those interviewed via the mobile frame, including the mobile phone-only respondents.

Compared to the landline frame, mobile-only respondents are:

- younger (average age of 35 years compared to 54 years)
- more likely to be male (52% compared with 40%)
- less likely to reside in the most advantaged areas (29% compared with 34%)

⁶ Considerable evidence now exists that the choice of survey mode affects respondent answers to survey questions that are worded the same.

- more likely to be born in a non-main English speaking country (31% compared with 13%)
- more likely to be a first-generation immigrant (41% compared with 25%) and to have arrived in Australia since 2005 (56% compared with 7%).

Table 2.1.1: Unweighted sample profile by sample frame and mobile phone-only status.

		Landline	Mobile Phone	Mobile Phone only
		%	%	%
Total Sample		n=8,750	n=8,767	n=2,879
Gender	Male	40	50**	52
	Female	60	50	48
Age Group	16 to 17 years	2	1	1
	18 to 24 years	4	15**	19**
	25 to 34 years	7	22**	35**
	35 to 44 years	15	20**	18**
	45 to 54 years	19	18	13**
	55 to 64 years	23	15**	10**
	65 to 74 years	20	7**	3**
	75 years or more	12	2**	1
Mean age (years)		54	40**	35**
Socio-economic Status (Quintiles)	1 - Low (most disadvantaged)	14	12	13
	2	12	14**	14
	3	16	20**	20**
	4	22	22	23
	5 - High (most advantaged)	34	31**	29**
Birthplace	Australia	75	62**	59**
	Main English Speaking countries	12	11	11
	Other countries	13	27**	31**
Migration Status	First generation	25	38**	41**
	Second generation	17	19**	18
	Third plus generation	58	43**	40**
Language Proficiency	<i>Base: First generation Australians speak LOTE at home</i>			
	Speak English well	85	84	79**
	Does not speak English well	15	16	21**
Year of Arrival	<i>Base: First generation Australians</i>			
	Arrived before 2005	92	60	43**
	Arrived from 2005	7	39**	56**

** Result is statistically significant compared to the landline sample, $p \leq .01$

Note: Figures may not always sum to 100% as 'don't know / refused' and 'other' are not always shown.

Compared with the landline frame respondents mobile-only respondents are also:

- more likely to have graduated from university (41% compared with 34%)
- more likely to be employed (72% compared with 55%)
- less likely to live as a couple with children (24% compared with 33%) and more likely to live in a group household (15% compared with 1%)
- less likely to be retirees (5% compared with 30%) or have a disability (nett 8% compared with 14%).

Table 2.1.1: Unweighted sample profile by sample frame and mobile phone-only status. (cont.)

		Landline	Mobile Phone	Mobile Phone only
		%	%	%
Total Sample		n=8,750	n=8,767	n=2,879
Indigenous Status[#]	Indigenous	2	2	3**
	Non-Indigenous	92	98	97**
Highest Education	University or higher	34	41**	41**
	Trade, certificate or diploma	24	25	23
	Secondary or below	41	34**	34**
Employment Status	Employed	55	70**	72**
	Unemployed	3	5**	6**
	Home duties	5	5	5
	Retired	30	10**	5**
	Student	3	6**	8**
	unable to work	3	3	3
Occupation	Manager	16	14**	12**
	Professional	30	30	29
	Technicians and trade	11	14**	14**
	Community and Personal Service	15	13**	13
	Clerical and administrative	13	11**	10**
	Sales worker	6	8	8
	Machinery operator and driver	3	4**	4**
	Labourer	5	7**	9**
Family Composition Household	Lone person household	22	13**	20
	Couple only	34	27**	27**
	Couple children at home	33	40**	24**
	Lone parent children at home	6	7	8**
	Group household	1	7**	15**
	Other type of household	3	6**	6**
Gender Equality Support	Low	23	24	26**
	Medium	43	42	42
	High	35	34	33
Disability Status by Age^(a)	Disability and aged <65 years	6	7	7
	Disability and aged 65 years plus	8	2**	1**
	Does not have a disability	86	91**	92**

** Result is statistically significant compared to the landline sample, $p \leq 0.01$

[#] Weighted to independent population benchmarks.

(a) Long-term disability that reduces the amount or kind of activity that can be undertaken

Note: Figures may not always sum to 100% as 'don't know / refused' and 'other' are not always shown.

2.1.2 Overview of the methodology used for NCAS 2009

Given the emphasis on comparing the results between the 2013 and 2009 survey it is important to document the research methodology used for the 2009 survey (McGregor 2009; VicHealth 2010).

The survey research component of NCAS 2009 comprised three separate surveys:

- A general community telephone survey of 10,105 persons aged 16 years and over using a randomly generated landline sampling frame.
- A separate telephone survey of 2,501 persons who were born in, or had a parent born in, the following countries: Italy, Greece, China, Vietnam or India. This was referred to as the selected culturally and linguistically diverse communities (SCALD) sample. This survey utilised a nonprobability surname-based sampling method to construct a sampling frame. This involved drawing surnames (and associated phone numbers) from the electronic white pages likely to identify persons as belonging to one of the SCALD groups with a view to obtaining 500 interviews from each group. The choice of these groups reflected an interest in evaluating the differences between more established immigrant communities (Italian, Greek) and more recently arrived groups (Vietnamese, Chinese and Indian) as well as between groups from different world regions. The surname-based approach for this survey had a number of limitations, including the exclusion of households with unlisted telephone numbers; and the exclusion of females in the groups of interest who married into other ethnic groups and changed their surname (such as a Vietnamese women marrying a non-Vietnamese man).
- A separate face-to-face survey of 400 persons who identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders from nine locations across Australia. The four metropolitan locations were Sydney (n=80), Brisbane (n=80), Darwin (n=45) and Perth (n=45). The five regional locations were Coffs Harbour (n=35), Rockhampton (n=25), Shepparton (n=35), Bunbury (n= 30) and Cairns (n=40). The sample for the Indigenous component was generated via community consultation and networking.

While the 2009 SCALD and Indigenous surveys produced rich insights into attitudes towards violence against women in these communities, the nonprobability nature of the sampling approaches used for these two surveys imposed limits on the extent to which the findings could be generalised to the population groups of interest. Records from these samples are not used in this report.

More detail regarding the methodology employed for the 2009 surveys is available from the 2009 *Methods Report* (McGregor 2009).

2.1.3 Impact of dual-frame method on selected findings of interest

The main reason for adopting a dual-frame design for the 2013 survey was to enable the inclusion of the mobile phone-only population and thereby obtain the best possible contemporary coverage of the population and to future-proof the survey program against expected future increases in the size of the mobile phone-only population. Given the importance of maintaining time series comparisons between 2009 and 2013, the impact of the change in methodology was monitored by comparing the independently weighted 2013 landline estimates and the final 2013 dual-frame results by selected characteristics. By and large the differences are marginal and are presented in Table B4, Appendix B - technical and methodological notes. This is a positive result as it means the change to the dual-frame method has not adversely impacted the time series comparisons.

2.1.4 Sample design and stratification

The sample blend used for the 2013 survey was such that of the total 17,517 interviews undertaken 8,750 were undertaken via the landline frame and 8,767 via the mobile frame, of which 2,879 (33%) were identified as mobile phone-only sample. A disproportionate stratified sample design was used for the landline sample such that 1,000 interviews were conducted in each State/Territory (distributed across the capital city and the rest of the State/Territory on a probability proportional to size basis) with the remaining 750 interviews distributed proportional to the population amongst those states (NSW, Victoria and Queensland) under-represented by the above design.

Given that geographic parameters are not available for mobile phone numbers it is not possible to put in place any controls to manage the geographic distribution of the mobile phone sample and there is a risk that over-sampling in particular areas may occur. Analysis of the distribution of the mobile phone sample by State/Territory (Table 2.1.4) shows the geographic spread of the mobile phone sample relative to 2011 census counts (Customised Table 2011 Census of Population and Housing, Table Builder©). The distribution of the mobile phone sample by State/Territory illustrates that it matches the census counts quite closely. The only notable departure is the increased proportion of mobile phone interviews in Victoria (29%) relative to the census (25%).

The distribution of mobile phone interviews by Remoteness Area aligns reasonably well with the population distribution but shows an over-representation of interviews in major cities (78% relative to a census benchmark of 70%).

Table 2.1.4: Geographic distribution of persons aged 16 years and over – Mobile phone frame and census counts (unweighted).

		Population census 2011	Mobile Phone
		%	%
State / Territory	New South Wales	32	30
	Victoria	25	29
	Queensland	20	18
	South Australia	8	8
	Western Australia	10	11
	Tasmania	2	2
	Northern Territory	1	1
	ACT	2	2
Remoteness Area	Major city	70	78
	Inner regional	19	14
	Outer regional	9	6
	Remote	1	1
	Very remote	1	0

2.1.5 Call procedures

In 2013, as was the case in the 1995 and 2009 surveys, to further optimise survey participation, where possible, members of the landline sample frame were matched with addresses through commercially available list-matching services and a Primary Approach Letter, on ministerial letterhead, was sent. Letters were able to be sent to 14,820 households for which a current address could be obtained. This approach letter introduced the survey, encouraged participation and provided website details to sample members to assist with query resolution. The reverse side of the letter included relevant project information translated into Simplified Chinese, Greek, Hindi, Italian and Vietnamese.

The within-household selection routine used for the landline sample was the 'next birthday' method. For the mobile sample those who met the *in-scope* requirements were selected for interview. In addition to the use of a Primary Approach Letter, other strategies adopted to maximise response rates included repeated callbacks to establish contact, leaving messages on answering machines/voicemail, the operation of a 1800 number Survey Hot Line, the ability to give out details for a Departmental Contact Officer, support materials for sample members (including Frequently Asked Questions sheets) on both the Social Research Centre's and DSS' websites, interviewing in languages other than English, and calling back reluctant sample members in the hope of obtaining an interview. Where it was not possible to send a Primary Approach Letter in advance an offer was made to send respondents the letter once telephone contact was made. In addition, interviewers were provided with extensive briefing materials to assist in responding to common questions.

2.1.6 Fieldwork statistics and response rates

Fieldwork was conducted over the period 29 January to 29 May, 2013 (see section 2.1.12 for a summary of the external environment at that time) with an average interview length of 19.6 minutes.

A total of 460,643 calls were placed to 87,019 sample records to achieve 17,517 completed surveys. This equates to an interview every 26.2 calls and an average of 5.3 calls per sample record.

An internationally accepted standard for calculating response rates, as recommended by the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR 2011) is used for this study. Using the AAPOR Response Rate 3, which proportionally allocates records with an unknown outcome as either in-scope or out-of-scope based on the distribution of records with a known call outcome, the final response rate for the survey was 27%. The various AAPOR rates are shown below for the total sample, the landline frame and the mobile frame. To provide a comparative context, the 2013 response rate was also calculated on an equivalent basis as for the 2009 survey (Interviews / Interviews + Refusals). On this basis the response rate for the 2009 survey was 49.8% compared to 48.1% for the landline component of the 2013 survey. Full response rate calculations are provided in Appendix B - technical and methodological notes.

Table 2.1.6: AAPOR response rate calculations by sample frame.

	Total %	Landline Frame %	Mobile Frame %
Contact rate (AAPOR 3)	71	85	61
Cooperation rate (AAPOR 3)	48	48	49
Refusal rate (AAPOR 3)	35	43	29
Response rate (AAPOR 3)	27	33	23

2.1.7 *The survey questionnaire*

The survey measured community knowledge, attitudes and beliefs with respect to partner violence (referred to as domestic violence in the questionnaire), sexual assault, sexual harassment and stalking.

To maintain the time series the vast majority of the items included in the 2013 questionnaire were unchanged from the 2009 questionnaire (see Appendix E). As was the case in 2009, in order to keep the average interview length to manageable proportions the two longest question sets (DV6 and SV3) were split into two separate blocks and respondents were randomly allocated to either block. DV6 is a series of 15 agree/disagree statements about domestic violence and SV3 is a series of 12 agree/disagree statements about sexual assault and harassment. In any given interview respondents were randomly sequenced to answer only half of these statements.

The process utilised to inform the design of the 2013 survey instrument included:

- a review of the 2009 survey instrument by the research team and Technical Advisory Group
- formal pilot testing.

The initial pilot test for the survey was conducted between 7 and 9 January 2013 (n=50). Modifications to the survey instrument were made as a result with a view to reducing the average interview length for the main study. A supplementary pilot was carried out on 23 and 24 January 2013 (n=32), after which further refinements were made to the survey instrument.

The final 2013 survey questionnaire is included as Appendix D.

2.1.8 *Ethics*

Ethics approval for the survey was obtained from the University of Melbourne through the School of Health Sciences Advisory Group and the Behavioural and Social Sciences Human Ethics Sub-Committee. The methodology for this survey was designed according to the World Health Organization violence against women research guidelines (WHO 2005b) and was carried out according to the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research produced by the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia (NHMRC). In addition, members of the research team were bound by the Code of Professional Behaviour of the Australian Market and Social Research Society (AMSRS), which covers both the ethical requirements and standard conditions of conducting and reporting market and social research.

Verbal informed consent was obtained from all study participants and a parent or guardian of participants under the age of 18. Participants were free to withdraw from the study at any time. Informed consent extended to:

- ensuring the voluntary nature of participation was clearly understood.
- protecting the privacy and confidentiality of respondent information.
- ensuring appropriate 'critical incident' procedures were in place.

In addition to the AMSRS Code of Professional Behaviour, the Social Research Centre is bound to adhere to ASMRO Privacy Principles. The voluntary nature of participation and privacy and confidentiality were also covered by the Social Research Centre's contract with VicHealth and by the appropriate privacy laws.

To ensure the safety of individuals contacted on their mobile phones, respondents were asked whether it was safe for them to take the call at the outset with the question: *"May I just check whether or not it is safe for you to take this call at the moment? If not, I am happy to call you back when it is more convenient for you."*

In addition, sample members unable to be contacted via a pre-survey letter were offered an approach letter as part of the initial household contact undertaken by interviewers (refer back to section 2.1.5). Forty-two such letters were dispatched in response to sample member requests.

Rigorous procedures were put in place, and figured prominently in interviewer briefing sessions, regarding the handling of any mid survey crises triggered by the subject matter of the survey (such as revelations of domestic violence or sexual assault victimisation). Interviewers were instructed to log all incidents involving distressed sample members. A total of 48 issues were logged by interviewers using 'call alert forms'. These were addressed using agreed procedures, with none of the issues raised being of a nature requiring referral to the University of Melbourne Ethics Committee. The broad themes captured in these call alert forms are summarised in Appendix B - technical and methodological notes.

Weekly reports produced over the course of the data collection cycle included details of any call escalation activities and critical incidents. Fieldwork activity was monitored throughout by members of the Research Team, including members from the University of Melbourne and VicHealth.

Given the study was designed to ask questions about attitudes and beliefs, not behaviour, we did not encounter any situations where interviewers became aware of any criminal behaviour or risk of harm to individuals which required reporting to appropriate organisations. At the end of the survey all participants were offered referral phone numbers in case the interview triggered concerns for which the participant required discussion with a professional. Participants with general questions or concerns about the survey topic were referred to the then Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, one of two partners leading the research. General questions or concerns about the survey process were referred on to the manager at the Social Research Centre call centre for response.

All data will be de-identified and stored securely at the Social Research Centre until the analysis is complete, whereby it will then be transferred to VicHealth and will be accessed only by authorised research project staff and members of the public upon application to use the data for further research. Stored data will have been de-identified with a unique code assigned to each participant. Name and contact information are stored separately from any information provided as part of the study questionnaire.

2.1.9 Gender matching interviewers to respondents

In 2013, as was the case in the 1995 and 2009 surveys, interviewers and respondents were gender matched such that male respondents were interviewed by male interviewers and female respondents by female interviewers. While there is very little practical guidance in the literature about the use of gender matching for the purposes of data quality (Davis et al. 2010), it is identified as important for ethical reasons in the World Health Organization guidelines for researching violence against women (WHO 2005b), given the sensitive nature of the subject matter. The practice of gender matching was also maintained to optimise comparability between waves of the survey.

2.1.10 Interviewing in languages other than English

A total of 542 interviews were completed by bilingual interviewers in over a dozen languages other than English, with translated versions of the questionnaire being utilised for 8 language groups.

2.1.11 The use of weighted survey estimates

It is usual to weight the data collected via sample surveys in order to:

- Adjust for unequal probabilities of selection both at the unit and within-unit levels.
- Properly combine the landline and mobile phone samples.
- Compensate for the effects of non-coverage and non-response.

Weighting survey data improves the ability to draw inferences about the population based on the sample surveyed. Details of the weighting procedures are documented in Appendix B - technical and methodological notes. The three step process comprised:

1. A design weight. Calculated to adjust for the unequal probabilities of selection for mobile phone and landline sample members, and the unequal probabilities of household and within-household selection based on the number of landline telephone numbers a household uses for residential purposes; and the number of in-scope persons within each household.
2. A post-stratification weight using a Raking procedure to align the survey estimates to independent population parameters by location, gender, age, educational attainment, birthplace and telephone status.
3. The design weights and the post-stratification weights were combined, and scaled back to the sample size, to provide the final dual-frame weighting solution.

The weights were also trimmed at the 95th percentile to remove very large weights thereby reducing the overall variance and improving the overall efficiency of the weighting design.

As noted in section 1.5, the 2009 survey results used in this report have been re-weighted to more closely align with the method used for the 2013 survey. Table B3, Appendix B - technical and methodological notes shows the impact of this revision on selected 2009 data.

As also noted in section 1.5, given the level of interest in providing as accurate an understanding as possible of community attitudes to violence against women amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people the survey estimates produced for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents have been separately weighted to independent population benchmarks (see Appendix B - technical and methodological notes for further exploration).

2.1.12 External environment around the time of the survey

When interpreting the results presented in this report, in particular changes between the 2009 and 2013 surveys, aspects of the external environment which may have impacted upon community attitudes should be kept in mind. The 2013 survey was conducted at a time when Australia's first female Prime Minister, Ms Julia Gillard, was in office. Around the time of the survey there was intense community debate regarding her elevation to this position and her performance (Summers 2013). Issues related to gender featured prominently in this discussion, particularly following Ms Gillard's misogyny speech (Goldsworthy 2013) in Parliament in October 2012, which gained wide media attention in Australia and internationally.

Another significant event which may have had an impact on community sentiment in the lead-up to the 2013 survey, particularly in Victoria, was the fatal physical and sexual assault of Jill Meagher (September 2012). The circumstances of this crime attracted unprecedented public interest culminating in widespread national media coverage and a public rally in Melbourne attracting 30,000 people (McGuire 2013). The committal hearing and trial took place in March and April 2013, during the data collection period for this survey, and also attracted national media coverage.

2.2. The 2009 (revised) and 2013 sample profiles and ABS population benchmarks

This section profiles the 2009 (revised) and 2013 samples by a range of demographic and socio-economic variables and compares the sample profiles with 2011 census benchmarks. All data have been weighted in accordance with the population parameters discussed earlier in section 2.1.10.

When comparing the weighted profile of the 2013 sample with census benchmarks (Table 2.2, next page) it is evident that the weighted sample profile matches the census benchmarks very closely (noting that the population parameters used for weighting purposes include gender, age, location, educational attainment (university graduate or not), birthplace (Australian-born or overseas born from a main English speaking country versus overseas born from a non-main English speaking country) and telephone status).

Table 2.2 also shows that the 2009 (revised) and 2013 samples have very similar profiles. This means that observed changes between the 2009 and 2013 results are unlikely to be substantially attributable to any differences in the underlying demographic and socio-economic profiles of the samples. Some of the slight differences between the 2009 and 2013 samples to be mindful of when interpreting the findings of this report include:

- A slightly lower proportion of 16–17 year olds (2% in 2013 compared with 4% in 2009). This is likely due to the increased difficulty associated with obtaining parental permission to interview 16–17 year olds via a mobile phone.
- A slightly lower proportion of interviews being obtained from areas within the second quintile of socio-economic disadvantage (16% in 2013 compared with 17% in 2009, although not statistically significant).
- A slight decrease in the proportion of interviews with third generation immigrants/longer term Australians (48% in 2013 compared with 50% in 2009, although not statistically significant).
- A slightly higher proportion of interviews with university graduates (20% in 2013 compared with 16% in 2009).
- An increase in the proportion of lone person households from 10% to 13%, and a decrease in the proportion of couples with children households from 47% to 41%. This is most likely somewhat attributable to the different chance of selection weighting adjustments applied to a respondent from a couple household selected via the landline frame and a respondent from a couple household selected via the mobile frame.

These differences in the relative profiles of the samples, while slight overall, need to be taken into account when comparing the results over time.

Table 2.2: Comparative profile of the 2009 and 2013 sample profiles relative to the 2011 Census counts.

		2009 (revised) %	2013 Dual Frame %	2011 Census %
Total Sample		10,105	17,517	
Gender	Male	49	49	49
	Female	51	51	51
Age Group	16 to 17 years	4	2**	3
	18 to 24 years	12	13	12
	25 to 34 years	17	17	17
	35 to 44 years	19	18	18
	45 to 54 years	18	18	17
	55 to 64 years	14	15	15
	65 to 74 years	9	10	10
	75 years or more	8	8	8
State / Territory	New South Wales	33	31	32
	Victoria	25	25	25
	Queensland	19	20	20
	South Australia	8	8	8
	Western Australia	10	11	10
	Tasmania	2	2	2
	Northern Territory	1	1	1
	ACT	2	2	2
Remoteness Area	Major city	70	72	70
	Inner regional	18	17	18
	Outer regional	10	10	9
	Remote	1	2	1
	Very remote	0	1	1
Socio- economic Status (Quintiles)	1 - Low (most disadvantaged)	15	15	
	2	17	16	
	3	20	20	
	4	21	22	
	5 - High (most advantaged)	27	27	
Birthplace	Australia	67	67	66
	Main English Speaking countries	9	10	34
	Other countries	24	23	
Migration Status	First generation	33	33	34
	Second generation	17	19	66
	Third plus generation	50	48	
Language Proficiency	<i>Base: First generation Australians speak LOTE at home</i>			
	Speak English well		80	
	Does not speak English well		20	
Year of Arrival	<i>Base: First generation Australians</i>			
	Arrived before 2005		71	70
	Arrived from 2005		28	30

** Result is statistically significant compared to the 2009 result, $p \leq .01$

Note: Figures may not always sum to 100% as 'don't know / refused' and 'other' are not always shown

Table 2.2: Comparative profile of the 2009 and 2013 sample profiles relative to the 2011 Census counts (cont.).

		2009 (revised) %	2013 Dual Frame %	2011 Census %
Total Sample		10,105	17,517	
Indigenous Status[#]	Indigenous	2	2	2
	Non-Indigenous	98	98	98
Highest Education	University or higher	16	20**	19
	Trade, certificate or diploma	28	32**	81
	Secondary or below	55	48**	
Employment Status	Employed	61	62	58
	Unemployed	7	5**	3
	Home duties	6	6	
	Retired	18	18	39
	Student	6	6	
	unable to work	2	3**	
Occupation	Manager	14	15	13
	Professional	21	21	21
	Technicians and trade	18	16	14
	Community and Personal Service	12	13	10
	Clerical and administrative	14	12	15
	Sales worker	10	9	9
	Machinery operator and driver	3	5**	7
	Labourer	7	8	9
Other	3	1	1	
Family Composition Household	Lone person household	10	13**	
	Couple only	27	28	
	Couple children at home	47	41**	
	Lone parent children at home	8	7	
	Group household	3	5**	
	Other type of household	5	6	
Disability Status by Age^(a)	Disability and aged <65 years		7	
	Disability and aged 65 years plus		5	
	Does not have a disability		88	

** Result is statistically significant compared to the 2009 result, $p \leq .01$

[#] Weighted to independent population benchmarks

(a) Long-term disability that reduces the amount or kind of activity that can be undertaken

Note: Figures may not always sum to 100% as 'don't know / refused' and 'other' are not always shown

3. Literature review

As part of the earlier development of this national survey a systematic literature review was conducted to understand the role of community attitudes and knowledge in relation to violence against women and the factors influencing them (Flood & Pease 2006, 2009). A theoretical and conceptual framework was developed to inform the ongoing development, analysis and reporting of the survey. To ensure that the 2013 wave of the survey was informed by the most recently published literature in the field a review was undertaken using the theoretical and conceptual framework developed in the original review. Key themes are summarised from the earlier review and the more recent literature as they relate to the three areas addressed in the survey:

- knowledge of the patterns and dynamics of violence against women and the law
- community attitudes
- responses to violence against women.

3.1. Background

In the introduction to this report it was indicated that violence against women is widely recognised as common and as having serious consequences for women, their children, individual businesses, national economies and civic society (WHO 2002).

Violence against women is a complex and multi-layered phenomena and is understood in the context of a convergent combination of individual characteristics in conjunction with community and organisational influences (including community attitudes). These are in turn underpinned by broader social structures and public policies perpetuated through the media, law and social norms (UN 2006, 2012c; VicHealth 2007; WHO 2010; WHO & London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine 2010). All of this sits against the historic and contemporary context in which power and resources are unequally distributed between men and women in both public and private life and supported by socially constructed gender roles, relationships and identities. While varying in the degree and manner in which they are manifest, these structural and gender divisions characterise most contemporary societies (Johnson, Ollus & Nevala 2008, p. 3; UN Women 2011; UNDP 2013; World Economic Forum 2013). This inequality, and the elements supporting it, is key to understanding violence against women. This violence is both a consequence of and serves to maintain gendered dynamics of power and control (Johnson et al. 2008, pp. 168–169; McPhail et al. 2007; True 2012, pp. 183–183; UN 2006, pp. 28–29, 2012c; WHO 2010; Yllo 1993).

Gender inequality and gendered roles, relationships and identities are not the result of biological or genetic differences between the sexes, but rather are socially constructed (Gilmore 1990). This is evidenced both by variations in gender roles, relationships and identities between societies, as well as the way in which these change as one society comes into contact with another, for example through processes of immigration or colonisation (Elliston 2004; Gilmore 1990; Simister & Mehta 2010). Gender roles, relationships and identities are not fixed, but rather are responsive to changing social and economic circumstances (Elliston 2004). They are understood to be maintained via structural arrangements (e.g. pay differentials between men and women); social practices (in particular the different ways in which male and female children are socialised); and cultural norms (e.g. the belief that women are best equipped to care for young children) (Flood 2009b). These different ways in which gender inequality, roles, relationships and identities are maintained help to explain why rates of violence against women may be relatively high even in societies with a relatively equal distribution of material resources between men and women.

There is a large and complex body of research on the relationship between violence against women and the different dimensions described above (gender inequalities in power and resources in relationships and

public life and distinct gender roles and identities) and the levels at which they are manifest (in individuals and their relationships, through to organisations, communities and at the broader societal level). Although there are occasional contrary findings, taken together the studies indicate a consistent relationship between the various markers of gender equality and violence against women (True 2012; UN 2006; UN 2012c; VicHealth 2007; WHO 2010; WHO & London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine 2010).

3.2. The link between gender equality and violence against women

While there is global variation in gender roles and identities, in most societies these are hierarchically organised such that masculine roles and identities are associated with greater power and authority (UN 2006). Again while variable over time and between societies, masculine identity is commonly associated with traits such as strength, independence, confidence and aggression, while feminine identity is commonly associated with traits such as patience, sensitivity, passivity, dependence and moral purity (Brannon pp. 46-70). Women and men internalise these identities as part of their views both of themselves and each other (Cook & Cusak 2010).

There are a number of key pathways through which gender inequalities, and gendered roles and identities, are understood to create the conditions for gender-based violence:

- The emphasis on aggression and conquest in male socialisation may lead to a greater proclivity and support for violence among some men, and a greater social acceptance of men's use of violence (Flood & Pease 2006). As discussed below, men who adhere more strongly to traditional notions of masculine identity are more likely to hold violence supportive attitudes and to use violence. Attitudes supportive of violence against women have been found to be particularly prevalent in highly masculinised environments, such as some male college fraternities and sporting clubs (Flood & Pease 2006).
- The sense of entitlement associated with the masculine gender role may result in the use of force by some men to secure their will, particularly in intimate relationships, and its acceptance and legitimisation in the wider community and by key institutions (Gilgun & McLeod 1999; Hill & Fischer 2001).
- Violence, or the threat of violence, may be used to re-establish the perceived natural 'gender order', with men's violence towards women often occurring and more likely to be supported in circumstances where women have or are perceived to have breached socially defined feminine roles (Reidy et al. 2009). For example, violence against women has been found to increase in societies undergoing rapid economic change where women have begun to play a more prominent role in paid work and civic society (Chon 2013; Jewkes 2002; Simister & Mehta 2010). Similarly, studies show that people are more likely to justify rape in circumstances where women are perceived to have transgressed standards of 'moral purity' (Whatley 2005).
- The importance attached to masculinity may result in the use of violence as a means of restoring masculine identity when it is under threat. For example, violence against women has been found to increase when economic conditions compromise men's role as breadwinner (True 2012; Weissman 2007). Some researchers attribute this to men's sense of entitlement and their desire to dominate women, while others see it as evidence of the fragility of masculine identity (for example, see Carrington & Hogg 2007).
- The lower social standing accorded women may render them vulnerable to being perceived, and to perceiving themselves, as justified targets of violence, hostility, exploitation and abuse (Forbes et al. 2004; Masser et al. 2006; Ryan & Kanjorski 1998; Sakalh 2001).

- Some feminine gender identities may involve the denigration, objectification and sexualisation of women, again potentially casting women as targets for hostility and exploitation (American Psychological Association 2010; Papadopoulous 2010).
- Gender inequalities in access to power and resources may increase women's risk of violence and compromise their capacity to seek safety once violence has occurred, rendering them vulnerable to repeated and escalating violence (Humphreys 2007a).

This understanding suggests that while violent behaviour is ultimately enacted by individuals, it is shaped and supported by social conditions.

3.3. Intersecting factors

While gender inequality plays a pivotal role in the aetiology of violence against women, there are variations in patterns of violence over time, and between groups, areas or nations (Garcia-Moreno et al. 2006). Such differences are explained by variation in the historical and contemporary conditions that shape gender relations in particular societies and communities (Hunnicut 2009; True 2012; Weissman 2007). A significant factor in this is the extent and nature of economic and human development. Gender equality commonly improves alongside improving economic and human development (Caprioli et al. 2009; Hausman et al. 2012). At the same time, economic and human development are dependent on the empowerment of women (Hausman et al. 2012; KPMG International 2012; WHO 2005a). However, the relationship between economic development and gender equality is not a linear one. The nature of development also matters. For example, some countries with very high levels of economic development have a larger 'gap' between the status of men and women than is the case in countries with lower levels of development. The magnitude of this gap has been found to be associated with the prevalence of violence against women (True 2012). Other research documents the differential impact of economic restructuring on men and women at both a national and global level and its impact on increasing risk factors for violence (Weissman 2007).

Also influential are other forms of social oppression such as racism, colonialism or discrimination on the grounds of disability or age. Communities affected by these forces experience relatively higher rates of violence against women (see discussion below). This suggests the importance of understanding violence against women using an intersectional approach (Crenshaw 1991). This approach enables diverse sources of oppression (such as gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, ability and class) to be analysed as they 'intersect' (interact or interlock) with one another. These multiple and different forms of oppression intersect to create what intersectionality theorists describe as 'unique and distinct' circumstances which are more powerful than the sum of their parts (Dhamoon, 2011, p. 231). As discussed further below, intersecting forms of disadvantage impact upon the perpetration of violence, women's risks of victimisation and upon the ways in which others respond to both perpetrators and victims.

Some experts believe that poor economic and social conditions increase stresses on individuals and relationships (for example, poverty may act as 'fodder' for marital conflict) (Smith & Weatherburn 2013; Weatherburn 2011; Wright & Benson 2010a, p. 792). However, others suggest that these factors are significant because they intersect with the influences of gender equality and gendered roles to compound the impact of gendered power differentials, or compromise men's capacity to meet gendered role expectations (Heise 1998, Jewkes 2002; 2012; True 2012).

Economic deprivation is also commonly associated with conditions of social disorganisation in which social cohesion, trust and collective efficacy are weakened (Wright & Benson 2010a). 'Social disorganization theory' (Sampson & Groves 1989; Sampson & Wilson 1995) posits that low community/neighbourhood cohesion occurs due to the combined effects of concentrated socio-economic disadvantage, institutional disinvestment and residential instability. This in turn leads to lower levels of unity and regulation (Sampson

& Groves 1989; Sampson & Raudenbush 1999), conditions that tend to be associated with greater levels of crime and interpersonal violence (Bursik & Grasmick 1993; Miles-Doan 1998; Patillo 1998). These conditions contribute to the development of negative beliefs about personal responsibility for intervening to assist others subject to violence, and the likely efficacy of doing so. Further, reduced social connectedness reduces the likelihood of being exposed to people likely to disapprove of the use of violence. Such conditions are understood to weaken the strength of formal and informal sanctions against the use of violence generally and violence against women in particular (Browning 2002; Frye 2007).

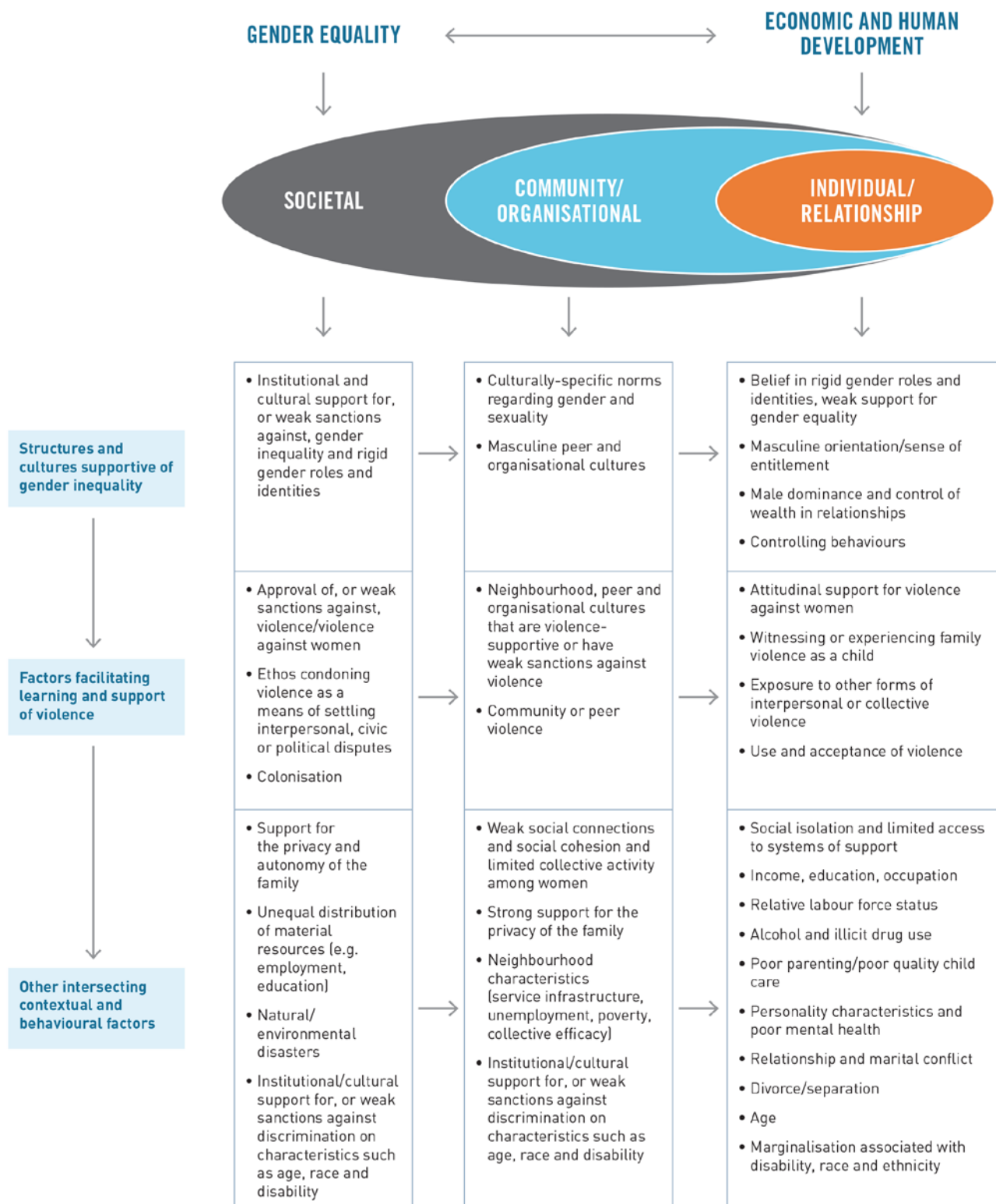
While social disorganisation theory is commonly applied to understand violence in neighbourhoods experiencing entrenched disadvantage, its effects are also graphically illustrated in the marked increase in violence against women that occurs in the extreme disruption to social and economic conditions during war and in the aftermath of natural and other disasters (Anastario et al. 2009; Fothergill 2008). These are conditions that have been found to both compound gender inequality and to be associated with the breakdown of formal and informal controls against gender-based violence (Bolin et al. 1998; Dasgupta et al. 2010; Enarson & Meyreles 2004).

3.4. Ecological model of violence against women

Researchers in the public health field have worked through these complex and intersecting causal dynamics to develop an 'ecological model', whereby factors contributing to the perpetration of violence against women are grouped according to individual, social and cultural domains (UN 2006, 2012c; WHO 2002, 2010; WHO & London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine 2010).

Drawing on the ecological model, VicHealth developed a Violence Prevention Framework (2007) identifying three intersecting realms of influence including: 1) gender inequality and the social and cultural structures which support it; 2) the contexts in which violence against women is learned and internalised; and 3) particular contextual situations and behaviours that may increase the risks or probability of violence (VicHealth 2007). These are illustrated in Figure 3.3. Within this Framework a range of factors are identified as contributing to violence against women. Among these is attitudinal support both for the perpetration of violence and for collusive behaviour which is supportive of violence against women (Flood & Pease 2006, 2009; VicHealth 2007).

Figure 3.3: Understanding violence against women – an ecological model



3.5. The relationship between attitudes and actions

The study of attitudes has its roots in social psychology (Allport 1935, 1968). Early understanding assumed that human behaviour was driven by attitudes (Thomas & Znaniecki 1918; Watson 1913) and therefore were seen as important concepts to measure (Likert 1932; Thurstone 1928). Attempts to measure a direct link between attitude and behaviour have led historically to mixed results (for a review see Ajzen & Fishbein 2005) eventually leading to a refined understanding of a complex relationship mediated by social context and social norms (Defleur & Westie 1958; Deutscher 1969; LaPiere 1934), as well as motivation, opportunity and strength of attitude conviction (Fazio 1986, 1990; Fazio & Towles-Schwen 1999).

Attitudes are understood to be socially constructed, that is, influenced by social interactions with family, peers and influential members of society (Clausen 1968; Habermas 1992; Mead 1913). Over time, attitudes are fuelled by the reactions and responses from family, peers and members of our social networks, as well as the wider community translating into both implicit and explicit attitudes (Albarracin et al. 2005; Alwin et al. 1991; Baumeister et al. 2001; Newcomb 1943; Watson 1913). Attitudes are now recognised as an ongoing evaluation of situations, experiences and people; they are seen not as stable and unmoveable, but malleable depending on knowledge, experience, understanding and social context (Ajzen & Fishbein 2005).

Attitudes and behaviour may each influence the other and they may or may not be the same (Ajzen & Fishbein 2005; Bassili & Brown 2005; Fazio 1990; Nosek et al. 2002); both may change according to social context and social desirability, strength of conviction and opportunity to act. Most simply, individuals may hold an attitude but behave differently according to social context; and conversely may behave one way but express an attitude in contrast to their action (Briñol & Petty 2005; Flood & Pease 2006, 2009).

Early attempts to measure links between attitude and behaviour were not systematically supported as they focused on linking specific attitudes to specific behaviours (Ajzen & Fishbein 2005). However, Fishbein and Ajzen published a seminal piece of research identifying that when multiple behaviours representative of a particular attitude are measured together, across a population holding that attitude, the correlation between the final *aggregate behaviour scale* and attitude is strong. In this case, the scale comprised 100 measures and the correlation was between .61 and .71 (Fishbein & Ajzen 1974, p. 63). Based on this work and others to follow (e.g. Weigel & Newman 1976; Werner 1978) it is now widely accepted that attitudes can predict behaviour if the behaviour is broadly representative of the domain of interest. That is, while individual behaviours are influenced by a range of factors in the surrounding environment, including context, peer support, opportunity and other general attitudes, combining a range of similar behaviours across an attitude domain controls for the external influences on specific behaviours (Ajzen & Fishbein 2005).

To illustrate implementation of this theory we can draw on work in the field of racism which also compares both implicit and explicit attitudes (Ajzen & Fishbein 2005). This work explores why, despite a reduction in expressed prejudice in western industrialised countries, some racial groups continue to be discriminated against and experience disadvantage. As is the case for violence against women, attitudinal support for racism is one among many population-level factors responsible for racism (VicHealth 2010). However, it is clearly associated. Work to document and understand this relationship illustrates the way in which contradictions exist between expressed (explicit) attitudes unsupportive of racism and implicitly held attitudes which translate into behaviour that is racism supportive. The understanding is that as blatant expressions of racism become increasingly socially unacceptable, the measurement of attitudes has become subject to social desirability biases. That is, respondents provide responses they believe are socially appropriate, as opposed to those that reflect the views they actually hold, but at the same time may exhibit behaviours which are racist and in common with the socially sanctioned behaviour (Fazio & Olson 2003). At the same time, attitudinal expressions of racism have become more subtle or covert and hence more

difficult to measure (Coates 2008). Similar conclusions have been drawn by researchers exploring discriminatory attitudes towards women, or sexism (Martinez et al. 2010; Tougas et al. 1995).

These patterns are also likely to be relevant in the case of attitudes towards violence against women. While there have been suggestions of an improvement in explicitly violence supportive attitudes overtime (ANOP 1995); this does not appear to have been paralleled by a similarly marked reduction in the prevalence of violence (ABS 2013b). However, there is evidence of continuing support for attitudes taking a more subtle form, such as excusing perpetrator behaviour on the basis of factors believed to be beyond their control or attributing at least some of the responsibility for violence to women (Grubb & Turner 2012; McGregor 2009; Newcombe et al. 2008; Suarez & Gadalla 2010; Taylor & Mouzos 2006; VicHealth 2010).

3.5.1 Attitudes and social norms

The discussion above is framed by the understanding that social context influences attitude formation. It is also understood that attitude formation and social context form a circular relationship. That is, while attitudes are influenced by the people we form relationships with, we are also drawn to form relationships with others of similar or sympathetic attitudes (Prislin & Wood 2005). The relationship between attitudes and social context may be magnified if a voice of authority reinforces particular attitudes in public formats seemingly giving support and credence to attitudes of particular leanings. This form of influence can be reformative in changing attitudes that may be harmful or in reinforcing positive attitudes, but if used irresponsibly, or without consideration of impact, can also compromise advances made by giving credence to retrograde attitudes.

When this cycle is multiplied within and across the community, in particular through repetitive media cycles, expressed attitudes are influential on the formation of collective social consensus or acceptable social norms within the community (Cialdini & Trost 1998; Newby-Clark et al. 2002).

Social norms influence the way in which institutions respond, the way in which individuals seek help and, of particular interest to this research, ultimately shape the understanding of violence against women (Flood & Pease 2006, 2009; Wendt 2009a). Together, learned beliefs become norms and values and are often referred to as 'cultures'. In this context cultures can pertain to a range of social entities, such as teams, organisations, geographic communities and regions, corporations, birth place groups, and whole nations. Culture is widely recognised as dynamic and continually changing, influenced by people's beliefs and the demands of their environment (Spencer-Oatey 2012; US Department of Health and Human Services 2001).

Negative social norms in relation to violence against women can result in a 'culture of silence' where victims are blamed and violence is justified, excused, trivialised, denied, minimised or hidden from view (Fergus 2012; UN 2006; VicHealth 2010, p. 16). When violence supportive community attitudes become embedded in the social framework they influence the perpetration of violence, the way in which women and those around them respond to it, and inhibit broader efforts to eliminate violence (Flood & Pease 2006, 2009; Wendt 2009a).

Attitudes that are supportive of violence against women are discussed in greater detail in sections 6 and 7 of this report, and include attitudes that justify, excuse, trivialise or minimise this violence or shift responsibility for violent behaviour from the perpetrator to the victim.

There is a strong body of evidence linking attitudes with violence against women, whether via their direct influence on the responses of individuals, or via their contribution to social norms. First, such attitudes influence men's use of violence against women (Abrahams et al. 2006; Foshee et al. 2008; Flood & Pease 2006, 2009). At the individual level, men who hold violence supportive attitudes are more likely to perpetrate violence as compared with men who do not hold such attitudes (Abrahams et al. 2006; Bohner et al. 2006; Foshee et al. 2008; Raiford et al. 2012; Scott & Straus 2007). In addition, there is some evidence

to suggest that men attending programs for their use of violence against women hold particularly strong attitudes which are supportive of violence against women. It is these attitudes which may prevent rehabilitation and support re-offending (Lila et al. 2008; Scott & Straus 2007; Weldon & Gilchrist 2012; see also Bonomi et al. 2011), particularly if community and social norms regarding accountability for violent behaviour are also weak.

Second, holding violence supportive attitudes influences whether or not victims disclose violence, whether they seek help and whether they report to police (Egan & Wilson 2011; Giles et al. 2005; Gracia, Gracia & Lila 2008; Weiss 2009). Victim's perceptions of the attitudes of others have also been found to influence help-seeking and reporting, with those perceiving others to hold violence supportive attitudes being less likely to disclose, because they fear that they will be blamed or stigmatised or that disclosure is unlikely to be effective (Ahrens 2006; Flood & Pease 2006, 2009). Holding violence supportive attitudes has also been found to increase the likelihood of long-term psychological and emotional effects and to inhibit recovery from violence (Flood & Pease 2006; 2009; Giles et al. 2005; Weiss 2010). Holding these attitudes may also render women vulnerable to re-victimisation (Miller et al. 2007).

Attitudes have also been found to influence the responses of families, friends and professionals to whom women turn for assistance. Negative attitudes, in particular victim-blaming, contribute to less empathy and support to victims of violence (Giles et al. 2005; Flood & Pease 2006; 2009), which may in turn impact on recovery (Giles et al. 2005; Guggisberg 2008; Humphreys 2008). People who hold violence supportive attitudes have also been found to be less likely to report that they are willing to intervene when witnessing violence or its antecedents (McMahon 2010; Powell 2011).

Research demonstrates that poor understanding of violence against women and negative attitudes contribute to poor outcomes when women seek help in the health system (Anderson & Quinn 2008; Flood & Pease 2006, 2009; Häggblom et al. 2005; Hegarty et al. 2012; Spangaro et al. 2010; Thapar-Björkert & Morgan 2010) or redress through the criminal justice system (Bieneck & Krahé 2011; DeJong et al. 2008; Lee et al. 2012; Meyer 2011b). In particular, studies on the behaviour of jurors suggest that they often draw on rape myths in their assessment of perpetrator guilt (Ellison & Munro 2009a & b; Wenger & Bornstein 2006) and that attitudes and beliefs are more influential in their judgements than the facts of the case (Taylor 2007).

Violence against women has been found to be more common in communities in which violence supportive attitudes are prevalent (Bleeker & Murnen 2005; Locke & Mahalik 2005). Both men's proclivity for violence (Abbey et al. 2006, 2007; Bohner et al. 2006) and whether bystanders will intervene in violence (Fabiano et al. 2003; Brown & Messman-Moore 2010) are influenced by their perceptions of the attitudes of those around them.

Community attitudes also influence the development of policies and programs to respond to and prevent the problem of violence against women. Countries with strong civic society groups, in particular feminist groups, concerned about violence against women tend to have better legal and policy frameworks to prevent violence and to respond to its impacts (Htun & Weldon 2012). In part this is achieved through the direct impact of civic advocacy on government decision making. However, these groups also influence policy indirectly by shifting social norms and mobilising public opinion (Htun & Weldon 2012).

Measuring and addressing community attitudes is important to inform work to prevent violence against women. Prevention is generally based around three tiers of response including: intervention once violence has occurred; early intervention at the first signs of violence; and primary prevention before violence occurs (see Glossary and Terminology). Critical to both intervention and primary prevention are: improving access to services, promoting and supporting help-seeking, as well as addressing structures and cultures at the organisational, community and societal levels that shape violence and responses to it (Fergus 2012;

Frye 2007; VicHealth 2010). Given the relationship between attitudes and social norms, ongoing measurement is also important to gauge progress in preventing violence against women.

In summary, it is important to understand attitudes towards violence against women as part of a complex causal chain. They are among a range of factors contributing to violence. Their relative contribution to prevalence will depend on the social context, and the presence of other relevant risk factors. While attitudes are important, they cannot be abstracted from the social contexts in which they are learned and shaped. These contexts similarly influence whether attitudes are manifest in behaviours. Understanding of these broader factors is important for policy development and practice as it suggests that strategies focussed on changing attitudes alone (e.g. community campaigns) are likely to meet with limited success, unless they are accompanied by measures to address factors underlying their development and determining whether they are expressed in behaviour. Moreover attitudinal change is but one part of the comprehensive strategy that will be required to address violence against women.

3.6. Knowledge of violence against women

The NCAS also includes a number of items to gauge knowledge of violence against women.

Research on attitudes towards a range of phenomena shows that there is a relationship between an individual's understanding of an issue and their attitudes towards it (Azjen & Fishbein 2005; Chaiken & Trope 1999; Fazio 1990).

Knowledge of violence has also been found to influence women's responses. Women are less likely to report violence that does not fit with narrow definitions of violence (e.g. as involving overt physical violence or forced sex) (Flood & Pease 2006). Women victims of rape whose understanding of the law is poor have been found to be more likely to blame themselves than those with an accurate understanding of the law (Miller et al. 2007).

Knowledge of violence against women is important to strengthen responses of families and friends of women affected by violence, as well as to engage the wider community in prevention efforts (Carlson & Worden 2005; McMahan & Baker 2011; O'Neil & Morgan 2010). The role of the law in setting new social norms is dependent on it being widely understood in the community (Salazar et al. 2003).

Knowledge is conceptually distinguished from attitudes in this report, and survey findings pertaining to these two categories of questions are reported separately. However, this distinction is seldom made in the literature. Accordingly many of the findings from the literature discussed in section 3.8 below, on factors influencing the formation of attitudes, also apply to knowledge.

3.7. Responses to violence against women

A third area addressed in the NCAS concerns the way in which people respond to violence they witness and the factors informing and facilitating action. This reflects a growing interest in harnessing the efforts of people who witness violence and its antecedents as bystanders in prevention effort (Powell 2011, 2012; McDonald & Flood 2012).

A bystander is one who observes violence or behaviours or conditions that may contribute to the problem. The objective in recent work has been to explore ways in which bystanders can be encouraged to respond to help address the problem, or to be what some researchers have called 'pro-social' bystanders (Powell 2011).

Bystanders can be engaged at each level of prevention introduced above and in the Glossary to this report. In 'tertiary intervention', this might involve calling the police or taking action when it is safe to do so in relation to a specific incident of violence. Bystanders can support 'early intervention' by talking to a perpetrator about his controlling behaviour or responding sensitively to a victim disclosing violence. In the

case of 'primary prevention', bystanders have the potential to strengthen the conditions that work against violence occurring in the first place. This might involve challenging sexist remarks or jokes that normalise violence towards or disrespect of women or, at the broader level, challenging degrading images of women in advertising or campaigning for improved laws related to violence (Powell 2011, 2012)

The interest in encouraging pro-social bystander behaviour has grown, recognising that only a small proportion of women subject to violence report to the police. Similarly, many of the antecedents of violence towards women occur in everyday contexts beyond the gaze of those in official positions responsible for sanctioning against them, such as workplace human resource personnel or sports club officials.

This interest also recognises the role of underlying social norms relating to gender roles and identities in the perpetration of violence against women. Many of the behaviours reflecting these norms are not against the law. However, there is evidence to suggest that it is possible to challenge them via social sanctions. For example, studies show that men's rape proclivity and their preparedness to challenge violence perpetrated by others is influenced by their perceptions of what their peers think about sexually predatory behaviour (Abbey et al 2007; Bohner et al. 2006; Brown & Messman-Moore 2010, Fabiano et al. 2003). These studies have led to an increased interest in strengthening pro-social peer behaviour. Given evidence of the particular role that masculine peer cultures play in the occurrence of violence against women (see 3.8.1 and 3.8.2 below), there has been a particular emphasis on harnessing pro-social behaviour among men (Powell 2012).

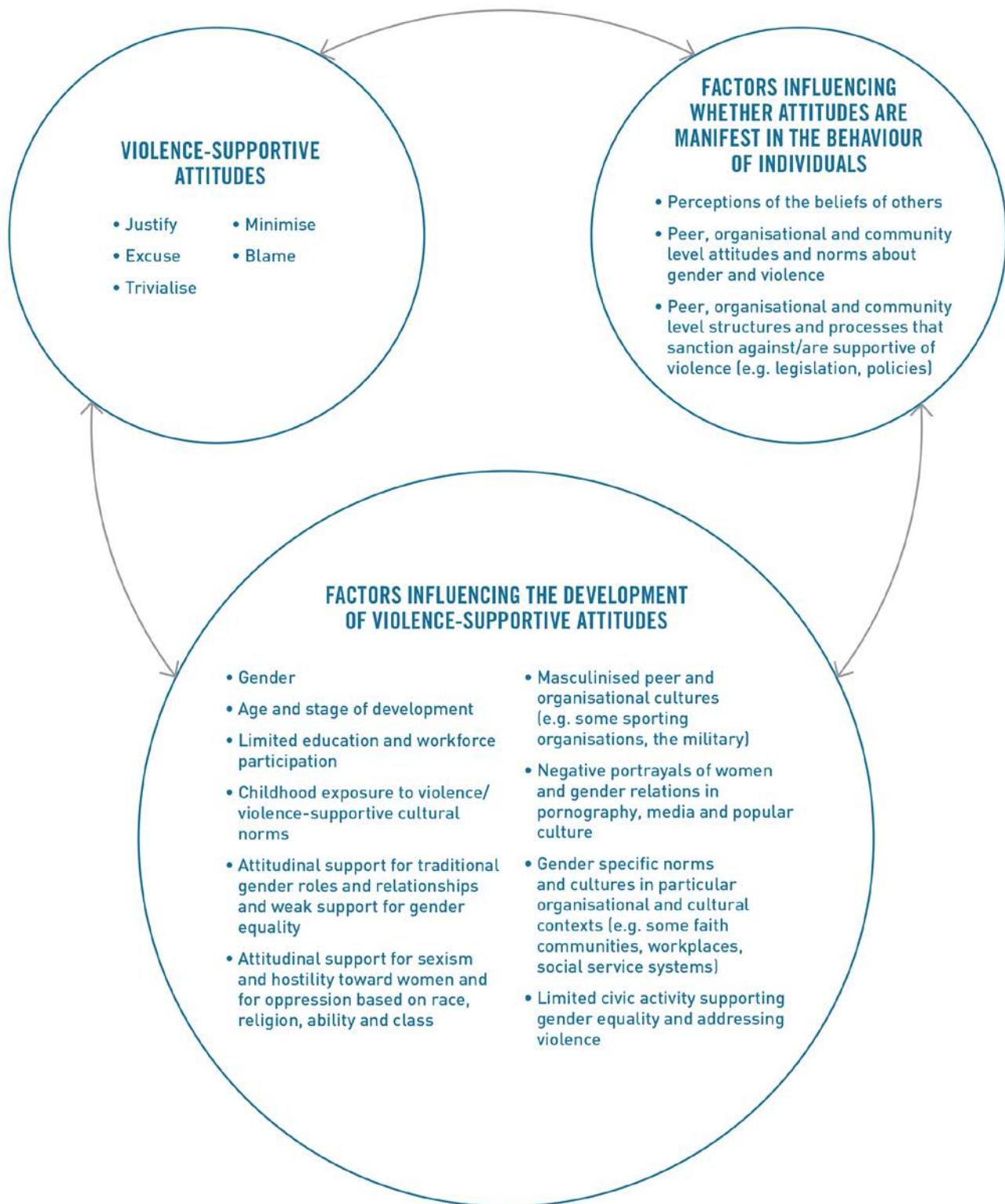
Research into the role of bystanders suggests that bystander inclination is influenced by a number of key factors including their own attitudes towards violence against women, their perception of the attitudes of others and their belief that action is likely to be effective (Powell 2012). The capacity to take informed action is also influenced by one's knowledge of sources of assistance.

3.8. Factors influencing attitudes

As is the case with violence itself, attitudes towards violence against women cannot be attributed to any one factor alone. Rather, they are framed by the interplay between multiple factors at individual, relationship, organisational, community and societal levels (Flood & Pease 2006, p. 20; 2009; Prislin & Wood 2005). There are two overarching and intersecting sets of influence (Flood & Pease 2006, 2009). The first is the way in which gender roles, relations and identities are constructed within particular community, organisational and regional and national cultures. The second is prior exposure to violence – both generalised violence and violence against women – in one's family, peer group, or society. These environments are understood to act as contexts in which attitudinal acceptance of violence may be learned (Bevan & Higgins 2002). Repeated exposure to violence may ultimately have the effect of 'normalising' violence, such that individuals either fail to recognise their experience as violence or perceive violent behaviour as normal (Flood & Pease 2006, p. 33; 2009). It is important to note that violence occurs in particular contexts in which people are exposed not only to violence, but to other norms, including those pertaining to gender relations. Further, as discussed earlier, the use of violence in all its forms is itself a gendered phenomenon, with men being more likely to both perpetrate it and to be subject to it (ABS 2013b). This suggests that it is the intersecting influences of norms about violence and those about gender roles and relations that shape attitudes towards violence against women.

The factors influencing attitudes are summarised in Figure 3.6. This Figure also illustrates the concept introduced earlier: that is, that the primary influences on whether attitudes are manifest in behaviours are the presence of formal and informal social norms, which are themselves influenced by the collective impact of attitudes.

Figure 3.6: The role of violence supportive attitudes against women



Source: Based on Flood & Pease 2006; VicHealth 2010.

3.8.1 Individual-level factors

Attitudes towards gender roles and identities

As indicated above, there is a relationship between the prevalence of violence against women and the construction of gender roles, relations and identities. This relationship is similarly manifest in attitudes, with evidence indicating that attitudes towards violence against women are linked to, and nested within, attitudes towards gender.

A consistent finding is that people who hold less egalitarian and more rigid attitudes towards gender are more likely to hold attitudes that are supportive of violence against women. This includes attitudes that reflect stereotypical notions about appropriate roles and identities for men and women (Glick & Fisk 1997; Tougas et al. 1995); that endorse the unequal sharing of power and responsibility between the sexes in public or private life (National Crime Prevention 2001); as well as attitudes that are hostile towards or objectify women (Chapleau et al. 2007; Cohn et al. 2009; Durán et al. 2010; Glick & Fisk 1997; Masser et al. 2006; Rebeiz & Harb 2010; Yamawaki et al. 2007). A low level of attitudinal support for gender equality was found to be the strongest and most consistent predictor of violence supportive attitudes in the 2006 Victorian survey (p. xiv) and the 2009 NCAS (McGregor 2009, p. 54; Taylor & Mouzos 2006; VicHealth 2006, 2010).

The association between attitudes towards gender inequality and gender roles and identities and violence supportive attitudes is also evident in studies of immigrants from non-western cultural backgrounds on their attitudes in these domains (Yamawaki & Tschanz 2005). These studies find that differences in the strength of violence supportive attitudes are mediated by differences in traditional gender role orientations (Yamawaki & Tschanz 2005). Similarly a study exploring the relationship between acculturation and attitudes towards both gender and violence against women among South-East Asian men in Canada (Bhanot & Senn 2007) found that attitudes supportive of violence against women were less strongly held among men who were more acculturated, and that this relationship was fully mediated by changes in gender role attitudes (i.e. attitudes becoming more egalitarian).

As discussed further in section 3.8.2, this does not necessarily mean that violence decreases as immigrants acculturate, since acculturation may also be associated with the loss of protective factors and exposure to new risks in countries of immigrant settlement.

Gender and orientations toward gender and gender relations

Overall, men are more likely than women to hold attitudes that are supportive of violence against women, (Anderson & Quinn 2008; Aosved & Long 2006; Ben-David & Schneider 2005; Black & Gold 2008; Boakye 2009; Carlson & Worden 2005; Dunlap et al. 2012; Grubb & Harrower 2008, 2009; Haj-Yahia et al. 2012; Lee et al. 2007; Nagel et al. 2005; Rani & Bonu 2009; Sinclair 2012; Worden & Carlson 2005). Men are more likely than women to endorse rape myths including victim-blaming attitudes (see Suarez & Gadalla 2010 and Grubb & Turner 2012 for reviews), while women are less likely to believe that violence can be excused or justified and more likely to believe that the impacts of violence are serious (McGregor 2009). Sex of the respondent was among the stronger demographic indicators of violence supportive attitudes in the 2006 Victorian survey and the 2009 NCAS (VicHealth 2006, p. 27, and 2010, p. 56).

The greater proportion of men holding violence supportive attitudes is evidence of the link between male socialisation and violence against women, and may also suggest that such attitudinal support serves some men's interests (Flood & Pease 2006, 2009). Nevertheless, substantial proportions of those found to have violence supportive attitudes are women and studies have found gender differences to be modest on some measures (Carlson & Worden 2005). This suggests that while gender is relevant, as indicated above, gender orientations are more influential.

Two related explanations are proposed in the literature for some women holding attitudes that are contrary to their interests. First, people experiencing the effects of inequality may be particularly prone to internalising negative attitudes about themselves. This process, referred to as 'internalised oppression', has been found to occur on the basis of a number of forms of social oppression including racism (Lipsky 1987; Pyke 2010), sexism (Calogero & Jost 2011; Pheterson 1986) and disabilism (Campbell 2008; Dowse et al. 2013; Healey 2013; WWDA 2007). Internalised oppression is based on the notion that when people are discriminated against over a long period of time they begin to incorporate the myths and misinformation about their group as part of their internal view of themselves. Internalisation functions on an individual basis, when a person believes discriminatory views about themselves, and subsequently lowers their expectations of themselves and of the ways they will be treated by others (potentially increasing vulnerability to violence). It functions at a group level when erroneous beliefs held by individuals about their own group are turned in on one another. As discussed further below, women experiencing intersecting forms of oppression may be especially vulnerable to internalisation of negative views about themselves.

A second, related explanation posed in the psychology literature is adherence to 'just world' beliefs. The 'just world' hypothesis was proposed by Lerner (1980) as a means adopted by some individuals to deal with their vulnerability to injustice (cited in Hammond et al. 2010). Lerner proposed that when threatened by forces beyond their control, some individuals may adopt the view that the world is a just place in which you 'get what you deserve: good things happen to good people, and bad things happen to bad people'. Applied to violence against women, this involves locating responsibility for violence in the behaviour of certain women (e.g. those who dress 'provocatively' or misuse alcohol). This makes it possible to maintain a view of the world as safe and just (i.e. 'it won't happen to me because I dress modestly and don't misuse alcohol'). There are mixed findings in prior research regarding whether people who hold 'just world' beliefs are more likely to hold violence supportive attitudes, and the link between these two sets of beliefs tends to be stronger among men than among women (Hammond et al. 2011; Sleath & Bull 2012).

Exposure to violence and attitudinal support for other forms of interpersonal violence

There is some evidence that the perpetration of violence against women is more common among men exposed to abuse or witnessing intimate partner violence in childhood (Franklin & Kercher 2012; National Crime Prevention 2001; Richards 2011; Roberts et al. 2010). This link is stronger among those who have witnessed partner violence than those who themselves have been subject to childhood abuse (Carlson & Worden 2005; Lichter & McCloskey 2004, p. 352; Markowitz 2001). However, some studies have not found such a link (Richards 2011). While a range of theories have been advanced to explain this relationship (Franklin & Kercher 2012; Roberts et al. 2010), social-learning theory is commonly cited, which posits that violence proclivity is mediated in part by attitudes supportive of violence which are learned in the family. In regards to attitudes (compared with behaviours) there is evidence that people who have experienced or witnessed violence in their families have a higher acceptance of violence and are more likely to justify using it (Edleson & Nissley 2006 p. 2; Speizer 2010). However other studies suggest that there is diversity in responses, with some individuals becoming particularly *intolerant* of violence (Flood & Pease 2006, 2009).

Recent first- or second-hand adult exposure to violence against women also influences attitudes. College students who know someone who had experienced rape are less likely to blame the victim (McMahon 2010). This exposure appears to have a different impact on men and women, with a European survey finding that men who had second-hand experience of a perpetrator of partner violence, tended to be more likely than those who did not to hold attitudes supportive of violence against women, while those who knew a victim of violence were less likely to hold violence supportive attitudes (Gracia & Herrero 2006a). Prior exposure was not found to influence the attitudes of women in this study.

Exposure to or use of other forms of violence (e.g. street violence) is also associated with an increased likelihood of the perpetration of partner violence (Abrahams et al. 2006; Abramsky et al. 2011; Balogun et al. 2012; Fang & Corso 2007; Foshee et al. 2008; Heise 2012; Raghaven et al. 2009). Further, individuals who hold attitudes that are supportive of other forms of interpersonal violence and the use of violence in other contexts (e.g. to resolve conflict between nations) are more likely to hold attitudes that are supportive of violence against women (Suarez & Gadalla 2010).

3.8.2 Organisational and community-level factors

A greater likelihood of holding attitudes supportive of violence against women has been found among men in male-dominated organisational and informal peer cultures which are characterised by close bonds between men and norms that support masculine dominance and risk taking. Examples include college fraternities and certain sporting clubs (Flood & Pease 2006, 2009), as well as male-dominated workplaces such as the police and the military (Flood & Pease 2006, p.37–39; 2009; Bleecker & Murnen 2005; Locke & Mahalik 2005). Again, it is not male-dominated environments per se that are linked to violence supportive attitudes but rather cultures within particular environments. This is demonstrated in research comparing sub-cultures associated with different male-dominated sporting codes (Flood & Pease 2006, p. 37). Further, women in such environments have also been found to be more likely than other women to hold violence supportive attitudes (Flood & Pease 2006, p. 39; 2009).

There have been studies exploring the relationship between religiosity and attitudes towards violence against women. These have yielded mixed findings. Variation between faiths has been found among studies involving clergy, with attitudes tending to be more violence supportive among those who are more fundamentalist in their beliefs (Flood & Pease 2006, p. 40; 2009).

Attitudes that are supportive of violence against women have been found to be more common in neighbourhoods in which there are generally high rates of violence (Button 2008) and among groups that hold attitudes supportive of the use of violence to resolve personal disputes (e.g. gangs). This may be in part explained by 'social disorganisation theory' (Sampson & Wilson 1995; Sampson & Groves 1989) discussed above (see 3.3).

Similarly, the attitudes of some groups may be influenced by their high levels of exposure to violence in institutions. Among these are populations experiencing high rates of incarceration, people with disabilities in institutional care, refugees with detention centre and refugee camp experiences, and children in child welfare institutions (Clark & Fileborn 2011; Pittaway 2004; Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody 1991; Zannettino et al. 2013).

3.8.3 Societal level factors

The role of the media and popular culture in influencing attitudes in general and in relation to gender roles and identities in particular is well established (Gauntlett 2002; Lind 2004). There is also evidence of a specific relationship between attitudes that are supportive of violence against women and consuming media depicting or misrepresenting sexual violence against women (Franuik et al. 2008); depicting sex stereotyped views of men and women (Dill et al. 2008; Fox & Bailenson 2009) or depicting sexually violent and degrading images of women, including in sexually violent pornography (Ferguson 2012; Hald et al. 2010; Suarez & Gadalla 2010). This relationship has been demonstrated for a range of forms of media including news, films, advertising and television and video games (Dill et al. 2008; Fox & Bailenson 2009). Violence supportive attitudes are also more likely to be held by individuals with a preference for films featuring sex and violence, over romance and suspense genres (Emmers-Sommer et al. 2006).

It is possible that the law and legislation also impact on attitudes towards violence against women, both at the individual level and through the symbolic role they play in establishing social norms in relation to the

acceptability of behaviour. However, this remains difficult to determine with certainty. There is conflicting evidence on the efficacy of the law in deterring perpetration at the individual level (Binder & Meeker 1988; Buzawa & Buzawa 2013, p. 133; Maxwell et al. 2011; Salazar et al. 2003), while at the broader level it is difficult to disentangle the impacts of legislation and laws from the impacts of social sanctions that typically precede and accompany them. Nevertheless, law and legislation are likely to be influential in shaping attitudes by embodying standards about acceptable and unacceptable behaviours. Studies comparing legislative and policy responses to violence against women between countries suggest that attitudes improve alongside improved laws and policies and rates of violence are lower in those countries in which laws to protect women are well developed (UN Women 2011, p. 34). A US study found that if people held the perception that contemporary criminal justice responses to partner violence did actively hold men accountable for violence, they were more likely to support those policies and less likely to endorse victim-blaming attitudes (Salazar et al. 2003).

However the law may not always influence attitudes in a positive direction. The failure of the law to prosecute standards set in legislation may also send the message that perpetrators will not be held accountable for their actions, undermining the potential in the law to shore up normative support against violence (Flynn & Henry 2012; Larcombe 2011).

Responses to violence, meanwhile (in the form of social, legal and economic remedies), have been found to be better developed in those countries in which civic society groups formed to address violence against women are active (Htun & Weldon 2012). At the same time, however, other civic society groups have sought to influence community attitudes and understanding in ways that may undermine women's safety. This is evident in the efforts of some father's rights groups to promulgate the belief that women routinely make false allegations of family violence to improve their chances of success in cases involving where children will live after divorce (Flood 2010a).

3.9. Factors influencing difference in attitudes between groups

As discussed above, culture and the attitudes, beliefs and social norms underlying it are changing, dynamic and influenced by material and social circumstances. In the case of violence against women they are particularly influenced by those pertaining to gender roles and identities. This is in turn reflected in variability in the nature of attitudes towards violence against women between different groups, at different points in time and at different stages of the people's life-cycle. These factors also influence differences in the strength with which attitudes are held.

3.9.1 The influences of intersecting forms of oppression on attitudes

There is evidence that people experiencing intersecting forms of oppression may be particularly prone to internalising attitudes that increase their risk of both experiencing and perpetrating violence (Campbell 2008; Dowse et al. 2013; Healey 2013; Lipsky 1987; Pyke 2010; WWDA 2007). Internalisation of attitudes and beliefs is also understood to be a factor in elevated rates of violence *within* certain communities; in particular, Indigenous communities (Langton 2008; Australian Human Rights Commission 2011).

The intersecting influences of different forms of oppression may also impact on attitudes towards help-seeking and to taking collective forms of action to prevent violence. For example, Indigenous women may have limited trust that either they or their partners will be treated appropriately by mainstream support services and within the criminal justice system due to insensitive and racist treatment of Indigenous people within these systems, particularly historically (Atkinson 2002; McGlade 2012; Nixon & Cripps 2013). The occurrence of partner violence may be grounds for intervention by child protection authorities, and possibly to children being placed in alternative forms of care. This may impact on attitudes towards reporting partner violence, particularly in light of the history of forced child removal from Indigenous

families and the over-representation of Indigenous children in the child protection system (Nixon & Cripps 2013). Women with disabilities face similar pressures in this regard (Hague et al. 2008; WWDA 2007).

Similarly, state-sanctioned human rights abuses in countries of origin and asylum may lead to an enduring mistrust of authorities among women from refugee backgrounds, again acting as a barrier to help-seeking in the event of partner violence (Allimant & Ostapiej-Piatkowski 2011; Pittaway 2004, p. 33; Zannettino et al. 2013). There may be a tendency in marginalised communities to privilege collective and community survival and reputation over the safety and well-being of women and children (Yoshihama 2009; Zannettino 2012). Studies show that women in these groups may be more inclined to justify or excuse male violence towards them, a pattern attributed to their acute awareness of the adverse social experiences of men in their communities (Crenshaw 1991; Nash 2005). As well as compromising the safety of individual women the cumulative effect of these attitudes is to reduce the potential in the law and human service systems to set new social norms holding men accountable for their use of violence.

The focus of the NCAS is on attitudes towards violence against women both in the wider community and among specific sub-populations. However, there is also evidence that attitudes held by the wider community *towards* socially marginalised groups are influenced by intersecting forms of oppression. For example, a scenario-based study conducted in the US shows that people respond less sympathetically to African-American victims of violence than white victims in the same circumstances (Esqueda & Harrison 2005). Both members of the general community and helping professionals often resort to racial and gender stereotyping to understand violence affecting ethno-racial minorities (Allimant & Ostapiej-Piatkowski 2011; McGlade 2003; Warriar 2008). These influences are particularly acute for women affected by multiple forms of oppression, Aboriginal women with a disability being a notable example documented in the literature (Cripps, Miller & Saxon-Barney 2010). Studies also suggest that attitudinal support for other forms of oppression, such as racism, religious intolerance, ageism and homophobia, often co-exist with attitudes supportive of violence against women (Aosved & Long 2006; Suarez & Gadalla 2010). This suggests the importance of addressing these intersecting forms of prejudice as part of work to address violence affecting particular groups of women and perpetrated by particular groups of men.

Owing to the complexity of managing survey time, the NCAS has not included questions to gauge community attitudes *towards* violence affecting particular sub-populations experiencing intersecting forms of oppression. The exception is women with disabilities, with several questions being included to tap community understanding of violence affecting this group. As discussed below, these were introduced recognising that women with disabilities are particularly at risk of violence. However, the survey does explore attitudes held *within* particular groups as discussed in the following section.

3.9.2 Particular groups

3.9.2.1 Immigrant communities

There is an expert consensus that women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds face additional barriers to securing safety from violence once it has started (Allimant & Ostapiej-Piatkowski 2011; Kasturirangan et al. 2004; Taylor & Putt 2007). Earlier Australian population-based surveys suggested that, overall, violence prevalence was about the same among women born overseas in non-main English speaking countries (N-MESCs) as among the general community (Mitchell 2011; Mouzos & Makkai 2004). In the 2012 *Personal Safety Survey*, women born in an N-MESC were less likely to have experienced physical

or sexual violence in the 12 months prior to the survey and since the age of 15 (ABS 2013b). However, it should be kept in mind that it is possible that women from N-MESCs are under-represented in the survey⁷.

Women from N-MESCs were also less likely than those born in Australia to experience violence by a male perpetrator since the age of 15 including:

- physical violence (20% versus 34% among the Australian-born)
- sexual violence (11% versus 22% among the Australian-born)
- stalking in their life time (12% versus 19% among the Australian-born) (ABS, customised report, 2014)⁸.

This may be an artefact of under-reporting (Mitchell 2011) or to cultural differences affecting survey participation (for further discussion see 12.8.7). However, there is some evidence from the US that partner violence prevalence is lower in some areas of immigrant concentration, as is also the case for other forms of violent crime (Wright & Benson 2010b). Other research conducted in Canada suggests that rates of violence for overseas-born women are lower than for Canadian-born women on arrival but increase to parallel those of the locally born over time (DuMont et al. 2012).

However, this data represents an aggregate of all women born overseas. Australia's settler population is extremely diverse, with overseas-born persons coming from many countries, each with very different social, cultural and economic contexts. International comparative studies show that there is considerable variability in the prevalence of partner violence against women between nations. Lifetime rates of reported physical violence range between 12.9% and 61% of women, while rates for sexual violence vary between 6.2% and 58% of women (Garcia-Moreno et al. 2006). It is likely that similar variations are present in Australia's settler population. Studies conducted in other settler societies such as New Zealand (Fanslow et al. 2010) and North America (Ellinson et al. 2007; Yoshihama 2009) indicate that this is the case. This is supported by qualitative studies conducted in Australia which suggest that intimate partner violence may be a particular issue for women from some country backgrounds (Fisher 2009; Rees & Pease 2006; Zannettino 2012).

It is now widely recognised that both ethnicity and race are social constructs and that genetic differences between racial and ethnic groups are minimal (UNESCO 1978). Gender power and role differentials vary widely globally (UNDP 2013; UN Women 2011; World Economic Forum 2013), and this is mirrored in (and reinforced by) differences in the ways in which gender roles and identities are culturally supported (Gilmore 1990). In turn this is reflected in wide variability between countries and between birthplace groups in settler societies in attitudes towards both gender relations (Aboim 2010; Brandt 2011; Steel & Kabashima 2008) and violence against women (Gracia, Herrero & Lila 2008; Lee et al. 2005; Pierotti 2013; Pradubmook-Sherer & Sherer 2011; Vandello et al. 2009; Waltermaurer 2012; Yamawaki & Tchanz 2005). With some exceptions studies among immigrants in high-income settler societies suggest that they tend to be more likely to hold non-egalitarian and violence supportive attitudes than individuals in host societies (McGregor 2009; Koo et al. 2012; Phinney & Flores 2002; Taylor & Mouzos 2006; VicHealth 2006, 2010). Violence supportive attitudes may also take particular cultural forms. For example, while many cultures

⁷ It was a requirement of the survey that all interviews be conducted alone in a private setting, ensuring that other members of the household were not aware of the survey content or the responses given. Interpreters or other family members were not used. A small number of interviewers with foreign language skills were trained for the PSS. Where a respondent required the assistance of another person to communicate with the interviewer (and an interviewer who spoke their language was not available), interviews were not able to be conducted. Therefore it is possible that the PSS may under-represent those from a non-English speaking background.

⁸ It should be kept in mind that this data does not enable conclusions to be drawn as to whether violence experienced, particularly since age 15, occurred in Australia or in another country. This information was not collected in the PSS.

place a value on male honour and female purity to some extent, in some cultures this is especially emphasised. Attitudes excusing violent behaviour and blaming women have been found to be particularly prevalent in so called 'honour cultures' (Flood & Pease 2006, 2009; Vandello et al. 2009).

Reflecting the dynamic and changing nature of culture, attitudes towards gender relations and towards violence against women among immigrant communities in settler societies generally change over time to more closely resemble those of the host society (Phinney & Flores 2002; Taylor & Mouzos 2006; VicHealth 2006). This is understood to occur via a process of acculturation. While acculturation is a complex phenomenon, in the context of immigrant and refugee settlement it is broadly understood as the process of psychological, cognitive and social change experienced when an immigrant comes into contact with a host culture. (See, for example, Berry 1997; Padilla & Perez 2003). Studies on the relationship between acculturation and mental health suggest that optimal outcomes are achieved when individuals are able to maintain associations with their culture of origin and aspects of their ethnic identity, while also being able to adapt to, and connect with, the culture of the host society (Berry 1997; Ward et al. 2001). Conditions in the host society are understood to have a significant influence on the extent to which this is possible. For example, antipathy towards the expression of cultural difference may work against both cultural maintenance and meaningful inclusion in the host culture (Berry 1997; Ward et al. 2001). There is evidence that some immigrant communities, as a result of both marginalisation in host societies and the fear of the loss of traditional cultural values, become 'frozen' adhering more strongly to traditional cultural values than compatriots in their countries of origin (Yoshihama 2009).

Research into the impact of acculturation on immigrant health and well-being overall suggests that acculturation can have net *negative* impacts for immigrants from non-western cultures migrating to high income countries (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2006; Fuller-Thomson et al. 2011; Jatrana et al. 2013). This is because it often involves the loss of aspects of non-western cultures that 'protect' health and wellbeing (e.g. a greater emphasis on collective responsibility), while at the same time an increase in exposure to negative environmental influences in the host society (Fennelly 2005; Noh & Kaspar 2003).

Although the evidence is currently inconclusive, this may also be the case with attitudes to violence against women. Few studies have tracked changes in the prevalence of violence against women in immigrant societies and these have focussed on reported experiences of violence, rather than perpetration. They have yielded mixed findings (Yoshihama 2009). However, some show that reporting of partner violence *increases* with length of settlement, among second- and third-generation settlers and with measures of acculturation (DuMont et al. 2012; Garcia, Hurwitz & Kraus 2005; Harris, Firestone & Vega 2005). This is despite the evidence (discussed above) suggesting that negative attitudes towards both gender roles and violence lessen as immigrant communities settle in host societies. This may be due to the impact of acculturation on both recognition and reporting of abuse (Harris, Firestone & Vega 2005). Further, men may use violence to reassert control over women exercising newfound freedoms in a host society with more liberal gender norms and this may result in an initial increase in violence (Fisher 2009; Pittaway 2004; Rees & Pease 2007; True 2012; Zannettino 2012).

However, it is also possible that, while migration to an industrialised society typically results in a liberalising of attitudes towards gender roles, it is also associated with increased exposure to other forms of gender oppression which have been linked with the development of violence supportive attitudes, ultimately increasing the risk of violence towards women. Examples of this are the sexualised and objectified portrayals of women in contemporary western media (in particular the rise of 'raunch culture' (Flood 2009a)) and increasing access to violent pornography. At the same time, migration may also result in the loss of protective factors such as attachments to extended family and communities that may otherwise have sanctioned against violence (Harris, Firestone & Vega 2005; Kasturirangan, Krishnan & Riger 2004).

The evidence above suggests that addressing attitudes in immigrant communities needs to involve attention to cultural influences in both immigrant *and* host societies. Moreover, while it is clearly important to identify and address particular cultural forms of support for violence against women in immigrant cultures (e.g. honour beliefs), there is also a need to identify and strengthen aspects of immigrant cultures that may protect against violence.

A substantial proportion of settlers to Australia are from refugee and 'refugee-like' circumstances (Pittaway 2004). Many of these communities will have been exposed to conditions identified elsewhere in this report as increasing the risk of violence or of holding violence supportive attitudes. These include being subject to and witnessing violence, prolonged exposure to social marginalisation and human rights abuses as well as the undermining of cultural and religious attachments and associated norms. War, civil strife and temporary protection arrangements such as refugee camps generally involve high levels of social disorganisation, in which social norms pertaining to gender relations and violence may be seriously compromised (Pittaway 2004). Strong community connections, identified as protective factors for immigrants overall, may be limited in small communities that are in the process of establishing in Australia (Kaplan & Webster 2003). As is the case with their counterparts arriving as migrants, however, there are also strengths in refugee communities – demonstrated by their survivorship against apparently insurmountable odds – that can be harnessed in efforts to prevent violence against women (Pittaway 2004; Kaplan & Webster 2003).

In NCAS 2013 data is presented by country of birth, length of time in Australia, generation and language proficiency. Language proficiency is recognised as an indicator of settlement and acculturation (Australian Survey Research Group 2011).

3.9.2.2 Indigenous communities

While people from Indigenous backgrounds share many attributes and experiences in common, there is also diversity within this community in terms of geographic location, group and cultural identification, language and social and economic conditions (ABS 2012). Communities also vary in the extent to which they have been, or are currently, exposed to the influences of European settlement. Most data pertaining to violence in Indigenous communities is based on population-level studies where results from Indigenous communities across Australia are aggregated. Such studies can mask differences between communities. This is demonstrated in research which shows that there is variation between Indigenous communities on measures such as social organisation, social connectedness and violence prevalence, as well as in social norms regulating relationships between family and community members (see, for example, McCausland & Vivian 2009). That is, as is the case across all communities, many Indigenous communities have positive indicators of community strength and wellbeing, while others face challenges in this regard. This variation and its impact on violence and its risk factors have been documented in research involving Indigenous populations in other countries (see, for example, Hamby 2005). Such variation needs to be taken into account in considering the following data, most of which is drawn from population-based studies. Recognition of this variation is also important because it suggests that violence is influenced by varying social and economic conditions and hence is amenable to change.

Indigenous women experience high rates of violence against women (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Task Force on Violence 1999; Al-Yaman et al. 2006; Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission 2006; Cripps et al. 2009; Lievore 2003; McGlade 2012; Taylor & Putt 2007; Victorian Indigenous Family Violence Task Force 2003), a plight shared with their Indigenous counterparts in other parts of the globe (Al-Yaman et al. 2006; Brownridge 2008; UNICEF et al. 2013). Indigenous women in Australia:

- were more than twice as likely to report being the victims of violence as non-Indigenous women in 2002 (18.3% compared with 7.0%) (Al-Yaman et al. 2006, p. 41)
- are 35 times more likely to be hospitalised for injuries inflicted for family violence-related assaults than non-Indigenous women (Al-Yaman et al. 2006, p. 71)
- when surveyed report sexual assault at three times the rate of non-Indigenous women (Mouzos & Makkai 2004, p. 30), and across Australian jurisdictions are between 2.5 and 3.7 times more likely to report to the police being sexually assaulted than non-Indigenous women (Taylor & Putt 2007, p. 2).

Indigenous women have also been found to experience high rates of violence-induced disability (Olle 2006).

The most recent population-level data on violence reported by Indigenous persons is from the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS), conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS 2013a). Data from NATSISS and the *Personal Safety Survey* are not directly comparable. However, the NATSISS data suggests that patterns of violence affecting Indigenous communities may differ from those in Australia as a whole in that there is no significant difference in the proportion of Indigenous men and women experiencing physical violence. In the population as whole, by comparison, men are more likely than women to experience physical violence, (although the difference is not large) (ABS 2013b). Further, a large proportion of Indigenous victims of violence – both male and female - know their assailant (see Table 3.8.2). Nevertheless, the gendered patterns of relationships between perpetrator and victim mirror those in the population as a whole. As can be seen, Indigenous women who experienced physical assault in the 12 months prior to the survey were substantially more likely to be assaulted by a person known to them than Indigenous men (94% compared with 77%). They were also significantly more likely than men who had experienced physical assault in the previous 12 months to identify the perpetrator as a current or previous partner (32% compared with 2% of men) or as a family member (28% compared to 20% of men). Men were more likely to be assaulted by a person they knew only by sight (20% of men compared with 8% of women).

The survey also found that women were significantly more likely than men to report that they had sustained an injury in their most recent incident of physical assault (60% of women compared with 49% of men).

Table 3.8.2. Relationship of perpetrator to victim in most recent incident of physical assault experienced by people identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders 2008^{(a)(b)(i)}

		Indigenous males 23,036 %	Indigenous females 24,799 %
Relationship to perpetrator	Current or previous partner	2 [#]	32*
	Family member	20	28*
	Friend	16	10
	Known by sight only	20	8*
	Other known person	25	19
	<i>Nett known person</i>	77	94*
	Stranger	23	6*

(a) Refers to perpetrator of most recent incident of physical assault during the past 12 months.

(b) Those who experienced physical assault could have reported more than one perpetrator. Therefore, the total of all relationship types do not add to 100%.

(c) Excludes those who were physically assaulted but refused to answer the relationship to perpetrator question.

[#]Estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution.

*Difference between ATSI males and ATSI females is significant, $p \leq .05$

Source: Adapted from ABS 2013a, *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey 2008*.

The gendered nature of violence affecting Indigenous communities is also apparent in crime and hospital data, with national data suggesting that:

- Half of all assaults of Indigenous women are family violence related compared with one in five for Indigenous males (Al-Yaman et al. 2006, p. 54)
- Eighty-two percent of all hospitalisations for family violence related assaults among females are the result of spouse or partner violence, compared with 38% among males (Al-Yaman et al. 2006, p. x).

There is very little difference in the rate of reported violence between remote and non-remote areas; however, Indigenous people in remote areas are substantially more likely to report that they perceive violence, including family violence, to be problems in their communities (Al-Yaman et al. 2006).

There is evidence of a high level of normative support for interpersonal violence in some Indigenous communities (Atkinson 2002; Langton 2008; Wundersitz 2010, p. 5). There is some debate regarding the extent to which this can be attributed to patterns of violence in pre-settlement Indigenous societies. Some researchers maintain that these societies were characterised by high rates of violence and this is a factor that needs to be considered in understanding violence in contemporary Indigenous communities (Jarrett 2013; Kimm 2004; Nowra 2007). In contrast, others have pointed to evidence that violence was used in Indigenous societies, as was the case in other societies at this time, but that it was highly regulated and controlled (see, for example, Atkinson & Woods 1990b; Langton 2008; Lucashenko 1996; McGlade 2012). Many contemporary Indigenous scholars maintain that there is minimal evidence that normative support of violence was or is currently an inherent feature of Indigenous culture. Rather, they argue that the elevated rates of violence affecting some Indigenous communities need to be understood in the context of historical and contemporary factors associated with their status as colonised peoples (Atkinson 1990b; Atkinson & Woods 2008; Cripps & Adams 2014; Lucashenko 1996; McGlade 2003, 2012; Wundersitz 2010).

In the colonial period, many Indigenous people were forcibly removed from their lands; traditional cultural practices and relationships were systematically undermined and traditional family structures were broken down through the forced removal of children (Cripps 2007; McGlade 2012; See also Wundersitz

2010). These exposures resulted in the breakdown of cultural norms against violence and the social processes responsible for supporting them (e.g. respect for elders). This is evident, for example, in the link found between being removed from one's natural family and experience of violence (Cripps et al. 2009). This removal took place on a wide scale across whole communities, disrupting norms and practices that had hitherto passed through families and traditional sources of authority (Al-Yaman et al. 2006; Cripps et al. 2009; Wundersitz 2010).

In the wake of European settlement, Indigenous men and women were subject to sustained and serious levels of violence, both the direct physical violence involved in their forced removal from land by white settlers, and later the social and economic violence that accompanied policies of forced child removal, incarceration, protectionism and assimilation (Australian Human Rights Commission 2011; Royal Commission 1991). As discussed above (see 3.8.1), childhood exposure to violence may be associated with the development of violence supportive attitudes which may in turn be transmitted through generations (Bevan & Higgins 2002).

The construction of gender roles and relations are also likely to influence community attitudes towards violence against women in Indigenous communities. As is the case with most other human societies, anthropological evidence indicates that gender role divisions in Indigenous cultures pre-dated European settlement, although the extent to which this was characterised by gender inequality is the subject of some debate (Atkinson & Woods 2008; Jarrett 2013; Kimm 2004; Lucaschenko 1996). Historical research suggests that the processes of colonisation involved the imposition of gender roles and identities evident in the societies of colonial powers (Patil 2013). As a consequence Indigenous men and women in post-colonial societies have been exposed to many of the same influences supporting gender inequality as their non-Indigenous counterparts (Atkinson & Woods 2008). The impacts of this on contemporary Indigenous societies is evident in an analysis of a Canadian survey on violence against women which found that domineering and jealous behaviours were associated with the occurrence of partner violence among both Indigenous and non-Indigenous respondents and to about the same degree (Brownridge 2008). Similarly the use of violent pornography, an established risk factor for holding violence supportive attitudes, is a particular problem in some Indigenous communities in Australia (Atkinson 1990a; Langton 2007; Wundersitz 2010).

Indigenous persons also suffer high rates of contemporary racism (Ferdinand et al. 2013; Paradies et al. 2008) and social and economic marginalisation (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision 2011), factors which may increase vulnerability to internalising violence supportive attitudes in these communities (Australian Human Rights Commission 2011). These conditions may also increase the likelihood of exposure to the ill-effects of social disorganisation (Atkinson 1990a; Langton 2008), which may in turn influence attitudes towards responsibility for taking action to address violence in the community.

Some observers have argued that the post-colonial marginalisation of Indigenous communities has had particular implications for gender relations in Indigenous communities. They assert that many Indigenous men have lost the status and respect they traditionally held. At the same time, they have had very little access to alternative sources of power and identity in post-colonial societies, with jobs, education and so on often being denied to them. This may contribute to feelings of intense powerlessness and helplessness and ultimately to attitudes of resentment and hostility towards women (Atkinson & Woods 2008; Day et al. 2012). In seeking to explain the gendered patterns of violence in Indigenous communities, these observers have argued that violence is in part an attempt by men to reassert their power and authority over women (Day et al. 2012). However, others argue that this risks excusing the use of violence by some Indigenous men and places an unfair burden on Indigenous women (McGlade 2012). Moreover, they point to the fact that in the course of European settlement Indigenous women similarly lost traditional sources of status and power and suffered extensive physical and sexual violence at the hands of some colonists (Lucashenko

1996; McGlade 2012). In contemporary society, meanwhile they are similarly affected by disadvantage as Indigenous persons, while also suffering gender inequality both in the wider society as well as within the Indigenous community, including through their under-representation in Indigenous decision-making bodies (Davis 2007, 2008; McGlade 2012).

In the 2009 NCAS, people in the Indigenous sample were found to be more likely to hold certain attitudes supportive of violence against women. However, it was impossible to exclude the possibility that this was an artefact of the convenience sampling methods used (see 2.1.2). This problem has been addressed in the methodology used for NCAS 2013 (see 2.1.3).

3.9.2.3 Disability

There is considerable diversity among women with disabilities and not all women with a disability face increased risk of exposure to violence. Research among women with disabilities is hampered by a lack of consensus on the definition of disability, making it difficult to compare between studies, set policy guidelines and implement consistent practice (Mays 2006; Nixon 2009).

Reviews of the international evidence find that both men and women with disabilities face an increased risk of violence (Hague et al. 2011a; Healey 2013; Healey et al. 2008; Plummer & Findley 2012; Walter-Brice et al. 2012). For example, population-based surveys show that:

- In Germany women with a disability are 1.7 times more likely to report intimate partner violence than women without a disability (Stockl et al. 2011).
- Among American women, those with a disability experienced violence and unwanted sex by a partner at almost twice the rate of women who were not disabled (Smith 2007).
- Canadian women with a disability are more than twice as likely to report experiencing intimate partner violence than those without disabilities (Hyman et al. 2006).

Australian data suggest that people with disabilities are over-represented among those experiencing sexual assault (Murray & Powell 2008). For example, while people with intellectual and mental health disabilities make up 2.2% and 0.8% of the population respectively, they comprised 5.9% and 15.6% of those reporting sexual assault in a study of reports to Victorian police (Heenan & Murray 2006). US data meanwhile indicates that women with disabilities experience sexual assault at a rate four times higher than those without disabilities (Martin et al. 2006).

Depending on the nature and extent of their disability, women with disabilities may be exposed to a wider range of potential perpetrators of violence. In addition to partners and other family members, this may include other residents in institutional settings, carers and health care and transport providers (Murray & Powell 2008; Powers et al. 2009). Women with disabilities may experience additional forms of violence related to their disability (e.g. destruction of medical equipment, physical neglect); and compared with women without disabilities are exposed to violence over a longer period of time (Plummer & Findley 2012) and to more severe forms of violence (Powers et al. 2009).

Prior to 2012, no studies had been conducted to arrive at a reliable population-based estimate of prevalence of violence among women with disabilities in Australia (Frohman 2011; Healey et al. 2008). However, a measure of impairment was included for the first time in the *2012 Personal Safety Survey*⁹.

⁹ In the PSS, a person was defined as having a disability or long-term health condition if they had one or more conditions which had lasted, or were likely to last, for six months or more, and that restricted everyday activities. People were identified as having a profound or severe core-activity limitation if they required help or supervision for one or more core activities, such as self-care, mobility or communication. In addition, it should be kept in mind that this data does not enable conclusions to be drawn as to whether violence experienced, particularly since age 15, occurred with the presence of the disability or long-term health condition. This information was not collected in the PSS.

No statistically significant differences were found between women with a disability or long-term health condition and those without such conditions in their experience of violence in the 12 months prior to the survey (ABS 2013b). However, data from the survey about women who had a disability or long-term health condition at the time of the survey and their experience of violence since the age of 15 indicated that they were significantly more likely to have experienced:

- physical violence by a male perpetrator since age 15 than women without a disability or a long-term health condition (40.6% with versus 27.2% without a disability or long-term health condition)
- sexual violence by a male perpetrator since age 15 (27.9% with versus 15.1% without a disability or long-term health condition)
- stalking by a male perpetrator in their lifetime (22% with versus 15.2% without a disability or long-term health condition) (ABS, customised report, 2014).

A review of international studies on the relationship between violence and disability found a similar pattern (Hughes et al. 2011). That is, although some studies find a difference between women with and without disabilities in their experience of violence in the preceding year, most do not. However, as was the case in the PSS, most studies find differences in the rate of violence between women with disabilities and those without over the lifetime. Differences between disabled and non-disabled women were also found in most of the studies asking if women had experienced violence in the last five years (Hughes et al. 2011).

An inherent limitation of any correlational analysis based on cross-sectional data (i.e. that collected at one particular point in time) is that a correlation between two variables does not necessarily mean that a cause and effect relationship exists. This is especially the case with risk behaviours like violence where it is not possible to establish the direction of the relationship concerned (i.e. in this case whether disability preceded the violence or violence preceded the disability). This is a greater issue when people are asked about their experiences over a long period, as is the case with experiences of violence since the age of 15 in the PSS. That is, women may report experiences of both violence and disability which may have occurred at different periods over their lifetime and which bore no relationship to one another. Further, additional statistical analysis would be required to investigate the extent to which other factors common to both disability and violence may influence any associations found (e.g. age, income). This is raised by the ABS which advises that caution should be used in drawing conclusions from the data on relationships between socio-demographic factors and violence, and that doing so may result in inaccurate conclusions being drawn (see Glossary and Terminology).

A significant gap in the evidence is population-based research exploring the nature of the relationship between violence and disability. That is, research establishing the temporal relationship and sequencing of violence and disability (Hughes et al. 2011). For the reasons discussed above, it is not possible to draw definitive conclusions about the nature of the relationship between disability and violence among Australian women. However, four possibilities are indicated in the existing literature.

The first is that the relationship found in studies asking about lifetime experience is not between disability and violence, but rather is an artefact of age. Disability increases with age and the older a woman is, the longer the period she will have had to have experienced violence. However, Brownridge (2006) investigating this possibility using Canadian population-based data, found that the differences between disabled and non-disabled women in past five-year rates of violence remained after the influence of age was accounted for. Further, it is noted that substantial differences between disabled and non-disabled women are found in most studies asking about past five years' violence, a period over which age would be expected to exert less influence (compared with lifetime/since age 15 data)(Hughes et al. 2011). Also, past 12-month rates of violence are highest among Australian women aged 18–24 years (13% experienced violence in the last 12 months) and thereafter reduce markedly with age, such that 1.5% of women aged 55

years and over experience past 12-month violence. That is, while the reporting period for older women is longer, their risk of having experienced violence within a 12-month period is markedly lower (ABS 2013b).

A second possibility is that having a disability makes women more vulnerable to experiencing violence or to men perpetrating violence against them (that is, that disability is *causally* related to violence). These possibilities are indicated in a body of both qualitative (for reviews see Healey 2013; Hughes et al. 2011) and quantitative (Brownridge 2006) research. Brownridge's study, significant because it was based on a representative national sample of 7000 people, found that the only factor distinguishing women with disabilities who were victims of violence from victims without disabilities was that those with disabilities were substantially more likely than non-disabled peers to report that their partners exhibited domineering and sexually jealous behaviours (Brownridge 2006, p. 819), a factor identified as associated with an increased risk of partner violence.

Another possibility is that the findings are indicative of disability being a *consequence* of violence. There is evidence in the literature of the occurrence of violence induced disability (Coker, Smith & Fadden 2005) and an extensive literature demonstrating that exposure to violence against women increases the prospects of poor health, in particular poor mental health (Coker, Smith & Fadden 2005; Devries et al. 2013). The likelihood that this relationship is causal is indicated by the fact that it has been found to be more likely in women reporting more frequent and severe violence (Coker, Smith & Fadden 2005) and to be linked to particular disabilities that would be expected to be associated with violence. For example, Coker, Smith & Fadden (2005) found an increased likelihood of conditions potentially caused by head trauma and strangulation among women with disabilities experiencing violence. In the case of long-term health conditions the relationship has also been found in longitudinal studies (Devries et al. 2013). Studies examining the sequencing of violence and disability, suggest that it is likely to run both ways (Coker, Smith & Fadden 2005; Devries et al. 2013).

If violence is related to disability as either a consequence and/or a cause, the lack of difference between disabled and non-disabled women in the past 12 months data found in most studies may be due to the small numbers involved. This works against the representation of the experiences of the range of women with a disability who may have experienced violence (Brownridge 2006). In the case of the PSS (and other similar population-based studies) a further factor may be that women with severe disabilities and women in institutional environments are not represented or are under-represented¹⁰. Women in institutional environments have been found to be particularly vulnerable to violence (Hughes et al. 2010).

Another possibility is that the greater risk of violence found over longer periods (life-time/since age 15 and past five years) is the consequence of socio-economic disadvantage. Other research shows that this may increase the risk of both violence (see 3.9.4) and disability (Bradbury et al. 2001). Violence and disability may be influenced by disadvantage via separate and unrelated pathways (that is, being disadvantaged may increase one's risk of a range of adversities with economic deprivation being the only common factor). Again however, Brownridge (2006) found that differences between disabled and non-disabled women remained even after accounting for the effects of socio-economic status. Longitudinal studies would be required to determine the direction of the relationships between disadvantage, disability and violence.

¹⁰ A specific requirement of the PSS was that interviews were conducted in private. Where a respondent required the assistance of another person to communicate with the interviewer, interviews did not proceed. Therefore it is likely that the PSS will under-represent those with a profound or severe communication disability. In addition the scope of the PSS is persons living in a private dwelling. Therefore the PSS also excludes people with a disability who usually live in non-private dwellings such as institutions.

However, the existing research suggests that it is a complex relationship since disadvantage is in itself both a cause and a consequence of disability (Bradbury et al. 2001) and violence against women (see 3.9.2.3).

The multi-directional relationships between these three factors make it difficult to disentangle the influences of any particular variable. They suggest, as argued elsewhere in this report, that violence against women with disabilities, as is the case for violence against women without disabilities, is likely to be explained by multiple and intersecting factors.

There is no known research into whether attitudes supportive of violence against women are more likely to be held by people with a disability. Prejudice and discrimination against people with disabilities as a group and women with disabilities in particular is relatively well documented (see, for example, Mays 2006), suggesting that people with disabilities may be vulnerable to internalising attitudes that in turn increase their risk of experiencing and perpetrating violence. Further, disability can be both a consequence and a cause of other forms of marginalisation understood to increase the likelihood of holding violence supportive attitudes, albeit moderately (see 3.9.4 below). For example, people with a disability are over-represented in disadvantaged areas, and among those with lower levels of education, on low incomes and outside of the labour-force (Bradbury et al. 2001).

People with disabilities may be infantilised and perceived as asexual or incapable of forming intimate relationships (Healey 2013). This has led to the neglect of disability populations in the delivery of health and human relations education and campaigns to inform about, and counter against, gender-based violence (Frawley & Bigby 2014). They are also more likely to be exposed to other forms of violence in families, communities and institutional environments (Plummer & Findley 2012), with such exposure, as discussed above, being a risk factor for both the perpetration of violence against women and for holding attitudes supportive of such violence.

Together these factors suggest the possibility that people with disabilities may be less informed about VAW and more likely to hold violence supportive attitudes.

To address the gap in research in this area, for the first time in 2013, NCAS includes questions to identify people with impairments. The aim is to assess if there is a relationship between having a disability and attitudes towards violence against women. Given the elevated rate of violence against women with disabilities, questions are also included to assess community knowledge of violence affecting women with a disability.

3.9.3 Age

Younger people (that is those aged less than 24) and older people (aged 65 years plus) have both been identified as being more likely to hold violence supportive attitudes (Flood & Pease 2006, 2009; McGregor 2009; Rani & Bonu 2009; Worden & Carlson 2005). This is likely to be a cohort effect, with older people having experienced their adult socialisation at a time that pre-dated the substantial changes taking place in gender relations in general and violence against women in particular in the mid to late twentieth century (Worden & Carlson 2005). Developmental factors, the nature of peer associations and contemporary youth culture are understood to account for differences in young people's attitudes (Flood & Pease 2006, 2009). Older people and the very young are also less likely to have been exposed to the liberalising influences of tertiary education (Alwin et al. 1991; Alwin & Krosnick 1991).

3.9.4 Socio-economic status

Studies suggest that women from low socio-economic status (LSES) backgrounds are more likely to be subject to more severe forms of partner violence (Evans 2005) and to face greater barriers to securing safety from violence once it has started (Nixon & Humphreys 2010; Sokoloff & Dupont 2005). They are also more vulnerable to non-partner sexual assault, and this is understood to be due to the lesser command

LSES women have over the resources required to protect themselves, such as taking taxis or living in low crime areas (Humphreys 2007a).

However, there are conflicting findings in the literature regarding whether there is a link between various indicators of socio-economic status (e.g. education, employment, income and occupation) and the *perpetration* of violence against women. Several Australian studies using police reporting data have found a higher rate of partner violence in disadvantaged areas (Grech & Burgess 2011; People 2005). However, population inferences cannot be drawn from such studies, since other evidence indicates a higher rate of police reporting in disadvantaged communities (Avakame et al. 1999). While undertaking an analysis of SES indicators using data from the 2012 *Personal Safety Survey* was beyond the scope of this research, in the 2006 survey, women who were unemployed or whose main source of income was a pension or benefit were more likely to report having been subject to partner violence (Mitchell 2011). However, no link between SES indicators and violence was found in the Australian component of the 2004 International Violence Against Women Survey (Mouzos & Makkai 2004). Further, since social disadvantage may also be a consequence of violence, it is difficult to disentangle cause and effect (Humphreys 2007a).

Beyond Australia, similarly conflicting findings have been found. Some studies indicate that there is a relationship between socio-economic status and either victimisation or perpetration (Aaltonen et al. 2012; Benson et al. 2003; Fox & Benson 2006; Humphreys 2007a; Nixon & Humphreys 2010; Sabina 2013), while others find no association (for summaries, see European Commission 2010b; Kiss et al. 2012; VanderEnde et al. 2012). Studies involving multiple sites have found an association in some sites but not others (see, for example, Jewkes et al. 2012). Where a relationship has been found between SES indicators and violence, it is generally modest (Buzawa & Buzawa 2013, Jewkes 2012; Jewkes et al. 2012) and indirect. For example, in a recent systematic review of factors contributing to sexual assault perpetration, SES was found to be influential primarily via gang membership, in itself more likely among men of lower SES (Jewkes 2012).

An association has been found between men's unemployment and the perpetration of partner violence (Benson et al. 2003). However, this increased risk is understood to be due primarily to the symbolic (as opposed to economic) aspects of employment. That is, to the fact that unemployment threatens some men's masculine identity (Benson et al. 2003), with the increased risk being primarily among men adhering strongly to traditional masculine gender roles and identity (Atkinson et al. 2005).

Another factor complicating assessment of the link between SES and violence against women is the range of measures of SES and approaches used in existing studies. Some studies measure variation in prevalence of violence in accordance with the degree of disadvantage experienced (Jewkes et al. 2012; Kiss et al. 2012). Others compare the prevalence of violence associated with people who are very disadvantaged compared with people not classified as disadvantaged. For example, Jewkes et al. (2012) compared violence perpetration among people classified as living in poverty with those not, while Benson et al. (2003) compared violence in communities experiencing concentrated disadvantage with those not disadvantaged.

It is of note that in synthesising the evidence, key expert bodies have concluded that the risk of violence against women is particularly high when poverty and disadvantage are extreme (see, for example, European Commission 2010b; UN 2006; WHO & London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine 2010).

The discussion above relates to the occurrence of *violence* against women. Turning now to *attitudes* towards violence against women, there are five possible reasons why negative attitudes may be more likely to be held by people of LSES. First, education, in particular liberal education, is understood to have a liberalising impact on attitudes to gender relations, including attitudes to violence against women (Alwin et al. 1991; Alwin & Krosnick 1991). Second, it has been proposed that economic deprivation may compromise men's capacity to meet masculine role expectations, and that violence may be used to reinforce traditional symbolic structures of male dominance (Kiss et al. 2012). Hypothetically, this may be mediated in part by

attitudes to violence against women, especially those justifying or excusing its use. Third, there is evidence that people from lower SES are more likely to endorse attitudes that are supportive of other forms of interpersonal violence (Markowitz 2003) and this may also be the case with attitudes to violence against women (Benson et al. 2003). Fourth, as discussed below, people in disadvantaged circumstances may be exposed to higher rates of other forms of violence and violent crime, a factor found to contribute to endorsement of attitudes supportive of violence against women (Button 2008). Finally, disadvantage at the neighbourhood level is understood to be associated with increased social isolation and reduced collective efficacy (see discussion in 3.3 above), both of which have been found to be associated with the perpetration of violence against women (see VanderEnde et al. 2012 for a review). Social isolation and the loosening of informal social controls may influence violence supportive attitudes by inhibiting the transmission of values that disapprove of violence within relationships and reducing the prospects of people taking action when witnessing violence and its antecedents (Benson et al. 2003; Wright & Benson 2010a).

A consistent relationship has been found between attitudes and various measures of socio-economic status in low and middle income countries (Antai & Antai 2008, 2009; Boakye 2009; Dhaher et al. 2010; Lawoko 2008; Marshall & Furr 2010; Rani & Bonu 2009; Uthman et al. 2009). However, some caution needs to be exercised in generalising from these, given marked differences between the countries in which they were undertaken and Australia. For example, in many of these countries there remain high levels of extreme poverty, low levels of female literacy and relatively low levels of urbanisation.

Studies conducted in high-income countries suggest a modest association between socio-economic status and rape myth acceptance (Anderson et al. 1997; Nagel et al. 2005) and between attitudes pertaining to partner violence (Worden & Carlson 2005). In the 2009 NCAS an association was found between various measures of SES and violence supportive attitudes. However, this tended to be sporadic across both the SES indicators and survey measures (McGregor 2009; VicHealth 2010). The 2013 NCAS includes four measures of SES: employment, occupation, education and an area-based measure of advantage and disadvantage (see Table 1.5).

3.9.5 Non-urban communities

Women in rural communities who have been subject to violence face particular barriers to help seeking (Neame & Heenan 2004), and there is some international evidence suggesting that they experience more severe physical partner violence than their urban counterparts (Peek-Asa et al. 2011). To explore relationships between violence and factors such as area of residence it is optimal to use data on violence experience in the last 12 months (see Glossary and Terminology). Past 12 month data from the *2012 Personal Safety Survey* shows that there are no statistically significant differences in violence experienced by women living in non-urban areas and women overall. However, data from the 2012 PSS based on women's experience of violence since the age of 15 and where they were living at the time the survey was taken (ABS customised report, 2014), indicate that:

- women who are now living in inner-regional, outer-regional and remote areas were more likely than all women to have experienced physical violence by a male perpetrator since the age of 15
- women who are now living in remote areas were more likely than all women to have experienced sexual violence by a male perpetrator since the age of 15.

The survey does not ask women where they were living at the time of the violence. There is significant residential mobility among Australians and further analysis would be required to establish whether patterns of residential mobility are likely to have influenced survey findings.

Administrative data sets, such as police reports and hospital admissions data, demonstrate that reported violence in general and violence against women in particular is substantially higher in rural and remote communities (Carrington & Hogg 2007). For example, between 2001 and 2010 the rate of reported domestic assault was 34% higher in regional statistical divisions of NSW than was the case in the Sydney statistical division (Grech & Burgess 2011, p. 3). Of the 20 Local Government Areas with the highest per-capita rates of domestic assault in 2010, only one was in Metropolitan Sydney (Grech & Burgess 2011, p. 5). There are similar patterns for other Australian states and territories (Carrington & Hogg 2007).

Administrative data sets are likely to underestimate the actual differences between urban and non-urban environments since barriers to reporting are generally regarded as being greater in rural and remote areas (Neame & Heenan 2004; Carrington & Hogg 2007). Rural/urban differences in violence against women remain after taking into account the higher proportion of Indigenous persons (who are more likely to be victims of violent crime) in non-urban areas (Carrington & Hogg 2007; Carrington & Scott 2008).

Some caution needs to be exercised in generalising about rural areas as there is considerable diversity both within and between locales. Nevertheless, attitudes supportive of violence against women may be more likely in such areas for a number of reasons. First, rates of participation by young people in tertiary education (and concomitant exposure to its liberalising influences) are lower in rural and regional Australia (Carrington & Scott 2008, p. 643). Second, rural areas have less cultural and occupational diversity and are more inclined to political and social conservatism (Neame & Heenan 2004; Pease 2010). This may be reflected in masculinity and femininity being more narrowly constructed around traditional concepts of gender in these areas (Pease 2010). Given the relationship between attitudes to violence and attitudes to gender roles and relationships (discussed above), this might be expected to be manifest in violence supportive attitudes in non-urban communities.

Researchers have documented the impact of rural restructuring on masculinity in rural communities, noting that, unlike men in urban environments, rural men have limited access to alternative masculine roles and identities, as traditional roles for rural men decline (Carrington & Hogg 2007; Carrington & Scott 2008). They suggest that this has posed a particular threat to masculinity in rural areas and made people, particularly men, prone to reasserting traditional masculine identity and rights (Carrington & Scott 2008). This might be expected to be reflected in attitudes towards violence against women, especially on issues that have been the concern of the men's rights movement (e.g. questions related to the gender-symmetrical nature of violence or to false allegations).

As discussed above, researchers exploring violence in urban settings have hypothesised that a lack of social connectedness contributes to violence because it works against the application of informal social controls that disapprove of violence. On this basis it might be expected that violence against women would be lower in non-urban environments. However, researchers investigating violence in rural communities have argued that the density and interconnectedness of social networks in these areas can have the opposite effect. That is, the fear of shame in rural communities associated with the density of social networks can increase the tendency to preserve family privacy and to protect the family from external influences (Carrington & Scott 2008; Neame & Heenan 2004; Pease 2010). Alongside this, there may be a greater emphasis on self-reliance in many rural cultures (Carrington & Scott 2008). Together these conditions might be hypothesised to influence attitudes, particularly those concerned with intervening in domestic violence and towards women being offered or seeking help and safety.

There are a number of unique challenges to delivering services to prevent and respond to violence against women in rural and regional communities (Neame & Heenan 2004; Peek-Asa et al. 2011). These challenges could potentially contribute to lower levels of understanding of violence against women in non-urban environments.

Accordingly in NCAS 2013, analysis was undertaken to determine if knowledge, attitudes and responses vary with the remoteness of area.

4. Attitudes to gender equality

4.1. The importance of attitudes to gender equality

As discussed in the previous section, people with lower levels of attitudinal support for gender equality and stronger endorsement of traditional gender roles and identities have been found to be more likely to hold violence supportive attitudes. These relationships are important for practical purposes, since they suggest that addressing attitudes towards gender roles and identities and gender inequality is likely to be important in addressing attitudes that are violence supportive.

In this section the relationships between gender equality, gender identities and gender roles and attitudes towards violence against women are explored. The literature pertaining to attitudes towards gender equality is then presented. Following this, the results on the items included in the NCAS to gauge attitudes towards gender equality are presented both individually and as a scale.

There are many ways in which attitudes towards gender equality and gender roles and identities may be expressed (see Flood 2008). Some of the key concepts explored in existing studies are attitudes related to:

- Stereotypical notions about appropriate roles for men and women in the public and private domains (e.g. whether women make better political leaders than men) (Ben-David & Schneider, 2005; Bhanot & Senn 2007; Capezza & Arraiga 2008; Haj-Yahia et al. 2012; Marshall & Furr 2010; Whatley 2005).
- More subtle forms of attitudinal support for gender inequality. Examples of this are measures which appear either benign or positive but are actually damaging to women and gender equality more broadly (e.g. the belief that women need to be protected by men). Such beliefs are referred to as 'benevolent sexism' (Glick & Fiske 1997; Masser et al. 2010). Another form is views that while appearing to support egalitarianism are actually hostile towards it (Tougas et al. 1995) (e.g. 'gender inequality is no longer an issue') (Chapleau et al. 2007; Masser et al. 2006; Yamawaki et al. 2007).
- The sharing of power and decision making between men and women within families and relationships (e.g. a man should be in charge of a relationship) (National Crime Prevention 2001).
- Hostility towards women, particular women who defy traditional gender roles, and towards the bid for women's equality (Chapleau et al. 2007; Cohn et al. 2009; Robertson et al. 2007).
- Narrow constructions of masculinity and femininity and masculine and feminine identities (e.g. men should not express their emotions in public), including the objectification of women (Nabors & Jasinski 2009).

In the NCAS the relationship between attitudes to gender and attitudes to violence is explored via a scale adapted from Inglehart and Norris (2003). This scale measures support for gender divisions in roles between men and women, primarily in the public sphere. The scale was introduced in the 2006 Victorian survey and updated in 2009 to include a statement reflecting more subtle attitudinal support for gender inequality (adapted from Swim et al. 1995) and two statements concerned with power dynamics in relationships (adapted from National Crime Prevention 2011). In both previous surveys in which this scale was included, attitudinal support for gender inequality was found to be strongly associated with attitudes supportive of violence against women (McGregor 2009; Taylor & Mouzos 2006; VicHealth 2006, 2010).

4.1.1 *Prior research on attitudes to gender equality*

There is some variability between studies in the domains of gender equality explored and the ways in which they are measured. A range of instruments is used and some studies explore attitudes to gender equality in the public sphere, while others focus on equality in the home and family. However, a consistent finding

among studies conducted in North America and Australia is that attitudes towards gender equality liberalised from the mid-1960s and levelled out in the mid-1990s (Bolzendahl & Myers 2004; Cotter et al. 2011; Pampel 2011; van Egmond et al. 2010). This is understood to have been initially driven by social and structural change, in particular the rapid increase of women in paid employment during this period (Pampel 2011). In Australia, there is some evidence of a stalling of this change since the mid-1990s (van Egmond et al. 2010). However, attitudes have continued to liberalise in Scandinavian countries in this period (van Egmond et al. 2010), a trend attributed to the strong public policy support for gender equality in those countries (Aboim 2010). This suggests that the apparent stalling in attitudinal change in Australia is not because attitudes have reached a threshold beyond which further liberalisation is impossible, but rather may be linked to the relative invisibility of gender equality in public policy and debate.

The socio-demographic factors predicting attitudes towards gender equality have remained relatively consistent over time and generally are similar for both men and women (Bolzendahl & Myers 2004; Davis & Greenstein 2009). These are conceptualised in the literature in two categories: factors motivated by perceived interest and factors related to exposure. Notwithstanding that there are benefits for all in egalitarian gender relations (Davis & Greenstein 2009; Pampel 2011), interest-related predictors are based on the understanding that when people's interests are perceived to benefit from gender equality, they are more likely to hold egalitarian gender beliefs. Exposure-related factors are those that shape attitudes via exposure to ideas and situations in the form of socialisation, education or personal experience (Bolzendahl & Myers 2004). Attitudes to gender equality are understood to be determined by both interest- and exposure-related factors.

Men consistently have more conservative attitudes than women, and their attitudes have been less responsive to the liberalising impacts of social change (Pampel 2011). Nevertheless there is evidence of a convergence between men's and women's attitudes on some aspects of gender equality. That is, men are 'catching up' with women over time (van Egmond et al. 2010, p. 161).

Those in traditional marital relationships tend to have more conservative attitudes (Pampel 2011), while divorce is associated with more liberal attitudes for women, although not for men (van Egmond et al. 2010). Being in the paid workforce is also associated with more liberal attitudes for women (Bolzendahl & Myers 2004; Pampel 2011), while higher levels of education are associated with more egalitarian attitudes for both sexes. This is understood to be due to the liberalising impact of education, in particular tertiary education. Although there is variability between faiths, religiosity tends to be associated with more conservative attitudes (Bolzendahl & Myers 2004; Davis & Greenstein 2009; van Egmond et al. 2010). Age is also a factor, with cohorts born before 1940 generally having less liberal attitudes to gender equality. In Australia, however, the relationship is not straightforward. Australians born between 1960 and 1979 tend to have more egalitarian views than those born between 1940 and 1959 and younger cohorts (i.e. those born after 1980). The views of this younger group tend to be more similar to those born between 1940 and 1959 (van Egmond et al. 2010).

Studies conducted in high-income settler societies indicate that people from non-western countries tend to have less egalitarian attitudes to gender equality and gender relations than other individuals in the host society (Bhanot & Senn 2007; Koo et al. 2012; Phinney & Flores 2002; Taylor & Mouzos 2006; Yamawaki & Tschanz 2005). International studies also suggest that there are marked differences between countries (see, for example, Wike et al. 2009), with countries holding more liberal attitudes towards gender tending to be those with relatively high GDP and a high level of support for civil liberties (Steel & Kabashima 2008). However, this relationship is neither consistent nor linear. Differences between countries with otherwise similar levels of economic, human and political development are understood to be driven by variations in contemporary social policies and particular historical factors that have influenced the ways in which gender roles and identities are structured (Aboim 2010; Steel & Kabashima 2008).

There is a trend towards a diminishing polarisation of attitudes towards gender equality between socio-demographic groups. This is largely understood to result from the diffusion of more liberal ideas about gender relations across social strata in high-income societies over time (Pampel 2011). This suggests that broader social factors are more influential than individual demographic factors in continuing support for gender inequality (Pampel 2011).

4.1.2 The Gender Equality (GE) Scale

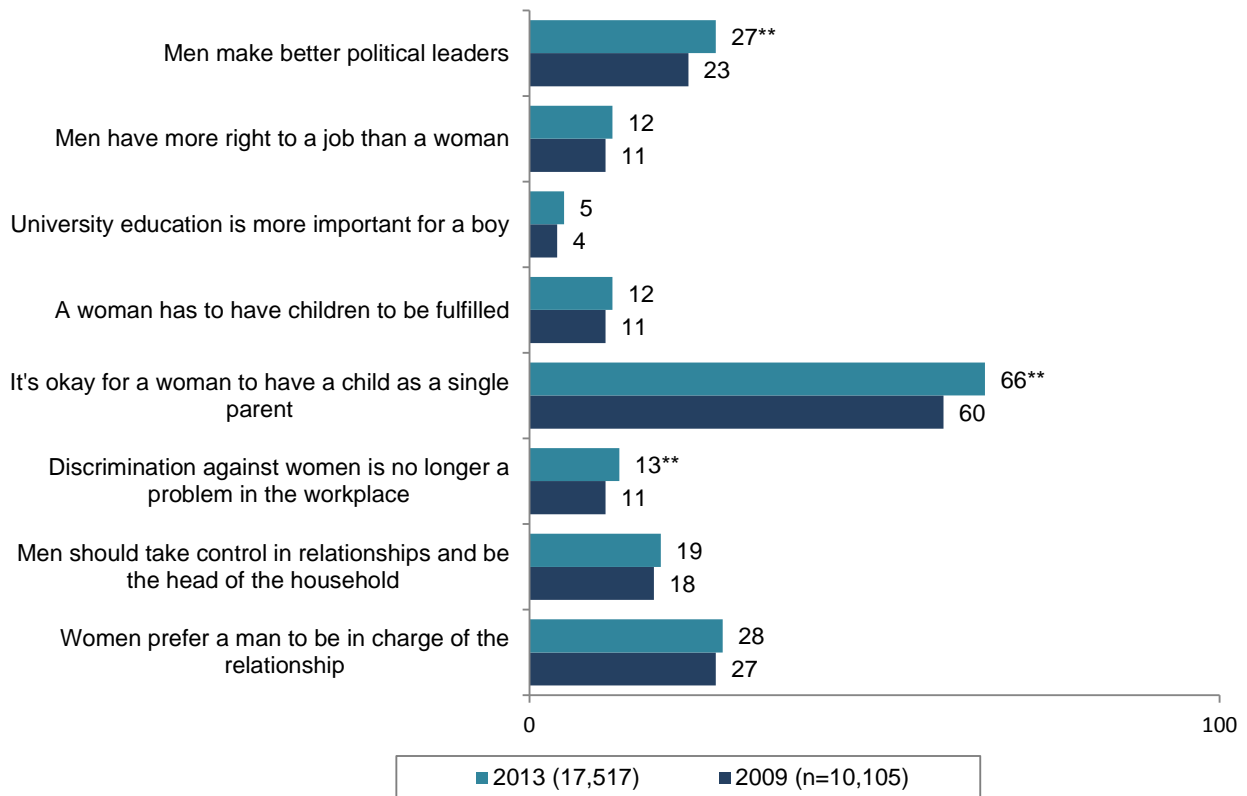
The eight items comprising the Gender Equality (GE) Scale are shown in Figure 4.1.2a.

With regard to the items gauging support for gender equality in the public sphere, 5% of Australians believes that a 'university education is more important for a boy than a girl', while just over one in 10 Australians agrees that 'men have more right to a job than a woman' (12%) and that 'discrimination against women is no longer a problem in the workforce' (13%). A substantially larger proportion – three in 10 – believes that 'men make better political leaders than women' (27%). Of the two items pertaining to women's roles in child bearing just over 1 in 10 (12%) agrees that a woman has to have children to be fulfilled, while two-thirds (66%) agree that 'it's OK for a woman to have a child as single parent'. Of the two items gauging attitudes towards equality in relationships, nearly two in 10 (19%) of Australians agree that 'men should take control in relationships and be the head of the household' and nearly three in 10 agrees that 'women prefer a man to be in-charge of the relationship' (28%).

Based on responses to this eight-item attitudinal battery each individual received a 'gender equality score'. For ease of interpretation, scores have been grouped into categories of low, medium or high gender equality. A more detailed explanation of how this score was constructed is supplied in Appendix C – scales and constructs.

There are statistically significant changes across three of the eight gender equality items between the 2009 and 2013 surveys. The largest change is the six percentage point increase (from 60% to 66%) in the level of agreement that it is OK for a woman to have a child as a single parent. The proportion of males in agreement with this statement has increased from 56% to 64% between 2009 and 2013 (data not shown). For females the increase was from 64% to 68% (data not shown). The increase in support for it being OK for women to have children as single parents is offset, however, by the increase in agreement, from 23% to 27%, that men make better political leaders than women (noting that the survey was conducted during the time in which Australia's first female Prime Minister was in office), and a slight increase (from 11% to 13%) in agreement that 'discrimination against women is no longer a problem in the workplace'.

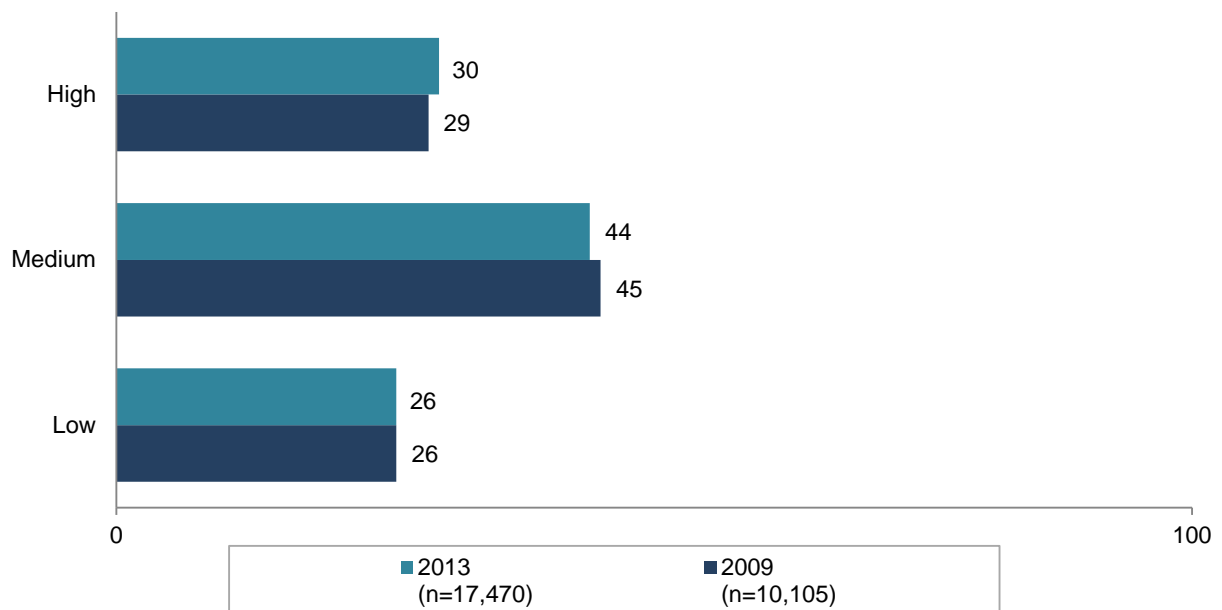
Figure 4.1.2a: Gender Equality items (% nett agree).



** Result is statistically significant compared to the 2009 result, $p \leq .01$.

Despite these movements in the individual items that comprise the Gender Equality Scale, at an overall level there has not been significant change in support for gender equality between 2009 and 2013.

Figure 4.1.2b: Time series – Gender Equality categories (%).



Gender Equality categories by selected characteristics (see Table 4.1.2c, following).

Gender: A higher proportion of females (39%) than males (21%) are classified as high on the Gender Equality (GE) Scale.

Age: Those aged 65 years and over have lower GE scores than other age groups. Just 22% of those aged 65 to 74 years are classified as having high support for gender equality declining to 12% among those aged 75 years and over.

Heritage and language: Compared with the total population (30%), first-generation immigrants are less likely (at 23%) to be classified as high on the GE Scale. There is a marked difference between those born overseas in main English speaking countries (38%) and those born in non-main English speaking countries (N-MESC) (17%). By way of contrast, 34% of the Australian-born individuals are classified as high on the GE Scale. Just 3% of those born overseas and with poor English language proficiency are classified as having a high GE score.

Socio-economic status: There is evidence of a correlation between socio-economic status, as measured by geographic disadvantage, educational attainment, employment status and occupation,¹¹ and GE scores. Those living in the most disadvantaged areas are less likely to have a high GE score (27%), compared with those living in the most advantaged areas (33%). There is a 10 percentage point difference between the proportion of university graduates classified as having high support for gender equality (37%), and those with an educational attainment of secondary school or below (27%). Professionals, clerical and administrative workers and community and personal service workers (all 39%) are more likely to be classified as high on the GE Scale than those employed in trades and technical occupations (23%), machinery operators and drivers (20%) and labourers (25%).

Disability status: Older respondents with a disability (65 years and over) are less likely to be classified as high on the GE Scale (14%) compared to general community counterparts of the same age (18%) (data not shown)¹².

Household composition: Lone parents are more likely (at 37%) than any other household type to be classified as having a high level of support for gender equality.

Place: The ACT is the State/Territory with the largest proportion of respondents rated as high on the GE Scale (37%), and South Australia the lowest (27%).

¹¹ Throughout this report occupation is used as an indicator of socio-economic status along with employment status, educational attainment and locational advantage/disadvantage. While occupation is a widely used indicator of socio-economic status it should also be noted that the different gender composition of some occupation groupings (e.g. community and personal service workers) may also be a factor which contributes to differences between occupation groups in relation to attitudes towards women and violence against women.

¹² Statistically significant at the 95% confidence interval.

Table 4.1.2c: Support for gender equality by selected characteristics (row %)

		Base n	Low Support %	Medium Support %	High Support %
	Total Sample	17,517	26	44	30
Gender	Male	7,834	34**	46**	21**
	Female	9,683	19**	42	39**
Age Group	16 to 17 years	247	18**	51	31
	18 to 24 years	1,676	21**	45	33
	25 to 34 years	2,515	26	44	30
	35 to 44 years	3,048	21**	44	35**
	45 to 54 years	3,223	21**	46	33**
	55 to 64 years	3,295	24	43	33**
	65 to 74 years	2,357	37**	41	22**
	75 years or more	1,156	49**	40	12**
State / Territory	New South Wales	3,973	26	44	30
	Victoria	3,790	26	42	33**
	Queensland	2,754	26	45	29
	South Australia	1,683	30**	44	27**
	Western Australia	1,926	27	46	28
	Tasmania	1,140	24	45	31
	Northern Territory	1,066	26	43	31
	ACT	1,185	20	43	37**
Remoteness Area	Major city	12,042	27	43	30
	Inner regional	2,582	22**	46	32
	Outer regional	2,173	29	42	29
	Remote	523	28	43	29
	Very remote	141	33	46	21
Socio- economic Status (Quintiles)	1 - Low (most disadvantaged)	2,284	30**	43	27**
	2	2,286	27	44	29
	3	3,104	27	45	28
	4	3,891	26	43	31
	5 - High (most advantaged)	5,692	23**	44	33**
Birthplace	Australia	11,996	21**	45	34**
	Main English Speaking countries	2,043	19**	44**	38**
	Other countries	3,453	44**	40**	17**
Migration Status	First generation	5,521	26**	41	23**
	Second generation	3,205	20**	47	33**
	Third plus generation	8,791	22**	45	34**
Language Proficiency	<i>Base: First generation Australians speak LOTE at home</i>				
	Speak English well	2,289	42**	42	16**
	Does not speak English well	437	66**	30**	3**
Year of Arrival	<i>Base: First generation Australians</i>				
	Arrived before 2005	3,986	34**	41**	26**
	Arrived from 2005	1,464	42**	42	16**

** Result is statistically significant compared to the Total sample, $p \leq .01$.
Don't know/ refused not shown.

Table 4.1.2c: Support for gender equality by selected characteristics (row %) cont.

		Base n	Low Support %	Medium Support %	High Support %
Total Sample		17,517	26	44	30
Indigenous Status[#]	Indigenous	341	27	45	28
	Non-Indigenous	17,176	26	44	30
Highest Education	University or higher	6,606	23	40**	37**
	Trade, certificate or diploma	4,254	24	46	30
	Secondary or below	6,547	29**	44	27**
Employment Status	Employed	10,989	23**	45	32**
	Unemployed	754	29	42	29
	Home duties	907	27	40	33
	Retired	3,527	39**	41	20
	Student	755	20	46	34**
	unable to work	442	25	42	33
Occupation	Manager	1,648	24	46	30
	Professional	3,264	17**	44	39**
	Technicians and trade	1,346	32**	45	23**
	Community and Personal Service	1,489	19**	42	39**
	Clerical and administrative	1,300	16**	45	39**
	Sales worker	774	19**	48	33
	Machinery operator and driver	382	34**	46	20**
	Labourer	657	28	48	25**
Other	51	20	38	42	
Family Composition Household	Lone person household	3,058	33**	41	26**
	Couple only	5,373	29**	44	28**
	Couple children at home	6,339	24**	45	32
	Lone parent children at home	1,153	18**	45	37**
	Group household	743	24	44	31
	Other type of household	771	27	43	30
Disability Status by Age^(a)	Disability and aged <65 years	1,134	25	45	30
	Disability and aged 65 years plus	833	49**	36**	14**
	Does not have a disability	15,458	25	44	31

** Result is statistically significant compared to the Total sample, $p \leq 0.01$.

Don't know/ refused not shown.

[#] Weighted to independent population benchmarks.

(b) Long term disability that reduces the amount or kind of activity that can be undertaken

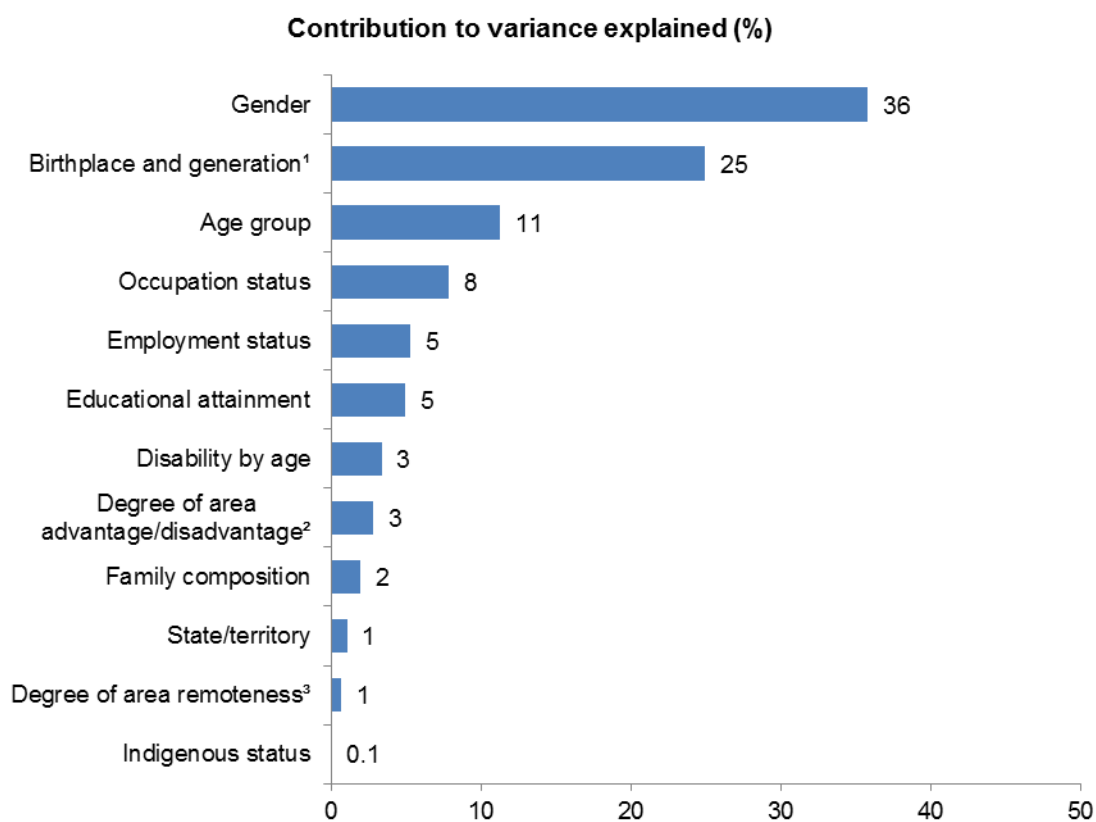
4.2. What are the key factors associated with attitudes towards gender equality?

The above show a relationship between various demographic and socio-economic characteristics and GE scores. Multiple linear regression modelling was undertaken (see Figure 4.2a) to measure the explanatory power of the combined variables and the relative strength of their association with gender equality. The results of this modelling must be interpreted differently from the univariate and bivariate results presented earlier. Whereas the univariate and bivariate results are overall averages for each separate demographic variable, ignoring all others the multiple regression approach gives results that illustrate the nett effect for a variable, after accounting for other variables.

Figure 4.2a shows that the overall variance explained by the model is 16.9%¹³. The characteristics explaining most of the explained variance in scores across the GE Scale are gender (36% of total variance explained), birthplace/generation (25% of variance explained) and age group (11%). The socio-economic constructs (occupation, employment status, educational attainment and SEIFA quintile) together accounted for 21% of the explained variance.

Taken together, these findings show that while attitudes to gender equality are differentiated by demographic and socio-economic characteristics there are also other factors (not measured in this survey), that contribute to variations in the distribution of attitudes that are supportive of gender equality across the community. These are discussed further in section 12, in which the implications of the findings of the survey are outlined.

Figure 4.2a: The relative importance of selected demographic variables in explaining variance on the gender equality scale (% variance explained).



¹ Included respondent's place of birth as well as the place of birth of their parents.

² Measured using the Bureau of Statistics Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage (see Table 1.5)

³ Measured using the Australian Bureau of Statistics remoteness areas classifications (see Table 1.5)

Total variance explained by model – 16.9%

¹³ The level of variance explained by the Multiple Linear Regression models used throughout this report is further discussed in Appendix B - technical and methodological notes – multiple linear regression modelling and in Section 12.

5. Community knowledge of violence against women

As discussed earlier, knowledge has the potential to influence responses to violence by individuals and at the community and organisational levels and also influences the formation of attitudes. A number of questions were included in the survey to gauge the level of knowledge and understanding of violence against women. The outcomes of these questions are reported in this section. The questions focus on understanding of the behaviours constituting violence against women, and of the law as it pertains to the problem. They also explore the perceived prevalence of violence against women, and community understanding of patterns of perpetration and impact and of the causes of violence.

5.1. Selected behaviours which constitute domestic violence

Background to questions

Efforts by the international community to address violence against women are underpinned by the definition in the Declaration of the Elimination of Violence Against Women (UN 1993). This definition conceptualises violence against women as occurring on a continuum, from behaviours designed to intimidate and cause psychological harm to women through to those involving forced sex and physical injury.

Wide community understanding of this definition is important for three main reasons. First, there is growing evidence that non-physical forms of violence can cause equal if not greater harms (Doherty & Berglund 2008; McDonald 2012; McKinnon 2008; Postmus et al. 2011; Theran et al. 2006). Second, forms of violence along the continuum often co-occur and produce a complex dynamic that can make it especially difficult for women to both prevent their victimisation and to escape violence once it occurs (Stark 2009). Third, there is increasing consensus that behaviours along the continuum are both related and underpinned by common causal factors. At the individual level, these include now well-established associations between men's perpetration of violence and a sense of entitlement over and disrespect for women and a desire to exercise control over them (Flood & Pease 2006). At the broader level are structures and social norms that engender or fail to sanction against these beliefs and behaviours. This suggests that drawing attention to and addressing all forms of abuse, harassment and exploitation of women is important not only for the harms they cause, but because it has the potential to strengthen understanding of the problem as whole.

This is particularly the case in partner violence where violence is often used by the perpetrator in a methodical and strategic manner to gain power in a relationship and control over their partner (Johnson 2011; Stark 2009). Physical and sexual violence are frequently accompanied by other forms of abuse designed to control, intimidate and belittle women and isolate them from sources of social support and economic independence (Postmus et al. 2011; Stark 2009; Starratt et al. 2008). This pattern of controlling behaviours is one of the most consistent findings in studies of partner violence across the world (Garcia-Moreno et al. 2006; Antai 2011; Dalal & Lindqvist 2012; Gage 2005; Heise 2012; Graham-Kevin & Archer 2008; Kiss et al. 2012). This includes Australia (Mouzos & Makkai 2004).

This pattern is commonly referred to as 'coercive control' (Stark 2009). In this dynamic, other non-physical violence may occur in the absence of physical or sexual violence, or physical forms of violence may be relatively infrequent (Wangmann 2011). This distinctive pattern of violence is understood to be a significant barrier to women leaving a violent relationship (Hand et al. 2009). It is also a contributor to the particularly high health, social and economic burden associated with partner violence (Lewis et al. 2006; Postmus et al. 2011).

There has been debate in the literature regarding the extent to which all partner violence reported in population-level surveys, such as the *Personal Safety Survey*, is characterised by coercive control. Some

researchers argue that there is a diversity of types of violence taking place in intimate relationships, each with different motivations, severity and impact (for discussion, see Wangmann 2011). In some relationships, it is maintained, violence, although no less serious, is more situational in nature. In response, others point to the absence of sound evidence on the basis of which to make these distinctions and the risks, in doing so, of missing, underestimating or dealing inappropriately with a problem with potentially serious consequences (see Wangmann 2011). Evidence from more detailed examination of population-based surveys supports the hypothesis that violence comprising a constellation of violent and abusive behaviours is common, with women reporting experience of one form of violence being substantially more likely to report other forms (Krebs et al. 2011).

Despite differences in expert opinion about how much partner violence experienced by women is characterised by coercive control, there is a consensus that it is both a common dynamic in relationships affected by violence and one which has significant consequences for women's safety and wellbeing (Wangmann 2011).

Understanding of both the dynamics of violence and shared causal factors implied in the continuum definition is important both in responding to people affected by violence, as well as in determining appropriate policy responses to the problem. This understanding may influence how readily violence or the proclivity for violence is identified by family, friends, support and legal professionals and women themselves (Flood & Pease 2006). Recognition of non-physical forms is especially important in this regard since these can often be covert and difficult to detect (Theran et al. 2006). How violence is defined also influences the framing of legislation to protect women (Stark 2009), as well as whether women see their experiences of violence as defined in law.

Research conducted in Europe and North America indicates that there is broad community understanding of violence against women as comprising a continuum of behaviours, but that recognition tends to be higher for physical abuse than for social and psychological forms, such as controlling a partner by preventing them from seeing their family or friends or humiliating them with constant put-downs (Carlson & Worden 2005; Harris/Decima 2009).

Survey findings and changes over time

Respondents to the NCAS were presented with seven behaviours commonly associated with partner violence. It is important to note that each of these statements is consciously framed to encapsulate the coercive and controlling dynamic documented in the research.

Respondents were asked whether these behaviours were domestic violence (Yes/No). Those responding 'yes' were then asked whether this was 'always', 'usually' or 'sometimes' the case. This was designed to gauge the extent to which the community's identification of behaviours as violence was conditional. That is whether they believed that there were circumstances in which the behaviours were not a form of domestic violence. The 'yes always' and 'no' responses are shown in Figure 5.1a.

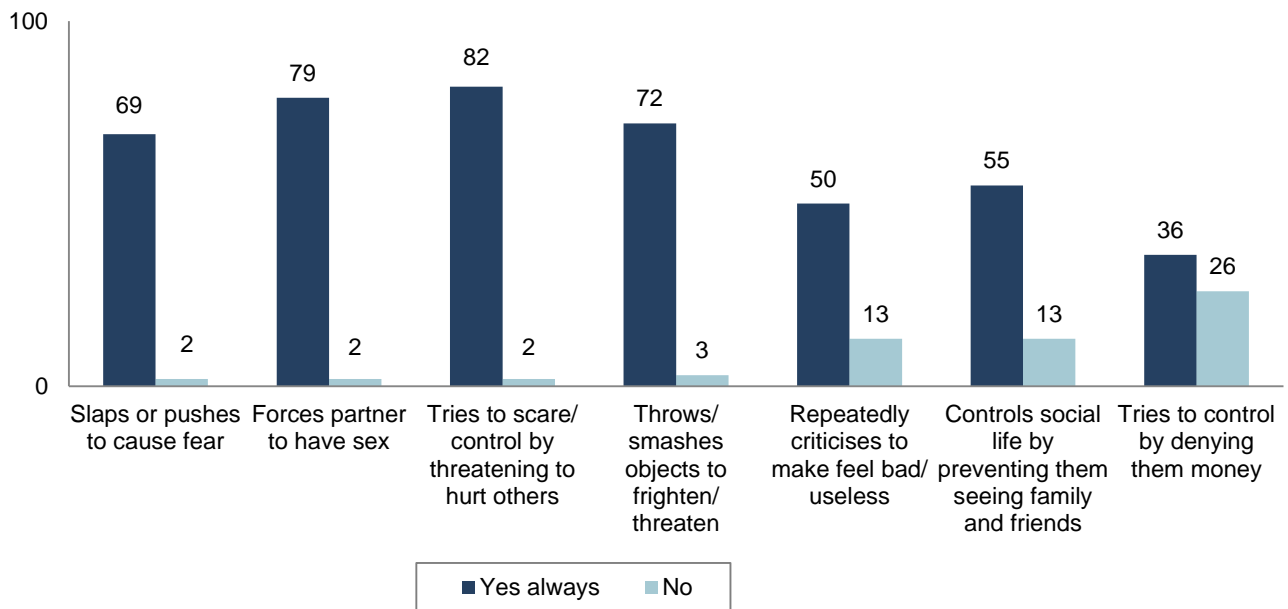
Overt physical violence or threats of violence are more likely to 'always' be regarded as domestic violence, with 82% of people believing that one partner in a domestic relationship trying to scare or control the other partner by threatening to hurt other family members was always violence and 79% believing that this was always the case if one partner forces the other partner to have sex, if one partner throws or smashes objects near the other partner to frighten or threaten them (72%), or if one partner slaps or pushes the other partner to cause harm or fear (69%).

Behaviours less likely to be always regarded as domestic violence are those involving more subtle forms of control and intimidation. Fifty-five percent of people agreed that trying to control the social life of the other partner was always violence, while 50% believed that it was always domestic violence if one partner

repeatedly criticises the other to make them feel bad or useless or if one partner tries to control the other partner by denying them money (36%).

The behaviour least likely to be identified as partner violence was 'controlling the partner by denying them money', with over 1 in 4 (26%) respondents believing that this was not domestic violence.

Figure 5.1a: The extent to which selected behaviours are regarded as domestic violence* (%).



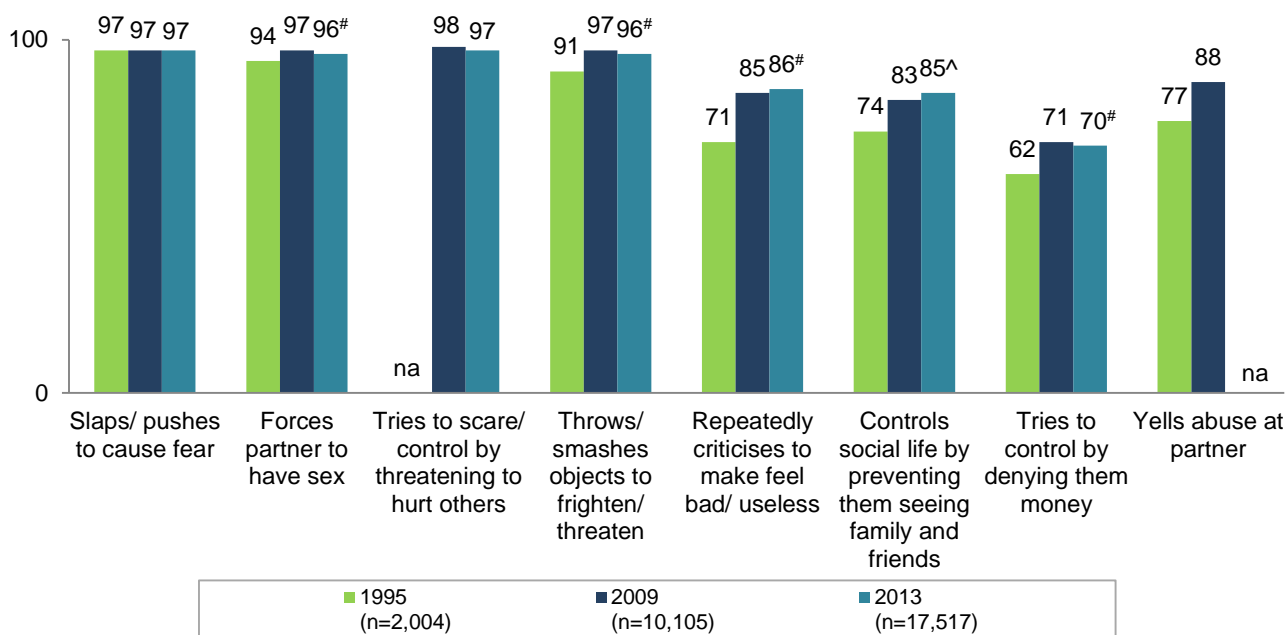
Sample size n=17,517

* Note not all response options included

The pattern of response seen in Figure 5.1a is consistent with that observed in 2009. Figure 5.1b, which shows the total for all 'yes' responses (yes always, yes usually, yes sometimes), and indicates that physical and sexual assault and threats and intimidation are more commonly seen as domestic violence than are psychological, verbal and economic abuse.

Since 1995 there has been a substantial increase in the proportion of the community who regard repeatedly criticising a partner, controlling their social life or denying them money as domestic violence.

Figure 5.1b: Time series – the extent to which selected behaviours are regarded as domestic violence (% 'yes').



[#] Difference between 1995 and 2013 is statistically significant, $p \leq .01$
[^] Difference between 1995, 2009 and 2013 is statistically significant, $p \leq .01$
na = not asked

Bivariate analysis

The extent to which physical threats and intimidation are classified as domestic violence by selected characteristics (see Tables 5.1a to 5.1d, Appendix A – detailed tables).

Gender: Females are more likely than males to 'always' perceive these behaviours as domestic violence. The behaviour that best illustrates this point is 'throws or smashes an object near the other partner to frighten or threaten them', with 69% of males regarding such behaviour as 'always' domestic violence compared with 74% of females.

Age: Older respondents are generally less likely than other age groups to state that these behaviours 'always' constitute domestic violence. For example, 61% of those aged 75 years and over and 71% of those aged 65–74 years regard forced sex as always domestic violence compared to 79% overall.

Heritage and language: Compared to the overall average, those born in a N-MESC are less likely to regard each of these behaviours as domestic violence, and this result holds true for related variables such as migration status, English language proficiency and time in Australia. By way of an example, 83% of Australian-born persons always regard forced sex within a relationship to be domestic violence as do 86% of those born overseas in main English speaking countries. The comparable percentage among those born in a N-MESC is 66%.

Socio-economic status: While the data is not consistent across all four of the selected behaviours it seems that those without post-secondary school qualifications are less likely to agree that these behaviours are always domestic violence and those in managerial, professional and other white collar occupations are generally more likely to agree that these behaviours are always domestic violence.

Gender Equality: Those with a high GE score are significantly more likely than the overall average (between nine and 13 percentage points higher) to regard these behaviours as always domestic violence.

The extent to which less overt forms of control are classified as domestic violence by selected characteristics (see Tables 5.1e to 5.1g, Appendix A – detailed tables).

Gender: Females are more likely than males to regard each of these behaviours as domestic violence (e.g. 78% of females regard 'denying money' as domestic violence compared with 63% of males). Eighty percent of males and 90% of females also regard 'controlling the social life of the other partner by preventing them from seeing family or friends' as domestic violence. The corresponding result for males in 2009 was 77%. Since 2009 there has been a significant increase in the proportion of males who regard 'controlling the social life of the other partner' to always be domestic violence (up from 42% to 48%).

Age: Younger respondents are generally less likely than other age groups to regard these behaviours as always domestic violence. Looking at 18 to 24 year olds, for instance, 43% of this group view 'repeatedly criticising one's partner to make feel bad or useless' as always domestic violence (compared with 50% overall). Of this same group, 45% regard 'controlling the social life of the other partner by preventing them from seeing family or friends' to always be domestic violence (55% overall) and 23% regard 'controlling the other partner by denying them money' to always be domestic violence (36% overall).

Heritage and language: Heritage and language are also associated with whether or not these non-physical forms of dominance and control are regarded as domestic violence. As an example, subjecting one's partner to repeated criticism to make them feel bad or useless is considered to be domestic violence among 42% of those respondents who have arrived in Australia since 2005, and 42% of those born in a N-MESC, compared with 50% of the total sample.

Indigenous status: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (61%) are more likely than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (50%) to regard repeatedly criticising a partner to make them feel bad or useless as a form of violence against women.

Gender Equality: Attitudes to gender equality are an important covariate in the extent to which these non-physical forms of influence and control are thought to be domestic violence. Ninety-one percent of those with a high GE score regard 'repeatedly criticising to make feel bad or useless' to be domestic violence, compared with 86% overall. Of this same group, 91% also agree 'controlling the social life of the other partner' is a form of domestic violence (85% overall) as is 'denying money' (78% compared with 70% overall).

5.2. Selected behaviours which constitute violence against women

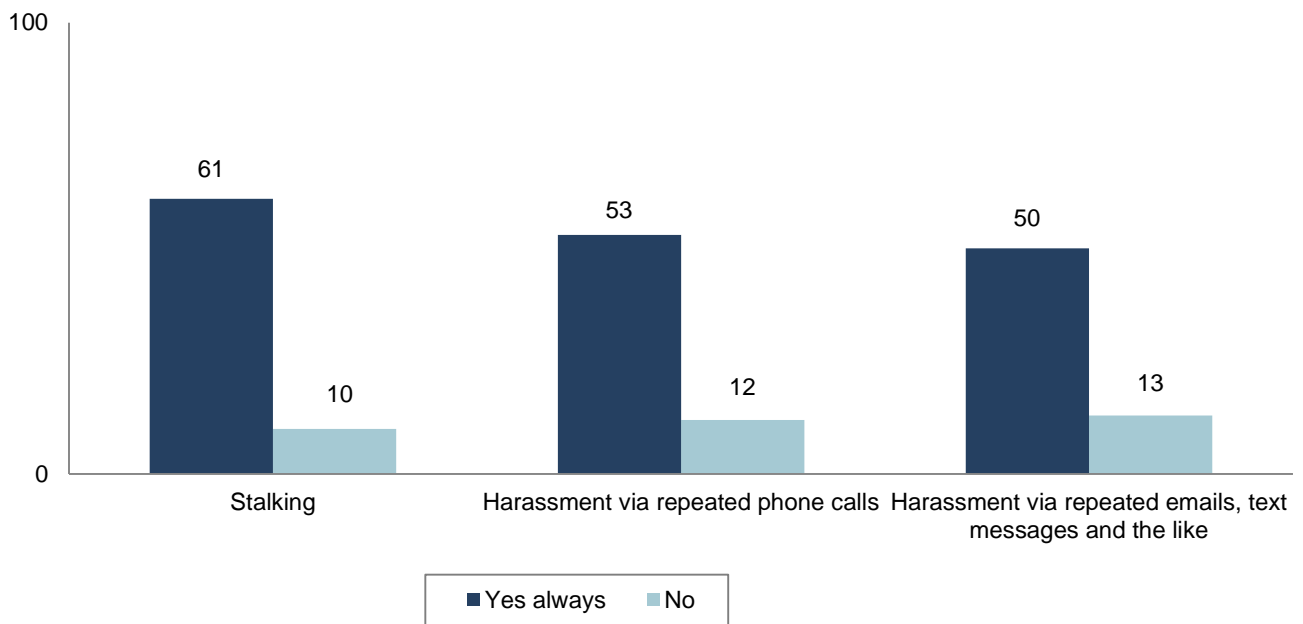
Background to questions

Three further questions were asked to gauge community understanding of stalking and harassment and abuse via telephone and email. These behaviours often occur in the context of domestic violence (Hand et al. 2009), but may also be perpetrated in the context of other intimate relationships, as well as by unknown men and men known to women in other contexts (e.g. work colleagues). Accordingly, in answering these questions, respondents were asked to think about violence against women generally, not just domestic violence. As with 5.1 above, the question format used for these questions was to ascertain whether a certain behaviour was regarded as violence against women (Yes/No) and, if yes, was that 'always', 'usually' or 'sometimes' the case. The 'yes, always' and 'no' responses are shown in Figure 5.2a.

Survey findings and changes over time

Six in 10 (61%) of those interviewed regard stalking (i.e. being repeatedly followed or watched at home or work) to always be a form of violence against women. Approximately half (53%) regard harassment via repeated phone calls to always be violence against women, with a similar proportion (50%) regarding harassment via repeated emails, text messages and the like to be violence against women.

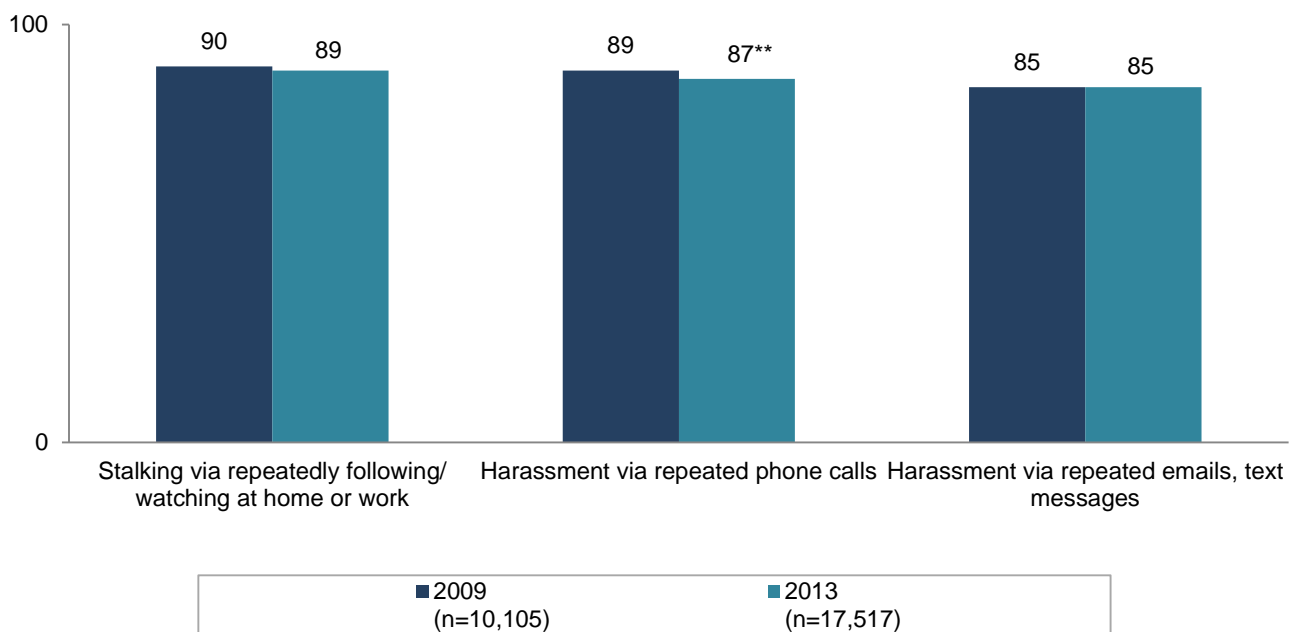
Figure 5.2a: The extent to which selected behaviours are regarded as violence against women (%).



Sample size n=17,517

The overall extent to which each of these behaviours is regarded as violence against women (yes always, yes usually, yes sometimes) shows very little variation from that observed in 2009 (see Figure 5.2b). Almost nine in 10 individuals (89%) regard stalking by repeatedly following or watching to be violence against women, (87%) regard stalking and harassment via repeated phone calls to be violence against women and the same proportion (85%) hold the same view with regard to harassment via repeated emails, text messages and the like.

Figure 5.2b: Time series – the extent to which selected behaviours are regarded as violence against women (% 'yes').



** Difference between 2009 and 2013 is statistically significant, $p \leq .01$

Bivariate analysis

The extent to which certain behaviours are regarded as violence against women by selected characteristics (see Tables 5.2a to 5.2c, Appendix A – detailed tables).

Gender: Females are more likely than males to regard these behaviours as violence against women, with 92% of females regarding stalking to be a form of violence against women compared with 85% of males, 89% of females regarding harassment via repeated phone calls to be a form of violence against women (85% of males), and 87% of females regarding harassment via repeated emails, text messages and the like to be a form of violence against women (82% of males).

Age: Those aged 55 to 74 years are more likely than other age groups to regard each of these behaviours as violence against women, while younger respondents are less likely to 'always' regard these behaviours as violence against women. Taking 16 to 17 year olds by way of example, 50% of this group always regard stalking to be a form of violence against women compared with 61% overall. Similarly, 37% of 16 to 17 year olds always regard harassment via repeated phone calls to be violence against women (53% overall), and 35% always regard harassment via repeated text messages and the like to be violence against women (50% overall).

Heritage and language: Sixty-six percent of first-generation Australians who do not speak English well regard stalking to be violence against women compared with 89% overall. Of this same group, 73% regard harassment via repeated phone calls to be violence against women (87% overall) and 69% regard harassment via emails, text messages and the like to be violence against women compared with 85% overall.

Indigenous status: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are more likely than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to regard each of these behaviours as violence against women. However, given sample size limitations, only harassment via emails and text messages is significantly different among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents (58%) compared with 50% of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

Gender Equality: Those with a higher GE score are more likely than others to rate each of these behaviours as a form of violence against women. Three in four (74%) of those with high GE score always regard stalking as a form of violence. Of this same group, almost two-thirds (64%) always regard harassment via repeated phone calls to be violence against women and 61% regard harassment via emails, text messages and the like to be violence against women.

5.3. Creating an overarching 'Understanding Violence Against Women' (UVAW) Scale

Background to scale

As discussed in section 5.1 above, an understanding of violence against women as extending beyond physical violence and threats of physical harm to include a range of social and psychological behaviours designed to intimidate and control women is pivotal to understanding the nature of this form of violence. Our hypothesis is that respondents with this more nuanced understanding of violence will be more knowledgeable about violence and less likely to endorse attitudes that support violence by justifying, excusing, trivialising or minimising it or blaming the victim. To assist our understanding of the extent to which the general community has an appreciation of the nuanced nature of violence against women a scale was constructed from an amalgam of questionnaire items which measure understanding of non-physical violence against women, and are suitable for amalgamation. This scale is used as a shorthand measure of community understanding of violence against women. Appendix C – scales and constructs, shows the items included in this overall Understanding Violence Against Women (UVAW) scale and also discusses the limitations of this variable.

Table 5.3a shows the six items included in this scale. The basic approach to compiling this scale was to tally scores across these items which resulted in each respondent being given an 'understanding of violence against women' score (UVAW). For the purposes of this exercise this score was split into quartiles with the 1st quartile labelled as low understanding of violence against women, the second and third quartiles combined and labelled as moderate understanding of violence against women and the fourth quartile labelled as high understanding of violence against women. The UVAW Scale provides a simple way to examine the interrelationship between the level of community understanding of the nature of violence against women and the other knowledge domains measured in the survey (see 5.4, 5.5, 5.6 and 5.7 below), as well as the relationship between violence supportive attitudes (as explored in Sections 6 and 7).

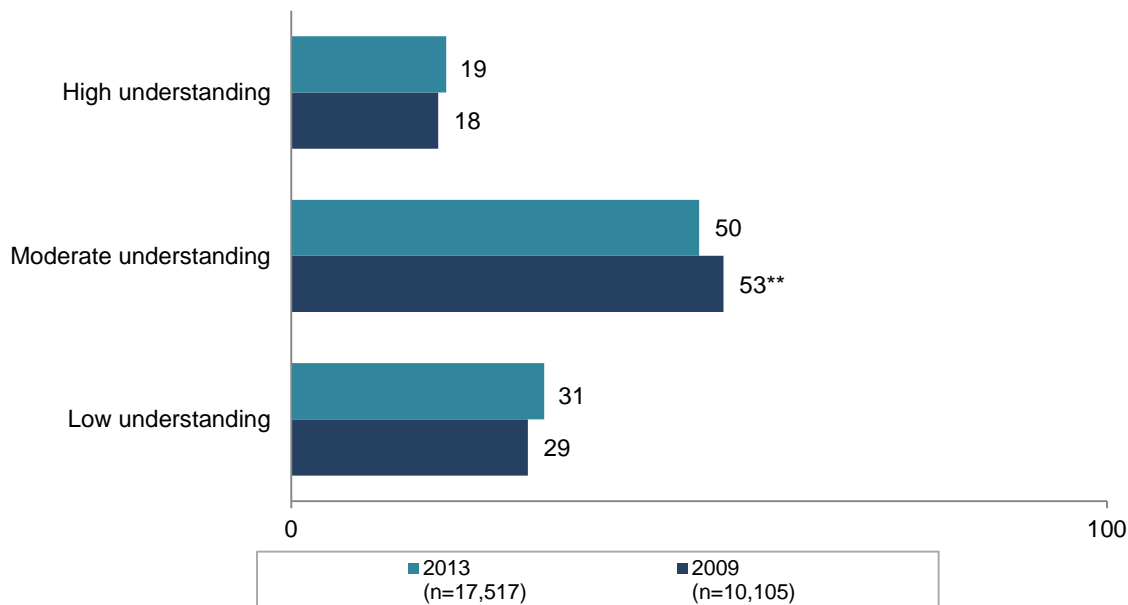
Table 5.3a: Measures included in the 'Understanding Violence Against Women' Scale

Theme and item	Reverse score (Y/N)
DV2g. Repeatedly criticises to make them feel bad or useless – a form of domestic violence? (1 – Yes, always, 4 – No)	Y
DV2k. Controls the social life by preventing them from seeing family and friends – a form of domestic violence? (1– Yes, always, 4 – No)	Y
DV2m. Tries to control by denying money – a form of domestic violence? (1 – Yes, always, 4 – No)	Y
SV1a. Stalking – a form of violence against women? (1 – Yes, always, 4 – No)	Y
SV2a. Harassment via repeated phone calls – a form of violence against women? (1 – Yes, always, 4 – No)	Y
SV2c. Harassment via repeated emails, text messages and the like – a form of violence against women? (1 – Yes, always, 4 – No)	Y

Survey findings and changes over time

The UVAW Scale created for the 2013 report was also applied to the 2009 data with a view to establishing whether or not there has been any change in this measure of community understanding of violence against women over time. The results from this analysis are summarised in Figure 5.3b and show very little change in the level of understanding of violence against women in the community based on this measure. The only statistically significant change was a decline from 53% to 50% in the proportion of the community classified as having a moderate score on the UVAW Scale.

Figure 5.3b: Time series – Understanding violence against women categories (%).



** Difference between 2009 and 2013 is statistically significant, $p \leq .01$

Bivariate analysis

Understanding violence against women (UVAW) scores by selected characteristics (see Table 5.3c, following).

Total sample: At an overall level, nearly one-third of the population (31%) were classified as low on the UVAW Scale, 50% as moderate and less than a fifth (19%) as high (i.e. having a more nuanced understanding of violence against women).

Gender: A higher proportion of males have a low UVAW score (37%) than females (25%).

Age: A relatively high proportion of 16 to 34 year olds are classified as having a low UVAW score (approximately 40%) compared with an average of 31% across all age groups.

Heritage and language: A higher proportion of those born in a N-MESC is categorised as having a low UVAW score (41%) than is the case for Australian-born individuals (27%) or those born overseas in main English speaking countries (27%). This is also true of first-generation immigrants generally (37% being classified as having a low UVAW score) and particularly those with poor English language proficiency (52%) and those who arrived in Australia from 2005 onwards (47%).

Socio-economic status: Technicians and trade workers are less likely to be classified as having a high level of understanding of violence against women (15%) compared with those working in community and personal service occupations (26%) and in clerical and administrative roles (24%).

Indigenous status: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents are less likely to be classified as having a low level of understanding of violence against women (23%) than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents (31%) and are more likely to be classified as having a high level of understanding (25% v 19%).¹⁴

Disability status: Persons with a disability aged less than 65 years are less likely to have a low UVAW score (26%) than the average for the population aged less than 65 years (32%) (data not shown). That is they are *less* likely to have a poor understanding of violence against women.

¹⁴ Significant at the 95% confidence level.

Place: Victoria is the State/Territory with highest proportion of residents with a low UVAW score (35%) whereas those in inner regional areas (27%) and remote areas (21%) are less likely to have a low score on the UVAW Scale.

Gender Equality: Individuals with a low GE score were more likely than others (at 44%) to be classified as having a low UVAW score. At the other end of the scale, 30% of those with a high GE score also had a high UVAW score (compared with 19% overall).

Table 5.3c: Understanding violence against women by selected characteristics.

	Base n	Low Understanding of VAW %	Moderate Understanding of VAW %	High Understanding of VAW %
Total Sample	17,517	31	50	19
Gender				
Male	7,834	37**	48	15**
Female	9,683	25**	52	24**
Age Group				
16 to 17 years	247	41**	51	8**
18 to 24 years	1,676	42**	49	9**
25 to 34 years	2,515	39**	47	14**
35 to 44 years	3,048	29	49	22**
45 to 54 years	3,223	26**	50	24**
55 to 64 years	3,295	22**	51	27**
65 to 74 years	2,357	23**	56**	21
75 years or more	1,156	30	53	17
State / Territory				
New South Wales	3,973	30	50	20
Victoria	3,790	35**	48	17**
Queensland	2,754	28	51	20
South Australia	1,683	28	52	20
Western Australia	1,926	29	52	19
Tasmania	1,140	27	51	22
Northern Territory	1,066	31	51	18
ACT	1,185	29	51	20
Remoteness Area				
Major city	12,042	32	50	18
Inner regional	2,582	27**	51	23**
Outer regional	2,173	28	51	21
Remote	523	21**	57	22
Very remote	141	30	37	33**
Socio- economic Status (Quintiles)				
1 - Low (most disadvantaged)	2,284	32	48	19
2	2,286	26**	51	22**
3	3,104	31	50	20
4	3,891	30	51	19
5 - High (most advantaged)	5,692	32	50	18
Birthplace				
Australia	11,996	27**	51	21**
Main English Speaking countries	2,043	27**	51	22
Other countries	3,453	41**	47**	12**
Migration Status				
First generation	5,521	37**	48	15**
Second generation	3,205	30	50	20
Third plus generation	8,791	26**	52	22**
Language Proficiency	<i>Base: First generation Australians speak LOTE at home</i>			
Speak English well	2,289	42**	47**	12**
Does not speak English well	437	52**	40**	8**
Year of Arrival	<i>Base: First generation Australians</i>			
Arrived before 2005	3,986	33	50	17**
Arrived from 2005	1,464	47**	43**	10**

** Result is statistically significant compared to the Total sample, $p \leq .01$.
Refused not shown.

Table 5.3c: Understanding violence against women by selected characteristics (cont.)

		Base n	Low Understanding of VAW %	Moderate Understanding of VAW %	High Understanding of VAW %
Total Sample		17,517	31	50	19
Indigenous Status[#]	Indigenous	341	23	52	25
	Non-Indigenous	17,176	31	50	19
Highest Education	University or higher	6,606	33**	49	18
	Trade, certificate or diploma	4,254	28	51	21
	Secondary or below	6,547	31	51	19
Employment Status	Employed	10,989	31	50	20
	Unemployed	754	35	46	19
	Home duties	907	28	52	20
	Retired	3,527	26**	54**	20
	Student	755	44**	46	10**
	unable to work	442	23**	51	26**
Occupation	Manager	1,648	27	51	22
	Professional	3,264	30	49	20
	Technicians and trade	1,346	35**	50	15**
	Community and Personal Service	1,489	26**	48	26**
	Clerical and administrative	1,300	28	49	24**
	Sales worker	774	33	52	15
	Machinery operator and driver	382	35	49	16
	Labourer	657	35	49	16
Other	51	37	45	18	
Family Composition Household	Lone person household	3,058	29	51	20
	Couple only	5,373	28**	51	21**
	Couple children at home	6,339	32	49	19
	Lone parent children at home	1,153	27	52	21
	Group household	743	41**	47	12**
	Other type of household	771	34	51	15**
Gender Equality Support	Low	4,050	44**	46**	10**
	Medium	7,444	30	52	17**
	High	5,999	19**	51	30**
Disability Status by Age^(a)	Disability and aged <65 years	1,134	26	48	25**
	Disability and aged 65 years plus	833	29	54	17
	Does not have a disability	15,458	31	50	19

** Result is statistically significant compared to the Total sample, $p \leq 0.01$.

[#] Weighted to independent population benchmarks.

(a) Long term disability that reduces the amount or kind of activity that can be undertaken
Refused not shown.

This overarching 'understanding of violence against women' measure provides a useful analytical tool in examining the relationship between understanding violence against women and other areas of knowledge as well as attitudes towards violence against women.

5.4. Is violence against women perceived as common in our community?

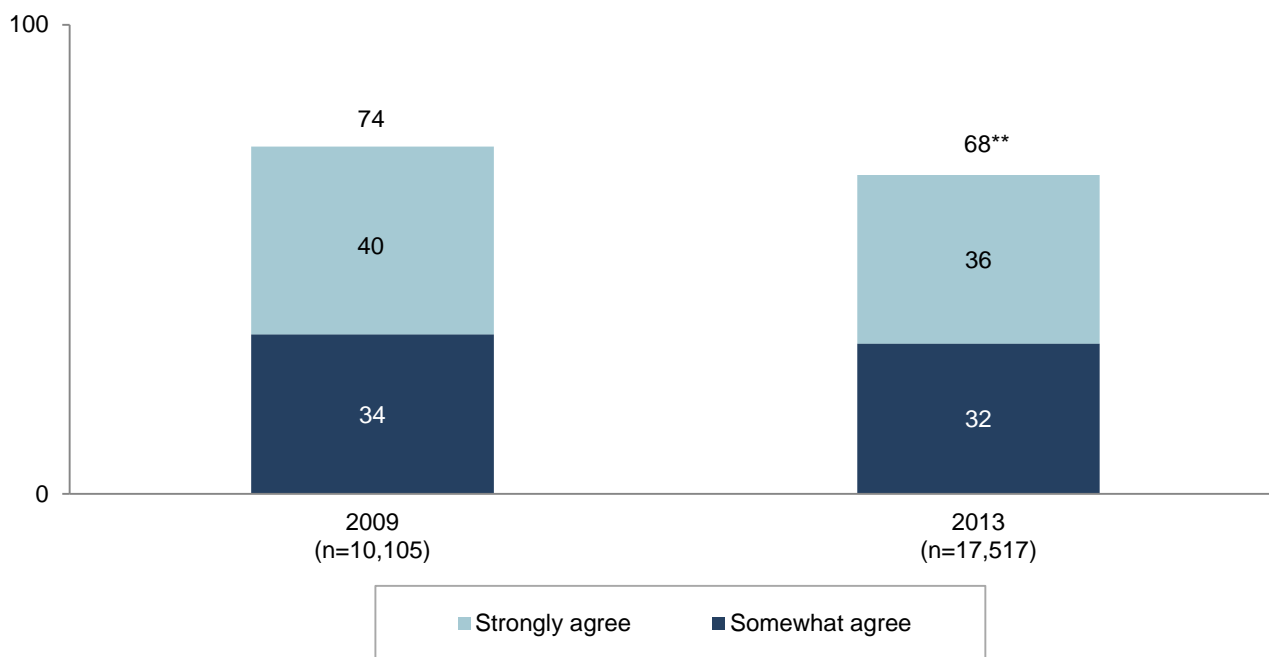
Background to question

The 2012 *Personal Safety Survey*, the most recent population-based survey to ask Australians about their experiences of violence, suggests that violence against women remains common, with physical and sexual forms of violence by a male alone affecting 39% of Australian women since the age of 15 (ABS 2013b). An appreciation of the prevalence of violence is important to ensure ongoing community engagement in efforts to address the problem (Gracia & Herrero 2006b, p. 128). People who regard violence against women as common have been found to be more likely to believe that domestic violence is unacceptable (Gracia & Herrero 2006b) and more likely to intervene if they know a woman is subject to partner violence (Gracia & Herrero 2006a).

Survey findings and changes over time

The NCAS included a question designed to gauge the extent to which prevalence of violence against women in the community is understood. Sixty-eight percent of respondents either somewhat agree (32%) or strongly agree (36%) that violence against women is common. This is significantly lower than in 2009 when 74% of respondents held this view. The proportion of respondents who stated they did not know whether violence against women is common is quite high at 11%, similar to 2009 (10%) (see Table 5.4, Appendix A).

Figure 5.4: Time series – violence against women is common (%).



** Result is statistically significant, $p \leq 0.01$

Bivariate analysis

The perception that violence against women is common by selected characteristics (see Table 5.4, Appendix A – detailed tables).

Gender: Males (59%) are less likely than females (76%) to agree that violence against women is common.

Age: A smaller proportion of young people agree that violence against women is common (16 to 17 years (58%), 16 to 24 years (60%) and 25 to 34 years (62%) whereas older respondents, in particular those aged 45 to 54 years (71%), 55 to 64 years (74%) and 65 to 74 years (73%), are more likely to agree.

Heritage and language: Compared to the Australian-born population (71%), N-MESC respondents are less likely to be of the view that violence against women is common (57%), with more recent arrivals (from 2005 onwards) (47%) and those who do not speak English (43%) less likely still.

Socio-economic status: Individuals living in the most disadvantaged areas of Australia are more likely to perceive violence against women as common (72%), compared with 64% of those living in the most advantaged areas. University graduates (62%) and those working as managers (63%) are less likely to perceive violence as common, as are tradespersons and technicians (62%) and labourers (also 62%). Of all the occupation groups, community and personal service workers (76%) are the most likely to regard violence against women as common.

Indigenous status: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are more likely to regard violence against women as common (87%) compared to non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (68%).

Disability status: Respondents with a disability are more likely to perceive violence against women as common, particularly younger disabled people (78%), compared to those without a disability (67%).

Place: Compared to the overall average (68%), a higher proportion of respondents living in inner (71%) and outer (73%) regional areas and in the Northern Territory (79%) regard violence against women as common. The pattern in the data also suggests an increase in the proportion of people recognising violence as common with increasing remoteness of the area.

Gender Equality: Sixty percent of those classified as low on the GE Scale agree that violence against women is common compared with 76% of those with a high GE score.

5.5. Understanding who perpetrates and who is affected by violence

5.5.1 *Patterns of perpetration of sexual assault*

Background to questions

Compared with other crimes against the person, sexual assaults are less likely to be reported, to be prosecuted or to result in conviction (Larcombe 2011). In explaining this difference, experts have pointed to the story or 'cultural script' that many people hold in their heads about what constitutes a credible, genuine or 'real' rape (Estrich 1986). In this script, rape usually takes place at night, outdoors in a dark and secluded place. The victim is alone and the perpetrator is unknown to her. She is typically of impeccable character, is conservatively dressed, does not have a history of mental health or cognitive problems and is unaffected by alcohol. The assault takes place with the use of force, typically involving both aggression and weapons. The victim physically resists her assailant, sustaining visible injuries in the process (Anderson 2007; Estrich 1986; Larcombe 2011; McMahon 2010).

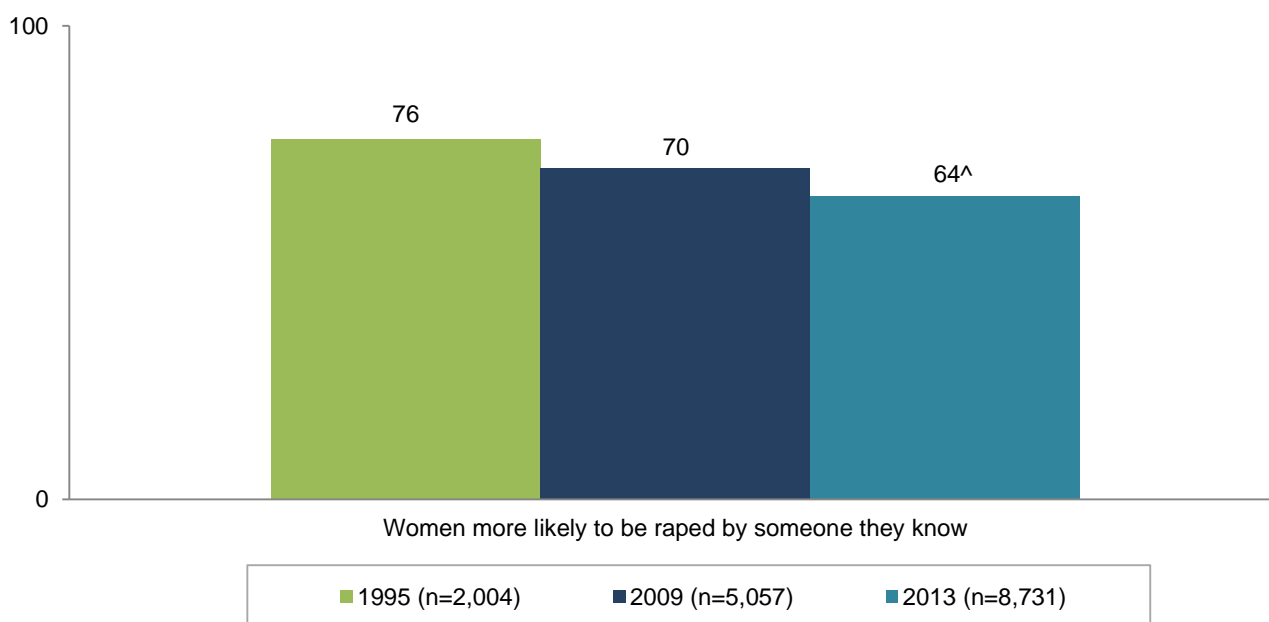
In reality, the circumstances in which most sexual assault occurs are very different. Australian women are over three times more likely to have experienced sexual assault since the age of 15 by a known person (15% of women) than a stranger (3.8% of women) (ABS 2013b). In many cases this known person will have been a current or previous partner or a boyfriend or date (ABS 2013b). Accordingly they may be someone with whom she may previously have had consensual sex, or with whom she will have spent at least some time prior to the assault. Older women and women with disabilities may be particularly at risk of rape in institutional settings (Clark & Fileborn 2011; Dillon 2010) and a very large proportion of sexual assaults take place in a domestic, social or workplace setting (Brecklin & Ullman 2002; Clark & Quadara 2010; Untied et al. 2013). Approximately half of all reported and unreported sexual assaults involve alcohol consumption by either the perpetrator or the victim (Abbey 2011). Weapons are involved in only a small proportion of sexual assaults (Lievore 2003 p.21), with submission commonly being secured through instilling fear and using other forms of psychological coercion (Lievore 2003). Women subjected to sexual assault respond in

diverse ways. While some women do physically resist or seek flight, others may respond more passively becoming 'frozen' and unable to act, or psychologically disassociating themselves from the situation (Mason & Lodrick 2013). As a consequence women who are sexually assaulted do not necessarily have visible injuries (Lievore 2003). A disproportionate number of victims of sexual assault have intellectual disabilities or mental health problems, conditions that may make them particular targets for assault (Larcombe 2011).

Survey findings and changes over time

To gauge understanding of patterns of perpetration of sexual assault in the Australian community respondents were asked whether they agreed that 'women were more likely to be raped by someone they know than a stranger'. The findings presented in Figure 5.5.1 (below) show that the proportion recognising that sexual assault is typically perpetrated by person known to the victim has fallen from 1995 when it was 76% to 70% in 2009 and 64% in 2013.

Figure 5.5.1: Time series – understanding perpetration of sexual assault (% agree).



[^]Difference between 1995, 2009 and 2013 is statistically significant, $p \leq .01$.

Bivariate analysis

Understanding who perpetrates and who is affected by sexual assault by selected characteristics (See Table 5.5.1a, Appendix A – detailed tables).

Gender: A higher proportion of females than males hold the view that women are more likely to be raped by someone they know than a stranger (68% compared to 59%).

Age: Younger respondents (16 to 17 year olds) are less likely than all other age groups to be aware that women are most likely to be raped by someone they know than by a stranger (51% compared with 64% overall).

Heritage and language: Compared to the Australian-born (64%) and those from main English speaking countries (71%), a lower proportion of N-MESC respondents agree that a woman is more likely to be raped by someone she knows than a stranger (58%).

Socio-economic status: Compared to those with lower levels of educational attainment, university graduates (69%) are more likely to agree that a woman is more likely to be raped by someone she knows, while technicians and trade workers are less likely to agree (56%).

Disability status: A higher proportion of younger respondents with disabilities (i.e. those aged less than 65 years) agree that a woman is more likely to be raped by someone she knows (71%) compared to the general community (64%).

Place: Residents of the ACT (72%) are more likely than residents of other States/Territories to agree that women are more likely to be raped by someone they know than a stranger while those living in Victoria are more likely to disagree (23% compared to 20% overall).

Gender Equality: Agreement that women are more likely to be raped by someone they know is higher among those with a high GE score (71%) compared to those with a low GE score (57%).

Understanding of violence against women: Those with a low score on the UVAW Scale are less likely to agree that a woman is more likely to be raped by someone she knows than a stranger (57%), while those with high understanding are more likely to agree (71%).

5.5.2 *Perpetration and impacts of partner violence*

Background to questions

Violence in intimate relationships and families is experienced by both women and men, and can be perpetrated by both men and women. At the same time, there are significant gender contrasts in women's and men's experiences of domestic violence victimisation and perpetration. Most violence between intimate partners or ex-partners is perpetrated by men against women, and men's domestic violence against women is more severe and more harmful in its impacts than women's violence against men, as discussed below.

In Australia, the most substantial source of data on domestic violence is the *2012 Personal Safety Survey* (ABS 2013b). This provides data on violence victimisation rather than perpetration, so its ability to explore the extent to which men or women commit rather than suffer acts of domestic violence is limited. Nevertheless, its data show that much greater numbers of women have been assaulted by male current partners or male previous partners than the numbers of men assaulted by female current partners or female previous partners. 66,200 women experienced violence by a current partner in the last year, and 33,100 men experienced violence by a current partner. 66,300 women experienced violence by a previous partner in the last year, and 18,700 men experienced violence by a previous partner (ABS 2013b). Moving

beyond this simple comparison of women's and men's experience of any violence by a partner, there are further gender contrasts once we examine the actual character and impact of and context for this aggression.

Among adult perpetrators of violence against intimate partners or ex-partners, men are more likely than women to use frequent, prolonged, and extreme violence (Bagshaw et al. 2000; Belknap & Melton 2005; Holtzworth-Munroe 2005; Kimmel 2002); and men are far more likely than women to sexually assault an intimate partner or ex-partner (ABS 2006; Swan et al. 2012). As discussed earlier, men are more likely than women to subject their partners to a pattern of coercive control, controlling their movements and independence, manipulating them, stalking them, perpetrating verbal and psychological abuse, and using a variety of other tactics to maintain or regain control (Caldwell & Swan 2012). Even in a sample of women recruited through their own perpetration of domestic violence, it is still the case that they were victimised by coercive and controlling behaviours more than they perpetrated them (Swan et al. 2012). In short, men are far more likely than women to perpetrate what some researchers have called 'intimate terrorism' or 'coercive controlling violence' (Johnson 2011).

There are also contrasts in the intentions, motivations and nature of men's and women's uses of domestic violence. Women's physical violence towards intimate male partners is largely in self-defence as evidenced in studies among men presenting to hospital Emergency Departments with injuries inflicted by their female partners (Allen 2011). When a woman is violent to her male partner, it is usually in the context of his violence to her and is largely reactive and self-protective (Cercone et al. 2005; Dobash & Dobash 2004; Holtzworth-Munroe 2005). In a systematic review of evidence regarding women's motivations for the use of physical intimate partner violence in heterosexual relationships, none of the 14 studies which ranked women's motivations for perpetrating violence found that control was the primary motivation (Bair-Merritt et al. 2010, p. 186). Instead, four found that self-defence was women's primary motivation, and in another it was the second most common, while other common motivations included anger, desiring one's partner's attention and retaliation.

Overlapping with the misconception about gender symmetry in perpetration is a corresponding belief in gender symmetry in victimisation – that is, that similar proportions of men and women are the victims of domestic violence, and these men and women have similar experiences as victims. These beliefs do not reflect the evidence, with important contrasts in women's and men's experiences as the victims of domestic violence. These reflect differences in the forms and severity of violence, abuse and control to which women and men are subjected. As a result of the contrasting patterns of victimisation and perpetration described earlier, women also are far more likely than men to fear for their lives, to sustain injuries, and to experience other negative consequences such as psychological harms. A recent systematic review of published studies on the effects of intimate partner violence for men and women highlights such gender contrasts (Caldwell & Swan 2012).

Gender differences in physical harm

There is a significant gender contrast in the outcomes of domestic violence victimisation. The recent systematic review found that nearly all studies show that female victims suffer more injuries than male victims as a result of intimate partner violence (Caldwell & Swan 2012, p. 44). A wide range of studies found that "Women involved in IPA [intimate partner abuse] are more likely than their male counterparts to suffer from injuries, require medical treatment, lose time from work, and experience bedridden days" (Belknap & Melton 2005, pp. 5–6). Women are also over-represented among victims of homicide perpetrated by a partner (Chan & Payne 2013, p. 30).

Gender differences in levels of fear

Numerous studies find that women report greater fear of violent male partners than men with violent female partners (Caldwell & Swan 2012, p. 43). Australian data corroborates this pattern:

- In a survey of 1643 partnered adults, twice as many women as men subjected to physical aggression by partners said they felt “frightened and intimidated” (Headey et al. 1999, p. 59).
- In a national survey of 12–20 year-olds, of those who had experienced actual or threatened physical violence, four times as many girls as boys had been frightened by the physical aggression they experienced, and five times as many girls as boys had been both frightened and hurt (National Crime Prevention 2001, pp. 122–123).
- In a study involving focus groups, interviews and a phone-in, twice the proportion of female victims as male victims of domestic violence were frightened of their partners. While women reported ongoing fear of their ex-partners after the relationship ended, none of the men did so (Bagshaw et al. 2000, pp. 22, 54).

The most recent data, from the *2012 Personal Safety Survey*, similarly shows that among individuals who experienced violence by a previous partner, women are far more likely than men to experience anxiety or fear for their personal safety (ABS, customised report, 2014). Table 5.5.2 below shows that twice the proportion of women than men felt anxiety or fear (72% compared with 35%) due to experiencing violence by their previous partner, and that over one-third (39%) of women but only one-tenth of men (11%) felt anxiety or fear all or most of the time.

Table 5.5.2: Experience of anxiety or fear among persons experiencing partner violence by sex, 2013.

		Males who have experienced violence by a female previous partner	Females who have experienced violence by a male previous partner
		318,300	1,256,100
		%	%
Experienced anxiety or fear	Did not experience anxiety or fear for personal safety	65	28*
	Experienced anxiety or fear for personal safety	35	72*
	<i>Total experiencing violence by a previous partner</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>
Frequency of anxiety/fear experienced	All of the time/most of the time	11	39*
	Some of the time/a little of the time	23	32
	Once only	nr	2
	<i>Total experienced anxiety or fear for personal safety</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>72</i>

nr not reported as the relative standard error is 50% or greater

Estimate has a relative standard error of between 25% and 50% and should be used with caution.

*difference between males and females significant, $p \leq .05$

Source: Based on data from Australian Bureau of Statistics, *2012 Personal Safety Survey*, customised report, 2014.

Gender contrasts in women’s and men’s levels of fear are not the result of reporting biases. Women do not show higher levels of fear in the context of domestic violence because they are more ‘fragile’ and willing than men to report fear, but because the violence they experience is worse. Women show higher levels of injury and fear than men because they are subjected to more severe and serious forms of violence, not because they show stronger reactions than men to the same level of violence (Romito & Grassi 2007). Women’s elevated levels of fear simply reflect elevated levels of violence.

In short, the evidence is that women and men tend to experience different types of abuse, and the types of abuse that women are more likely to experience have worse outcomes (Caldwell & Swan 2012, p. 51).

Why do community beliefs about patterns of perpetration and impact matter?

Community understanding of the gendered patterns of violence is important for two main reasons. First, arguably a poor understanding reflects a lack of appreciation of the nature, severity and dynamics of violence against women itself. This has the potential to influence the ways in which people respond to any violence against women they may witness. Their responses are likely to be very different if partner violence is understood as mutual physical behaviour between two equally powerful individuals than if the particular nature of male to female partner violence and the greater physical, and in many cases economic and social power, of a male aggressor are understood.

Second, an accurate understanding is important to guide the level of policy attention and resourcing needed to address these two forms of partner violence. For example, some groups have argued the need for a parallel resource base to that allocated to combat men's violence against women to combat women's violence against men (Flood 2010a).

Survey findings and changes over time

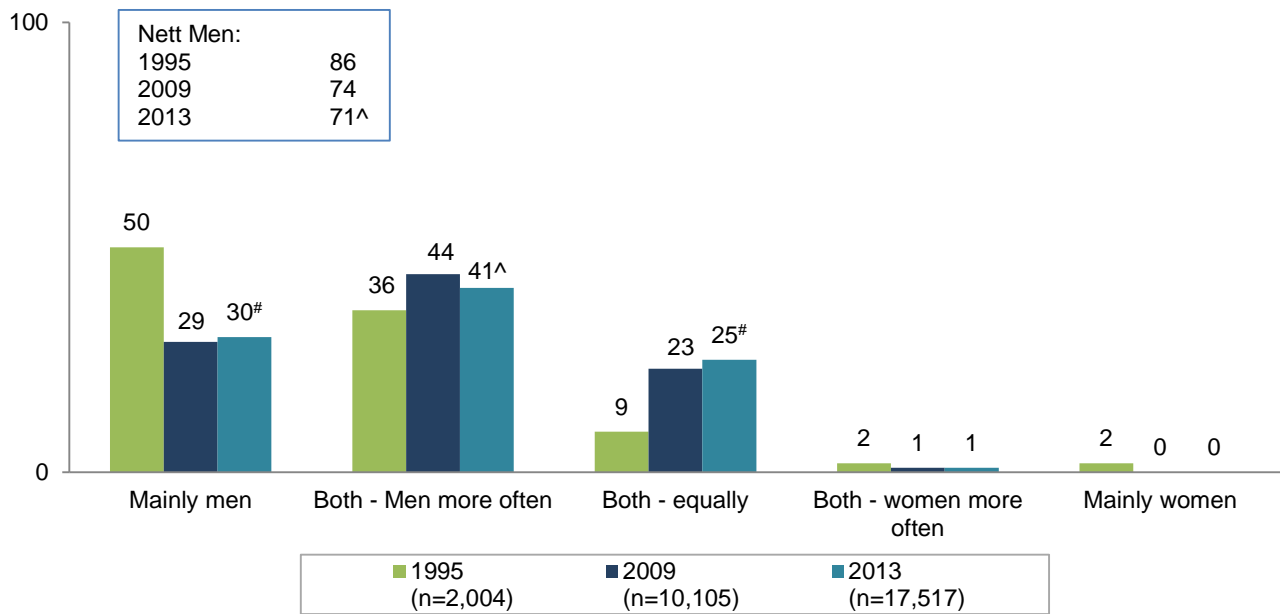
Three questions were included in the NCAS to gauge the level of understanding of gender differences in the perpetration and impact of partner violence. The specific questions used to gauge this are:

- “Do you think it is mainly men, mainly women or both men and women that commit acts of domestic violence?”
- “Do you think that men or women would be more likely to suffer physical harm as a result of domestic violence?”
- “Thinking about male and female victims of domestic violence, would you say the level of fear experienced is worse for males, worse for females or equally bad for both?”

The findings presented in Figures 5.5.2a–c show that the majority of respondents believe that it is males who mainly commit acts domestic violence (71%) and that females are more likely than males to suffer physical harm as a result (86%). However, barely half believe that the level of fear associated with domestic violence is worse for females (52%).

These data also indicate that community understanding of the patterns of perpetration and impact has declined. The proportion of people believing that partner violence is perpetrated mainly by men declined by 12 percentage points between 1995 (when it was 86%) and 2009 and a further 3 percentage points between 2009 and 2013. The questions related to the physical and psychological impacts of partner violence (asked nationally for the first time in 2009) show a similar pattern with the proportion believing that mainly women suffer physical harm and that the level of fear is worse for women both declining 3% between survey waves.

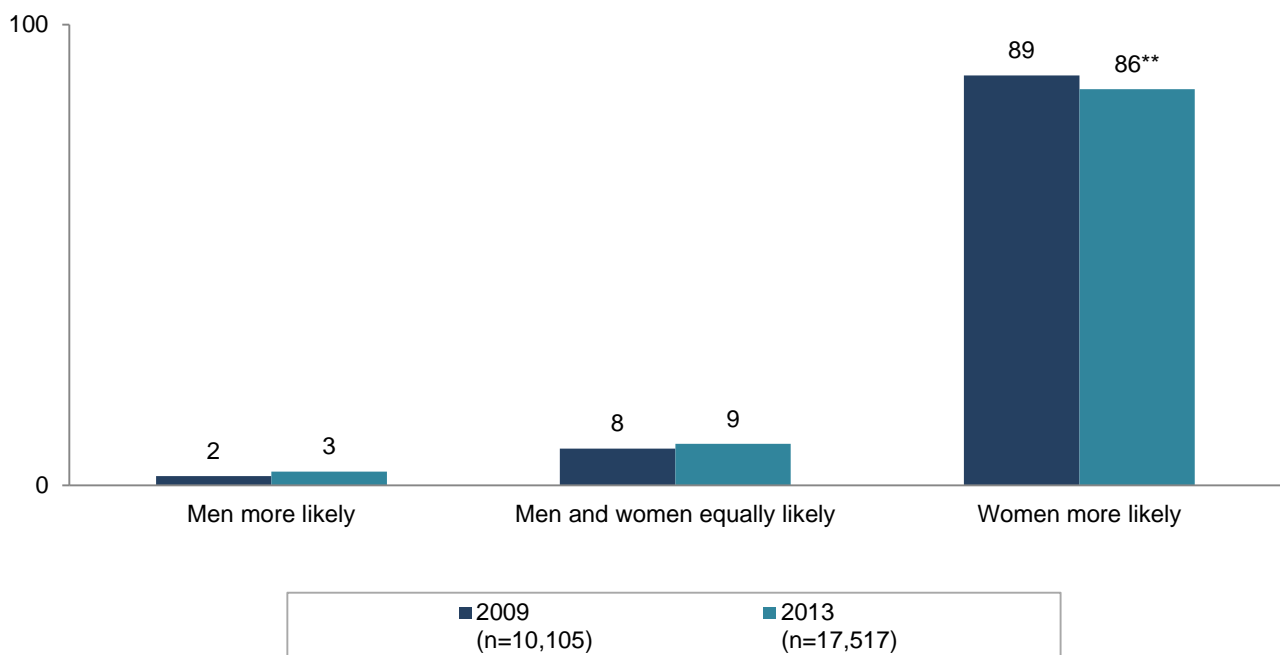
Figure 5.5.2a: Time series – perceptions of who mainly commits acts of domestic violence (%).



[#] Difference between 1995 and 2013 is statistically significant, $p \leq .01$

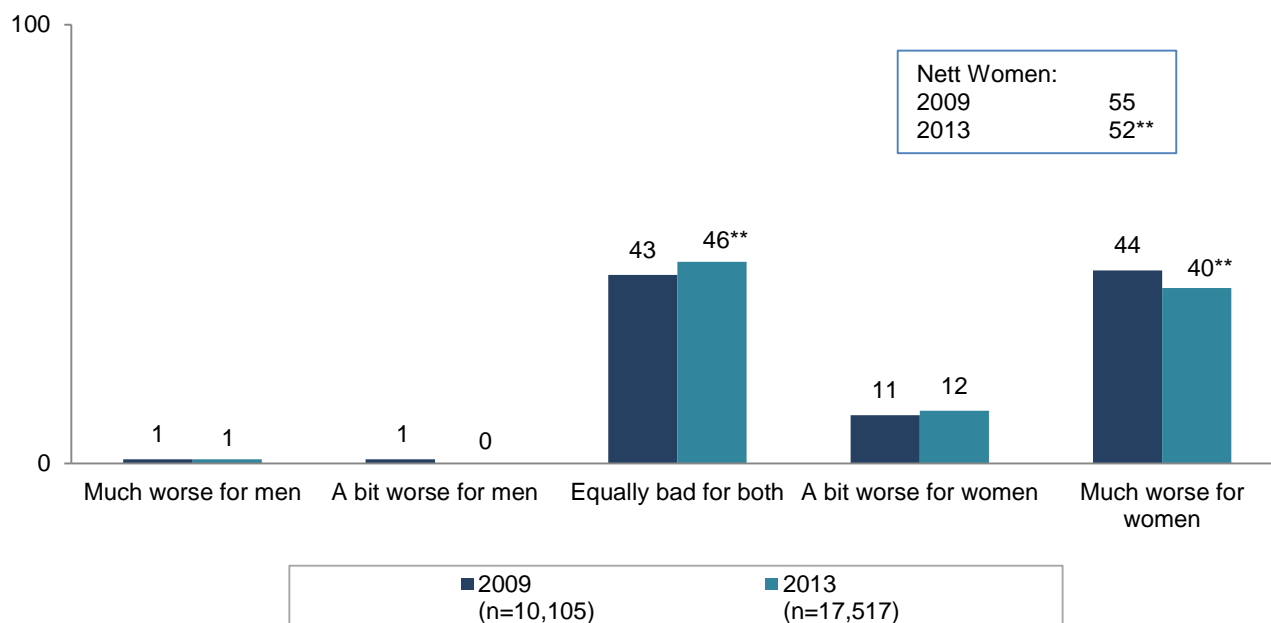
[^] Difference between 1995, 2009 and 2013 is statistically significant, $p \leq .01$

Figure 5.5.2b: Time series – perceptions of who is more likely to suffer physical harm (%).



^{**} Difference between 2009 and 2013 is statistically significant, $p \leq .01$

Figure 5.5.2c: Time series – perceptions of the level of fear experienced (%).



** Difference between 2009 and 2013 is statistically significant, $p \leq .01$

Bivariate analysis

Understanding who perpetrates and who is affected by domestic violence by selected characteristics (see Tables 5.5.2b–5.5.2d, Appendix A – detailed tables).

Gender: A higher proportion of females than males hold the view that men are more likely to commit acts of domestic violence than women (32% compared with 28%), and that the level of fear associated with domestic violence is equally bad for both sexes (50% compared with 42%).

Age: There is no clear relationship between responses to these questions and age. For instance, 25 to 34 year olds are more likely to state that males and females are equally likely to commit domestic violence (31%), while 45 to 64 year olds (22%) and 55 to 64 year olds (21%) are less likely to agree with this statement, and those aged 55 to 64 years are more likely to agree that the level of fear is much worse for females (46%).

Heritage and language: Respondents born in a N-MESC are more likely to state that men and women are equally likely to commit acts of violence (28%), and less likely to believe that women suffer more harm (82%) compared to the general community (25% and 86%). By way of contrast, overseas-born respondents from main English speaking countries are less likely to state that both men and women commit acts of domestic violence equally (21%), and more likely to believe that men commit violence more often (46%). First-generation immigrants are less likely to state that women suffer more harm (83%), while second-generation immigrants are more likely to agree with this statement (89%) compared to the general community (86%).

Socio-economic status: Those living in more advantaged areas are more likely to state that mainly men commit acts of domestic violence compared to those in more disadvantaged areas (35% compared to 27%) and less likely to perceive violence as committed equally by males and females (20% compared with 28%). Respondents living in more advantaged areas are also less likely to state both sexes are equally likely to suffer harm (7% compared to 11% living in more disadvantaged areas). University graduates are more likely to agree that it is mainly men who commit violence (35%), while trade, certificate or diploma holders are less likely to do so (27%). Professionals are more likely to believe that mainly males commit domestic

violence (36%), and less likely to agree that males and females are equally likely to suffer harm (7%). Those working in technical and trade occupations (33%), as machinery operators and drivers (32%), and labourers (37%) are more likely to state that males and females equally commit acts of domestic violence. Labourers are also less likely to believe that females suffer more harm from violence (81%).

Place: Victorians (33%) are more likely than the national average (30%) to state that mainly men commit acts of domestic violence, while Tasmanians are less likely to do so (26%), and those from Queensland are more likely to believe that violence is committed by both sexes equally (28% compared with 25% overall). Respondents living in Tasmania and the Northern Territory are more likely to feel that both men and women are equally likely to suffer harm (13% compared to 9% overall), while those in the Northern Territory are less likely to state that women are more likely to suffer harm (82% compared with 86% overall). This is similar for Queenslanders, 11% of whom think that both men and women are equally likely to suffer harm from domestic violence, while 84% believe that it is women who suffer most from domestic violence. Living in an outer regional area is associated with a higher likelihood of believing that both men and women are equally likely to commit domestic violence (29%), and that men and women are equally likely to suffer harm (12%).

Gender Equality: Compared to those with a low level of support for gender equality, respondents with high support are more likely to state that mainly men (33% compared to 28%) or men more often (45% compared to 35%) commit acts of domestic violence, and less likely to state that both sexes equally commit violence (20% compared to 31%). Respondents with a high level of support for gender equality, are more likely than those with a low level of support to believe that mainly women experience physical harm from partner violence (89% compared to 82%). However, they are more likely than those with a low level of support to believe that the level of fear experienced is equally bad for both men and women (50% compared with 42%).

Understanding of violence against women: Those who have a higher understanding of violence against women are less likely to agree that violence is committed by males and females equally compared to those with low understanding (20% compared to 28%). Although this group is more likely than those with a low level of understanding to believe that the level of fear is equally bad for both men and women (50% compared with 44%), a larger percentage of this group also believes that the level of fear is much worse for females (42% compared with 38%) as opposed to a bit worse (6% compared with 14%).

5.6. Understanding the law regarding violence against women¹⁵

Background to question

One of the key strategies in efforts across the globe to reduce violence against women has been to strengthen legal sanctions against it (UN Women 2011). Historically, laws relevant to violence against women have tended to be weak or weakly enforced, particularly when compared with other comparable offences (Scutt 1983). For instance, it was only in the 1980s and 1990s that legislation explicitly criminalising rape in marriage was introduced in common law countries such as Australia. Prior to that in many common law regimes it was assumed that a husband was incapable of raping his wife “... due to the presumption of a wife’s absolute, irrevocable consent to any sexual acts during the course of marriage” (Adamo 1989). That is, it was unclear whether prevailing laws provided a husband with immunity for prosecution for marital rape, owing to his status as a husband. Currently however, criminal laws against sexual or physical violence do not, at least in the way in which they are framed, treat violence that occurs

¹⁵ Not all of the behaviours canvassed in this report are crimes and there is some variation in definitions of domestic violence between Australian jurisdictions and between the civil and criminal law.

within intimate relationships less seriously than other forms of interpersonal violence. With regard to partner violence a key strategy has been the introduction of protection orders designed to prevent further violence by placing conditions on perpetrator's behaviour.

Despite extensive reform of both the law and its application, relative to violence and sexual assault perpetrated by a stranger, rates of reporting (Lievore 2003; Grech & Burgess 2011), prosecution and conviction in relationship and acquaintance violence remain low (Lievore 2003). 127 countries throughout the world still do not explicitly criminalise rape within marriage and many do not have laws prohibiting family violence (UN Women 2011).

As discussed in section 3.8.3, while there is some uncertainty about the effectiveness of the law in reducing re-offending among individual offenders, the law is understood to have an influence on social norms, which in turn influence behaviour (Salazar et al. 2003). International comparative studies indicate that countries with well-developed legal frameworks to protect women's rights and safety tend to have lower rates of violence against women and a lower proportion of the population holding violence supportive attitudes (UN Women 2011, p. 34). Where it provides for the removal or incarceration of perpetrators, the law also has the potential to protect women from violence and its impacts. Women who are aware that such violence is against the law are more likely to report violence and are less likely to blame themselves (Egan & Wilson 2011).

Prior research demonstrates that there is a high level of recognition that physical and sexual assault by a man against his intimate partner are crimes (Carlson & Worden 2005; European Commission 2010a; Harris/Decima 2009).

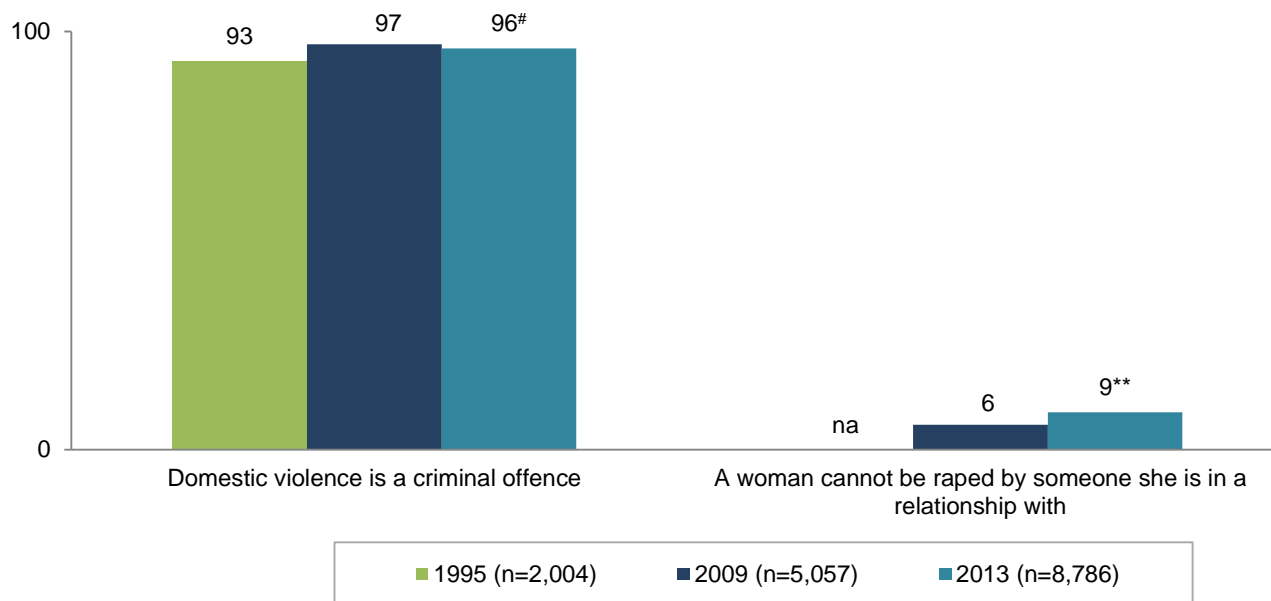
Survey findings and changes over time

To gauge understanding of the extent to which people understand the law as it pertains to violence in intimate relationships respondents were asked whether they agreed with the statements:

- "domestic violence is a criminal offence" and
- "a woman cannot be raped by someone she is in a sexual relationship with".

Reference to Figure 5.6 shows that the overwhelming majority of Australians recognise that partner violence is a criminal offence (96%) and the proportion doing so has marginally increased since 1995. At the same time the proportion holding the view that a woman cannot be raped by someone she is in a relationship with has increased from 6% in 2009 to 9% in 2013.

Figure 5.6: Time series – understanding the law regarding violence against women (% agree).



^{**} Difference between 2009 and 2013 is statistically significant, $p \leq .01$

[#] Difference between 1995 and 2013 is statistically significant, $p \leq .01$

*Statement asked of split sample 2009 n=5,050; 2013 n=8,715

Bivariate analysis

Understanding the law regarding violence against women by selected characteristics (see Tables 5.6a and 5.6b, Appendix A – detailed tables).

Gender: A higher proportion of females than males hold the view that domestic violence is a criminal offence (98% compared with 94%).

Age: Those aged 65 to 74 years (12%) and 75 years and over (14%) were more likely to be of the view that a woman cannot be raped by someone she is in a relationship with.

Heritage and language: People born in a N-MESC are less likely than the sample as a whole to state that domestic violence is a criminal offence (92%), as are first-generation immigrants (94%). N-MESC respondents are also more likely to agree that a woman cannot be raped by someone she is in a relationship with (21%). On the other hand, overseas-born respondents from main English speaking countries are less likely to agree that a woman cannot be raped within a relationship (4%). First-generation immigrants are more likely to agree that a woman in a relationship cannot be raped by her partner (16%), particularly those who do not speak English well (30%).

Socio-economic status: Those with a trade, technical certificate or diploma (7%) are less likely to agree that a woman cannot be raped in a relationship, as are professionals (6%) and clerical and administrative workers (5%).

Gender Equality: Those with low support for equality are also more likely to agree that women cannot be raped by someone they're in a relationship with (20%) compared to those with high support (3%).

Understanding of Violence Against Women: Over one in 10 respondents with a low UVAW score (13%) believe that a woman cannot be raped within a relationship; by contrast, 5% of those with high UVAW score agree with this statement.

5.7. The main perceived causes of violence against women

Background to question

Previous surveys have specifically addressed community perceptions of the causes of violence against women (European Commission 2010a; Harris/Decima 2009; Worden & Carlson 2005). There is variability in the ways in which this topic has been approached between surveys, making it difficult to draw definitive conclusions. However, some common themes emerge and these are supported in recent qualitative research (O'Neil & Morgan 2010). Specifically:

- Unless explicitly prompted very few people think about violence beyond the individual incident, the individuals involved and the relationship. When given a range of possible causes from those located in individuals to broader cultural and systemic factors, a larger proportion identify causes attributable to individuals or the dynamics of violent relationships. Common among these are alcohol and substance use, anger and loss of control, relationship conflict, childhood abuse and the perpetrator's mental health.
- Themes next most likely to be offered or agreed to relate to external stressors, such as unemployment and social exclusion.
- Unless prompted, very few people identify causes attributable to the construction of gender roles and relationships and factors supporting them (e.g. sexism, sex-role stereotyping, inequalities in power between men and women, learning of aggressive behaviour as part of male socialisation, or the breakdown of social norms). When these options are offered as part of a closed question, a much smaller proportion of people identify these factors as opposed to other individual or systemic factors (e.g. unemployment). Nevertheless, the proportion agreeing to factors pertaining to gender roles and relations when prompted is still substantial. For example, in the European Commission's 2010 Eurobarometer survey on violence against women, 65% of people agreed that 'the way women are viewed by men' is a cause, while 58% agreed with the proposition that 'the way power is shared between the sexes' contributes to violence against women (however, this compares with 98% identifying alcoholism) (European Commission 2010a).
- A large proportion of people are prepared to nominate more than one factor when given a range of options suggesting that there is a community understanding that multiple factors contribute to violence against women.
- There is a substantial difference between the views and understanding of the general community and those of many specialist researchers and professionals working to respond to and prevent violence against women, with the latter more likely to endorse broader structural and cultural causes and to invoke gender relations and gender power differences as key causal factors (O'Neil & Morgan 2010).

As discussed in the introduction to this report, although many factors contribute to violence against women, factors most consistently and strongly identified in studies are those associated with the way gender roles and identities are constructed and power is distributed between men and women in public and private life. Broad community understanding of this is important for a number of reasons. Firstly, the primary prevention of violence will involve addressing broader structural and cultural factors, and this will require collaboration with a range of organisations and communities and the people in them. Such engagement will be dependent on an understanding of the links between what occurs in these day-to-day environments and the perpetration of violence against women. Second, community support for contemporary approaches for addressing violence against women is important, both to maintain wider policy commitment and to support implementation 'on-the-ground'. For those holding the belief that

violence lies in the characteristics of individuals, many of the strategies involved in contemporary policy may seem counter-intuitive. For example, asserting the importance of establishing new social norms by holding men accountable for their behaviour by removing them (as opposed to women and children) from the family home, may seem inappropriate or inadequate to those viewing partner violence as a natural response to stress or a product of mental illness (Worden & Carlson 2005). Third, assessment of the extent to which community understanding of the causes of violence equate with contemporary expert understanding can help to identify strengths on which to build and gaps in knowledge that need to be addressed.

Community understanding was gauged in the NCAS by providing survey participants with three options, from which they were required to choose the *main* cause for *some* men being violent towards women. This 'forced choice' approach was taken in favour of an open-ended format both to manage survey time and to build on understanding from previous research by gauging the causal paradigm most likely to be 'top-of-mind'.

The three options were selected to reflect three key causal paradigms reflected in the literature and community dialogue. The first of these was "The belief that men should be in charge of relationships". This reflects an understanding of the cause of violence as lying in the construction of gender roles and the distribution of power between men and women in relationships. Men's controlling behaviours (Antai 2011; Dalal & Lindqvist 2012; Foran & O'Leary 2008; Gage 2005; Garcia-Moreno et al. 2006; Heise 2012; Kiss et al. 2012; Mouzos & Makkai 2004) and adherence to hierarchical gender roles (Foshee et al. 2008; Nabors & Jasinski 2009; Santana et al. 2006) are among the strongest and most consistent risk factors for violence identified in the literature. The second option was "Men being under financial stress", reflecting an understanding of violence as resulting primarily from external stressors. While there are a number of studies exploring the relationship between stress and women's victimisation (see, for example, Weatherburn 2011; Smith & Weatherburn 2013), only one study could be identified finding a link between any form of stress and the perpetration of violence in the literature review undertaken for this report (Roberts et al. 2010). This study found a modest link between violence and recent life stressors.

It is very difficult to disentangle the potential impact of financial stress on individual behaviour from the impact of conditions that commonly co-occur with financial stress and which may increase women's risk of violence (e.g. economic downturn and the reduction in services to protect and support women and sanction against violence) (Renzetti & Larkin 2009). Research on the impact of unemployment (a factor that may contribute to financial stress) suggests that this tends to be associated with an increase in violence in those relationships with an existing asymmetric power imbalance, but less so in more egalitarian relationships (Atkinson et al. 2005).

The third option was "men not being able to manage their anger". This represents an understanding that the cause for violence lays in the individual personality characteristics of those using violence. Norlander and Eckhardt (2005) concluded on the basis of a meta-analysis of studies on the relationship between anger and partner violence that perpetrators do show consistently higher levels of anger and hostility than non-violent males and that this holds when accounting for relationship distress. Men perpetrating partner violence also show higher levels of anger. At the same time the overall relationship between partner violence and anger and hostility is only moderate, it is not clear if problems of anger differentiate violent from non-violent men in relationship conflicts, and there is not data to show that acute experiences of anger are predictive of partner violence (Ali & Naylor 2013; Norlander & Eckhardt 2005). Some studies show that most partner-abusive men in treatment programs do not present with anger-related disturbances, although such issues among sub-groups of abusers have implications for intervention (Eckhardt et al. 2008).

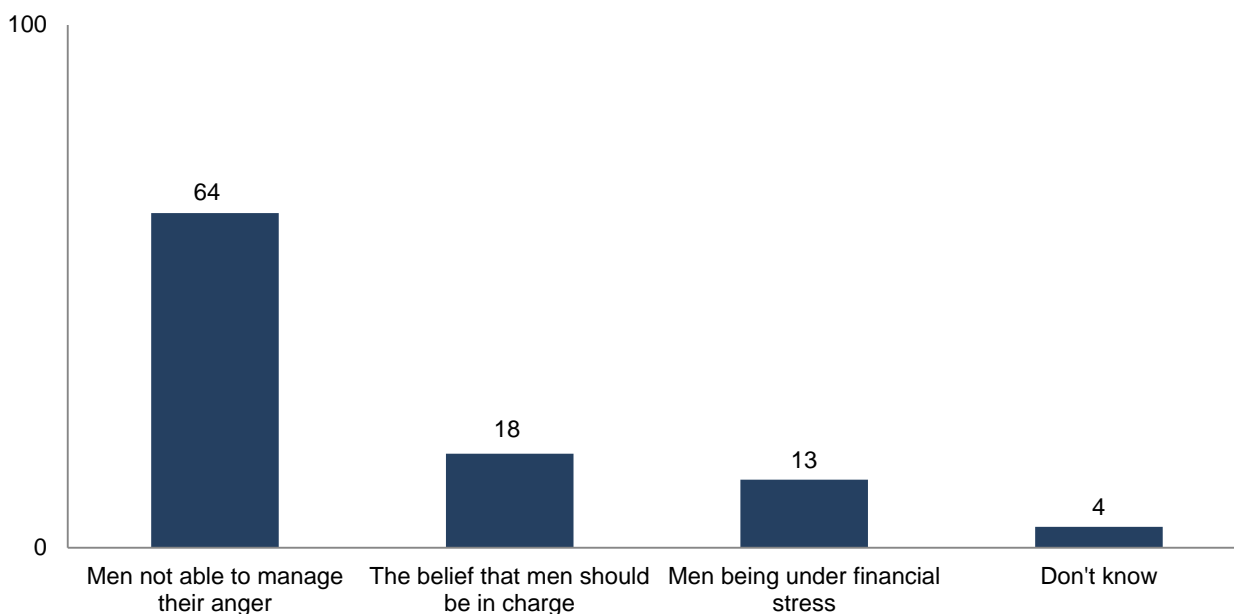
A 2003 study exploring the relationship between physical violence in dating relationships, trait anger and negative attitudes towards women found that the risk of perpetration of violence was significantly higher among men with high levels of anger *and* negative attitudes towards women than among those with high levels of trait anger alone (Parrott & Zeichner 2003). Two further factors suggest that an inability to control anger is not a primary factor for many men who use violence against women. First, although some men who are violent in their intimate relationships are also violent in other contexts, many are not (Mouzos & Makkai 2004). If men are able to control their anger in other contexts, it would be expected that they would similarly be able to do so in their intimate relationships. Second, detailed studies of the dynamics of violence in many relationships in which men use violence suggests that such men go to extra-ordinary lengths to exercise control over women and to perpetrate violence in ways that avoid detection (Pringle 1995; Stark 2009; VLRC 2006). These findings are at odds with the notion of violence resulting from poor control of aggressive impulses. A body of expert opinion counsels against interventions to address partner violence that have anger control as a primary modality (Greal et al. 2013), suggesting that to be effective such programs also need to address perpetrator's attitudes towards gender roles and relationships (Parrott & Zeichner 2003). Indeed interventions based primarily on anger management are specifically prohibited for the purposes of court-ordered counselling for men perpetrating partner violence in many jurisdictions in the US (Greal et al. 2013, p. 19; Norlander & Eckhardt 2005).

Each of the possible 'causes' presented to participants was framed in terms of its impact at the individual or relationship level. This approach was taken to optimise comparability between response options. For example, the gender roles and relationships paradigm was framed as an individual belief rather than in terms of influences shaping that belief, such as media portrayals of women. Similarly the 'stress' question was framed as "men being under financial stress", rather than as more distant factors such as economic downturn or unemployment.

Survey findings

Almost two-thirds of individuals (64%) endorse the view that violence against women is attributable to men not being able to control their anger (Figure 5.7a). Over one in 10 (13%) believe that the main cause of violence against women is men being under financial stress. Fewer than one in five (18%) respondents selected the main cause with the highest level of empirical support, that is that violence against women is mainly caused by a belief in male dominance in relationships.

Figure 5.7a: Perceived causes of violence against women (%)



Sample size n=17,517

Bivariate analysis

Perceived causes of violence against women by selected characteristics (see Table 5.7a, Appendix A – detailed tables)

Gender: Women are more likely than men to believe that violence against women arises from the belief that men should be in charge in relationships (22% compared with 14%) and men are more likely than women (15% compared with 11%) to attribute violence against women to financial stress.

Age: Compared to the overall average (64%), those aged 35 to 44 years (68%) and 45 to 54 years (69%) are more likely to regard violence against women as being caused by men not being able to control their anger. Those aged 16–17 years (31%) and 18–24 years (29%) are more likely than other age groups to nominate the belief that men should be in charge as the main cause of violence against women, and those aged 65–74 years (17%) and 75 years and over (20%) are more likely to regard financial stress as a cause of violence against women (compared with the overall average of 13%).

Heritage and language: Compared to the Australian-born population, individuals from N-MESC are less likely to believe that violence against women arises from men not being able to control their anger (55% compared with 67%) and more likely to nominate the belief that men should be in charge of relationships (20% compared with 17%) and that violence against women is attributable to men being under financial stress (19% compared with 11%). This same pattern of response is evident among those who have arrived in Australia from 2005 onwards.

Socio-economic status: Compared to the overall average (13%), those living in the most socio-economically disadvantaged locations are more likely to regard financial stress as a cause of violence against women (16%), as are those working in what tend to be relatively low-income occupations such as machine operators/drivers and labourers (both 18%) and those with secondary school or below as their highest level of educational attainment (15%).

Indigenous status: The view that male dominance in relationships is the main cause of violence against women is more widely held by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (27%) than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (18%).

Gender Equality: In comparison with the overall result, those classified as having high support for gender equality are more likely to nominate male anger (67% compared with 64%) and the belief that men should be in charge of relationships (22% compared with 18%) as the primary cause of violence against women. As a result, this group is less likely to nominate financial stress as the main cause of violence against women (7% compared with 13% overall).

Understanding of Violence Against Women: Those with a high score on the UVAW Scale are less likely (9%) to nominate financial stress as the main cause of violence against women than those with a low understanding of violence against women (16%).

5.8. Perceptions of the risk faced by women with disabilities

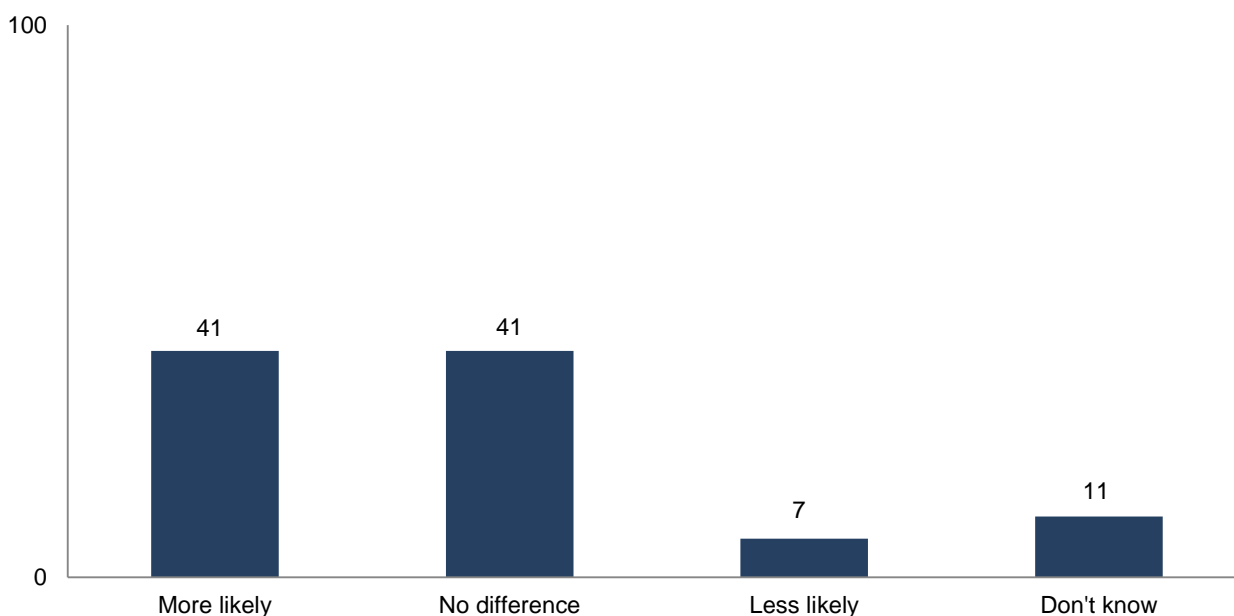
Background to question

As indicated in the review of the literature (see 3.9.2.3), women with disabilities are substantially more likely to experience violence. To assess community understanding of this, a new question was added to the 2013 survey “do you think that women with a disability are more or less likely to experience violence from people around them than women without disabilities, or do you think there is no difference?”.

Survey findings

Reference to Figure 5.8 shows that the community is evenly split between believing that women with disabilities face an increased risk of violence, or that they are no more or less likely to be victims of violence (41% each). Seven percent think that women with disabilities are less likely to be victims of violence and just over one in 10 don't know (11%).

Figure 5.8: Perceived risk of violence for women with a disability (%).



Sample size n=17,517

Bivariate analysis

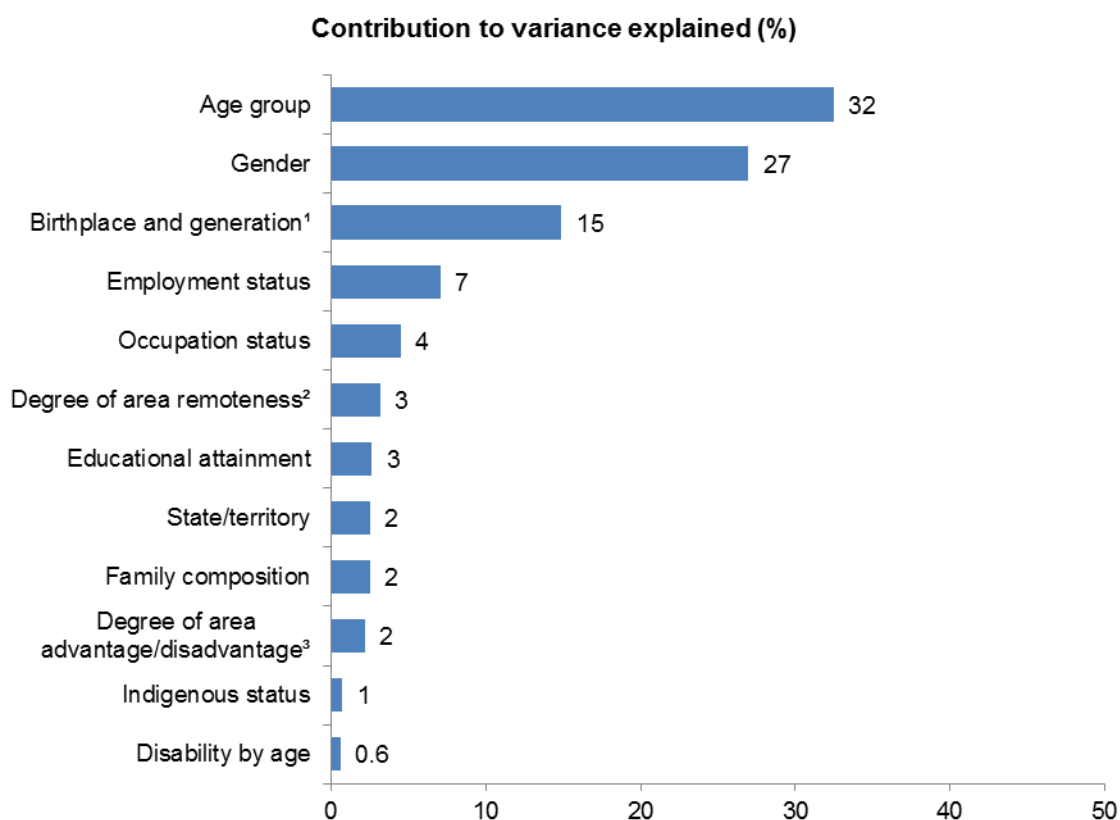
Table 5.8 (Appendix A – detailed tables) provides a breakdown of responses to this question by selected characteristics. This shows that women are much more likely than men (48% and 33%) to hold the view

that women with disabilities are at increased risk of violence. Women with a self-reported disability do not differ from all women in their response to this question (data not shown). There is little differentiation in responses to this question across the other variables of interest.

5.9. What are the key factors associated with community understanding of violence against women?

Figure 5.9a shows the demographic and socio-economic characteristics which explain most of the variance in UVAW scores. Again multiple linear regression modelling was used for this purpose (refer back to section 4). Those factors most strongly associated with understanding violence against women are: age (32% of total variance explained), gender (27%) and birthplace/generation (15% of variance explained). The socio-economic constructs (occupation, employment status, educational attainment and SEIFA quintile), when taken together, account for 16% of the explained variance.

Figure 5.9a: The relative importance of selected demographic items in explaining variance on the Understanding Violence Against Women Scale (% variance explained).



¹ Included respondent's place of birth as well as the place of birth of their parents.

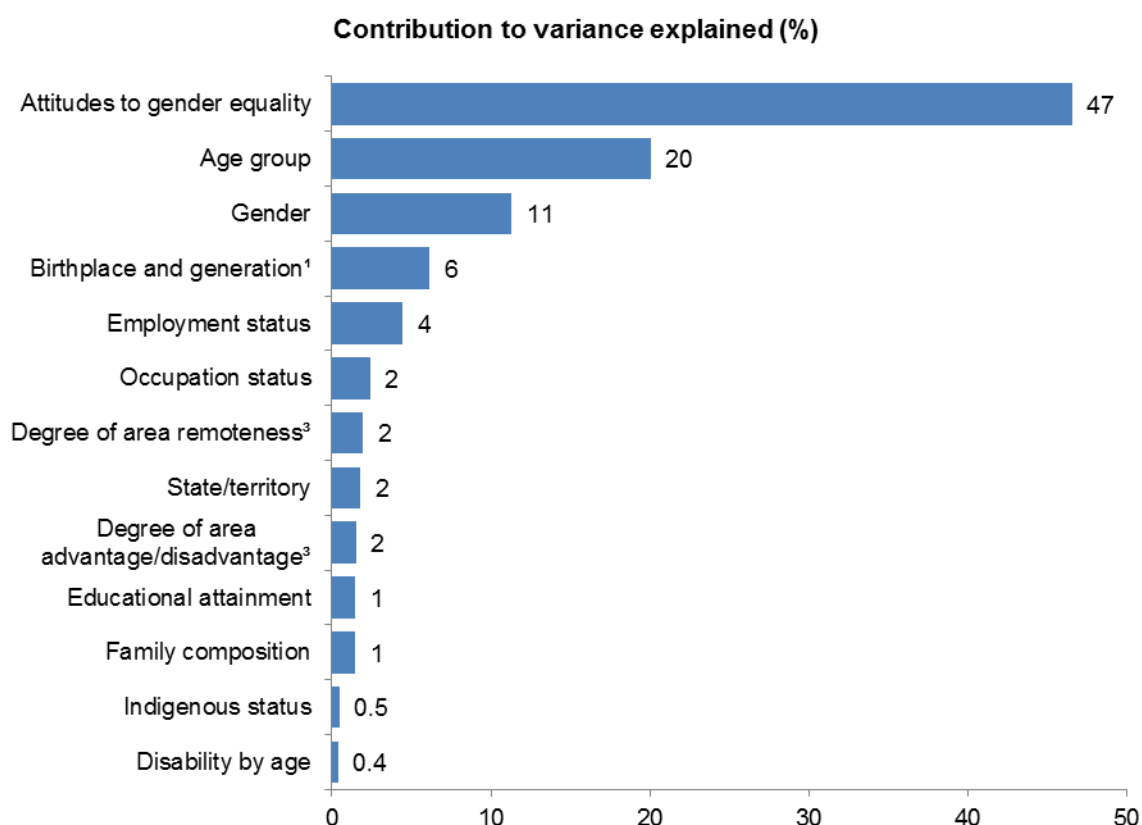
² Measured using the Australian Bureau of Statistics remoteness areas classifications (see Table 1.5)

³ Measured using the Australian Bureau of Statistics Index of Relative Advantage and Disadvantage (see Table 1.5)

Total variance explained by model – 8.9%

Figure 5.9b shows that the addition of attitudes to gender equality (as measured by the GE scale) to the model improves the total variance explained to 14% and that gender equality is the dominant variable (accounting for 47% of the explained variance) in driving understanding violence against women. Factors influencing gender equality that are included in this survey are discussed earlier (see section 4). The finding that attitudes to gender equality and UVAW are related suggests that strengthening the factors underlying attitudes supportive of gender equality is likely to, in turn, improve understanding of violence against women.

Figure 5.9b: The relative importance of selected demographic variables and Gender Equality in explaining variance on the Understanding Violence Against Women Scale (% variance explained).



¹ Included respondent's place of birth as well as the place of birth of their parents

² Measured with Australian Bureau of Statistics remoteness areas classifications (see Table 1.5)

³ Measured with Australian Bureau of Statistics Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage (see Table 1.5)
Attitudes to Gender Equality measured using the Gender Equality Scale (see Table 1.5 and section 4.1.2)

Total variance explained by model – 14.3%

Comparing the relative importance of the explanatory variables in the Gender Equality model (Figure 4.2a) and the UVAW model (see Figure 5.9a) yields some interesting findings. While the main explanatory variables are the same, their explanatory power varies somewhat. While gender accounts for 36% of the explained variance on the GE Scale (and is the variable with the greatest explanatory power), gender accounts for 27% of explained variance on the UVAW Scale and is eclipsed by age as the most important explanatory variable (32% of variance explained). Similarly, birthplace/generation explains more of the variance on the Gender Equality Scale (25%) than it does on the Understanding Violence Against Women Scale (15%) and the combined socio-economic status variables have stronger explanatory power for the Gender Equality Scale (21%) than the Understanding Violence Against Women Scale (16%).

On the whole these findings indicate that while knowledge, attitudes and beliefs which underpin community understanding of violence against women are differentiated by demographic and socio-economic characteristics, other factors (not measured in this survey) are more influential in explaining why the level of understanding of violence against women differs across the community. These are discussed further in section 12 of this report.

6. Violence supportive attitudes and beliefs

Two research genres concerned with attitudes towards violence against women can be distinguished. The first are small-scale studies using scales that have been designed to test adherence to 'myths' about violence against women and/or the relationship between such myths and other factors. 'Myths' have been defined as attitudes and beliefs about violence against women and its victims and perpetrators that are generally false, and which create an environment that is hostile or unsympathetic towards victims (Earnshaw et al. 2011; Lonsway & Fitzgerald 1994; Suarez & Gadalla 2010). More recently, some researchers have argued that the falsity of the beliefs is less important than the fact that certain beliefs are universally applied, despite having a basis in only a minority of instances (e.g. there has been a recent false allegation of sexual assault, therefore all allegations must be treated with scepticism) or that they are 'wrong' in an ethical sense because of their significant potential to cause harm (see Conaghan & Russell 2014, citing Gerger).

The second body of research involves larger population- or community-based samples. Typically these include measures of both attitudes and knowledge (see, for example, European Commission 2010a; Worden & Carlson 2005).

In the earlier research on myths, distinctions were often made between attitudes towards the various forms of violence against women, including partner violence (see, for examples, Burt 1980; Lonsway & Fitzgerald 1994; Saunders et al. 1987; Velicer et al. 1989), rape (Burt 1991; Field 1978; Lonsway & Fitzgerald 1994; Ward 1995), and more recently stalking (Sinclair 2012) and sexual harassment (Lonsway, Cortina & Magley 2008). However, very little research assessed the degree of support for specific attitudinal dimensions. That is, the studies tended to report on adherence to myths as a single construct, and for specific violence types, as opposed to assessing the degree of support for the different dimensions (or sub-constructs) contained within the scales. More recently, there has been recognition of the need to assess separately support for the different attitudinal dimensions (Johnson et al. 1997; Lonsway & Fitzgerald 1994; Suarez & Gadalla 2010; Ward 1995; Yamawaki et al. 2007). This is because information about how strongly the various types of attitudes are held, and by whom, can help to guide and frame future efforts to address attitudinal support for violence against women.

While there is some variation in the way sub-constructs are conceptualised by different researchers, five key themes can be discerned from the literature. These include attitudes that:

- justify violence against women: these views typically pertain to partner violence and are based on the notion that it is legitimate for a man to use violence against his female partner in certain circumstances (e.g. partner violence is justified if a woman has sex with another man)
- excuse violence against women by attributing it to perceived external causes (e.g. financial stress) or maintaining that men cannot be held fully responsible for violent behaviour (e.g. rape results from men not being able to control their need for sex)
- trivialise violence against women, based on the view that the impacts are not sufficiently serious to warrant action by women themselves, the community or public agencies (e.g. women who are sexually harassed should sort it out themselves)
- minimise the impact of violence against women, by denying its seriousness, denying that it occurs or denying that certain behaviours are indeed violence at all (e.g. it's only rape if the woman physically resisted)
- shift blame for the violence from the perpetrator to the victim or hold women at least partially responsible for their victimisation or for preventing victimisation (e.g. women ask for rape).

It is important to note that individuals who hold such attitudes are not necessarily 'violent-prone' or would openly condone violence against women. However, as noted in section 3 of this report, when such attitudes are expressed by influential individuals or held by a substantial number of people this can have the effect of creating a culture in which violence is at best not clearly condemned and at worst condoned or encouraged.

Individual attitudinal questions in NCAS were sorted into the themes separately by two members of the research team, with any differences in categorisation being resolved via a consensus of the team. The classifications were subsequently reviewed at a workshop comprising members of the project Technical Advisory group and other national experts in the prevention of violence against women. As the allocation of questions to themes was undertaken *post hoc* using an existing instrument, some questions could have been placed into more than one category. Their ultimate allocation was based on an assessment of 'best-fit' using the process described above.

In the following section findings for each of these themes are reported. Further on, in section 7, we bring all of these themes together in an overarching construct measuring violence supportive attitudes. This single construct was developed to enable analysis of the relationship between the extent of attitudinal support for violence against women and other variables in the survey.

6.1. Circumstances seen to justify violence against women

Background to question

Attitudes identified in the literature as justifying violence against women typically concern violence within intimate relationships. They are grounded in the notion that the use of violence by a man against his female partner is legitimate, if not a right. Justifications centre around the use of violence by men to assert their authority in a household or relationship (e.g. violence is justified if a woman disobeys her partner); to punish women for failing to meet gendered role expectations (e.g. if the woman has not prepared dinner as expected); or because gendered role expectations have been transgressed (e.g. if she has sex with another man or he believes she makes him look stupid in front of his friends).

The direction of legal and social reform internationally has been to establish the use of violence against women as wrong and unacceptable, regardless of the circumstance and to hold men accountable for their use of violent behaviour (Council of Australian Governments 2010; UN Women 2011).

In the last two decades surveys have been conducted in a number of countries to measure the prevalence of attitudes justifying partner violence (Dhaher et al. 2010; Fanslow et al. 2010; Haj-Yahia et al. 2012; Khawaja et al. 2008; Klomegh 2008; Uthman et al. 2009; Waltermaurer 2012; Garcia-Moreno et al 2005). Many of these surveys have been in low- and middle-income countries and have found the prevalence of such attitudes to be very high, exceeding 80% of the population for some measures in some countries (Waltermaurer 2012). In most of the surveys conducted in low- and middle-income countries, women have been found to be more likely to justify violence than men (Waltermaurer 2012). This is most likely to be due to the fact that many of these countries are also characterised by marked gender inequality, including relatively low levels of female literacy and participation in education. These are all factors understood to increase the risk of women internalising violence supportive attitudes (see section 3.8.1 and 3.9.1).

In contrast the few studies gauging attitudes justifying violence in high-income countries have found the prevalence to be extremely low – in the order of 1%–4% (Fanslow et al. 2010; McGregor 2009; Taylor and Mouzos 2006; VicHealth 2006, 2010; Waltermaurer 2012). The European Commission's Euro-barometer survey on violence against women, taking a slightly different approach to the same issue, found that a majority of persons (84%) across EU countries believed that domestic violence was both unacceptable in all

circumstances and punishable by law, with only a very small proportion finding such violence acceptable in any (2%) or all (1%) circumstances (European Commission 2010a, p. 44).

At a global level, there is a trend of diminishing support for justifying partner violence. Of the 26 countries participating in the Demographic and Health Survey, 23 recorded an increase in the percentage of people rejecting justifications for violence over a five-year period. For 12 of these countries, this increase was in excess of 10 percentage points and for some this was up to 20% (Pierotti 2013). Significant progress was also noted in many of the countries in the Euro-Barometer survey in the rejection of the acceptability of violence and support for it being punishable (European Commission 2010a).

This trend is similarly apparent over waves of the NCAS. In 1987 and 1995 seven statements were included to test support for attitudes justifying violence. Consistent with the international trend for high-income countries, these statements were rejected by the overwhelming majority of the sample and in the second wave of the survey the proportion agreeing to any of the statements had decreased by a half (ANOP 1995).

In the 2009 NCAS new statements were added with a view to testing support for justifications framed to reflect more contemporary language and contexts. This included the addition of questions relating to violence during and following separation. These were added recognising the evidence that separation is associated with heightened risk of violence, including intimate partner homicide, especially where there are disputes about children (Dobash et al. 2004). However, again support remained very low, at 4% or less for all statements except infidelity. Six percent believed infidelity justified a man's use of violence against a partner in 2009. Support for justification of violence, though still low, was generally higher in the 2009 Indigenous and Selected Culturally and Linguistically Diverse samples. Similar variations were found in a community survey conducted in New Zealand (Fanslow et al. 2010).

Given these findings, in 2013 a decision was taken to retain the justifications series but to reduce the number of statements. Those which were more likely to be agreed to as justifications in 2009 (albeit that the rate of acceptance was low) were selected, recognising the importance of monitoring support for these particular justifications, especially in particular populations.

6.1.1 Justifications for violence against current partners

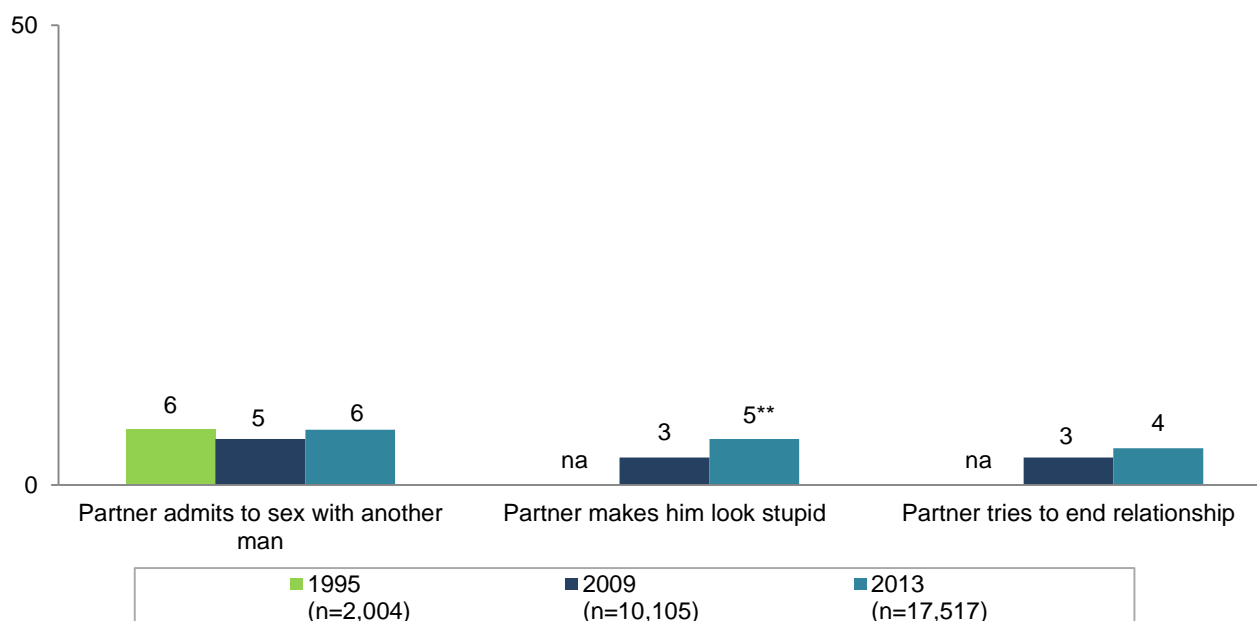
Survey findings and changes over time

Justifications for violence against a wife, partner or girlfriend were measured for each of the following circumstances:

- "she admits to having sex with another man"
- "she makes him look stupid or insults him in front of his friends"
- "she ends or tries to end the relationship".

Only a small minority of the general community agree that these are circumstances where physical force against a current partner is justified. The statement which attracts the highest level of support is "if she admits to having sex with another man" (6%). Attitudes towards all three justifications have remained relatively constant over time, although in 2013 there was an increase in the level of agreement that violence is justified if a man's partner makes him look stupid (from 3% to 5%).

Figure 6.1.1a: Time series – justifications for violence against current partners (% agree).



** Result is statistically significant, $p \leq 0.01$

Bivariate analysis

Justifications for violence against a current partner by selected characteristics (see Table 6.1.1a to 6.1.1c, Appendix A – detailed tables).

Gender: While there is little difference between men and women in how they respond to these questions, the proportion of females who agree that a man is justified in using physical force if his partner admits to having sex with another man has increased from 4% in 2009 to 6% in 2013 (data not shown).

Age: Persons aged 65 years and over are more likely than other age groups to regard the behaviours put to them in the survey as justifications for violence. For example, 12% of respondents aged 75 years and over (compared with 6% overall) think that a male is justified in using physical force if his current partner admits to having sex with another man.

Heritage and language: Thirteen percent of those who migrated to Australia from 2005 onwards are of the view that a man is justified in using physical force against his current partner if she admits to having sex with another man, 10% if she makes him look stupid or insults him in front of his friends and 11% if she ends or tries to end the relationship (compared with 6%, 5% and 4% overall).

Socio-economic status: Compared to the overall average, labourers are more likely to agree that each of these behaviours justify the use of physical force (10% in response to “sleeping with another man”, 7% “if she makes him look stupid ...” and 7% “if she ends or tries to end the relationship”). Those working as managers or professionals are less likely to support these propositions (e.g. 2% of managers and 3% of professionals agree that violence can be justified if a man’s current partner makes him look stupid or insults him in front of his friends).

Indigenous status: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are more likely than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to justify the use of violence against a current partner in these circumstances. One in six Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents (16%) agreed that physical force could be justified if a man’s current partner admits to having sex with another man, 11% if she makes him look stupid or insults him in front of his friends and 14% if she ends or tries to end the relationship. These results occur for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and, though to lesser extent women, even though there are no

significant differences between them and their non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander counterparts with regard to their views on gender equality (refer to Figure 10.2a)

Gender Equality: Compared to those with high scores on the GE Scale, those with low GE scores are more likely to be classified as holding attitudes seen to justify violence against partners. By way of illustration, of those classified as having low support for gender equality, 14% agree that a man would be justified in using violence against his current partner if she admits to having sex with another man, compared with 2% of those with a high score on the GE Scale.

Understanding of Violence Against Women: Relative to those with high scores on the UVAW Scale, those with low UVAW scores are more likely to be classified as holding attitudes seen to justify violence against partners. For example, 7% of those with low UVAW scores agree that a man would be justified in using violence against his current partner if she makes him look stupid or insults him in front of his friends, compared with 2% of those with a high score on the UVAW Scale.

6.1.2 Justifications for violence against former partners

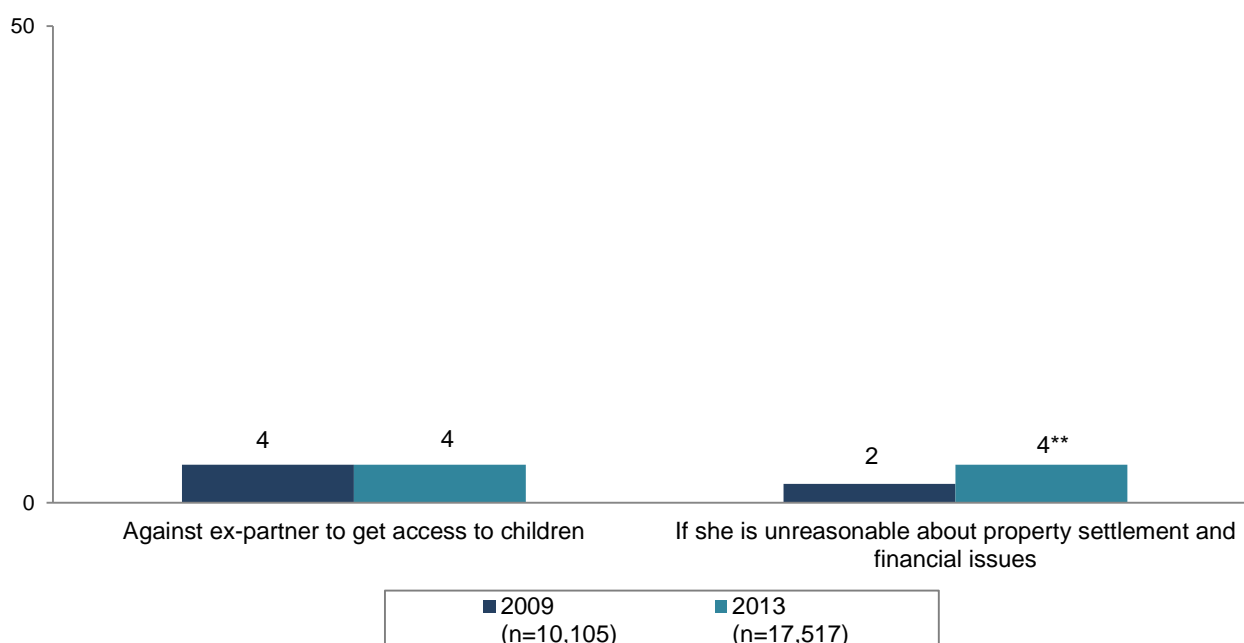
Survey findings and changes over time

The circumstances in which violence against an ex-partner might be considered justified were ascertained by the level of agreement with the statements:

- “... a man would be justified in using physical force against his ex-partner in order to get access to the children
- “if she is unreasonable about property settlement and financial issues”.

Reference to Figure 6.1.2a reveals that both of these propositions attract very little support from the general community (both at 4%). There was an increase in the level of agreement that violence can be justified if an ex-partner is unreasonable about financial and settlement issues, although this has remained very low (4% in 2013 up from 2% in 2009).

Figure 6.1.2a: Time series – justifications for violence against former partners (% agree).



** Result is statistically significant, $p \leq 0.01$

Bivariate analysis

Justifications for violence against a former partner by selected characteristics (see Tables 6.1.2a and 6.1.2b, Appendix A – detailed tables).

Age: The level of agreement that violence against an ex-partner can be justified varied little across the age groups, with the exception of 16–17 year olds who felt that physical force was justified in order to gain access to children (9% compared with 4% overall).

Heritage and language: Compared to the overall result, a higher proportion of the N-MESC population and those who have recently settled in Australia agreed that violence against an ex-partner could be justified in these circumstances. For example, 9% of those who arrived in Australia from 2005 (4% overall) agree that violence against an ex-partner is justified in order to get access to his children and 11% of the N-MESC sample agree that violence against an ex-partner is justified (4% overall) if she is being unreasonable about settlement and financial issues.

Indigenous status: Compared with non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents, there were higher levels of agreement among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents that violence against an ex-partner is justified in order for a man to gain access to his children (15% compared with 4%), and if the man feels that his ex-partner is being unreasonable about settlement and financial issues (14% compared with 4%).

Gender Equality: Those with lower scores on the GE Scale are more likely to justify violence against ex-partners. For example, 10% agreed violence was justified for a man to get access to his children (compared with 4% overall).

Understanding of Violence Against Women: Those with lower scores on the UVAW Scale are also more likely to justify violence against ex-partners with 7% of the view that violence was justified in order for a man to gain access to his children (4% overall).

6.2. Common excuses for violence against women

The findings above suggest a generally low prevalence of attitudes justifying violence. To what extent does this mean that normative support for violence against women is largely a thing of the past in countries like Australia? A study conducted in the US suggests that there is little cause for complacency. People participating in the US study were given a vignette involving partner violence and were asked a series of questions. Groups within the study received versions of the vignette in which aspects of the situation were altered. For example, one group received a version in which the victim was affected by alcohol and another in which the victim was sober. Participants were asked a range of questions about which of the parties they believed to be *responsible* for the violence and who they believed to be responsible for the *solution* (Taylor and Sorenson 2005). While the vast majority believed the perpetrator to be *primarily* responsible (i.e. that violence was not justified), they were more inclined to believe that fault could be shared in certain circumstances, such as when the victim had been drinking or when her behaviour was perceived as provocative (e.g. if she was suspected of 'cheating'). Further, despite most participants believing the perpetrator to be responsible, they nevertheless believed the victim shared some responsibility for taking action to prevent or respond to the violence.

This study suggests that diminishing support for violence being *justified* does not necessarily mean that there has been a parallel shift in normative support for perpetrators of violence being held *accountable*. Rather it suggests that accountability continues to be undermined by more covert norms based on notions of shared responsibility for causing, or alternatively, for preventing or dealing with the violence. Some of

these more covert beliefs and their prevalence in Australia are considered in the following sections, beginning with excuses for violence.

Attitudes that *excuse* violence do not necessarily endorse or legitimise it. Rather they are based on the impression that there are factors leading some men to be unable to control their behaviour, or to be held fully responsible for it. Common excuses for violence centre around external circumstances (e.g. violence can be excused if the person is experiencing stress); individual factors such as poor anger control or mental illness (Lazenbatt et al. 2005); or biological factors such as hormones (e.g. rape results from men not being able to control their need for sex) (Anderson & Swainson 2001; Bell et al. 1994; Szymanski et al. 1993 cited in Lee et al. 2005).

Excusing violence supports it by undermining normative support for the notion that using violence is always a choice and that people using it ought to be held accountable. The basis upon which people are prepared to excuse violent behaviour also provides some insight into what they believe is the cause of such behaviour. As discussed in the previous section, this understanding is important since it has the potential to influence the development of policy and practice to reduce violence, as well as commitment to implementing it.

6.2.1 Excuses for domestic violence

Background to questions

The questionnaire contained five items designed to ascertain attitudes as to whether domestic violence can be excused in certain circumstances. These being:

- “if the violent person was themselves abused as a child”
- “if the violent person is under a lot of stress”
- “if afterwards, the violent person genuinely regrets what they have done”
- “if the violence results from someone becoming so angry that they temporarily lose control”
- “if the offender is heavily affected by alcohol”.

The roles of stress and anger control in the perpetration of partner violence have been discussed earlier (see 5.7). The notion that the violent person can be excused if genuinely regretful afterward is especially problematic owing to the very dynamic of relationships in which violence occurs. Violent episodes are frequently interspersed with periods of intense remorse and regret (Hale et al. 2006; Heise et al. 1999; VLRC 2006). This can undermine women’s resolve to take steps to seek safety from violence. If held by women themselves or voiced by those around them, the belief that violence can be excused by expressions of genuine regret compounds the impacts of this dynamic.

Men who experienced abuse as child are at greater risk of perpetrating violence against women as adults (see 3.8.1). However, many men who experienced child abuse do not use violence as adults (Holt et al. 2008). Indeed there is evidence that some men abused as children grow up to be very intolerant of violence (Flood & Pease 2006). Further, many men who do use violence against women were not themselves childhood victims.

Partner violence is more common among men who misuse alcohol, although the association is modest (Foran & O’Leary 2008). The likelihood of violence occurring is higher after episodes of drinking and the severity of violence has found to be greater when alcohol is involved (Bennet & Bland 2008; Graham et al. 2010). In a substantial proportion of cases of sexual assault, either the victim, the perpetrator or both have been drinking (Abbey 2011; Heenan & Murray 2006). At the same time many men who misuse alcohol are not violent, while many men who use violence do not have a problem with alcohol (Abbey 2011; Mouzos &

Makkai 2004). The increased risk associated with alcohol is primarily among men already predisposed to sexual aggression (Abbey 2011), such that alcohol is viewed as determinant of when particular men may become aggressive rather than of which men will perpetrate violence. Similarly in the case of partner violence, an existing pattern of controlling behaviours often exists among men who use both alcohol and violence (Bennet & Bland 2008) and controlling behaviours have been found to be a stronger correlate of violence than alcohol use (Mouzos & Makkai 2004).

It is also likely that the social context in which drinking takes place contributes to the increased risk of violence, either as well as, or rather than, the pharmacological effects of alcohol. That is, some men consume alcohol in 'drinking cultures' that place a value on male conquest and aggression, and it is the social support for violence and disrespect for women that contributes to risk (Abbey 2008; Humphreys et al. 2005; Schwartz & Dekersedy 2000). Allied to this is the expectation in our culture that alcohol will negatively impact on our ability to behave appropriately. These claims are supported by studies that demonstrate that behavioural changes occur at very low levels of alcohol consumption (i.e. at levels unlikely to affect behaviour) (Pernanen 1991 cited in Bennet & Bland 2008). There is evidence that some men consciously drink to give themselves 'time-out' to behave in ways they know are unacceptable (Bennet & Bland 2008; Rothman et al. 2011).

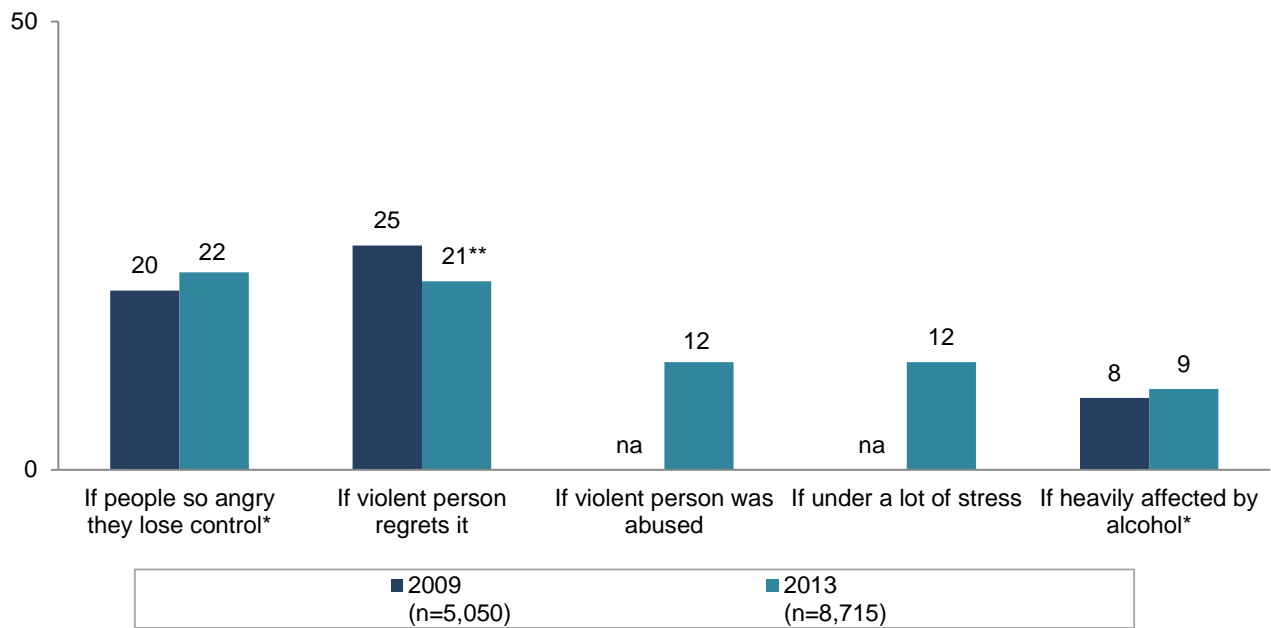
Both men and women who are intoxicated behave in ways that reflects their gender socialisation, with only a small proportion of women becoming aggressive when intoxicated (Taft & Toomey 2005). This suggests that masculine socialisation remains important in understanding the behaviour of men who use violence while intoxicated.

For these reasons alcohol is seen by many experts as a catalyst for violence against women, rather than a fundamental cause (VicHealth 2010). This distinction is important, since it suggests that while addressing alcohol use will be important in reducing the severity and frequency of violence it will be unlikely to eliminate the problem altogether. This is demonstrated by programs where men who use violence are treated for their alcohol misuse, which have been shown to be effective in reducing but not altogether resolving their use of violence (Bennet & Bland 2008).

Survey findings and changes over time

Figure 6.2.1a shows that over one in five respondents agree that domestic violence can be excused if the violent person genuinely regrets their behaviour afterwards (21% down from 25% in 2009), or if the violence results from someone becoming so angry that they temporarily lose control (22%). Anger and regret are more commonly accepted as excuses for domestic violence than a personal history of abuse (12%), stress (12%) or being affected by alcohol (9%).

Figure 6.2.1a: Time series – excuses for domestic violence (% agree).

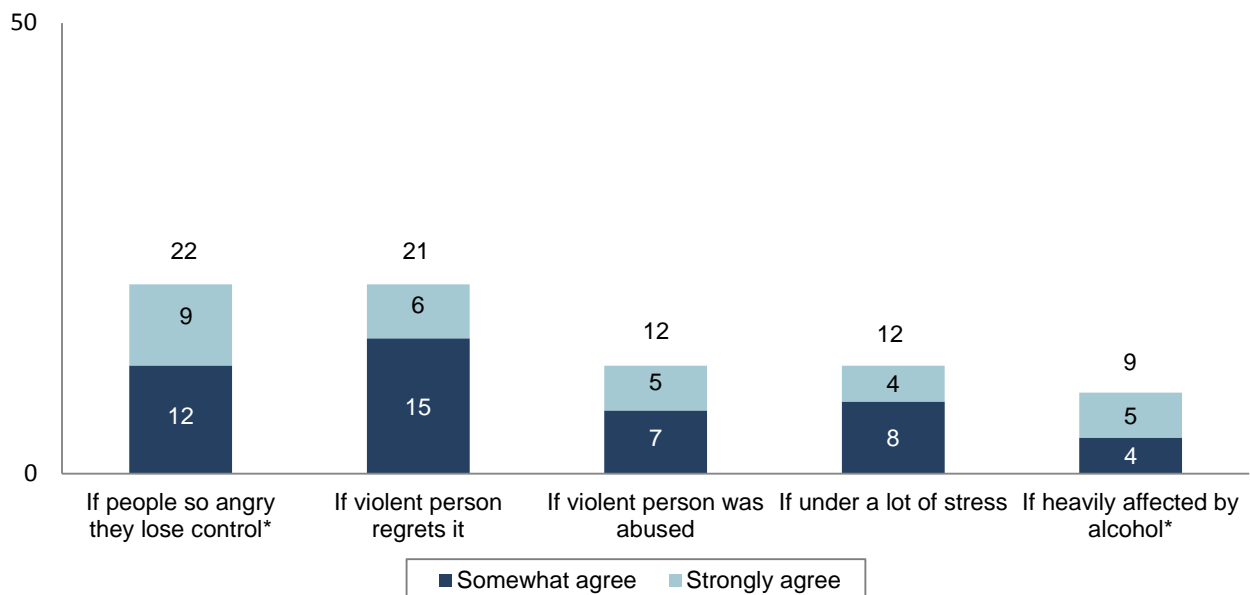


** Result is statistically significant, $p \leq 0.01$

*Statements asked of split sample 2009 n=5,055; 2013 n=8,802

Figure 6.1.2b shows the proportion of respondents who somewhat or strongly agree with each excuse for domestic violence. Close to one in 10 (9%) respondents strongly agree that being so angry and temporarily losing control is an excuse for domestic violence.

Figure 6.2.1b: Level of agreement with excuses for domestic violence.



Statements asked of split sample n=8,715

*Statements asked of split sample n=8,802

Bivariate analysis

Level of agreement with excuses for domestic violence by selected characteristics (see Tables 6.2.1a to 6.2.1e, Appendix A – detailed tables)

Gender: Twenty-six percent of males agree that domestic violence can be excused if genuinely regretted afterwards compared with 17% of females. This represents a decline in the proportion prepared to excuse

violence in these circumstances compared to the 2009 results (data not shown) when the corresponding results were males 29% and females 21%.

Age: Those aged 65 years and over are generally more likely than the general community to agree that violence can be excused.

Heritage and language: Compared to the average across the total population, a higher proportion of N-MESC respondents agree that domestic violence can be excused on the basis of each of the scenarios presented to them, with 40% agreeing that domestic violence can be excused if genuinely regretted afterwards (21% overall), and 37% if it arises from a loss of control due to anger (22% overall).

Socio-economic status: While those classified as being of lower socio-economic status are more likely to hold attitudes that *excuse* domestic violence, overall the variation in agreement is fairly narrow.

Indigenous status: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents are more likely than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents to agree that domestic violence can be excused if: the man is under a lot of stress (23% compared with 12%), the man gets so angry that he temporarily loses control (37% compared with 21%) and if the offender is heavily affected by alcohol (21% compared with 8%).

Place: Compared to the national average, residents of the ACT are consistently less likely to agree that any of the circumstances described in the survey are excuses for domestic violence.

Gender Equality: Of those with a low GE score, 39% agree that domestic violence can be excused if genuinely regretted, while among those showing high support for gender equality, 9% agreed with this excuse.

Understanding of Violence Against Women: Thirty-two percent of those classified as having a low UVAW score agree that domestic violence can be excused if the violent person genuinely regrets their actions afterwards, while the corresponding level of agreement for those with a high UVAW score is 9%.

6.2.2 *Excuses for sexual violence*

Background to questions

Two items were used to measure community perceptions as to whether or not sexual violence against women could be excused. These are:

- “rape results from men not being able to control their need for sex”
- “a man is less responsible for rape if he is drunk or affected by drugs at the time”.

The excuse that rape results from men not being able to control their sexual urges is challenged by the substantial variation in rates of sexual violence across both time and place (Jewkes et al. 2012; Sanday 1981). This together with evidence showing that these variations reflect differences in gender-related social norms, structures and relations (Sanday 1981), suggest that rape proclivity is socially as opposed to biologically determined. Second, evidence indicating that a substantial proportion of rapes are planned in advance suggests that they are unlikely to be a spontaneous response to urges beyond men’s control (Abbey 1991; Ryan 2004). Third, studies with men who have used sexual violence identify the desire to assert power and control over a victim, rather than sexual gratification, as a primary motive (Chiroro et al. 2004).

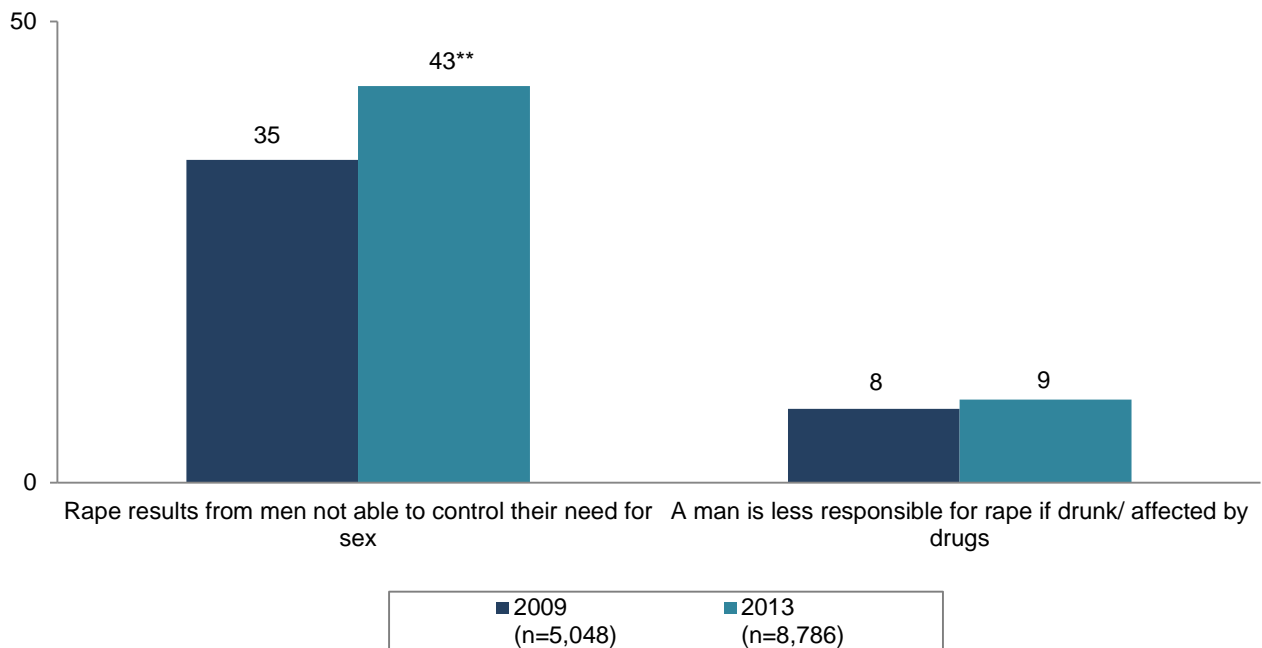
The role of alcohol in the perpetration of sexual assault is discussed above (see 6.2.1).

Survey findings and changes over time

Forty-three percent of the general community agreed that rape results from men not being able to control their need for sex (up from 35% in 2009). Of interest with respect to this finding is that the proportion of

women agreeing with this statement increased from 32% in 2009 to 41% in 2013, outstripping the 39% to 44% among males (data not shown). The level of agreement that a man is less responsible for rape if he is drunk or affected by drugs has remained largely unchanged (9% from 8% in 2009).

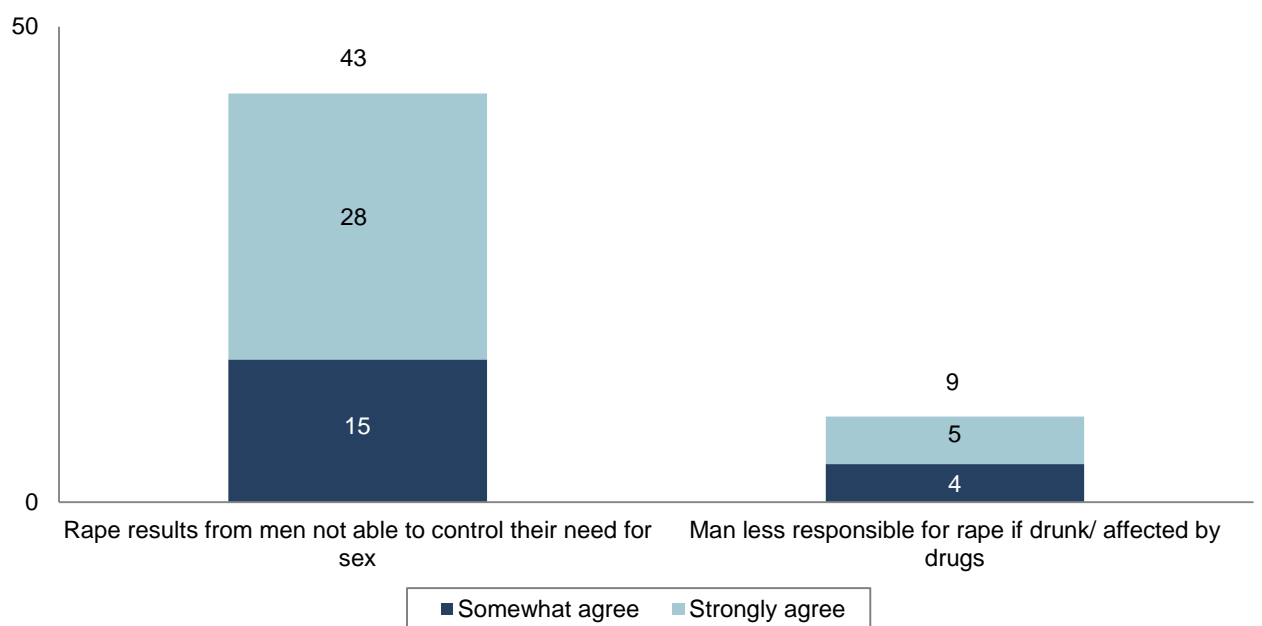
Figure 6.2.2a: Time series – excuses for sexual violence (% agree).



** Result is statistically significant, $p \leq .01$

Examining the level of agreement with each of these attributes (Figure 6.2.2b) reveals that over a quarter of the population (28%) strongly agree that rape results from men not being able to control their need for sex.

Figure 6.2.2b: Level of agreement with excuses for sexual assault.



Sample size n=8,786

Bivariate analysis

Level of agreement with excuses for sexual assault (see Tables 6.2.2a and 6.2.2b, Appendix A – detailed tables).

Age: Those aged 65 years and over are more likely than other age groups to agree (51% compared with 43% overall) that rape results from men not being able to control their need for sex.

Heritage and language: The N-MESC population (18%) and those who do not speak English well (25%) are more likely to agree that a man is less responsible for rape if he is drunk or affected by drugs at the time (9% overall).

Socio-economic status: Again compared to the overall results (9%), those working as managers and professionals are less likely to agree that being drunk or drug affected is an excuse for rape (5%).

Indigenous status: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are more likely to agree (16%) than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (9%) that a man is less responsible for rape if he is drunk or affected by drugs at the time.¹⁶

Place: The proportion of South Australian residents who agree that rape results from men not being able to control their need for sex has increased from 35% in 2009 (data not shown) to 48% in 2013. This is significantly higher than the other States and Territories.

Gender Equality: Thirty-six percent of those with a high score on the GE Scale agree that men being unable to control their need for sex is an excuse for rape compared to half of those with a low GE score (51%). A minority of those with a high GE score agree that being drunk or affected by drugs is an excuse for rape (4%), while close to one in five of those with a low score on the GE Scale agree with this attribute (17%).

Understanding of Violence Against Women: Those with a higher score on the UVAW Scale are less likely to agree that rape results from men not being able to control their need for sex (38%) and less likely to agree that being drunk or affected by drugs is an excuse for rape (5%).

¹⁶ Significant at the 95% confidence level.

6.3. Trivialising violence against women

As indicated earlier (refer back to section 1.3), violence against women has serious health, social and economic consequences both for women experiencing it and for the wider community. Underlying attitudes that *trivialise* violence are the notions that it does not have serious impacts, or that the impacts are not sufficiently serious to warrant action by women themselves, the community or public agencies.

The trivialisation of sexual harassment is evident in the attitude that women over-react to this behaviour and should be flattered by men's sexual attention (Lonsway et al. 2008). Similarly, rape may be seen as merely sex (Ward 1995). Trivialisation of the serious impacts of domestic violence are reflected in attitudes that privilege other goals such as the preservation of the family or the wellbeing of children over the need for protection from violence (e.g. it's a woman's duty to stay in a violent relationship to keep the family together) or which deny that there is a legitimate role for public policy and public agencies in ending violence (e.g. women who are sexually harassed should sort it out themselves).

Other attitudes, while presupposing the right to seek protection from violence, question women's motivations for not doing so (e.g. it's hard to understand why women stay). In doing so, they trivialise the serious impacts of domestic violence on a woman's capacity to leave and the risks, in many cases, to her own and her children's safety in doing so.

Background to questions

Community support for attitudes trivialising violence against women is gauged through three key sub-themes. The first and second of these are attitudes relating to the sanctity of the family and towards women staying in or returning to violent relationships. The third sub-theme addresses the extent to which women are thought to be responsible for resolving the problem themselves, as opposed to violence being one of broader concern for which perpetrators should be held accountable.

A barrier to addressing violence against women, particularly evident in the early expert literature, was the belief in the sanctity of the family (Schneider 1991). Research suggests that partner violence is more common in communities with strong cultural norms about the sanctity of the family than in those in which such norms are weak (Browning 2002).

Such beliefs are especially pervasive in collectivist cultures where the needs of the individual are seen to be less important than the preservation of the family or community (Yoshioka & Choi 2005). As discussed earlier (see 3.9.2.1), it is probable that there are some aspects of collectivism that *protect* women from violence. However, collectivist cultural norms can also impose particularly high, and potentially harmful, expectations of conformity upon women (Yoshioka & Choi 2005). As discussed in 3.9.2.1, family sanctity may also be a particular issue for marginalised groups who are subject to discrimination and violence as a result of their minority status. In such circumstances, women may face intense pressure to maintain loyalties to fragile families and communities as a means of preserving cultural integrity and unity. Women in racial and ethnic minorities in post-colonial and settler societies, such as Australia, may face the force of both these influences, often being members of communities that are collectivist *and* marginalised.

This theme is explored in the NCAS by assessing the level of agreement with the following statements:

- "It's a woman's duty to stay in a violent relationship in order to keep the family together."
- "Domestic violence is a private matter."

In contrast to attitudes placing pressure on women to remain in violent relationships, other commonly held beliefs imply judgement of women for *not* leaving a relationship in which violence is occurring.

Studies of relationships affected by partner violence suggest that violence may take place over a long period, which is often characterised by repeated separations. Many women who separate from a violent partner make multiple attempts before doing so permanently (Mahoney 1994). There is an extensive literature documenting the barriers to women securing safety from violence, with these including:

- fears that the abuse will escalate or that the perpetrator will harm children (Davies et al. 2008; Dekeseredy et al. 2004)
- women's lack of confidence that they and their children will receive appropriate protection by police and through the family law system. Indeed, some family laws (e.g. those encouraging shared parenting outcomes) may mean that some children are in greater danger upon separation (Meyer 2012; Murray 2007)
- women's lower socio-economic standing and financial dependence on the abuser (Meyer 2012)
- women's commitment to maintaining family unity or protecting community reputation, a particular issue in collectivist cultures or in marginalised minority communities (Yoshioka & Choi 2005)
- unhelpful responses and lack of support from family and friends and formal support services (Fanslow & Robinson 2009).

Murray (2007) also points out that the assumption implicit in focusing on the reasons some women remain in violent relationships reflects the belief that it is women who bear responsibility for ending the violence. In so doing it belies the possibility of exploring strategies for removing the perpetrator of violence from the home, and ensuring the protection of women and children. Such beliefs also have the effect of attributing some responsibility for women's fate to them, leading to a culture of resignation in which violence can become normalised (Thapar-Bjökert & Morgan 2010). This can in turn act as a further barrier to separation (Fanslow & Robinson 2009).

Prior research indicates that a relatively large proportion of the community underestimates the difficulties women face in seeking safety from a violent relationship. For example in a US study, two-thirds of respondents supported the belief that a "woman can leave a violent relationship if she really wants to" (Worden & Carlson 2005). Those holding such beliefs have also been found to be more likely to attribute some blame for the violence to the woman if she returns to a violent relationship (Taylor & Sorenson 2005; Yamawaki et al. 2012). This tendency is greater when the judgement is of a victim experiencing violence in a dating relationship, compared with violence in a marital relationship (Taylor & Sorenson 2005; Yamawaki et al. 2012). Although there are some conflicting findings, generally men are less sympathetic towards women staying in or returning to violent relationships than women (Worden & Carlson 2005; Yamawaki et al. 2012).

This theme is explored by assessing the level of agreement with two statements:

- "It's hard to understand why women stay."
- "Most women could leave if they wanted."

Since the 1980s in Australia there has been increasing recognition that violence and harassment of women ought to be a concern of government and the community. In 1984 the *Sex Discrimination Act* was passed. Although sexual harassment had been recognised by tribunals prior to this, the Act marked the first time an Australian government named sexual harassment as an actionable wrong for which women were able to seek redress (Mason & Chapman 2003). In the same period Australian governments commenced programs of reform to the law and to police procedures to strengthen the capacity of the law to protect women and contribute to new social norms disapproving of the use of violence (Murray & Powell 2009). Courts in all Australian States and Territories have the power to include a provision to exclude a perpetrator of domestic violence from the home as part of a protection order (National Council to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2009a). In addition to promoting perpetrator accountability, reform aimed to avoid the

situation where women and children who were victims of violence were required to seek alternative accommodation. Community acceptance of the increasing responsibility taken by government to address violence against women was explored through two questions:

“Where one partner is violent it’s reasonable for them to be made to leave the family home.”

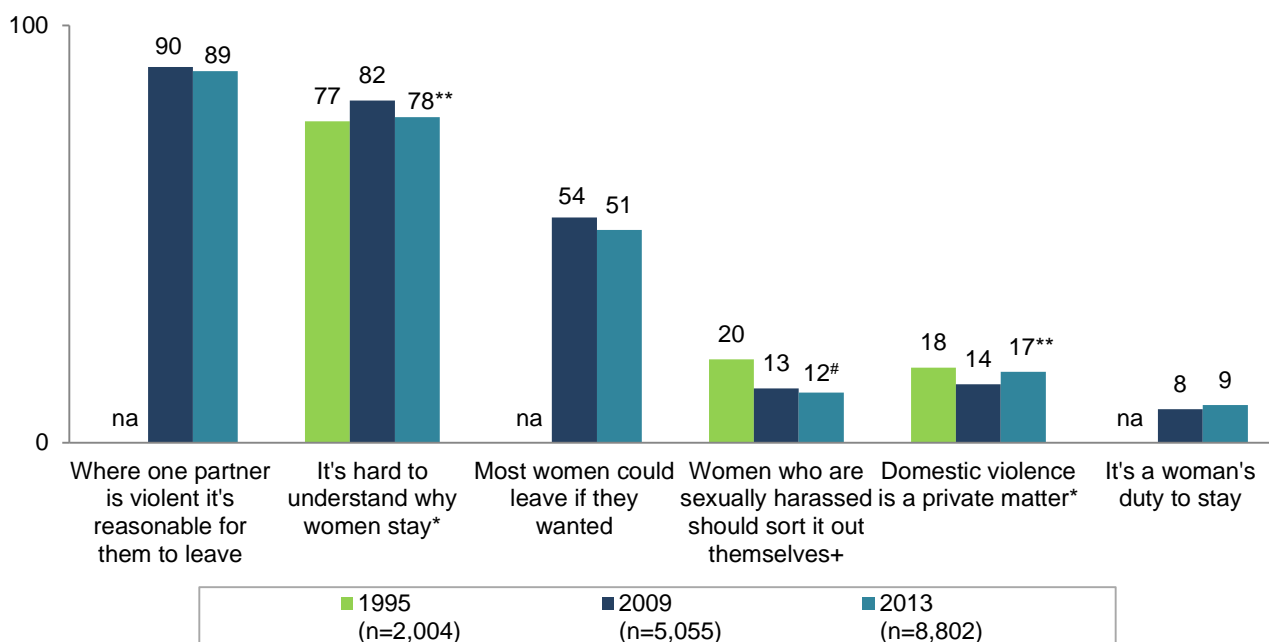
“Women who are sexually harassed should sort it out themselves.”

Survey findings and changes over time

In the Australian community, 17% agree that domestic violence is a private matter, and this is up from 14% in 2009. Nearly 1 in 10 (9%) agree that it is a woman’s duty to stay in a violent relationship. Around eight in 10 individuals (78%) agree that it is hard to understand why women stay in a violent relationship, and around one in two agree (51%) that most women could leave a violent relationship if they really wanted to.

There is a relatively high level of support for the notion that violence is an issue of public concern. The majority of respondents (89%) agree that it is reasonable for the violent person in a domestic setting to be made to leave the home, and only 12% agree that women who are sexually harassed should sort it out themselves (8 percentage points fewer than held this belief in 1995 (20%). With the exception of this improvement, the data presented in Figure 6.3a shows little variation between 2009 and 2013.

Figure 6.3a: Time series – trivialising violence against women (% agree).



** Difference between 2009 and 2013 is statistically significant, p ≤.01

Difference between 1995 and 2013 is statistically significant, p ≤.01

*Statements asked of split sample 2009 n=5,050; 2013 n=8,715

+Statements asked of split sample 2009 n=5,057; 2013 n=8,731

Bivariate analysis

Attitudes which trivialise violence against women by selected characteristics (see Tables 6.3a to 6.3f, Appendix A – detailed tables)

Gender: Across three of the six attributes a higher proportion of males (than females) displayed attitudes consistent with trivialising violence against women. These are: domestic violence is a private matter (20% males, 14% females); most women could leave a violent relationship if they really wanted to (58% males, 45% females); and it is entirely reasonable for the violent person to be made to leave the family home (87% males, 91% females). These substantial gender differences indicate that, on these attributes, men are significantly more likely to lack an appreciation of the real impacts of violence against women and hence to trivialise its consequences.

Age: Those aged 75 years and over are more likely than other age groups to endorse the propositions that domestic violence is a private matter (30% compared to 17% overall); that if a woman is sexually harassed she should sort it out herself (19% compared with 12% overall); and that it is a woman's duty to stay in a violent relationship (17% compared with 9% overall). This age group is also less likely to endorse the proposition that the violent person should be made to leave the family home (84% compared with 89% overall).

Heritage and language: Compared to the overall average, N-MESC respondents are more likely to view domestic violence as a private matter (31% compared with 17%), and to agree that sexually harassed women should sort it out themselves (21% compared with 12%). This group is also more likely to agree that most women could leave a violent relationship if they wanted to (63% compared with 51% overall), and to agree that it's a woman's duty to stay in a violent relationship to keep the family together (19% compared to the total population average of 9%). This subgroup is less likely to agree that it is hard to understand why women stay in a violent relationship (73% compared with 78%) and that the violent person should be made to leave the family home (82% compared with 89% overall).

Socio-economic status: University graduates are more likely than the overall average to disagree that it is hard to understand why women stay in violent relationships (27% compared with 19%), and less likely to agree (44% compared with 51%) that a woman can leave a violent relationship if she really wanted to.

Gender Equality: Across all but one of the measures ("It's hard to understand why women stay in a violent relationship"), those classified as high score on the GE Scale are less likely than the overall population to have attitudes trivialising violence against women.

Understanding of Violence Against Women: Across all but one of the measures ("It's hard to understand why women stay in a violent relationship"), those classified as high on the UVAW Scale are less likely to have attitudes trivialising violence against women. This exception may be due to the possible ambiguity of this question. That is, respondents may have had a number of possible notions in mind when thinking about this question (e.g. that it's hard to understand why women stay owing to the severity of the impacts; that it's hard to understand because of the complex issues involved, or, alternatively, that it's hard to understand why women tolerate violence).

6.4. Minimising the reality of violence against women

Attitudes minimising violence against women are those that deny the seriousness of the violence, deny that it occurs or deny that certain behaviours are indeed violence at all.

This is illustrated in the case of partner violence when overt physical and sexual violence are recognised as serious, despite evidence suggesting that other forms of violence, such as emotional and financial abuse, can be equally damaging, if not more so (see 5.1). It is also apparent in attitudes that women often falsify claims of violence or when claims of rape in certain circumstances are claimed not to be 'real' rape (e.g. if the woman didn't physically resist) (Lonsway et al. 2008).

6.4.1 Violence against women is a serious issue in our community

Background to question

It is important to gauge perceptions of the seriousness of social issues as this is understood to be among the factors influencing the extent to which individuals believe action should be taken to address them. Gracia and Herrero (2006b), analysing a survey of over 13,000 people in the European Union, found that people who ranked various domestic violence behaviours as serious were also more likely to agree that violence against women was unacceptable in any circumstance. The extent to which people assess various behaviours as serious has also been found to influence the extent to which they are prepared to intervene as bystanders (Powell 2012). In a study of police officers, Gracia, García and Lila (2011) found a relationship between how seriously various behaviours were ranked and law enforcement approaches. Officers who said that they would enforce the law unconditionally were also more likely to rank various partner violence behaviours as serious, whereas those who indicated that they would only enforce the law at the victim's request were less likely to rank the behaviours as serious.

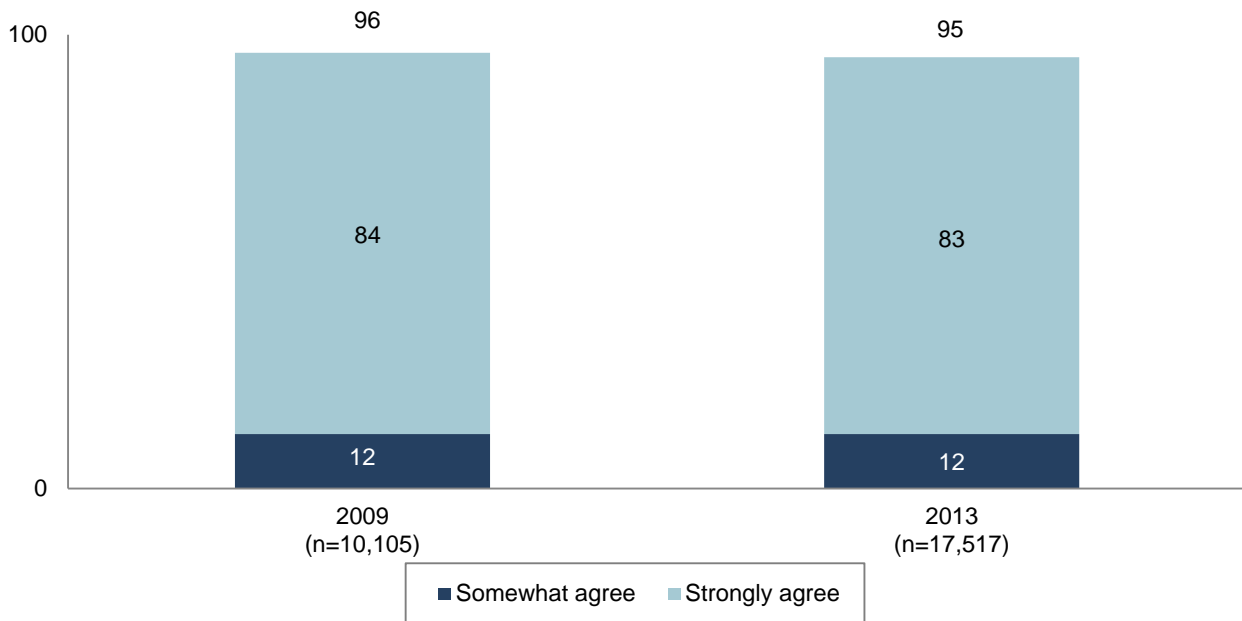
Prior survey research suggests that the overwhelming majority of people in countries comparable in their development to Australia hold a high level of concern about violence against women (Harris/Decima 2009; European Commission 2010a).

As discussed earlier in this report, violence against women occurs along a continuum from overt physical violence through to social and emotional forms of abuse. Other research has shown that there is wide community recognition of the seriousness of forms of violence along this continuum. However, this research finds that people are less likely to rate non-physical forms of violence as serious than physical and sexual forms (Carlson & Worden 2005; European Commission 2010a; Harris/Decima 2009; Yamawaki et al. 2012).

Survey findings and changes over time

Figure 6.4.1 shows that there is a very high level of agreement with the statement that "violence against women is a serious issue for our community" (95%), with most respondents (83%) indicating that they 'strongly' as opposed to 'somewhat' agree with this proposition. This is virtually unchanged from 2009 levels (96%).

Figure 6.4.1: Time series – violence against women is a serious issue (% agree).



Bivariate analysis

Level of agreement that violence against women is a serious issue by selected characteristics (see Table 6.4.1, Appendix A – detailed tables).

Heritage and language: Compared to the overall result (95%), agreement is lower among first-generation immigrants (91%), the N-MESC population (89% agree) and, in particular, those with poor English language skills (78% agree).

Gender Equality: Those with a high score on the GE Scale are more likely to agree that violence against women is a serious issue in our community (98%), while a low GE score is linked with lower levels of agreement (91%).

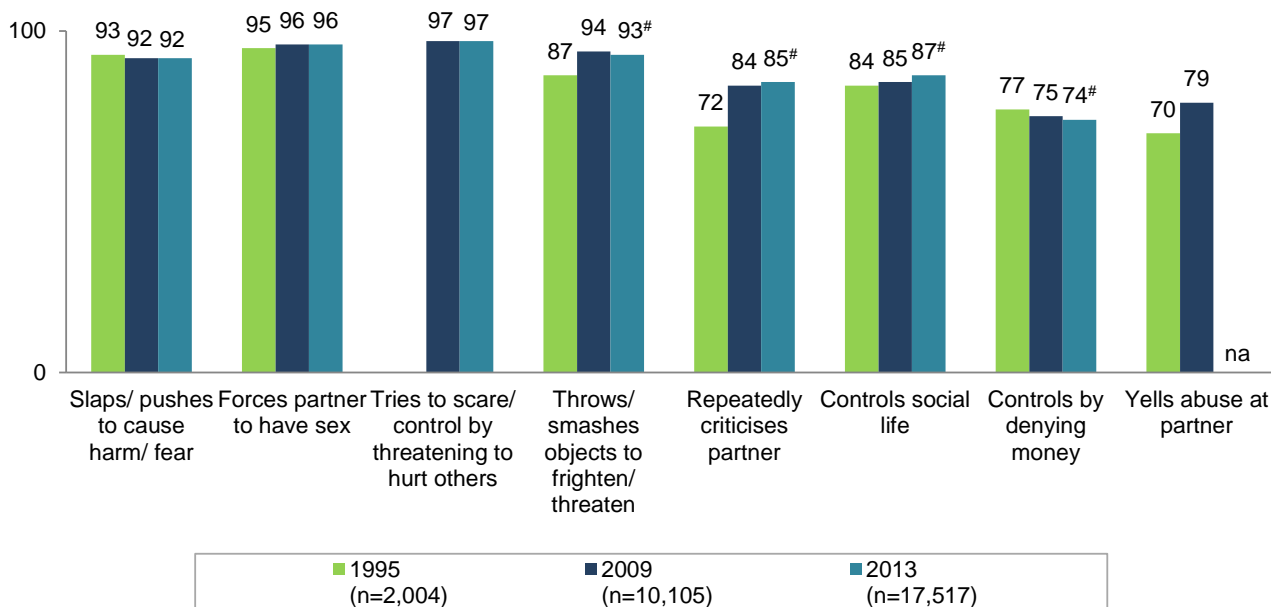
Understanding of Violence Against Women: Those with a high UVAW score are more likely to agree that violence against women is a serious issue (98%) while those with a low UVAW score have a lower level of agreement (92%).

6.4.2 The perceived seriousness of specific domestic violence behaviours

Given the above, it is unsurprising that the vast majority of the population view specific domestic violence behaviours as serious. As was the case in 2009, perceptions of the seriousness of the non-physical forms of violence are lower than for the more overt physically violent behaviours. Results have remained consistent with 2009, maintaining the gains made between 1995 and 2009 across most attributes. In particular, since 1995 there has been a sizeable increase (from 72% to 85%) in the proportion of the community who agree that repeatedly criticising a partner to make them feel bad or useless is serious. The only variation to this pattern is the perceived seriousness of “controls by denying money” which fewer people now perceive as serious (74%) than in 1995 (77%).

It is important to note that each of these questions was framed to capture the intimidating and controlling dynamic outlined in section 5.1 of this report.

Figure 6.4.2a: Time series – perceived seriousness of domestic violence (% serious).



** Difference between 2009 and 2013 is statistically significant, $p \leq 0.01$
[#] Difference between 1995 and 2013 is statistically significant, $p \leq 0.01$

Bivariate analysis

Perceived seriousness of certain domestic violence behaviours by selected characteristics (see Tables 6.4.2a to 6.4.2g, Appendix A – detailed tables).

Gender: Males are less inclined than females to regard these forms of domestic violence as ‘very serious’, and more likely to regard them as ‘quite serious’.

The substantially lower proportion of males who recognise each of the above behaviours as a serious manifestation of domestic violence confirms a substantial gender gap in the extent to which domestic violence is *minimised*.

- Forty-six percent of males regard slapping or pushing the other partner to cause harm or fear as very serious compared with 58% of females.
- Seventy-two percent of males regard forcing the other partner to have sex as very serious compared with 79% of females.
- Trying to scare or control one’s partner by threatening to hurt other family members was considered to be very serious by 73% of males, compared with 81% of females.

- Throwing or smashing objects near the other partner to frighten them was considered serious by 54% of males compared with 65% of females.
- Thirty-three percent of males considered repeatedly criticising one's partner to make them feel bad or useless very serious compared with 49% of females.
- Controls the social life of one's partner by preventing them from seeing family and friends was considered very serious by 40% of males compared with 57% of females.
- Twenty-five percent of males considered trying to control one's partner by denying them money very serious compared with 41% of females.

Age: Compared to other age groups, those aged 75 and over are less likely to regard the majority of these behaviours as very serious, in particular "forces partner to have sex" (55% compared with 76% overall). Young respondents (16 to 17 years and 18 to 24 years) are less likely to consider "slaps or pushes to cause harm or fear" (40%, 47%, respectively compared to 52% overall), "repeatedly criticises partner" (30%, 34% compared with 41% overall), "controls partners' social life" (31%, 39% compared with 49% overall), and "controls partner by denying them money" (18%, 21% compared with 33% overall) as very serious behaviours.

Heritage and language: N-MESC respondents are less likely than the overall population to regard many of these behaviours as very serious, as are first-generation immigrants. For example, 65% of the N-MESC subgroup regard "forces partner to have sex" as very serious, as do 70% of first-generation immigrants (compared with 76% overall).

Socio-economic status: Technicians and trade workers are less likely to regard the majority of behaviours as very serious, while community and personal service and clerical and administrative workers are much more likely to consider the various behaviours as very serious.

Indigenous status: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents are as likely than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to view these attributes as very serious, in particular "repeatedly criticises partner" (ATSI 61% compared with non-ATSI 41%).

Gender Equality: A high score on the GE Scale is associated with a greater likelihood of regarding behaviours as very serious, whereas those with low support for gender equality are less likely to consider these behaviours as serious. For example, 61% of those with a high GE score regard controlling the social life of the other partner by preventing them from seeing family and friends as very serious, compared with 38% of those with a low rating on the GE Scale.

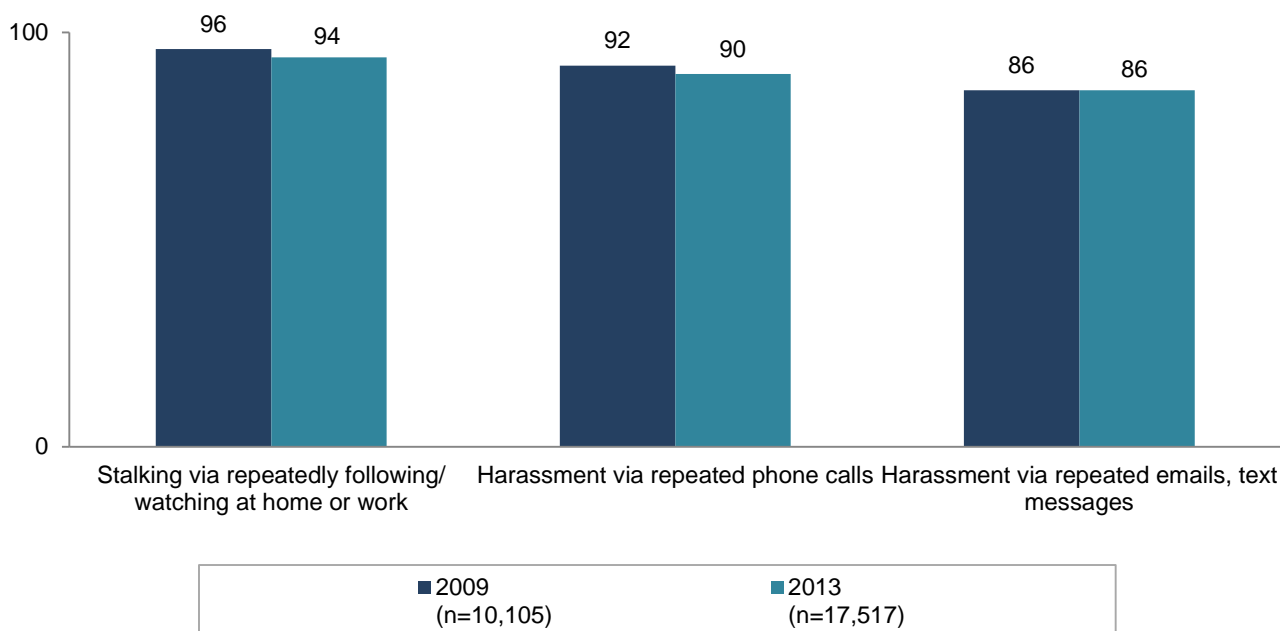
Understanding of Violence Against Women: Those with a low score on the UVAW Scale are less likely to regard each of these behaviours as serious compared to those with a high UVAW score. For instance, 76% of those rated as high on the UVAW Scale regard trying to control a partner by denying them money as very serious, compared with 13% of those who rate as low on this scale.

6.4.3 *The perceived seriousness of specific violence against women behaviours*

Survey findings and changes over time

Respondents were also asked whether they believed stalking and various forms of harassment were serious (see Figure 6.4.3a). The majority of people agreed that physically stalking a woman is serious (94%). Ninety percent agreed that stalking and harassment via repeated phone calls was serious, and 86% agreed that this was the case for harassment via emails or text messages. Perceptions have remained consistent overall with 2009.

Figure 6.4.3a: Time series – perceived seriousness of selected behaviours (% agree).



Bivariate analysis

Perceived seriousness of selected behaviours by selected characteristics (see Tables 6.4.3a-6.4.3c, Appendix A – detailed tables)

Gender: Females are more likely than males to consider these behaviours as ‘very serious’. Further to the discussion above regarding the *minimising* of domestic violence by males, it is evidence that, relative to females, males also tend to minimise the seriousness of violence against women. To this end:

- Sixty-nine percent of women but only 56% of men regarded stalking as very serious. Harassment via repeated phone calls was regarded as very serious by 51% of females but only 44% of men.
- Forty percent of men regarded harassment via repeated emails, text messages and the like as very serious compared with 48% of females.

Age: Compared to the total population, both the youngest (16–24 year olds) and oldest respondents (75+ years) are less likely to regard each of these behaviours as ‘very serious’, tending to regard them as ‘quite serious’ instead.

Heritage and language: The N-MESC population consistently regard these forms of violence against women as less serious than the general community, as do first-generation immigrants, those who speak languages other than English at home, and those who have arrived in Australia from 2005 onwards.

Socio-economic status: University-educated respondents and technicians and those who work in trade services are less likely to consider these forms of violence against women as ‘very serious’ compared to the average across the whole population. On the other hand, community and personal services workers are overall more likely to regard these behaviours as ‘very serious’.

Gender Equality: Those with a high GE score are more likely than those with a low GE score to regard these forms of violence against women as very serious. For instance, 75% of those classified as high on the GE Scale regard stalking to be very serious compared with 49% of those at the low end of the scale.

Understanding of Violence Against Women: The higher the rating on the UVAW Scale the higher the level of seriousness ascribed to each of these behaviours. This is illustrated by the finding that 89% of those

classified as high on the UVAW Scale consider stalking to be very serious compared with 39% of those with a low rating on this scale.

6.4.4 Perceptions of electronic tracking

Question background

Since the 1995 survey, there have been significant advances in the development of information communication technologies (ICT), and these technologies have become increasingly accessible. Eighty - three percent of Australian households have access to the internet at home (ABS 2012), and 89% of adults in households with fixed lines also have a mobile phone (Australian Communications and Media Authority 2014). While overall these developments have been very positive, there is growing evidence of their use in both the harassment of women and in the monitoring and control of their movements and communications activity. The latter, occurring particularly in the context of partner violence, may take a number of forms including a partner:

- checking a woman's mobile phone call register, messages and contacts
- installing and using mobile phone and computer tracking software to enable key stroke logging or computer monitoring (e.g. spyware)
- using technologies such as a web-cam to record, and subsequently digitally transmit, a woman's movements and activities
- checking a woman's instant messaging, chat room and browser activity (Hand et al. 2009).

In 2013, new questions were added to ascertain community perceptions of the use of ICT to track women's movements. These questions were:

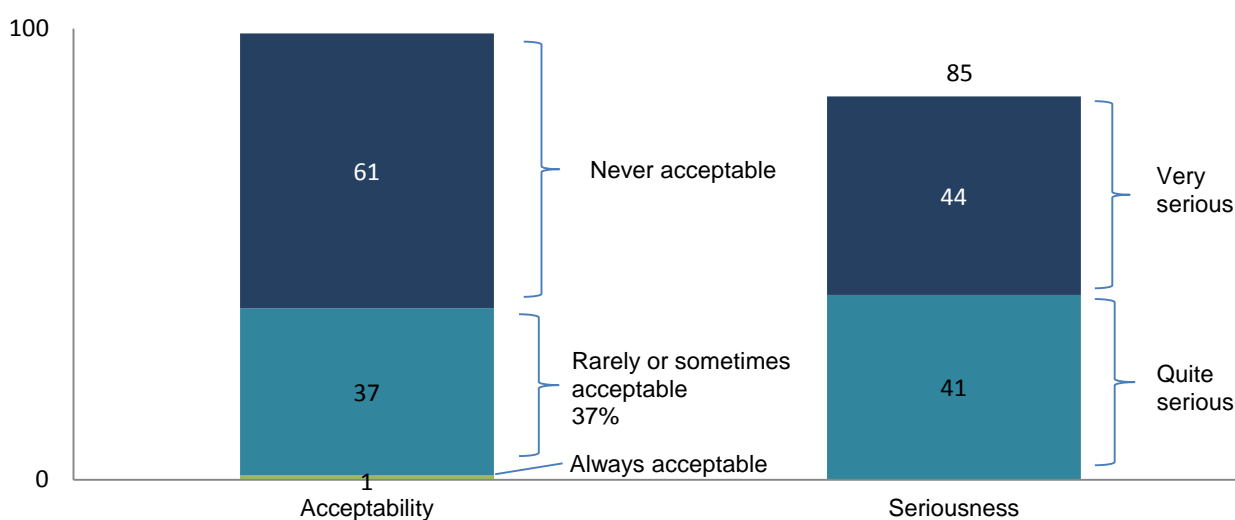
"If a man keeps track of his wife's, partner's or girlfriend's location, calls or activities through her mobile phone or other electronic devices without her consent would you say that was (always acceptable, sometimes acceptable, rarely acceptable or never acceptable)?"

"And how serious is this, would you say very, quite, not that serious or not at all?"

Survey findings

Close to four in 10 respondents (38%) found electronic tracking acceptable to some extent (Figure 6.4.4); nevertheless, a very high proportion of the general community consider this behaviour to be of a serious nature (85%).

Figure 6.4.4: Acceptability and seriousness of electronic tracking of female partner without consent (% agree).



Sample size n=17,517

Bivariate analysis

Perceived seriousness of selected behaviours by selected characteristics (see Tables 6.4.4a – 6.4.4b Appendix A – detailed tables)

Gender: Males (43%) are more likely than females (32%) to regard the electronic tracking of a female partner as acceptable. Females are more likely than males to consider this behaviour to be ‘very serious’ (51% compared with 37%).

Age: All respondents up to the age of 44 years are more likely to find electronic tracking of a partner acceptable (16–17 years (48%), 18–24 years (46%), 25–34 years (45%) and 35–44 years (42%), while those aged 45 years and over are less likely to regard this behaviour as acceptable (31%). Similar to acceptability, younger respondents are overall less likely to find this behaviour serious, while older respondents (55 years and over) are more likely to regard tracking one’s partner as serious behaviour.

Heritage and language: Compared with the overall result (38%), the N-MESC population is more likely to regard the electronic tracking of a partner without consent as acceptable (42%), as are those who have settled in Australia from 2005 onwards (47%). N-MESC respondents are less likely to regard tracking a partner as serious (78% compared with 85% overall), as are first-generation immigrants (81%) and those who arrived in Australia from 2005 (78%).

Socio-economic status: In terms of the perceived acceptability of tracking of one’s partner electronically, compared with the overall result (38% acceptable), a higher proportion of university graduates (42%), those working as professionals (40%) and those working as technicians/tradespersons (46%) hold the view that tracking a partner in this manner is acceptable. Those who work in the technicians and trade services (36%) are less likely to consider this behaviour as ‘very serious’. On the other hand, community and personal services workers are overall more likely to regard tracking a partner as ‘very serious’ (48%).

Household composition: Thirty-two percent of respondents in lone parent households regard the electronic tracking of a partner as acceptable compared with 42% of those living as a couple with children at home.

Gender Equality: Respondents with a high GE score are less likely to regard such behaviour as acceptable (27%) compared to those with a low GE score (49%). Those with a high GE score are more likely to regard tracking a partner as serious (93%) compared to those with a low GE score (74%).

Understanding of Violence Against Women: Those with a high score on the UVAW Scale are far less likely to regard such behaviour as acceptable (15%) compared to those with a low UVAW score (52%). Almost three in four (72%) of those within the high category of the UVAW Scale consider keeping track of a wife's, partner's or girlfriend's location to be very serious compared with 26% of those with a low rating on this scale.

6.4.5 Perceptions of claims of domestic violence

Background to question

The misconception that false allegations of violence and abuse against women are a common occurrence has direct and harmful consequences. It contributes to the enormous problem of underreporting by victims of rape and abuse, informs negative responses to victims who do report (whether by family and friends or personnel in legal and other systems), and excuses perpetrators. Although false allegations of violence and abuse are far less common than false denials of their perpetration (Jaffe et al. 2008), studies suggest that a culture of scepticism persists in which the words of women are met with disbelief and denial (Kelly 2010). This is contrary to the research evidence.

A common belief is that women routinely make false allegations of domestic violence against men in the context of family law proceedings. The stereotype is that mothers allege domestic violence to gain an unfair advantage in disputes over children's residence (custody) or to alienate fathers from their children. Such stereotypes are visible not only among the public in general but among professionals who evaluate disputes over children's residence, including allegations of violence, and make recommendations regarding parenting arrangements (Haselschwerdt et al. 2011).

To what extent does this belief square with the reality? Contrary to the stereotype, two points are clear from the research evidence outlined below. First, false accusations of domestic violence (and other forms of violence and abuse including child abuse) in the context of family law proceedings are uncommon. Second, mothers are more likely than fathers to have unsubstantiated allegations – both false accusations and allegations without support – levelled against them, and fathers are more likely than mothers to make unsubstantiated allegations.

It is important to distinguish between lack of support for an allegation and evidence that the allegation is false. 'Unsubstantiated' allegations include both unfounded and false allegations. Unfounded or undetermined allegations do not have sufficient evidence but may still be true, while false allegations are intentionally false. Empirical data on the extent of false allegations are limited, with more studies on the frequency of allegations of violence and abuse than on the substantiation of abuse (Johnston et al. 2005).

Three studies provide evidence regarding the character of allegations of partner violence (by adults against adults) in family law proceedings. A Canadian study of family law cases in which written decisions were produced over a three-year period identified 42 recorded cases of spousal abuse alleged against men. Seventy-four percent of these were substantiated. Only two cases of spousal abuse alleged against women were identified, one of which was substantiated (Shaffer & Bala 2003). A US study drew on documentary records describing 120 divorced families referred for child custody evaluations and custody counselling. This found that allegations by mothers against fathers were more likely to be substantiated than allegations by fathers against mothers (67% versus 55%) (Johnston et al. 2005). In other words, counter to some popular perceptions, men were more likely than women to make allegations of domestic violence (and substance abuse) in family law proceedings which were not substantiated. However, this study could not

determine rates of false allegations, as it could not distinguish among 'unsubstantiated' allegations between those which were false and those which could not be determined due to lack of evidence (Johnston et al. 2005). In another US study of 3086 randomly selected divorces in Oregon over 1995 to 2002, while most accusations of domestic violence were made by mothers, fathers were four times as likely as mothers to make accusations which were unsubstantiated (Allen & Brinig 2011).

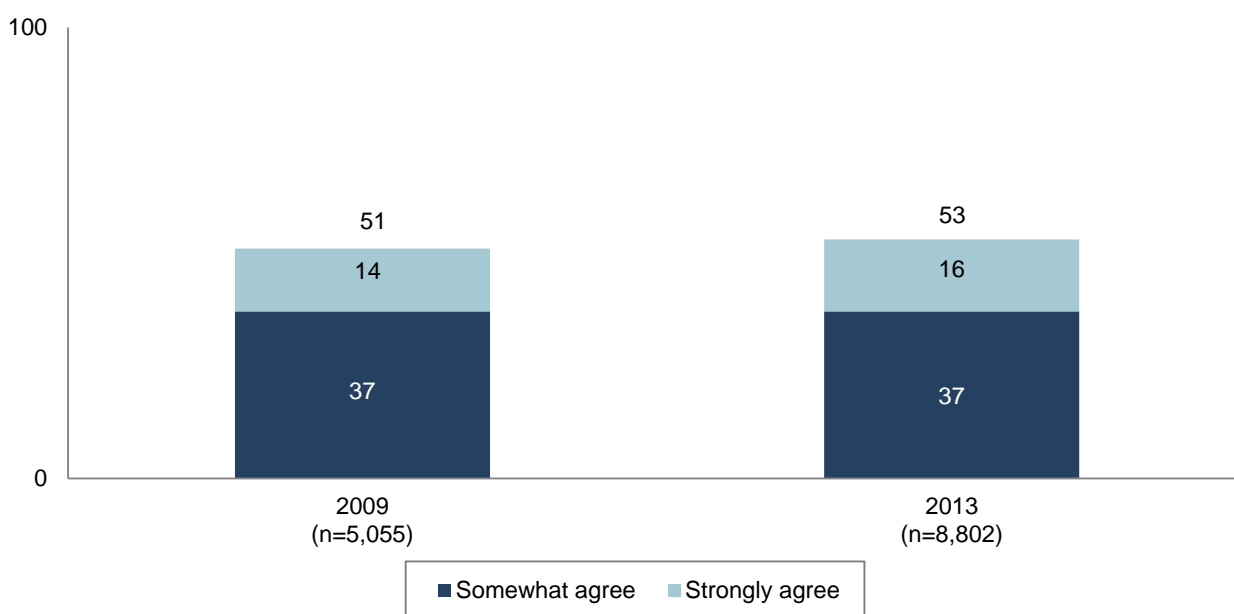
The question included in the survey on this issue has a focus on false allegations of domestic violence (see below). However, a related stereotype concerns child abuse, again that mothers often make false accusations of abuse in the context of family law proceedings. Five studies assessed allegations of physical or sexual abuse of children, including the second of the two above and four further studies. Some studies distinguish between unfounded and false allegations, while others treat these together as unsubstantiated allegations. These five studies found varying rates of false allegations, but none supported the belief that false allegations of child abuse are common in family law proceedings, or that mothers are more likely than fathers to make them.

- A 1990 US study found that 51% of the allegations of sexual abuse made by mothers against fathers, and 58% of the allegations made by fathers against mothers, were unlikely or indeterminate (Thoennes & Tjaden 1990).
- A 1993 Canadian study found that of allegations by mothers against fathers regarding sexual and physical abuse of children, 27% were substantiated and 1.3% were false, while of those by fathers against mothers, 10% were substantiated and 21% were false (Bala & Schuman 1999).
- A 1999 Canadian study found that 23% of sexual and physical abuse allegations were likely to be intentionally false (Bala & Schuman 1999).
- In a 2003 Australian study, 11% of allegations were found to be false (Brown 2003). While mothers made allegations twice as often as fathers, these were four times as likely to be substantiated, and fathers and mothers were equally likely to have made false allegations.
- In Johnston et al.'s US study above, 26% of allegations of fathers' child abuse and 46% of allegations of mothers' child abuse were substantiated, in the only one of the five studies here to find a lower rate of substantiated allegations (but not necessarily false accusations) against fathers.

Survey findings and changes over time

Just over one in two respondents (53%) agree that women often make up or exaggerate claims of domestic violence in cases to decide where children will reside following separation or divorce. This is largely consistent with 2009 (see Figure 6.4.5).

Figure 6.4.5: Time series – women going through custody battles often make up/exaggerate claims of domestic violence in order to improve their case (% agree).



Bivariate analysis

Women going through custody battles often make up or exaggerate claims of domestic violence by selected characteristics (see Table 6.4.5, Appendix A – detailed tables)

Gender: Males are much more likely (59%) than females (46%) to agree that women make up or exaggerate domestic violence.

Age: Older respondents (65 to 74 years and 75 years and over) are especially likely to agree (59% and 62%, respectively), compared with 53% overall.

Socio-economic status: Compared to the overall result (53%), those living in areas of high socio-economic disadvantage are more likely agree with this proposition (59%), as are those who have completed secondary school or below (57%), who work as technicians or tradespersons (59%) or machinery operators or drivers (69%).

Indigenous status: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents are more likely (67%) than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (52%) to agree that women going through custody battles often make up or exaggerate claims of violence.

Disability status: Sixty-one percent of those with a self-reported disability aged under 65 years agree that women make up or exaggerate claims of domestic violence during custody battles as do 68% of those with a disability aged 65 years and over. The corresponding figure for those without a disability is 51%.

Gender Equality: A low GE score equates to high levels of agreement (66%), and a high GE score is associated with lower levels of agreement that women make up or exaggerate claims of domestic violence (41%).

Understanding of violence against women: A high UVAW score is associated with lower agreement that women make up or exaggerate domestic violence (58%), and a low UVAW score correlates with high levels of agreement (44%).

6.4.6 Minimising sexual assault

Background to questions

As discussed in section 5.5.1, a common myth embedded in the 'real-rape' script is the notion that for rape to have occurred, a woman needs to have physically resisted. This myth belies the circumstances in which many rapes take place and minimises their seriousness and impacts.

In recent years there has been substantial reform to laws relating to sexual assault in Australia, with particular attention being given to the issue of consent. Whereas once sexual assault was conceptualised in law as an act forced upon women against their will (Rush 2011, p. 53), jurisdictions across Australia have now adopted a definition of consent based on free and voluntary agreement that is more consistent with the principles of mutual respect, autonomy and communication. The absence of physical resistance is not sufficient to indicate consent (Flynn & Henry 2012, p. 170; Rush 2011, p. 53). These reforms were introduced to reflect changing community norms about sexual relations and in particular to correct the law's tendency to reflect and reinforce the 'real rape' script (see section 5.5.1).

It has long been asserted and assumed that women 'cry rape' – that women often invent allegations of rape for malicious, vengeful and other motives (Lisak et al. 2010). In reality, evidence suggests that false reports of sexual assault are both rare and no higher than false reporting for other crimes (Kelly 2010). A report of sexual assault is false if no crime was committed or attempted. As discussed above in relation to domestic violence, this is different from an unsubstantiated allegation, in which an investigation fails to prove that a sexual assault occurred (Lisak et al. 2010). Assessments of the extent of false allegations of sexual assault have been plagued by various problems (Rumney 2006). Some studies do not define a false allegation, or confuse unsubstantiated and false allegations, or take at face value the ambiguous or overly inclusive definitions used sometimes in law enforcement (Lisak et al. 2010). Law enforcement agencies at times have classified as 'false' those cases where the victim is unable or unwilling to cooperate, evidence is lacking, or the victim is heavily intoxicated. This means that meaningful data on the frequency of false reports has been lacking, and even some widely cited figures (both low and high) regarding their frequency lack strong foundations.

However, according to a recent review there are now at least seven studies which provide methodologically robust assessments of the extent of false allegations of rape (Lisak et al. 2010). These studies involved some degree of scrutiny of police classifications and/or applied authoritative international definitions of false reporting. The review notes that these studies find a relatively consistent rate of false reporting, of between 2% and 10%.

Focusing on the strongest of these studies, the largest and most comprehensive study of false reports currently available is the 2005 British Home Office Study (Kelly et al. 2005). This involved analysis of 2643 cases over a 15-year period, using a wide range of forms of data. It found that only 2.5% of cases met the criteria for false allegations. (This study also found that police overestimated the frequency of false allegations, by ignoring the police agencies' own classification rules.) Another large-scale study, this time in Australia, examined 850 rapes reported to Victoria Police over a three-year period and drew on both quantitative and qualitative data. It found that only 2.1% of reports were identified by police as false (Statewide Steering Committee to Reduce Sexual Assault 2006). Three earlier studies in Australia, based on police data from 1986 to 1990, find rates of false reports of sexual assault of just over 1% (1.4%), close to 5% (4.8%), and 7% (VLRC 2004).

Studies in addition to those in Lisak et al.'s review have similar findings. In European research across nine countries and involving almost 900 sexual assault cases, rates of false allegations ranged between 1% and 9% with most at 6% or less (Kelly 2010). In an examination of rape allegations in England over January 2011

to May 2012, there were 5651 prosecutions for rape and 111,891 for domestic violence, and only 35 prosecutions for making false allegations of rape, six for making false allegation of domestic violence, and three for making false allegations of both rape and domestic violence (Levitt & Crown Prosecution Service Equality and Diversity Unit 2013; Crown Prosecution Service 2013).

The vast majority of sexual assaults are not reported to the police. Given, for example, that only 17% of women who experienced sexual assault by a male perpetrator (in their most recent incident of violence) reported it to the police (ABS 2013b), the actual percentage of false cases is likely to be tiny. By one estimate, the actual percentage of false cases as a proportion of all rapes (reported and unreported) may be less than 1% (0.005%) (Belknap 2010). While there has been media and community concern about false rape allegations, what is of more concern is that most rapes are not reported to the police, and of those which are, many then drop out of the legal system through case attrition.

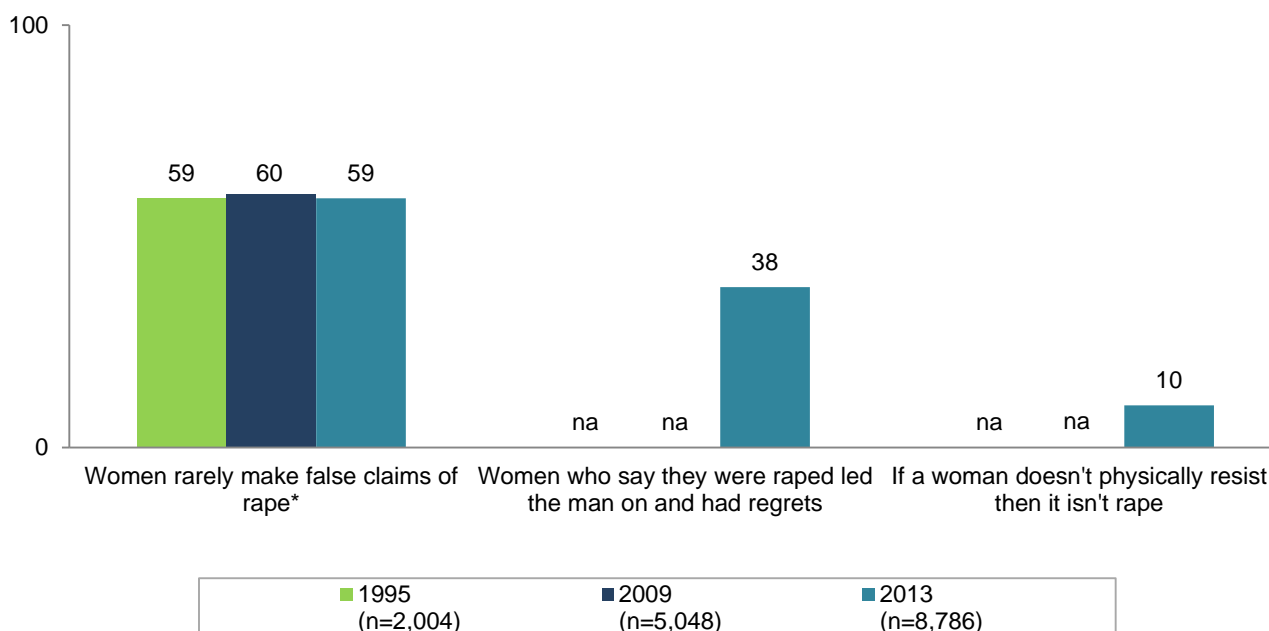
In the NCAS the strength of beliefs minimising sexual assault were gauged with the following statements:

- “Women rarely make false claims of rape.”
- “A lot of times women who say they were raped led the man on and then had regrets.”
- “If a woman doesn’t physically resist then it isn’t really rape.”

Survey findings and changes over time

Six in 10 members of the general community (59%) agree that women rarely make false claims, a finding which has been consistent over time. Almost four in 10 (38%) agree that a lot of women who say they were raped led the man on and then had regrets later, while one in 10 agree that if a woman doesn’t physically resist then she can’t claim to have been raped. The last two questions were asked for the first time in 2013 (see Figure 6.4.6).

Figure 6.4.6: Time series – minimising sexual assault (% agree).



*Statement asked of split sample 2009 n=5,057; 2013 n=8,731

Bivariate analysis

Attitudes which minimise sexual assault by selected characteristics (see Tables 6.4.6a to 6.4.6c, Appendix A – detailed tables)

A relatively high proportion of respondents (13%) stated they lacked knowledge (i.e. 'don't know') whether women rarely make false claims of rape. This is highest for those aged 75 years and over (19%), and those who do not speak English well (18%).

Overall there is a high level consistency in responses to this question, with fewer subgroup variations relative to many of the other aspects of violence supportive attitudes measured in the survey.

Gender: Men are less likely than women to agree that women rarely make false claims of rape (54% compared with 63%) and more likely to agree that a lot of times women who say they were raped led the man on and then had regrets later (males – 42%, females – 34%). Fifty-nine percent of men agree that women make up or exaggerate claims of domestic violence compared with 46% of women.

Age: Compared with the overall results, older respondents (75 years and over) are less likely to agree (52% compared with 59% overall) that women rarely make up false claims of rape and more likely to hold the view that women who say they were raped led the man on then had regrets (53% of those aged 65 to 74 years and 62% of those aged 75 years and over compared with 38% overall). Also, 14% of 65 to 74 year olds and 17% of those aged over 75 years agree that if a women doesn't physically resist then it isn't really rape (compared with 10% overall).

Heritage and language: The N-MESC sample (55%) is less likely to agree that women rarely make false rape claims (59% overall) and more likely to hold the view (42% compared with 38% overall) that women who say they were raped often led the man on and had regrets afterwards. The N-MESC sample (23%), first-generation immigrants (17%), those who do not speak English well (35%) and those who arrived in Australia from 2005 onwards (27%) all demonstrate higher levels of agreement that a woman cannot claim to have been raped if she did not physically resist.

Socio-economic status: Professionals (63%) are more likely to agree that women rarely make false claims. University graduates (28%) and those in managerial (33%), professional (26%) are less likely to agree that often woman who say they were raped had led the man on and then had regrets. Persons with a trade, certificate or diploma tend to have a lower level of agreement overall (7%), while university graduates are more likely to agree that if a women doesn't physically resist then it isn't rape (13%).

Gender Equality: Those with a low GE score are less likely to agree that women rarely make false claims of rape (55%) relative to those with a high GE score (65%). Those with a low score on the GE Scale are also more likely to agree that women who reported rape led the man on and regretted it (46%) and to agree that if a women doesn't physically resists then it isn't really rape (20% compared with 10% overall).

Understanding of Violence Against Women: Those with a high UVAW score are more likely to agree that women rarely make false claims of being raped (65%) while those with a low UVAW score are less likely to agree (52%). Those with a low score on the UVAW Scale are also more likely to hold the view that a lot of times women who say they were raped had led the man on and then had regrets (58% compared with 38% overall) and to agree that if a woman doesn't physically resist then it isn't really rape (15% compared with 10% overall).

Household composition: Couples without children (43%) and those residing in lone person households (45%) are more likely than those with children at home (33%) to be of the view that a lot of times women who say they were raped had led the man on and had regrets.

Place: Compared with the other States and Territories, residents of Western Australia (43%) are the most likely to hold the view that a lot of times women who were raped had led the man on then had regrets, while those in the ACT (30%) are the least likely.

6.5. Victim-blaming attitudes

Victim-blaming attitudes are those that seek to shift the blame for violence from the perpetrator to the victim, and which hold women at least partially responsible for their victimisation or, alternatively, for preventing their victimisation. Examples of these are attitudes that women provoke violence (e.g. by nagging) or invite sexual harassment or assault (e.g. in the manner of their dress) (Field 1978; Lonsway et al. 2008). So too are attitudes that women choose to be abused by choosing abusive partners (Ewing & Aubrey 1987; Ferraro 1989; Hart 1993; Lazenbatt et al. 2005; Shadigan & Bauer 2004).

Victim-blaming is a problem because it undermines attempts to ensure that the perpetrators of violence are held accountable for their actions. Studies also suggest that people holding victim-blaming attitudes are more likely to make harsher judgements of those subject to violence and to treat them less sympathetically, contributing to secondary trauma and impeding recovery from violence (Flood & Pease 2006, 2009). There are few other crimes in which the victim's motivations and behaviours are considered relevant to perpetrator culpability (Bienick & Krahé 2011).

Prior research indicates that victim-blaming in relation to both domestic violence and sexual assault is common and that there are distinct gender differences, with men being significantly more likely to blame the victim than women (Gracia & Herrero 2006b; Grubb & Harrower 2008; Taylor & Sorenson 2005; Whatley 2005). Victim-blaming has been found to occur in relation to violence in both acquaintance and marital rape, though its influence is stronger in acquaintance rape scenarios (Grubb & Harrower 2008).

Background to questions

The NCAS explores two common sources of victim-blaming. The first of these are questions concerned with whether women share responsibility for partner violence and sexual assault if they are affected by alcohol:

- “Domestic violence can be excused if the victim is heavily affected by alcohol.”
- “If a woman is raped while she is drunk or affected by drugs she is at least partly responsible.”

As discussed earlier in this report alcohol consumption by either the victim or perpetrator often precedes partner violence and sexual assault. However, it does not diminish responsibility for violence perpetration. With regard to partner violence, there is evidence that some women may use alcohol in order to cope with the consequence of violence and that this may increase their risk of further violence (Bennet & Bland 2008). The belief that women in these circumstances are partly responsible for their abuse not only denies the origins of their alcohol misuse, but risks locking them into a spiral of further violence exposure, self-blame and blame by others. The belief that women are partly responsible for sexual assault if intoxicated may act to fuel sexual violence, with some men conspiring to get a woman intoxicated in order to have sex with her in circumstances in which she would not otherwise give consent (Tyler et al. 1998). In some Australian states the law specifically identifies severe intoxication as a condition compromising the capacity to give free consent (Flynn & Henry 2012).

The second theme explored is whether women ‘provoke’ sexual assault through their behaviour:

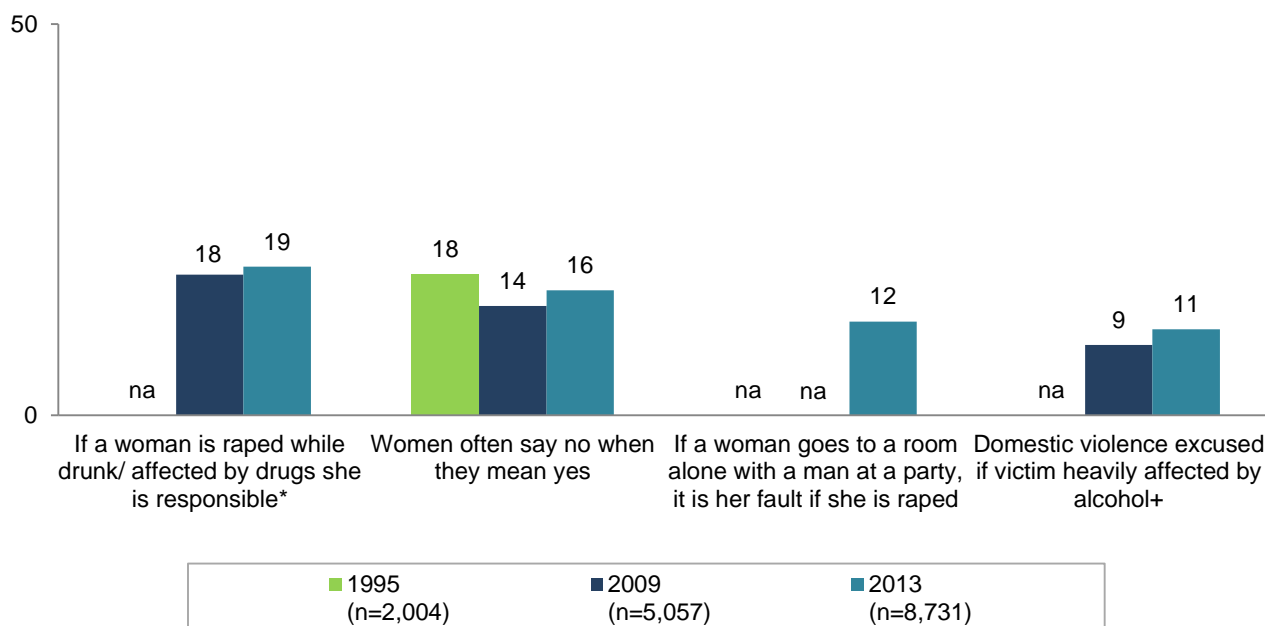
- “Women often say no when they mean yes.”
- “If a woman goes to a room alone with a man at a party, it is her fault if she is raped.”

These beliefs are contrary to the direction of law reform relating to consent to sexual relations in most Australian jurisdictions (see above).

Survey findings and changes over time

The level of agreement with these propositions varies from about one in 10 (11% agree that domestic violence can be excused if the victim is heavily affected by alcohol) to around one in five (19% agree that if a woman is raped while drunk/affected by drugs she is at least partly responsible). The level of agreement with these statements has not changed significantly between 2009 and 2013. Similarly, there has been minimal change on the measure included in all three survey waves (“women often say no when they mean yes”) (refer to Figure 6.5a).

Figure 6.5a: Time series – victim-blaming attitudes (% agree).



** Difference between 2009 and 2013 is statistically significant, $p \leq .01$

*Statement asked of split sample 2009 n=5,048; 2013 n=8,786

+Statement asked of split sample 2009 n=5,055; 2013 n=8,802

Bivariate analysis

Victim-blaming attitudes by selected characteristics (see Tables 6.5a to 6.5d, Appendix A – detailed tables)

Gender: There are no statistically significant differences in the tendency to endorse victim-blaming between men and the sample as whole or between women and the overall sample. However, there are small, yet significant differences *between* men and women on the statements ‘If a woman is raped while drunk/affected by drugs she is partly responsible’ (20% of women endorse this statement v. 18% of men) and ‘If a woman goes to a room alone at a party it is her fault if she is raped (14% women v. 10% of men) (significance testing between men and women not shown).

Age: Overall, older respondents (75+ years) are more likely to agree with the statements ascribing blame to the victim of violence, while other age groups are generally less likely to do so. For example, those aged over 65 years are most likely to agree “if a woman is raped while she is drunk or affected by drugs she is at least partly responsible” (32%, data not shown) compared with 19% overall.

Heritage and language: Compared to the overall population, the N-MESC sample, first-generation immigrants and those who speak languages other than English at home are more likely to endorse these victim-blaming statements. For example, 29% of the N-MESC sample agree that “women often say no when they mean yes” (compared with 16% overall).

Socio-economic status: Relative to the total population, those who hold a trade certificate or diploma are less likely to hold attitudes which assign blame to the victim, while those highest level of educational attainment is secondary school are more likely to hold such attitudes. Managers, professionals and clerical and administrative workers are much less likely to agree with these victim-blaming statements, while other occupations overall remain consistent with the general community. By way of example, relative to the total population (11%) those employed as managers or professionals are less likely to agree (7%) that domestic violence can be excused if the victim is heavily affected by alcohol.

Indigenous status: Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people are more likely to agree that “domestic violence can be excused if the victim is affected by alcohol” (25%) compared with 10% among non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

Gender Equality: Respondents with a low GE score are more likely to endorse victim-blaming statements. For example, 28% agree that a woman drunk or affected by drugs is at least partly responsible if she is raped compared with just 10% of those with a high score on the GE Scale.

Understanding of Violence Against Women: Those with a low score on the UVAW Scale are more likely endorse statements which blame the victims (e.g. 25% agree than women often say no when they mean yes), compared to those rated as high on the UVAW Scale (9% of whom are of the view that women often say no when they mean yes).

7. Summing up violence supportive attitudes

7.1. Creating an overarching 'violence supportive attitudes' measure

The findings presented in section 6 show a relationship between various characteristics such as gender, age, attitudes towards gender equality, understanding violence against women, birthplace/migration status and socio-economic status (education and occupation) and holding attitudes which justify, excuse, trivialise or minimise violence against women or blame the victims of violence. Findings were reported according to attitudinal themes with the aim of identifying particular themes requiring attention in future violence prevention work, both in the population as whole and amongst particular groups.

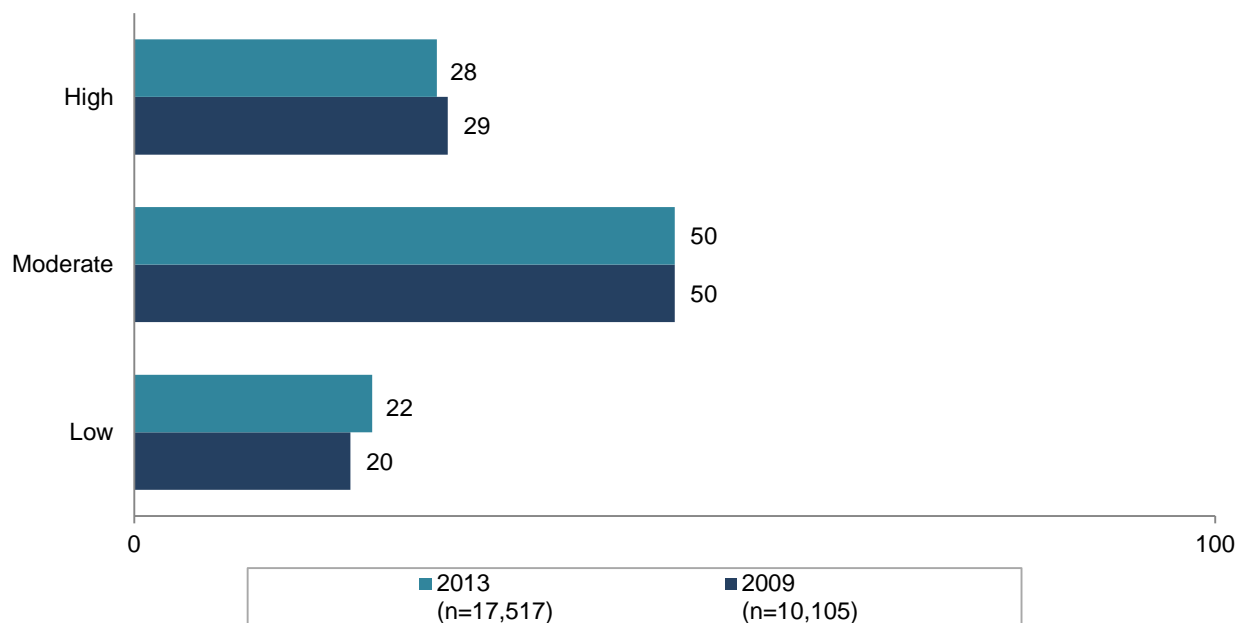
To assist our understanding of the **overall** pattern between these selected characteristics and violence supportive attitudes, an overarching construct of the questionnaire items which measure the various aspects of violence supportive attitudes, and are suitable for amalgamation, has been developed. This provides a summary variable which encapsulates all those attitudinal elements which contribute to an overarching Violence Supportive Attitudes Construct.

Appendix C – scales and constructs – shows the items included in this overall Violence Supportive Attitudes (VSA) Construct. The basic approach to compiling this construct was to standardise all 4- and 5-point scale items and to tally scores across all items answered (remembering that some items were randomly asked of only half of the sample members). The resultant score for each respondent was converted into a standardised score (Z-score) for analysis purposes, whereby a low score is equated with a low level of violence supportive attitudes, and a high score is equated with a high level of violence supportive attitudes. The VSA score was then split into quartiles with the 1st quartile labelled as a low VSA, the second and third quartiles combined and labelled as a moderate VSA and the fourth quartile labelled as a high VSA score. Using this method 22% of the sample was categorised as having a low VSA score, 50% as a moderate VSA score and 28% as a high VSA score. Further details regarding the construction of this variable and its limitations are provided in Appendix C – scales and constructs.

Survey findings and changes over time

The VSA variable created for the 2013 report was also applied to the 2009 data with a view to establishing whether or not there has been any change in this measure of violence supportive attitudes over time. The results from this analysis are summarised in Figure 7.1a and shows no significant changes in VSA scores between 2009 and 2013.

Figure 7.1a: Time series – violence supportive attitudes categories (%).



Violence supportive attitudes by selected characteristics (see Table 7.1b, following).

Bivariate analysis

Gender: A third of males (33%) and just under a quarter of females (23%) are classified as high on the VSA Construct (that is, as being more likely to endorse attitudes that support violence against women). As seen in sections 6.3 and 6.4 it is the tendency of males, relative to females, to trivialise and minimise domestic violence and violence against women that accounts for most of the gap between males and females in terms of overall violence supportive attitudes.

Age: Compared to the overall result (28%), younger respondents (aged 16 to 34 years) and older respondents (65 years and over) are more likely to have a high VSA score (i.e. to hold attitudes supportive of violence) while a lower proportion of those aged 35 to 64 years fall into the high VSA category (that is this group are less likely to endorse violence supportive attitudes).

Heritage and language: First-generation immigrants are much more likely (at 41% compared to 28% overall) to be classified as high on the VSA Construct. This is particularly the case for those who arrived in Australia from 2005 onwards (53%) and those with poor English language proficiency (74%). A lower proportion of persons born overseas in main English speaking countries had a high VSA score (18%) than was the case for Australian-born individuals (22%). In section 9 the way in which attitudes vary with different measures of settlement are explored.

Socio-economic status: Residents of the most highly disadvantaged areas are more likely to be classified as 'high' on the VSA Construct (34%) as are those without post-secondary school qualifications (32%), unemployed persons (34%) and labourers and machine operators / drivers (35% and 36%, respectively).

Indigenous status: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents are more likely (at 37%) to be classified as having a high level of violence supportive attitudes than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents (28%). In section 10, variations within this sample based on gender and degree of disadvantage experienced are explored.

Disability status: The proportion of the general community aged less than 65 years with a high VSA score is 25% (data not shown) compared with 29% amongst those of the same age with a disability. Among those

aged 65 years and over, the proportion of the general community with a high VSA score is 43% (data not shown) compared to 50% for those with a disability. In section 11, gender and age differences within this sample are explored.

Household composition: Those living with children either as lone parents (21%) or as part of a couple (25%) are less likely to have a high VSA score relative to the population overall (28%).

Place: A smaller proportion of ACT residents have a high VSA score (22%) compared with the national average of 28%.

Gender Equality: Fifty-eight percent of those with a low GE score (that is having low support for gender equality) have a high VSA score compared to 7% of those who have a high GE score (and high VSA score).

Understanding of Violence Against Women: Fifty percent of those with a low UVAW score have a high VSA score, while 8% of those with a high UVAW have high violence supportive attitudes.

Table 7.1b: Grouped violence supportive attitudes (VSA) scores by selected characteristics (row %'s).

		Base n	Low VSA Score %	Moderate VSA Score %	High VSA Score %
	Total Sample	17,517	22	50	28
Gender	Male	7,834	16**	51	33**
	Female	9,683	27**	49	23**
Age Group	16 to 17 years	247	8**	57	36
	18 to 24 years	1,676	15**	55	30
	25 to 34 years	2,515	20	50	30
	35 to 44 years	3,048	29	51	20**
	45 to 54 years	3,223	27	51	21**
	55 to 64 years	3,295	27	50	23**
	65 to 74 years	2,357	16**	50	35**
	75 years or more	1,156	8	39	53**
State / Territory	New South Wales	3,973	23	49	28
	Victoria	3,790	21	48	30
	Queensland	2,754	21	54**	26
	South Australia	1,683	21	49	30
	Western Australia	1,926	20	53	27
	Tasmania	1,140	21	51	28
	Northern Territory	1,066	24	49	27
	ACT	1,185	26**	52	22**
Remoteness Area	Major city	12,042	21	50	29
	Inner regional	2,582	24	51	25**
	Outer regional	2,173	21	52	27
	Remote	523	22	51	27
	Very remote	141	20	54	26
Socio-economic Status (Quintiles)	1 - Low (most disadvantaged)	2,284	18**	48	34**
	2	2,286	22	49	29
	3	3,104	21	51	28
	4	3,891	22	51	27
	5 - High (most advantaged)	5,692	24	51	26**
Birthplace	Australia	11,996	25**	53**	22**
	Main English Speaking countries	2,043	28**	54**	18**
	Other countries	3,453	10**	39	50**
Migration Status	First generation	5,521	16**	44	41**
	Second generation	3,205	25**	53	23**
	Third plus generation	8,791	25	53	22
Language Proficiency	<i>Base: First generation Australians speak LOTE at home</i>				
	Speak English well	2,289	9**	40**	51**
	Does not speak English well	437	2**	24**	74**
Year of Arrival	<i>Base: First generation Australians</i>				
	Arrived before 2005	3,986	18**	46**	36**
	Arrived from 2005	1,464	9**	38**	53**

** Result is statistically significant compared to the Total sample, $p \leq .01$.

Don't know/refused not shown.

Weighted to independent population benchmarks.

Table 7.1b: Grouped violence supportive attitudes (VSA) scores by selected characteristics (cont.).

		Base	Low VSA Score	Moderate VSA Score	High VSA Score
		n	%	%	%
Total Sample		17,517	22	50	28
Indigenous Status[#]	Indigenous	341	23	40	37**
	Non-Indigenous	17176	22	50	28
Highest Education	University or higher	6,606	27**	47	26
	Trade, certificate or diploma	4,254	24**	53	23
	Secondary or below	6,547	18	50	32**
Employment Status	Employed	10,989	25**	52**	23**
	Unemployed	754	20	47	34**
	Home duties	907	23	47	29
	Retired	3,527	15	50	41**
	Student	755	14	45	35**
	unable to work	442	23	46	31
Occupation	Manager	1,648	27**	54	20
	Professional	3,264	31**	50	19
	Technicians and trade	1,346	15**	55**	30
	Community and Personal Service	1,489	31**	49	20**
	Clerical and administrative	1,300	29	55**	16**
	Sales worker	774	23	56**	21**
	Machinery operator and driver	382	14**	50	36**
	Labourer	657	15**	50	35**
Other	51	23	59	18	
Family Composition Household	Lone person household	3,058	19	44**	37**
	Couple only	5,373	21	50	28
	Couple children at home	6,339	23	52**	25**
	Lone parent children at home	1,153	27**	52	21**
	Group household	743	19	48	33
	Other type of household	771	18	49	34
Understands VAW	Low understanding	5,025	6**	44**	50**
	Moderate understanding	8,859	20**	57**	23**
	High understanding	3,631	50**	42**	8**
Gender Equality Support	Low	4,050	5**	37**	58**
	Medium	7,445	18**	57**	25**
	High	6,000	41**	51**	7**
Disability Status by Age^(a)	Disability and aged <65 years	1,134	23	47	29
	Disability and aged 65 years plus	833	10**	40**	50**
	Does not have a disability	15,458	22	51	27

** Result is statistically significant compared to the Total sample, $p \leq .01$.
Don't know/refused not shown.

[#] Weighted to independent population benchmarks.

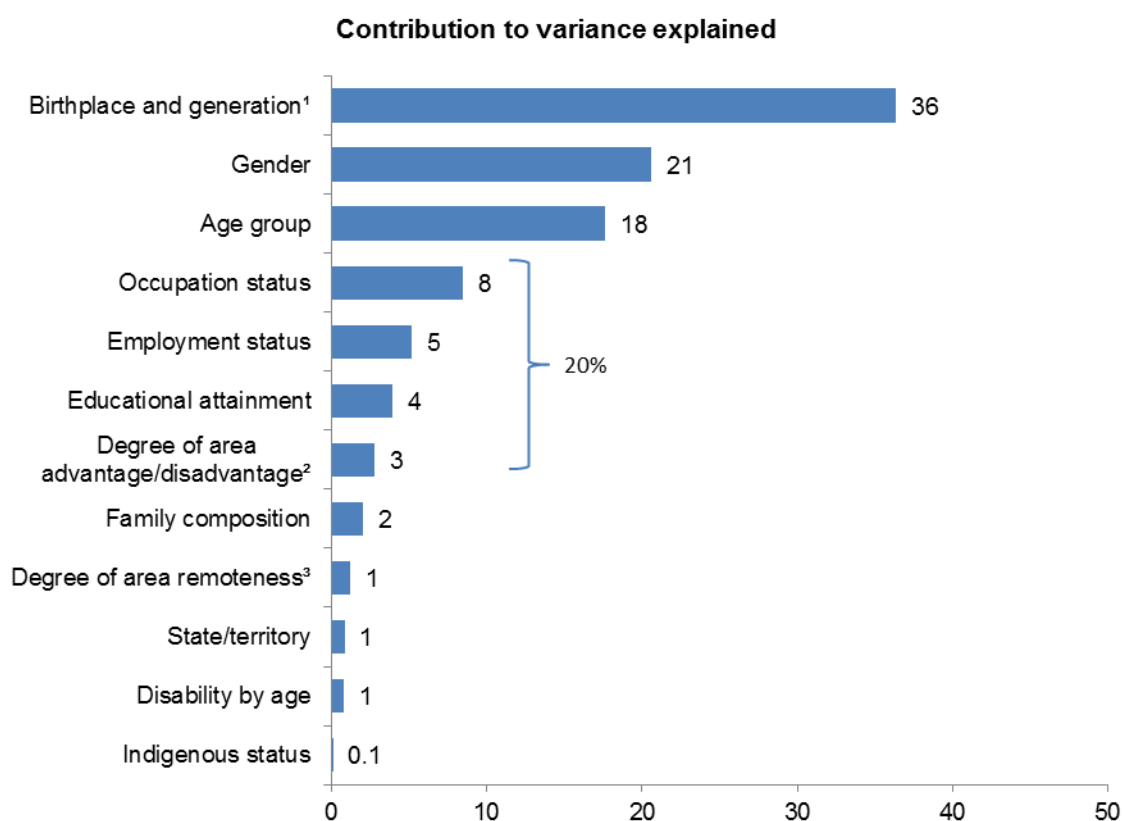
7.2. The key factors associated with violence supportive attitudes

The above findings suggest that while the **overall relationship** between gender equality, understanding violence against women and violence supportive attitudes holds true, the relationship is more complex among some specific subgroups of the population.

Again, multiple linear regression modelling was used to identify and assess the strength of the association between certain characteristics and violence supportive attitudes. Two models were created for this purpose, one which included just demographic variables and one which included both demographic variables and the GE and UVAW scores. As indicated earlier in this report, the results of this analytic approach must be interpreted differently from the univariate and bivariate results. The univariate and bivariate results are overall averages for a single demographic variable, ignoring all others, whereas the multiple regression approach gives results that represent the nett effect for a group, after accounting for other variables.

Taking the demographic model first, Figure 7.2a shows that the demographic characteristics which explain most of the variance are birthplace/generation (36% of total variance explained), gender (21% of variance explained) and age group (18%). The socio-economic constructs (occupation, labour force status, educational attainment and SEIFA quintile), when taken together, account for 20% of the explained variance.

Figure 7.2a: The relative importance of selected demographic items in explaining variance in the Violence Supportive Attitudes Construct (% variance explained).



¹ Included respondent's place of birth as well as the place of birth of their parents.

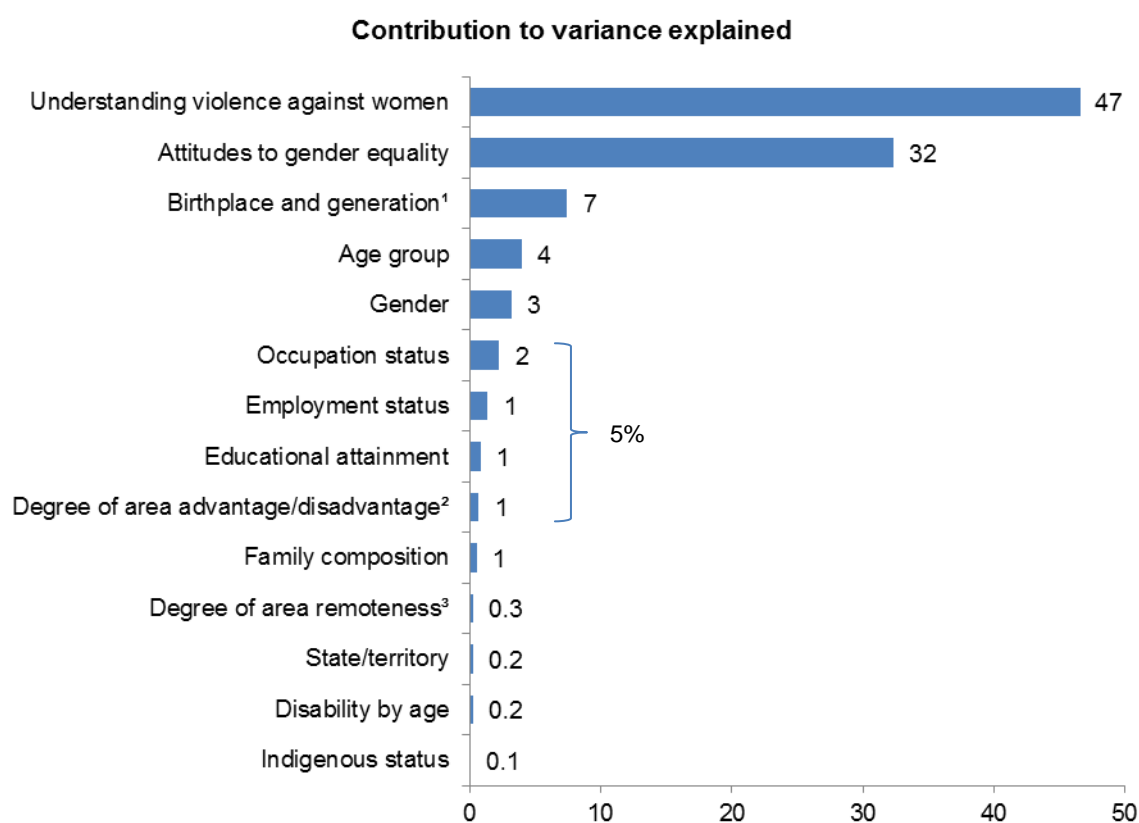
² Measured using Australian Bureau of Statistics Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage (see Table 1.5)

³ Measured with Australian Bureau of Statistics remoteness areas classification (see Table 1.5)

Total variance explained by model – 16.2%.

The above model was re-run with scores on the GE and UVAW Scales added to the input variables. The relative importance of all these variables in explaining variations in the VSA Construct are shown in Figure 7.2b. This shows that when all other variables are held constant 'understanding violence against women' explains most of the variance in VSA scores (accounting for 47% of the total variance explained). The next most important explanatory variable is Gender Equality (32% of the explained variance), followed by birthplace/generation (7%), age group (4%) and gender (3%). The combined socio-economic variables account for a total of 5% of the variance explained. This confirms the finding of other research that only a relatively small amount of variance on attitudes to violence against women can be explained by standard demographic factors (refer to Appendix B – technical and methodological notes and Section 12 for a more detailed discussion).

Figure 7.2b: The relative importance of selected demographic and attitudinal items in explaining variance in the Violence Supportive Attitudes Construct (% variance explained).



¹Included respondent's place of birth as well as the place of birth of their parents.

² Measured with Australian Bureau of Statistics Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage (see Table 1.5)

³ Measured with Australian Bureau of Statistics remoteness areas classification (see Table 1.5)

Understanding measured using the Understanding Violence Against Women Scale (see Table 1.5 and section 5.3)

Attitudes to gender equality measured using the Gender Equality Scale (see Table 1.5 and section 4.1.2)

Total variance explained by model – 46.7%.

Relative to the demographic model, which explains 16.2% of the total variance in VSA scores, the combined demographic and attitudinal model explains 46.7% of total variance. As such the combined model is a much stronger predictor of changes in VSA scores. This analytical approach tells us that while attitudes that are supportive of violence against women are to some extent related to demographic and socio-economic factors (such as birthplace, age group, gender and socio-economic status), understanding and knowledge about violence against women and attitudes to gender equality have greater influence. Other factors (not

measured in this survey) are also influential. The results of this modelling, when taken together with the results presented in section 4 (Gender Equality) and section 5 (Community knowledge, attitudes and beliefs regarding violence against women) suggest that attitudes towards women and violence against women are shaped by myriad factors and that demographic and socio-economic variables have only limited explanatory power. These are discussed further in section 12 where the implications of the findings are outlined.

8. Community responses to domestic violence, awareness of sources of help and preparedness to intervene

The third area explored in the survey concerns responses to domestic violence. Data is reported on respondent's own behavioural intentions on witnessing partner violence as bystanders and whether they have knowledge about where to go if they needed advice or support about a domestic violence issue.

Perceptions of responses to violence by the police and the community are also explored, along with community understanding of responses to women with disabilities.

8.1. Preparedness to intervene if witnessing a domestic violence situation

Background to questions

Growing interest in encouraging pro-social bystander behaviour to reduce violence against women was identified in the literature review.

A recent survey of Victorians (Powell 2012) investigated community perceptions of pro-social behaviour with a focus on primary prevention of and early intervention in violence against women. In contrast, the questions in the NCAS are concerned with intervention in an actual incident of violence. That is, the role of the bystander in 'tertiary intervention'. There is conflicting evidence in the research regarding whether a person's intention (stated in research) is matched by their behaviour. Gracia and Herrero (2006a), suggest that there is a substantial gap between intention and behaviour in the case of domestic violence. In contrast Powell (2012), investigating the role of pro-social behaviour in response to gendered harassment, abuse, joke telling and systemic sexism, found that intent was a predictor of behaviour. Three-quarters of study participants reporting an intention to take action who had also witnessed the behaviours in question did indeed take action. The proportion taking action was lower for those with moderate intention and lower still for those who reported that they would not act (Powell 2012, p. 28). This study also demonstrated that both intention and intervention were more likely with more serious behaviours, especially those targeted to an individual woman (e.g. verbal abuse), than for those less readily identified as sexist or harmful to an individual (e.g. sexist joke telling) (Powell 2012).

In the NCAS, four scenarios were put to respondents to measure pro-social intent to intervene in response to an incident involving physical partner violence. The premise used was to ask respondents how they think they would react if they were present when a woman they didn't know was being physically assaulted by her partner and how they would respond if the victim was a family member or friend. In each of the scenarios the presence or absence of the woman's children was an additional variable, with half the sample presented a scenario with children present and half without the presence of children. As such, "...how do you think you would react if you were present when (a family member or close friend of yours / a woman that you didn't know) was being physically assaulted by her partner (in front of her young children)?"

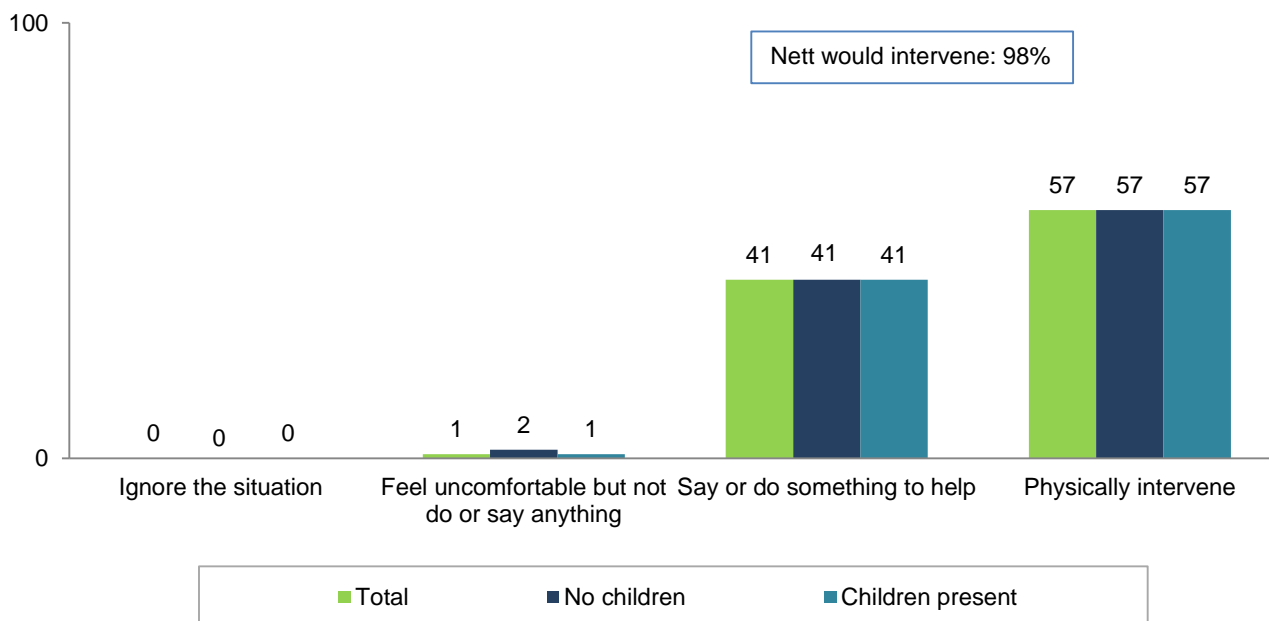
8.1.1 Preparedness to intervene to help a family member or close friend

Survey findings

Turning first to stated intervention intentions if the victim is a family member or close friend, Figure 8.1.1 shows that, at an overall level, 98% of respondents would take some sort of action if they were present when a family member or close friend was being physically assaulted by her partner. The presence or absence of the victim's children did not have a significant bearing on stated intentions (98% would intervene if the victim's children were present and 97% if they were not). Respondents were more likely to

indicate that they would physically intervene to try and stop the violent person (57%) than take some other form of action to try and help (41%).

Figure 8.1.1: Preparedness to intervene to help a family member or close friend (%).



Sample size n=17,517

Due to rounding the individual figures for children present/not present do not sum to the nets presented above.

Bivariate analysis

Preparedness to intervene to help a family member or close friend by selected characteristics (see Table 8.1.1, Appendix A – detailed tables)

Table 8.1.1 shows the combined results for these questions (i.e. by aggregating the responses regardless of whether or not children are present) by selected subgroups of the population.

Gender: Almost two-thirds of males (65%) report that they would be most likely to physically intervene in such a situation compared with 49% of females.

Age: Those aged 18 to 44 years are more likely to state an intention to physically intervene in such a situation (64% on average across this group) compared with 46% of those aged 55 years and over (data not shown).

Heritage and language: Compared to the overall result of 57%, the N-MESC sample is less likely to state an intention to physically intervene to help a family member or close friend who is being physically assaulted by her partner (48%), as are first-generation immigrants generally (52%) and, particularly, those who do not speak English well (41%). (Note: These same groups are also more likely to regard domestic violence as a private matter to be handled within the family (refer back to section 6.3).

Socio-economic status: Employed persons (61%), and particularly those working as managers (64%), technicians and trade workers (65%) and sales workers (63%), are more inclined to physically intervene to help a family member or friend who is being physically assaulted by her partner than those in other occupation groups.

Indigenous status: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (64%) are more likely than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (57%) to be inclined to physically intervene to help a family member or friend who is being physically assaulted by her partner.¹⁷

Disability status: Over one in three (37%) of those with a disability who are aged 65 years and over state an intention to physically intervene to help a family member or friend in such circumstances compared with 41% of the total population aged 65 years and over (data not shown).

Household composition: Respondents living in lone person households (generally older persons) (46%) are less inclined to physically intervene than those living as couples with children at home (60%) and those living in group households (63%).

8.1.2 Preparedness to intervene to help a stranger

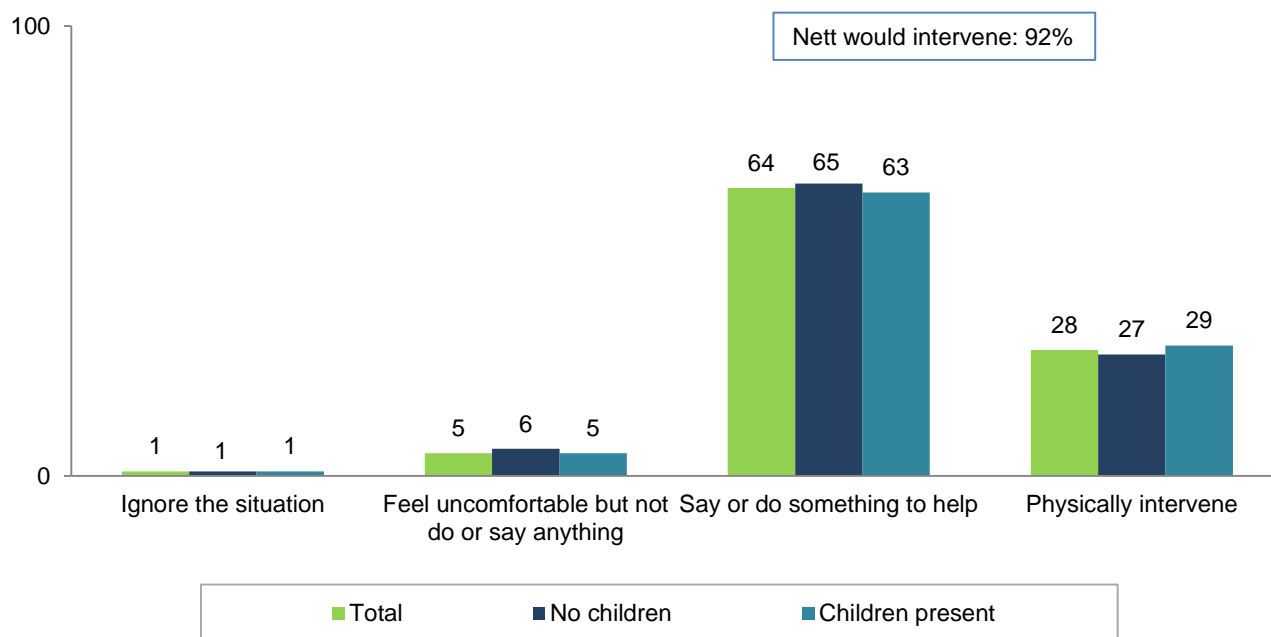
Survey findings

Looking at stated intervention intentions if the victim is not known to the respondent, a slightly smaller majority (92%) of respondents stated they would be inclined to act if they witnessed a woman who is not known to them being physically assaulted by her partner (Figure 8.1.2). Again, the presence or absence of the victim's children did not have a significant bearing on stated intentions (93% would intervene if the victim's children were present and 92% if they were not).

A comparison of the type of intervention response, depending upon whether the victim in the scenario is a family member or close friend (Figure 8.1.1), or not known to the respondent (Figure 8.1.2), shows that 57% of respondents state that they would most likely physically intervene to help a family member or close friend whereas fewer than one-third (28%) say they would physically intervene to help a woman who was not known to them. Thus while overall intervention intentions are broadly similar (98% would take action to help a family member or friend who was being physically assaulted by her partner and 92% would take action to help a stranger), the nature of the action to be taken varies considerably in each of these situations.

¹⁷ Statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

Figure 8.1.2: Preparedness to intervene to help a stranger (%).



Sample size n=17,517

Due to rounding the individual figures for children present/not present do not sum to the nets presented above.

Bivariate analysis

Preparedness to intervene to help a stranger by selected characteristics (see Table 8.1.2, Appendix A – detailed tables).

Table 8.1.2 shows the combined results for this question (both with and without children present) by selected subgroups of the population.

Gender: Over one in three (39%) males report that they would be most likely to physically intervene in such a situation compared with 18% of females.

Age: Those aged 65 to 74 years (24%) and those aged 75 years and over (19%) are less inclined towards physical intervention than younger respondents.

Heritage and language: Compared to the overall result (28%), members of the N-MESC population are less inclined towards physically intervening to help a stranger who is being physically assaulted by her partner (23%), as are first-generation immigrants (25%), and particularly those who do not speak English well (21%).

Socio-economic status: University graduates (22%) are less inclined towards physical intervention when responding to this scenario than those with trade qualifications or a diploma (32%). Technicians and trade workers (40%), labourers (39%) and managers (35%) are all more inclined towards physical intervention, with community and personal service workers and clerical and administrative workers (both 23%) less inclined to physically intervene to help a stranger in these circumstances. The relationship between gender and occupation is likely a factor in this result.

Indigenous status: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (36%) are more likely than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (28%) to be inclined to physically intervene to help a stranger who is being physically assaulted by her partner.

Household composition: Respondents living in lone person households (generally older persons) are less inclined to physically intervene (23%) than those living in group households (34%).

Gender Equality: Compared with the overall average of 92%, those with high GE scores are slightly more likely to intervene, either physically or in some other way, to help a stranger being physically assaulted by her partner (95%).

Understanding of violence against women: Those with high UVAW scores are also slightly more likely to intervene, either physically or in some other way (95%) to help a stranger being physically assaulted by her partner.

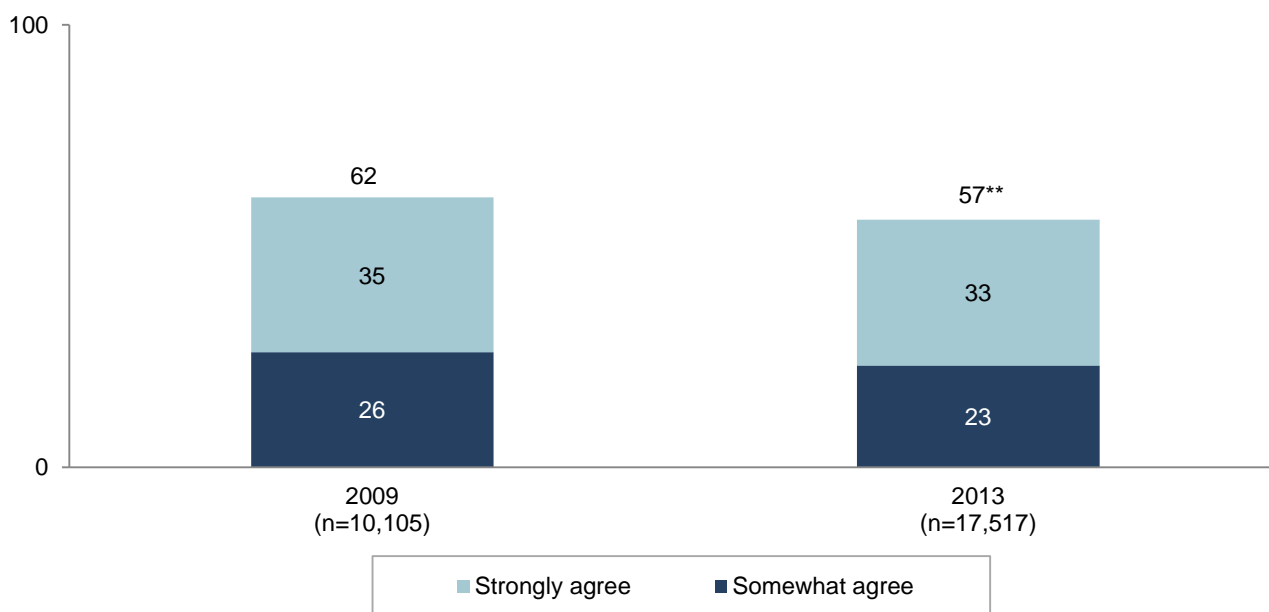
There is also some suggestion of a relationship between perceptions regarding police responsiveness to calls for domestic violence and preparedness to intervene to help a stranger who is being physically assaulted by her partner, regardless of whether children are present or not. To this end, 32% of those who disagree that police now respond more quickly (see 8.3.2 below) report an intention to physically intervene to help a woman who is being physically assaulted by her partner compared with 26% of those who agree that police responsiveness has improved.

8.2. Awareness of sources of help about domestic violence

Survey findings and changes over time

Lack of knowledge about how to intervene is a barrier to pro-social bystander behaviour identified in the literature (Powell 2011). In the 2009 and 2013 surveys, respondents were asked their extent of agreement with the statement "If I needed outside advice or support from someone about a domestic violence issue, I would know where to go." More than half (57%) agreed with this statement, down from 62% in 2009 (Figure 8.2).

Figure 8.2: Would know where to go for outside advice or support for a domestic violence issue (% agree).



** Result is statistically significant, $p \leq 0.01$.

Bivariate analysis

Would know where to go for outside advice or support for a domestic violence issue by selected characteristics (see Table 8.2, Appendix A – detailed tables).

Gender: Females (60%) are more likely than males (53%) to agree that they would know where to go if they needed outside advice or support about a domestic violence issue.

Age: Both 18 to 24 year olds and those aged 75 years and over are less likely to feel as though they would know where to go if needing support (52%) whereas those aged 35 to 44 years are the most confident in this regard (60%).

Heritage and language: Compared to the overall result (57%), first-generation immigrants (54%) and particularly those who have settled in Australia from 2005 onwards (50%) and those who do not speak English well (41%) are much less likely to report knowing where to go if in need of outside support or advice in relation to a domestic violence matter.

Socio-economic status: Residents in the most socio-economically disadvantaged areas (62%) are more likely than those in the most advantaged areas (54%) to agree that they would know where to go if in need of outside advice or support with a domestic violence situation. Those with university-level qualifications (59%) and those working as community and personal service workers (67%) are more likely to report knowing where to go if in need of such help or advice whereas those working in trades and technical occupations (49%) are less likely to know where they would go for support in such a situation.

Indigenous status: Seventy-one percent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders agree that they would know where to go if in need of outside advice or support in relation to a domestic violence matter. This

result is consistent with the earlier finding that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents are more likely to have a high UVAW score (25%) than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (19%).¹⁸

Place: Northern Territorians (69%) are much more likely than all other Australians to agree that they would know where to go if in need of outside support or advice. The same is true of those living in very remote areas generally (73%).

Gender Equality: Those with a low GE score (54%) are, on average, less likely to know where to go if they needed outside assistance with a domestic violence matter (59% overall).

Understanding of Violence Against Women: Those with a relatively low UVAW score (53%) are, on average, less likely to know where to go if they needed outside assistance.

8.3. Perceived community and police responses to domestic violence

Background to questions

The findings above suggest that the overwhelming majority of respondents have an intention to intervene if they witness violence. A further question “Most people turn a blind eye to or ignore domestic violence”, tapped respondent’s view of how others respond to the issue.

Confidence in the efficacy of intervention has been identified as a factor in people’s preparedness to respond when they witness violence (Powell 2012). Across a number of Australian jurisdictions, police forces have led significant operational and procedural reforms to ensure that they respond quickly and decisively to calls for assistance related to partner violence and that the community is aware that this is the case (see, for example, Commonwealth of Australia 2008). Such efforts are also important for the protection of affected women and children, and because they demonstrate that violence is taken seriously by law enforcement agencies, thereby helping to establish social norms that sanction against violence

The survey includes the following question regarding police response times as one of a range of possible indicators of community perceptions regarding the extent to which partner violence is prioritised as a serious issue: “Police now respond more quickly to domestic violence calls than they did in the past.”

8.3.1 *Most people turn a blind eye to or ignore domestic violence*

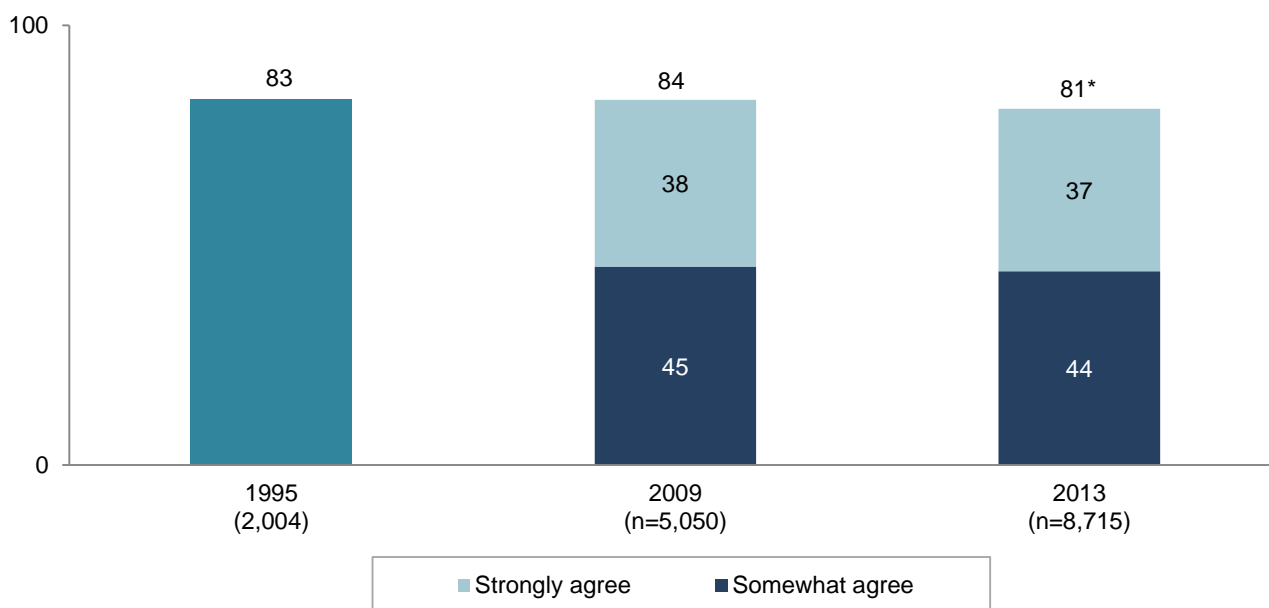
Survey findings and changes over time

Figure 8.3.1 shows that a sizeable majority of the community (84% in 2009 and 81% in 2013) agree that the prevailing community attitude is to turn a blind eye to or ignore domestic violence.¹⁹ The fact that such a sizeable proportion of respondents feel this is the case suggests a widely held belief that community indifference is still a significant barrier to be overcome in dealing with domestic violence.

¹⁸ Statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

¹⁹ Statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

Figure 8.3.1: Most people turn a blind eye to or ignore domestic violence (% agree).



** Result is statistically significant, $p \leq .05$.

Bivariate analysis

Most people turn a blind eye to or ignore by selected characteristics (see Table 8.3.1, Appendix A – detailed tables)

Gender: Females (84%) are more likely than males (78%) to agree that most people turn a blind eye to or ignore domestic violence.

Age: The only age group to differ significantly from the overall result (81%) is 18 to 24 year olds, 86% of whom agree that most people turn a blind eye to or ignore domestic violence.

Heritage and language: First-generation immigrants (78%), and in particular those born in non-main English speaking countries (77%), and those who do not speak English well (60%), are less likely to agree that the prevailing community response is to turn a blind eye to or ignore domestic violence.

Socio-economic status: Compared to the overall result (81%), those working in managerial occupations are less likely to agree that most people turn a blind eye to or ignore domestic violence (75%).

Indigenous status: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents are more likely to hold this view (93%) than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (81%).

Household composition: Lone parents with children at home are more likely to agree (87%) that the prevailing community attitude is to turn a blind eye to or ignore domestic violence.

Gender Equality: Those categorised as low on the GE Scale (78%) are less likely to agree that most people turn a blind eye to or ignore domestic violence.

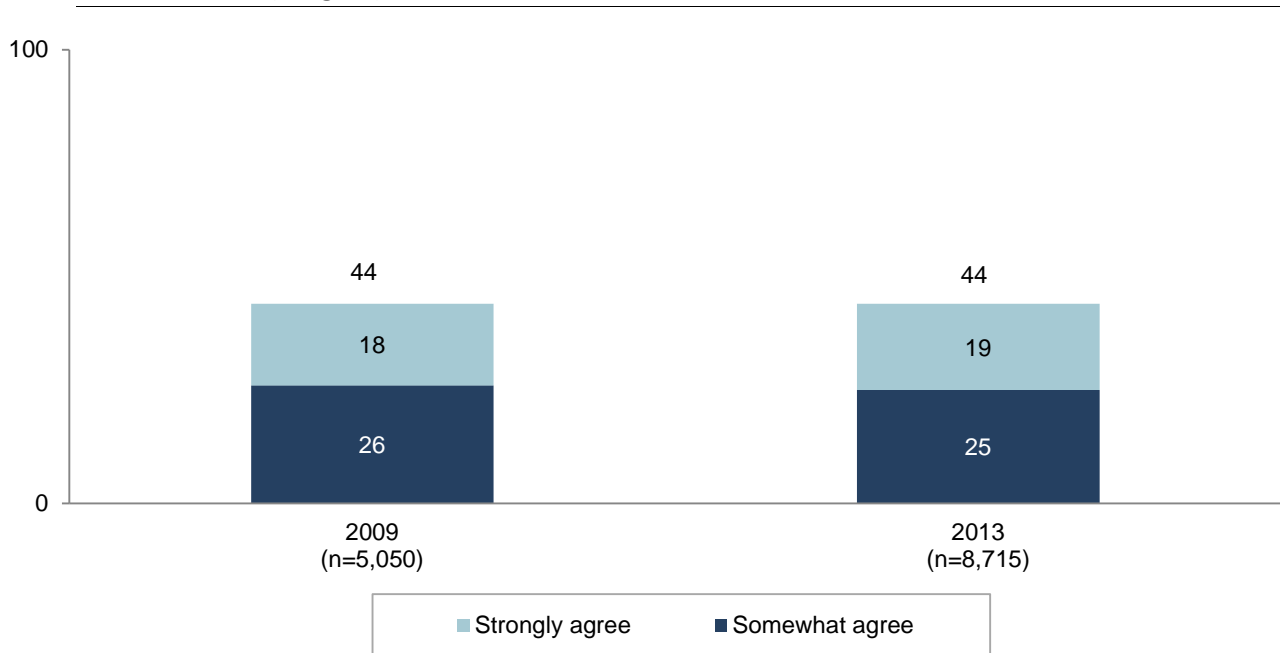
Understanding of Violence Against Women: Those categorised as low on the UVAW Scale (76%) are also less likely to agree that most people turn a blind eye to or ignore domestic violence.

8.3.2 Perceptions of police response times

Survey findings and changes over time

While reference to Figure 8.3.2 shows that a substantial proportion of the community (44%, the same as in 2009) is of the view that police response times for partner violence have improved, 42% indicated that they don't know (see Table 8.3.2, Appendix A – detailed tables).

Figure 8.3.2: Police now respond more quickly to domestic violence calls than they did in the past (% agree).



Bivariate analysis

Police now respond more quickly to domestic violence calls by selected characteristics (see Table 8.3.2, Appendix A – detailed tables)

Gender: Females (46%) are more likely than males (41%) to agree that police now respond more quickly to domestic violence calls.

Age: Compared to the overall result (44%), younger respondents (and students) are of the view that police responsiveness to domestic violence calls has improved. This view is held by 66% of 16 to 17 year olds and 52% of 18 to 24 year olds.

Socio-economic status: Managers, those in clerical and administrative occupations and technicians and tradespersons (all at 36%) are less likely to think that police response times have improved whereas community and personal service workers are more likely to be of this view (50%). Those with trade-level qualifications or diplomas (40%) are less likely to think that response times have improved and those with secondary school as their highest level of qualification (47%) more likely to be of this view.

Indigenous status: Relative to non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents (44%), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents (54%) are more likely to think that police response times have improved.²⁰

²⁰ Statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

8.4. Women with disabilities who report rape or sexual assault are less likely to be believed than other women

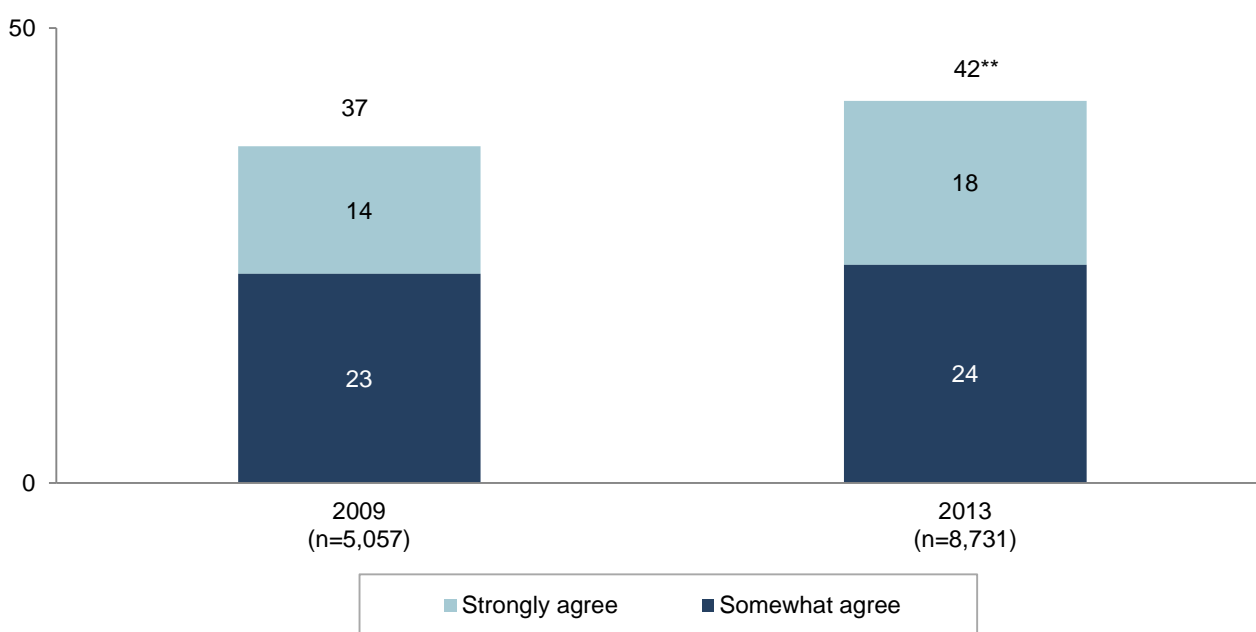
Background to question

One of the significant barriers to women with disabilities securing safety from violence is that they are less likely to be believed (Camilleri 2009; Chenoweth 1996; French 2007; Healey 2013; Healey et al. 2008; Murray & Powell 2008; VLRC 2004; WWDA 2007). This is despite the fact that the incidence of violence against women with disabilities is higher (Hyman et al. 2006; Martin et al. 2006; Smith 2007; Stockl et al. 2011) and women with disabilities are likely to be subject to more severe forms of abuse, and abuse over a long period (Dillon 2010; Healey 2013; Plummer & Findley 2012). The disinclination to believe women with disabilities is also a factor in poorer outcomes for this group in the criminal justice system, particularly for sexual assault (Clark & Fileborn 2011).

Survey findings and changes over time

Figure 8.4 shows that at an overall level 42% of individuals agree that women with a disability who report rape or sexual assault are less likely to be believed, which is a sizeable increase from 2009 (37%).

Figure 8.4: Women with disabilities less likely to be believed (%).



** Result is statistically significant, $p \leq 0.01$.

Bivariate analysis

Reference to Table 8.4 (Appendix A – detailed tables) shows there is little variation in responses to this question across the population. Women (at 45%) are more likely than men (39%) to be of the view that women with disabilities who report rape or sexual assault are less likely to be believed. The same is true of persons aged 55 to 64 years (47%) and persons with a low score on the GE Scale (46%). On the other hand, residents of the Northern Territory (33%) and technicians/tradespersons (35%) are less likely to agree that women with disabilities who report rape or sexual assault are less likely to be believed.

9. Persons born in non-main English speaking countries

A clear finding from the results presented thus far is that relative to Australian-born persons, persons born in mainly non-English speaking countries (N-MESC) have lower Gender Equality scores (17% of the N-MESC population have high GE scores compared with 34% of the Australian-born population), lower scores for understanding violence against women (12% of the N-MESC population have a high UVAW score compared with 21% of the Australian-born population) and higher VSA scores (50% of the N-MESC population rated as high on the VSA Construct compared with 22% of the Australian-born population).

This supports prior research suggesting wide variation in attitudes toward both gender equality and violence against women globally, as well as between ethnic groups in settler societies (see 3.9.2.1 and 4.1.1).

It is for this reason that this section of the report takes a more detailed look at the N-MESC population. This is achieved by:

- profiling the N-MESC population relative to the Australian-born population, and by region of origin and year of arrival
- looking at differences in VSA scores by various sub groups within the N-MESC population
- exploring the process of acculturation by measuring changes in attitudes by length of time in Australia and within first- and second-generation N-MESC populations
- modelling the differences between the N-MESC and Australian-born populations in terms of the relative strength of various characteristics in helping to explain variance in violence supportive attitudes.

A consistent finding in the literature and this survey is that gender is a factor influencing knowledge of, and attitudes towards, violence against women. This section also examines gender differences *within* the N-MESC population.

9.1. Profile of the N-MESC population

Table 9.1a (see next page) provides a comparative socio-demographic profile of the N-MESC population relative to the Australian-born population. This shows that relative to the Australian-born population the N-MESC population is slightly younger (mean age of 43.2 years compared to 45.5 years), has a significantly higher proportion of 25 to 34 year olds (25% compared to 15%), is more clustered in NSW and Victoria and more likely to reside in capital cities (89% compared to 64%). The N-MESC population is also more likely to live in the most socio-economically advantaged locations (30% compared with 25%), to be university graduates (34% compared with 15%) and to be employed as professionals (26% compared with 19%). As demonstrated elsewhere in this report, younger cohorts tend to score lower on the GE Scale and higher on the VSA Construct, while people of higher SES tend to score higher on GE and lower on VSA (i.e. they tend to be less likely to endorse violence supportive attitudes).

Table 9.1a: Comparative profile of the Australian-born and N-MESC populations by selected characteristics (%).

		Australian Born n=11,996	N-MESC Born n=3,443
		%	%
Gender	Male	48	49
	Female	52	51
Age Group	16 to 17 years	3**	1
	18 to 24 years	14	12
	25 to 34 years	15	25**
	35 to 44 years	18	19
	45 to 54 years	17	15
	55 to 64 years	15	14
	65 to 74 years	10	8
	75 years or more	8**	6
	<i>Mean age</i>	45.5**	43.2
State / Territory	New South Wales	31	35**
	Victoria	24	33**
	Queensland	22**	13
	South Australia	8**	6
	Western Australia	9	10
	Tasmania	3**	1
	Northern Territory	1	1
	ACT	2	1
Remoteness Area	Major city	64	89**
	Inner regional	21**	6
	Outer regional	12**	4
	Remote	2**	1
	Very remote	1	*
Socio-economic Status (Quintiles)	1 - Low (most disadvantaged)	15	16
	2	18**	11
	3	20	19
	4	22	22
	5 - High (most advantaged)	25	30**
Language Proficiency	<i>Base: First generation Australians speak LOTE at home</i>		
	Speak English well	-	80
	Does not speak English well	-	20

** Result is statistically significant between Australian-born and N-MESC sample, $p \leq .01$.
Don't know/refused not shown.

Table 9.1a: Comparative profile of the Australian-born and N-MESC populations by selected characteristics (%) (cont.).

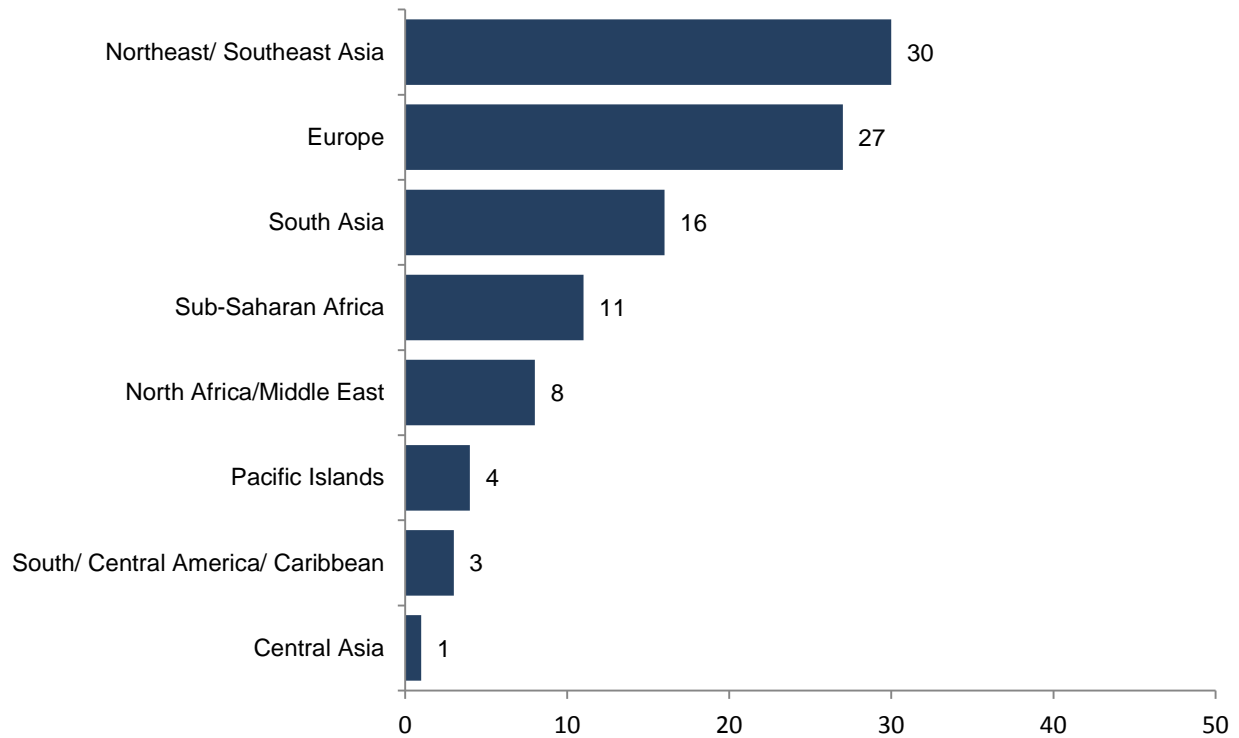
		Australian Born n=11,996	N-MESC Born n=3,443
		%	%
Indigenous Status[#]	Indigenous	3**	1
	Non-Indigenous	97	99**
Highest Education	University or higher	15	34**
	Trade, certificate or diploma	33**	25
	Secondary or below	51**	40
Employment Status	Employed	62	61
	Unemployed	5	6
	Home duties	6	8**
	Retired	6	8**
	Student	18**	14
	unable to work	3	2
Occupation	Manager	15**	12
	Professional	19	26**
	Technicians and trade	16	15
	Community and Personal Service	13	14
	Clerical and administrative	13**	10
	Sales worker	10**	7
	Machinery operator and driver	5	5
	Labourer	7	10**
Family Composition Household	Lone person household	13	12
	Couple only	28**	25
	Couple children at home	41	44**
	Lone parent children at home	7**	6
	Group household	4	7**
	Other type of household	6	5

** Result is statistically significant between Australian-born and N-MESC sample, $p \leq .01$.
Don't know/ refused not shown.

[#] Weighted to independent population benchmarks

Figure 9.1b provides a profile of the N-MESC sample by region of origin. The regions each accounting for at least 5% of the N-MESC sample are: Northeast and Southeast Asia (e.g. China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, etc.) (30%); Europe (Italy, Greece, France, Germany, Croatia, etc.) (27%); South Asia (Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bangladesh, etc.) (16%); Sub-Saharan Africa (e.g. Sudan, Nigeria, Somalia, Zambia, etc.) (11%); and North Africa and the Middle East (Morocco, Egypt, Turkey, Lebanon, Syria, etc.) (8%).

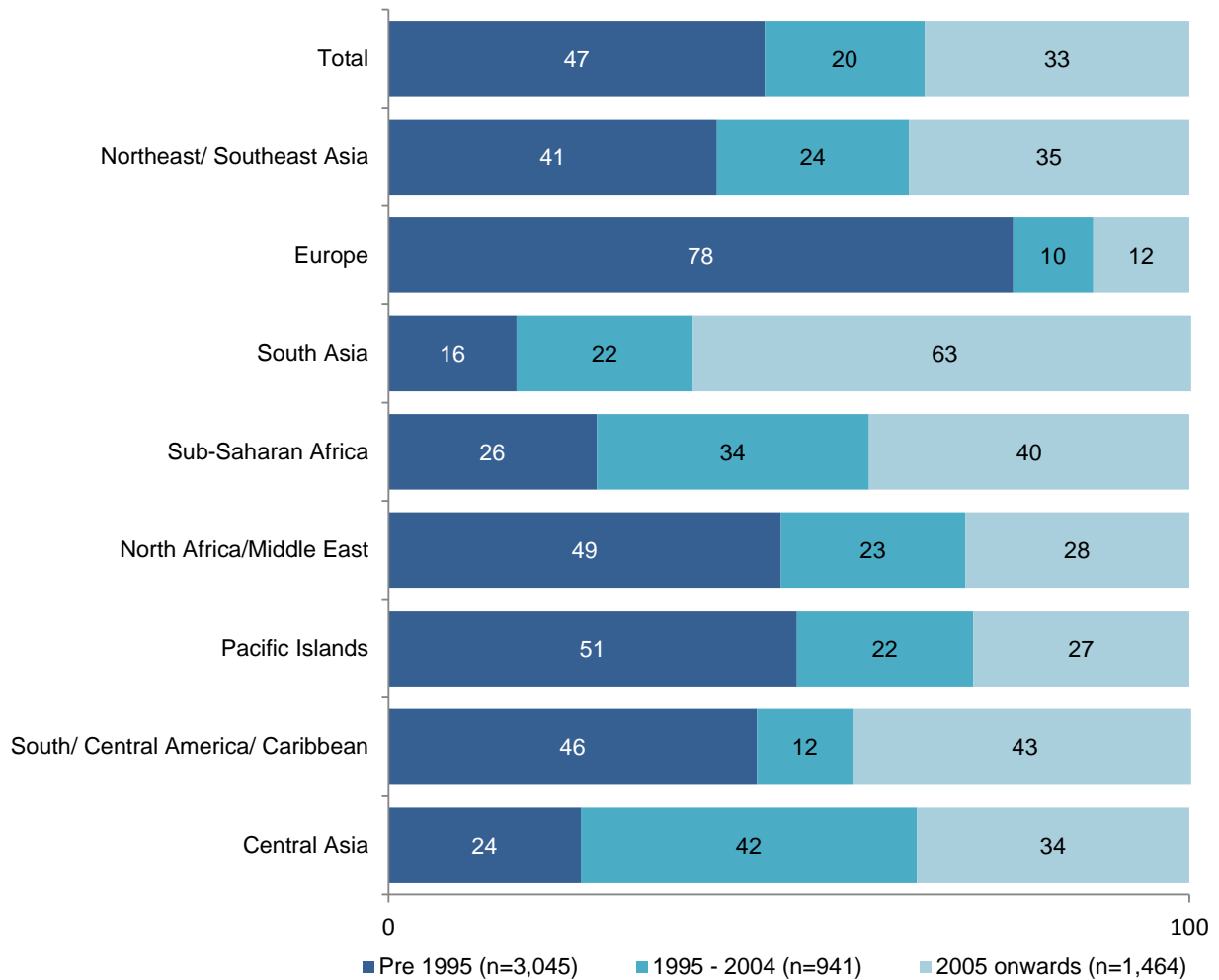
Figure 9.1b: Region of origin of persons born in non-main English speaking countries (%).



Sample size n=3,453

Additional profiling information is provided in Figure 9.1c. Here it can be seen that almost half of the N-MESC sample (47%) arrived in Australia prior to 1995, a fifth (20%) between 1995 and 2004 and a third (33%) from 2005 onwards. The nature of the sample from 2005 onwards varies considerably by region of origin. For example, 63% of the South Asian-born sample arrived in Australia from 2005 onwards, as did 43% of the South/Central America/Caribbean sample and 40% of the Sub-Saharan-born sample. At the other end of this dimension, just 12% of the European-born population arrived in Australia from 2005 onwards.

Figure 9.1c: Region of origin by year or arrival for persons born in non-main English speaking countries (%).



An alternative view of these data is shown in Table 9.1d, illustrating that those born in Northeast or Southeast Asian countries account for 32% of the N-MESC sample that has settled in Australia from 2005 onwards, while South Asian-born respondents account for 31%, Sub-Saharan Africans for 13% and European-born respondents for 10%.

Table 9.1d: Year of arrival by region of origin (%).

	Pre 1995 (n=3,045) %	1995-2004 (n=941) %	2005 onwards (n=1,464) %
Northeast/ Southeast Asia	26	35	32
Europe	46	14	10
South Asia	6	17	31
Sub-Saharan Africa	6	18	13
North Africa/Middle East	8	9	7
Pacific Islands	4	4	3
South/ Central America/ Caribbean	3	2	4
Central Asia	*	1	1
Total	100	100	100

9.2. Violence supportive attitudes by selected subgroups within the N-MESC sample

The extent to which selected subgroups within the N-MESC population differ with regard to their VSA scores is explored in Table 9.2a.

Gender: N-MESC males (55%) are more likely than N-MESC females (46%) to have high VSA scores.

Age: Those aged 75 years and over (60%) and those aged 25 to 34 years (57%) are more likely than other age groups to be classified as having high VSA scores, while those aged 55 to 64 years are the least likely of the age groups to have a high VSA score (44%).

Heritage and language: Relative to the overall N-MESC sample (50%), a higher proportion of those who do not speak English well (75%) and those who arrived in Australia from 2005 onwards (61%) are classified as high on the VSA Construct.

Socio-economic status: Those living in the most advantaged locations are less likely to have a high VSA score (45%), as are employed persons (47%) those working as professionals (44%), and clerical and administrative workers (36%). On the other hand, a higher proportion of those working as machine operators and drivers (64%) and labourers (61%) have a high VSA score.

Place: Those members of the N-MESC sample residing in Victoria are more likely to be classified as high on the Violence Supportive Attitudes Construct (55%) compared to the national average for the N-MESC population (50%).

Gender Equality: Seventy-one per cent of those with a low GE score are classified as having a high VSA score.

Understanding of violence against women: Seventy per cent of those with a low UVAW score are classified as having high support for violence against women.

While it is apparent that a higher proportion of the N-MESC population are classified as high on the VSA Construct (50%) than the Australian-born population (22%), similar subgroup differences are evident across both the N-MESC and whole community populations (refer back to sections 7.1 and 7.2).

Table 9.2a: Violence supportive attitudes scores by select subgroups (%).

		Base n	Low VSA score %	Moderate VSA score %	High VSA score %
Total N-MESC Sample		3,453	10	39	50
Gender	Male	1,661	8	36	55**
	Female	1,729	12	42	46**
Age Group	16 to 17 years	28	-	53	47
	18 to 24 years	361	6**	40	53
	25 to 34 years	865	8	35**	57**
	35 to 44 years	639	13	42	45
	45 to 54 years	525	14**	40	46
	55 to 64 years	531	16**	40	44
	65 to 74 years	352	6**	43	51
	75 years or more	152	4**	36	60**
State / Territory	New South Wales	1,006	11	39	50
	Victoria	1,027	9	36	55**
	Queensland	375	11	42	46
	South Australia	243	13	41	46
	Western Australia	392	11	46**	44
	Tasmania	75	16	37	47
	Northern Territory	153	16	33	51
	ACT	182	15	41	44
Socio- economic Status (Quintiles)	1 - Low (most disadvantaged)	442	8	37	55
	2	336	9	37	55
	3	613	10	40	50
	4	795	10	39	51
	5 - High (most advantaged)	1,219	13	43	45**
Language Proficiency	Speak English well	2,165	9	39	52
	Does not speak English well	436	1**	24**	75**
Year of Arrival	Arrived before 2005	2,247	13**	42	45**
	Arrived from 2005	1,168	5**	34**	61**

** Result is statistically significant compared to the Total N-MESC sample, $p \leq 0.01$.
Don't know/refused not shown.

Table 9.2a: Violence supportive attitudes scores by select subgroups (%) (cont.).

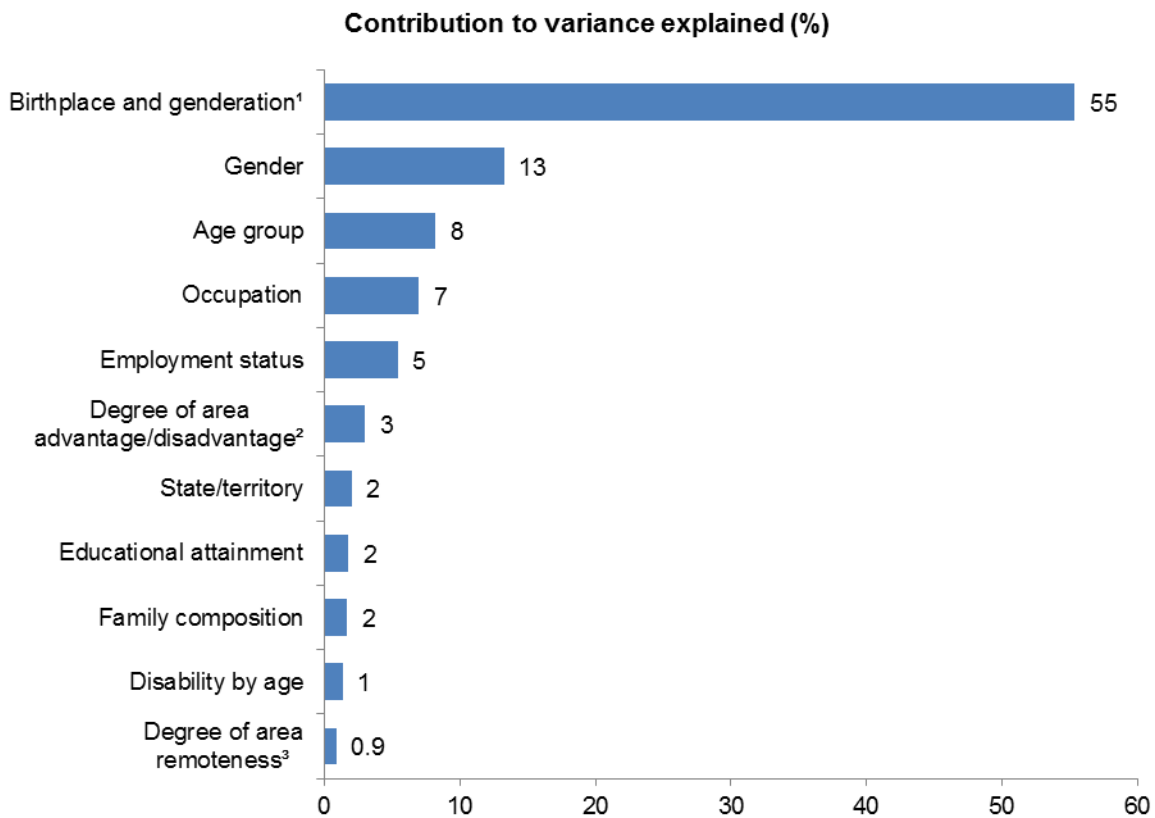
		Base n	Low VSA score %	Moderate VSA score %	High VSA score %
	Total N-MESC Sample	3,453	10	39	50
Highest Education	University or higher	1,875	12	39	49
	Trade, certificate or diploma	588	13	41	46
	Secondary or below	962	8**	38	54
Employment Status	Employed	2,196	12	41	47**
	Unemployed	186	10	37	53
	Home duties	232	7	33	60**
	Retired	509	6**	38	56
	Student	238	7	38	55
	Unable to work	61	14	39	48
Occupation	Manager	265	20	44	36
	Professional	751	15**	41	44**
	Technicians and trade	265	8	39	53
	Community and Personal Service	286	12	39	49
	Clerical and administrative	214	13	51**	36**
	Sales worker	134	9	44	47
	Machinery operator and driver	75	8	28	64**
	Labourer	173	5**	35	61**
Family Composition Household	Lone person household	526	11	33	56
	Couple only	892	9	43	48
	Couple children at home	1,433	11	40	49
	Lone parent children at home	179	13	44	43
	Group household	238	7	33	60
	Other type of household	158	8	39	53
Understands VAW	Low understanding	1,402	2**	28**	70**
	Moderate understanding	1,633	12	47**	41**
	High understanding	416	33**	47	20**
Gender Equity Support	Low	1,425	3**	26**	71**
	Medium	1,362	9	48**	42**
	High	656	33**	52**	14**

** Result is statistically significant compared to the Total N-MESC sample, $p \leq 0.01$.
Don't know/refused not shown.

As before, a multiple linear regression model was created to identify those demographic variables that are most strongly associated with the VSA Construct for the N-MESC population. The outputs from this modelling are summarised in Figure 9.2b (below).

The most striking feature of this model is that, even among the N-MESC population, country of origin is the variable that explains most of the explained variance (55%) in VSA scores. This means that within this population of persons born in non-main English speaking countries, the individual country of origin accounts for more of the variance in violence supportive attitudes than either gender (13%), age (8%) or occupation (7%).

Figure 9.2b: The relative importance of selected demographic items in explaining variance in the Violence Supportive Attitudes Construct (% variance explained) for the N-MESC population.



¹ Included respondent's place of birth as well as the place of birth of their parents.

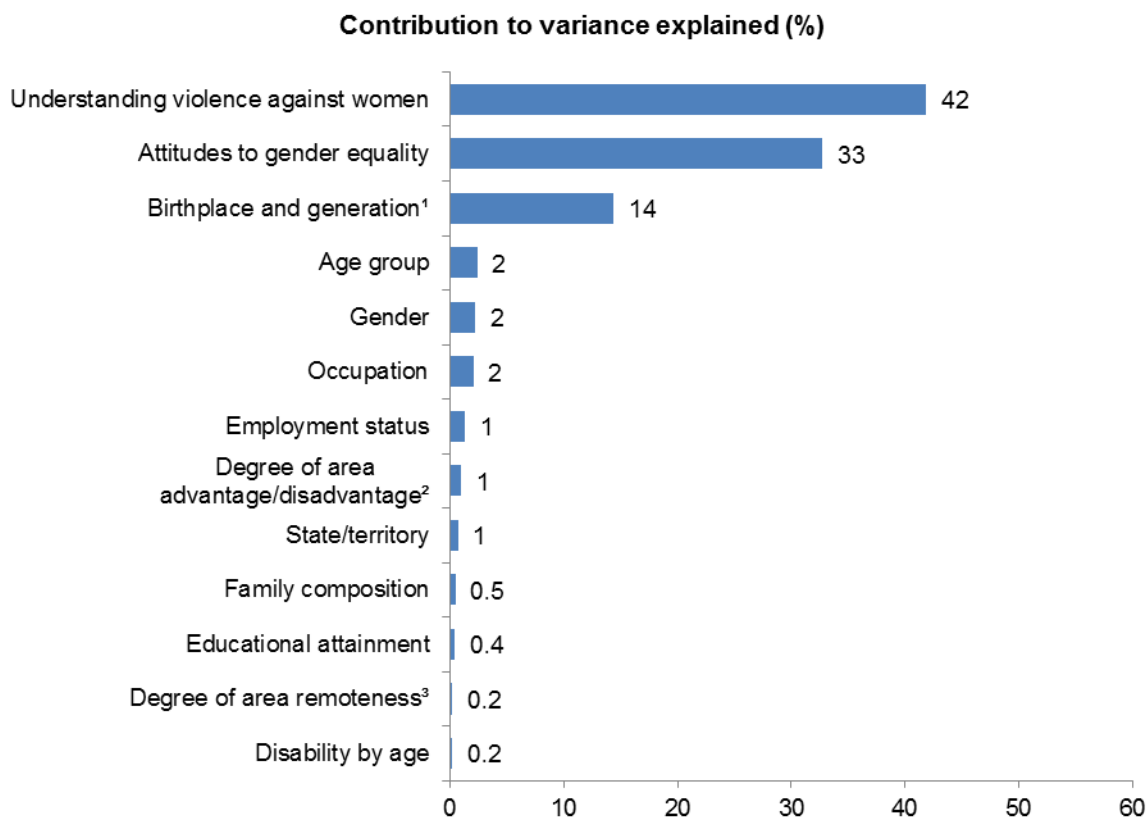
² Measured with Australian Bureau of Statistics Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage (see Table 1.5)

³ Measured with Australian Bureau of Statistics remoteness areas classifications (see Table 1.5).

Total variance explained by model – 17%

This outcome lends strength to findings documented in the literature suggesting that social and cultural norms pertaining to gender and violence are important drivers of violence supportive attitudes, and that variations in these norms globally contribute to variations between groups, depending on their country of origin. This is further reinforced when the attitudinal constructs of gender equality and understanding of violence against women are added to the model (see Figure 9.2c). The addition of these two variables improves the explanatory power of the model to 44%. Understanding violence against women accounts for 42% of the explained variance while attitudes toward gender equality account for 33%.

Figure 9.2c: The relative importance of selected demographic and attitudinal items in explaining variance in the Violence Supportive Attitudes Construct (% variance explained) for the N-MESC population.



¹Included respondent's place of birth as well as the place of birth of their parents.

²Measured with Australian Bureau of Statistics Index of relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage (see Table 1.5)

³Measured with Australian Bureau of Statistics remoteness areas classifications (see Table 1.5)

Understanding measured using the Understanding Violence Against Women Scale (see Table 1.5 and section 5.3)

Attitudes to gender equality measured using the Gender Equality Scale (see Table 1.5 and section 4.1.2)

Total variance explained by model – 44%.

9.3. Gender-based comparisons between the Australian-born and N-MESC populations

This section explores gender differences between the Australian-born and N-MESC populations with respect to the GE, UVAW Scales and the VSA Construct and also the extent to which violence against women is regarded as common. The item regarding as to whether or not violence against women is seen as common was included on the basis of other studies showing that the level of agreement that violence against women is common is a predictor of the acceptability of violence and of stated intention to intervene (Gracia & Herrero 2006a & b)

Figures 9.3a to 9.3d (next page) show the following:

Gender Equality: There is a 12 percentage point gap between the proportion of Australian-born males with a high GE score (23%) and the proportion of N-MESC males with a high GE score (11%). The gap is even larger for females (21 percentage points) with 43% of Australian-born females having a high GE score compared with 22% of N-MESC females.

UVAW: Sixteen per cent of Australian-born males and 9% of N-MESC males are classified as having a high UVAW Scale. The corresponding result for females is 26% for Australian-born females and 15% for N-MESC females.

VSA: The proportion of N-MESC males with a high VSA score (55%) is almost double that of Australian-born males (28%). The proportion of N-MESC females with a high VSA score (46%) is 2.7 times greater than for Australian-born females (17%).

VAW is common: Fifty per cent of N-MESC males and 62% of Australian-born males agree that violence against women is common compared with 80% of Australian-born females and 64% of N-MESC females.

Mirroring the sample as a whole, N-MESC women are more likely than N-MESC men to have a high level of support for gender equality, to have a high level of understanding of violence against women and to agree that violence is common. They are less likely to have a high score on the VSA Construct.

Figure 9.3a: Attitudes to Gender Equality by sex and birth place
(% high)



Figure 9.3b: Understanding (UVAW) by sex and birth place
(% high)

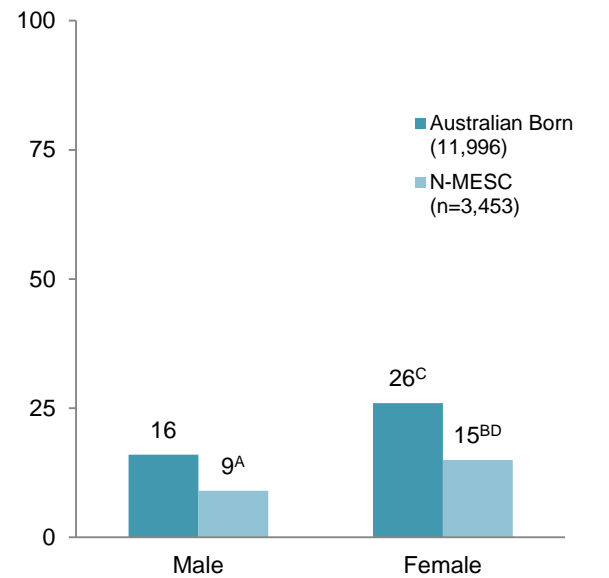


Figure 9.3c: Violence supportive attitudes by sex and birth place
(% high)

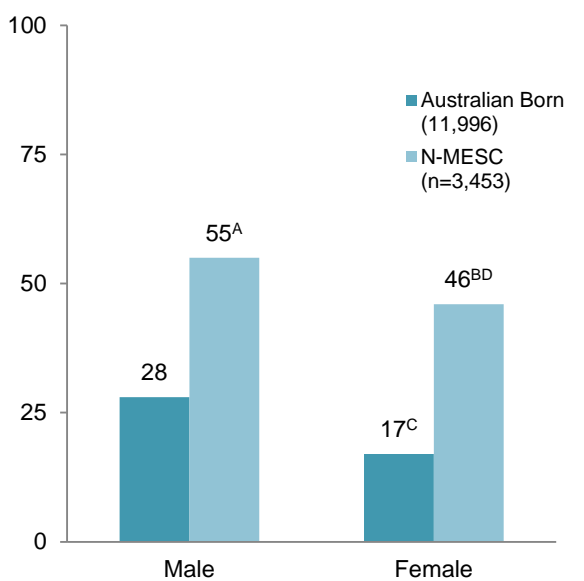
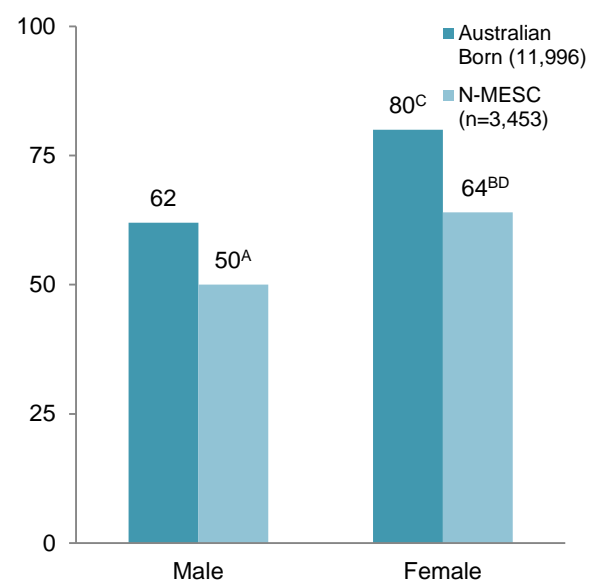


Figure 9.3d: 'Violence is common' by sex and birth place
(% agree)



^A N-MESC males significantly different to Australian-born males, $p \leq .01$.
^B N-MESC females significantly different to Australian-born females, $p \leq .01$.
^C Australian-born females significantly different to Australian-born males, $p \leq .01$.
^D N-MESC females significantly different to N-MESC males, $p \leq .01$.

9.4. Changes in attitudes to gender equality, understanding violence against women and violence supportive attitudes by length of time in Australia

There is evidence in the literature that attitudes toward both gender equality and violence against women change with length of residence in settler societies so that they more closely resemble those of the locally born (see section 3.9.2.1) This is understood to occur as part of the process of acculturating to a new country and ethos.

As noted in the literature review, caution is required in interpreting the significance of these changes for the purposes of violence prevention, since acculturation is a complex process which may also result in the loss of cultural norms that protect against violence, as well as the acquisition of host society norms and practices that may increase risk (e.g. objectification of women, reduced family and community support).

Given the observed differences in attitudes to women and violence against women between the Australian-born and N-MESC populations, there is interest in understanding whether this convergence of attitudes occurs among N-MESC groups in Australia. Table 9.4a illustrates changes in the Gender Equality and Understanding Violence Against Women Scales and the Violence Supportive Attitudes Construct by year of arrival (pre 1995, 1995–2004, 2005 onwards). This shows that those members of the N-MESC population who settled in Australia prior to 1995 are more likely than recent arrivals (2005 onwards) to have high GE scores (20% compared with 11%), more likely also to score high on UVAW (17% compared with 8%) and less likely to rate high on the VSA Construct (44% compared with 61%).

Table 9.4a: Gender equality, understanding violence against women and violence supportive attitudes by year of arrival.

		Base	Pre 1995	1995-2004	2005 onwards
		n	A %	B %	C %
VSA	Low	407	14 ^C	10 ^C	5
	Moderate	1,356	42 ^C	42 ^C	34
	High	1,690	44	48	61 ^{AB}
Understands VAW	Low understanding	1,402	34	44 ^A	50 ^A
	Moderate understanding	1,633	50 ^C	47	42
	High understanding	416	17 ^{BC}	9	8
Gender Equity Support	Low	1,425	43	39	48 ^B
	Medium	1,362	37	43	41
	High	656	20 ^C	18 ^C	11

^{ABC} Result is statistically significant between years, $p \leq .05$.
Don't know/refused not shown.

While the above provides some support for the view that attitudes toward gender equality and violence against women will change over time to more closely resemble those of the Australian-born, it could be that the observed differences in attitudes to women and violence against women over time are attributable to changes in the composition of the N-MESC sample. For example, reference back to Table 9.1c shows that 46% of the N-MESC sample that arrived in Australia prior to 1995 was of European background compared with 14% of those who arrived between 1995 and 2004 and 10% who arrived from 2005 onwards. To control for this possibility, it is necessary to look at changes in attitudes over time for specific countries/regions of origin. To this end, Table 9.4b looks at the distributions across the GE and UVAW Scales and the VSA Construct by year of arrival for respondents originating from the five largest non-main English speaking countries/regions of origin. There were sufficient numbers to form three groups of

respondents from a single country. The remaining two groups were formed with respondents from regions selected on the basis of the sample size and they were the least heterogeneous in their composition in terms of the country background and period of arrival of the waves of the groups concerned. The countries/regions have been masked and are labelled A, B, C, D and E to avoid stigmatising any particular group.

Bearing in mind sample size limitations, in two of the five regions (B and E), there is a statistically significant increase in gender equality scores as length of time in Australia increases. In one case (B) there is a significant increase in the understanding violence against women score, and in two cases (B and E) there is a significant decline in the violence supportive attitudes scores. These findings suggest that understanding of violence increases over time and attitudes toward gender equality and violence against women do generally moderate. However, the nature and pace of change may differ depending on country/region of origin.

Table 9.4b: Gender equality, understanding violence against women and violence supportive attitudes by year of arrival by country/region of origin.

Country of origin		Pre 1995	1995-2004	2005 onwards
		n=1,587 A %	n=660 B %	n=1,168 C %
A	High gender equality	10	6	6
	High understanding violence against women	7	2	3
	High violence supportive attitudes	64	67	70
B	High gender equality	29 ^C	19 ^C	8
	High understanding violence against women	20 ^C	10	4
	High violence supportive attitudes	43	51	77 ^{AB}
C	High gender equality	27	33	37
	High understanding violence against women	20	7	19
	High violence supportive attitudes	35	39	36
D	High gender equality	24	26	14
	High understanding violence against women	19	23	16
	High violence supportive attitudes	26	21	39
E	High gender equality	18 ^C	16 ^C	5
	High understanding violence against women	14	6	8
	High violence supportive attitudes	43	50	68 ^{AB}

^{ABC} Result is statistically significant between years, $p \leq .05$.
Don't know/refused not shown.

9.5. Generational changes in attitudes to gender equality, understanding violence against women and violence supportive attitudes

Another perspective on this change is provided by examining attitudes by generation. Table 9.5a shows changes in gender equality, understanding violence against women and violence supportive attitudes scores across first- and second-generation immigrants from non-main English speaking countries. These results are also compared with those of third- or subsequent-generation Australians (i.e. those born in Australia and with both parents born in Australia).

There are significant increases in both the gender equality and understanding of violence against women scores among second- and third-generation Australians, coupled with a reduction in the proportion of each generation classified as high on the Violence Supportive Attitudes Construct. For example, between first and second generations, the proportion with high GE scores increased from 17% to 29%, high UVAW scores increased from 12% to 18%, and high VSA scores decreased from 50% to 29%.

Table 9.5a: Gender equality, understanding violence against women and violence supportive attitudes by year of arrival.

		First Generation (n=3,453) A %	Second Generation (n=1,664) B %	Third Generation (n=8,791) C %
Gender Equity Scale	Low	44 ^{BC}	25 ^C	22
	Medium	40	46 ^A	45 ^A
	High	17	29 ^A	34 ^{AB}
Understanding VAW scale	Low	41 ^{BC}	34 ^C	26
	Moderate	47	48	52 ^A
	High	12	18 ^A	22 ^{AB}
VSA scale	Low	10	21 ^A	25 ^{AB}
	Moderate	39	50 ^A	53 ^A
	High	50 ^{BC}	29 ^C	22

A/B/C Result is statistically significant between generations, $p \leq .05$.
Don't know/refused not shown.

As noted earlier, it is necessary to understand whether this pattern holds true for individual countries/regions of origin. While the small sample sizes available at a country/region of origin by generation restrict the level at which significance testing can be undertaken, the pattern in the results presented in Table 9.5b is clear. These data show increased gender equality scores by generation for all five countries/regions, increased understanding of violence against women scores for three countries /regions and decreases in the violence supportive attitudes scores between first- and second-generation immigrants for all five countries/regions.

Table 9.5b: Gender equality, understanding violence against women and violence supportive attitudes by generation by country/region of origin.

Country of origin		First Generation	Second Generation
		n=2,526 A %	n=1,057 B %
A	High gender equality	6	23**
	High understanding violence against women	5	14
	High violence supportive attitudes	68**	37
B	High gender equality	13	36
	High understanding violence against women	7	17
	High violence supportive attitudes	67**	20
C	High gender equality	28	35
	High understanding violence against women	18	25
	High violence supportive attitudes	36	21**
D	High gender equality	21	37
	High understanding violence against women	17	9
	High violence supportive attitudes	31	17
E	High gender equality	15	22
	High understanding violence against women	9	2
	High violence supportive attitudes	53	44

** Result is statistically significant between generations, $p \leq .05$.
Don't know/refused not shown.

10. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

10.1 Overview

As mentioned in section 2.1 (Methodological Overview), one of the reasons for increasing the sample size for the 2013 survey, and for adopting a dual-frame design, was to increase both the number of interviews with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and the representativeness of the interviews achieved. This approach resulted in 341 interviews with respondents who identified themselves as being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin. The use of the dual-frame method increased this yield over what would have otherwise been the case, with 57% of these interviews obtained via the mobile phone frame (compared with 50% overall) and 29% being mobile-phone only compared with 16% overall. As mentioned previously (section 2.1) and elaborated upon in Appendix B – technical and methodological notes, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sample has been weighted to independent population parameters in order to provide the most robust estimates possible.

10.2 Gender-based comparisons between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous samples

The results summarised below in Figures 10.2a to 10.2d (next page), show that there are no overall differences between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders on the Gender Equality Scale (28% compared with 30%)²¹. Yet, while this is the case, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents are more likely than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents to rate high on the UVAW Scale (25% compared with 19%)²², and more likely (37% compared with 28%) to be classified as high on the VSA Construct. Consistent with the literature, ATSI respondents are more likely to regard violence against women as common (ATSI 87% compared with non-ATSI 68%). Figures 10.2a to 10.2d (next page) show the following:

Gender Equality: Gender differences are greater in the Indigenous sample than the non-Indigenous sample. ATSI women are nearly 2.5 times more likely to have high support for gender equality (39%), than ATSI men (16%). By comparison non-Indigenous women are 1.9 times more likely than non-Indigenous men to score high for gender equality. There are no differences between ATSI and non-ATSI women on support for gender equality.

UVAW: Indigenous women are more likely to score higher than Indigenous men (30% compared with 20%). However, there are no statistically significant differences between Indigenous women and non-Indigenous women, or between Indigenous and non-Indigenous men.

VSA: Indigenous males are significantly more likely to have a high VSA score (48%) than non-Indigenous males (33%). Gender differences on this measure are more pronounced in the ATSI sample than the non-Indigenous respondents. ATSI men are 1.8 times less likely to score high on VSA (27% of women are classified as having high support compared with 48% of men). In comparison non-Indigenous women are 1.4 times less likely to score high on the VSA Construct than non-Indigenous men.

Indigenous women and men vary more from each other than they do from their non-Indigenous peers. Indigenous men are 1.5 times more likely to hold violence supportive attitudes (as measured by the VSA Construct) than non-Indigenous men and are 1.8 times more likely to do so than Indigenous women.

²¹ Differences reported in this section are between ATSI and non-ATSI respondents, rather than between these respondents and the sample overall

²² Significant at the 95% confidence level.

VAW is common: As reported above, Indigenous respondents are more likely than non-Indigenous respondents (87% and 68%) to agree that violence against women is common. This is also the case when Indigenous men and women are compared.

Figure 10.2a: Attitudes to gender equality by sex and ATSI status
(% high)

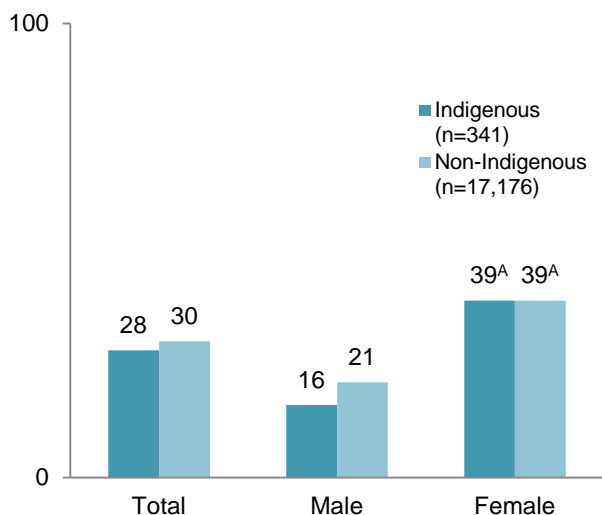


Figure 10.2b: Understanding (UVAW) by sex and ATSI status
(% high)

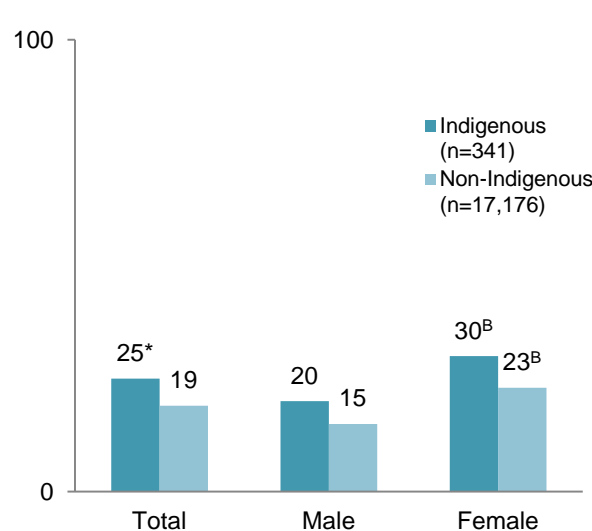


Figure 10.2c: Violence supportive attitudes by sex and ATSI status
(% high)

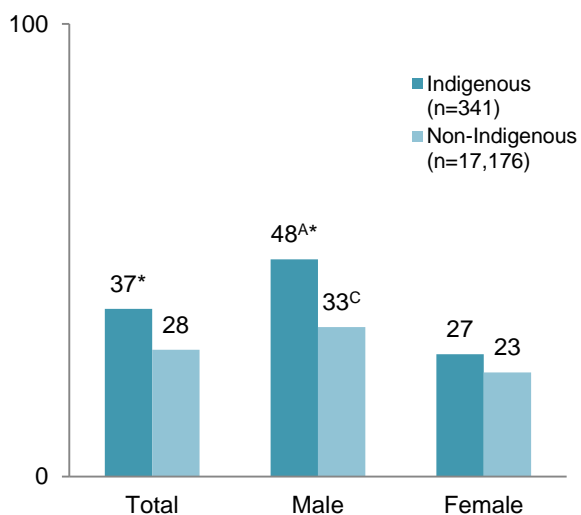
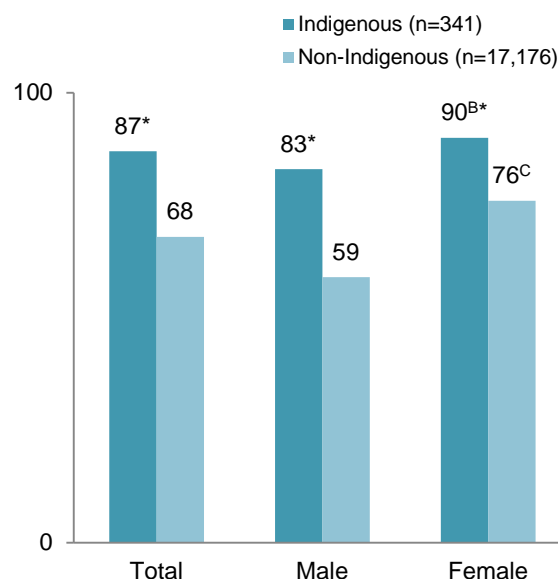


Figure 10.2d: 'Violence is common' by sex and ATSI status
(% agree)



* Result is statistically significant between Indigenous and non-Indigenous sample, $p \leq .05$.

^A Result is statistically significant between females and males, $p \leq .05$.

^B Result is statistically significant between Indigenous females and Indigenous males, $p \leq .05$.

^C Result is statistically significant between non-Indigenous females and non-Indigenous males, $p \leq .05$.

Other differences noted earlier in this report (data not shown in this section) include the fact that Indigenous respondents are more likely to nominate male dominance in relationships as the main cause of violence against women (ATSI 27%, compared with non-ATSI 18%). ATSI respondents are also more likely to

strongly agree that a woman is more likely to be raped by someone she knows than by a stranger (ATSI 45%, compared with non-ATSI 33%).

When it comes to awareness of police response to violence, the ATSI population are more likely to agree that 'police now respond to domestic violence calls more quickly' (ATSI 54%, non-ATSI 44%)²³ as well as being more aware of outside help and support for domestic violence issues (71% for ATSI respondents compared with 57% for non-ATSI respondents).

At the same time, ATSI respondents are more likely to:

- Agree that there are circumstances in which violence against a partner or ex-partner can be justified or excused. For example, "if his partner has sex with another man" (ATSI 16%, non-ATSI 6%).
- Excuse domestic violence if the offender is heavily affected by alcohol (ATSI 21%, non-ATSI 8%) and to agree with reduced culpability for sexual assault if the man is drunk or affected by drugs at the time (ATSI 16%, non-ATSI 9%)²⁴.
- Be of the view that both men and women are equally likely to commit acts of domestic violence (ATSI 31%, non-ATSI 24%)²⁵ and that men and women are equally likely to suffer physical harm as a result of domestic violence (ATSI 14%, non-ATSI 9%)²⁶.
- Strongly agree that if a woman doesn't physically resist then it isn't really rape (ATSI 10%, non-ATSI 5%)²⁷.

When it comes to responses to violence against women ATSI respondents are more likely to say that they would physically intervene to help a family member or friend if she is being physically assaulted by her partner (ATSI 64%, non-ASTI 57%)²⁸ and to agree that most people turn a blind eye to domestic violence (ATSI 93%, non-ATSI 81%).

Having set out the main differences in the survey findings between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders presented thus far, the remainder of this section focuses on further exploring these differences both between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous samples and within the Indigenous sample (while always being mindful of the limits of interpretation given the nature of the sample and sample size limitations). The first task in this undertaking is to profile the Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander sample relative to the non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander sample.

10.3 Profile of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sample

Table 10.3a (see next page) provides a comparative socio-demographic profile of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander samples. The results show the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is younger (mean age of 37.3 years compared to 45.8 years), less likely to live in major cities (35% compared with 72%) and more likely to live in remote/very remote regions (20% compared with 2%). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents are also more likely to live in the

²³ Statistically significant at the 95% confidence level

²⁴ As above

²⁵ As above

²⁶ As above

²⁷ As Above

²⁸ As above

areas of highest locational disadvantage (29% compared with 14%), less likely to have graduated from university (11% compared with 20%) and more likely to be unemployed (19% compared with 5%). In terms of family composition/living arrangements, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents are more likely than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents to be lone parents (16% compared with 7%), live in group households (9% compared with 5%) and live in other types of households (11% compared with 5%).

Table 10.3a Comparative profile of the non-Indigenous and Indigenous populations by selected characteristics (%).

		Indigenous (n=341) %	Non-Indigenous (n=17,176) %
Gender	Male	48	49
	Female	52	51
Age Group	16 to 24 years	27**	15
	25 to 34 years	21	17
	35 to 44 years	20	18
	45 to 54 years	16	18
	55 to 64 years	10	15**
	65 years or more	6	18**
	<i>Mean age</i>	37.3	45.8**
Remoteness Area	Major city	35	72**
	Inner regional	22	16
	Outer regional	21**	9
	Remote/Very remote	20**	2
Socio-economic Status (Quintiles)	1 - Low (most disadvantaged)	29**	14
	2	23**	16
	3	16	20
	4	17	22
	5 - High (most advantaged)	11	27**
Highest Education	University or higher	11	20**
	Trade, certificate or diploma	23	32**
	Secondary or below	64**	47
Employment Status	Employed	53	62**
	Unemployed	19**	5
	NILF	27	33
	Other	1	*
Occupation	White collar	63	70
	Blue collar	34	29
	Other	1	*
Family Composition Household	Lone person household	11	13
	Couple only	14	28**
	Couple children at home	40	41
	Lone parent children at home	16**	7
	Group household	9**	5
	Other type of household	11**	5
Disability Status by Age^(a)	Disability and aged <65 years	15**	6
	Disability and aged 65 years plus	1	5
	Does not have a disability	83	88

Weighted to independent population benchmarks.

** Result is statistically significant between Indigenous and non-Indigenous sample, $p \leq .01$.

Don't know/refused not shown.

As discussed earlier in this report, gender is a key influence on attitudes toward violence against women, although both the literature and the statistical modelling undertaken as part of this survey suggests measures of social, community and economic disadvantage also have an influence. The fact that Indigenous persons are more likely to experience disadvantage has been well documented elsewhere (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision 2011).

To enable us to examine, at an aggregate level, the relative 'disadvantage' of the ATSI and non-ATSI samples, and to explore the relationship between disadvantage, Indigenous status and gender, a count of unique indicators of disadvantage available from the survey was compiled.²⁹ The indicators used for this purpose are as follows:

- secondary school educational attainment or below
- living in a remote/very remote area
- living in a lowest SEIFA quintile area
- being unemployed or unable to work
- living in one person households or as a sole parent with dependent children
- having a self-assessed disability.

The distribution of the population with zero or one of these indicators of disadvantage and multiple indicators of disadvantage is shown below (Figure 10.3b). These data show that 57% of the Indigenous sample has two or more indicators of disadvantage compared with 26% of the non-Indigenous sample. It is also the case that amongst the non-Indigenous sample, females (28%) are significantly more likely to have two or more indicators of disadvantage than males (24%). In contrast, amongst the Indigenous sample, the proportion of females with two or more indicators of disadvantage (54%) is not significantly different from males (59%).

Table 10.3b: Indicators of disadvantage by Indigenous status and gender.

		Counts of disadvantage	
		0 or 1 n=11,596 %	2 or more n=5,921 %
Total sample	Total	74	27
	Male	75 [#]	25 [#]
	Female	72	28
Indigenous	Total	44 [*]	57 [*]
	Male	41 [*]	59 [*]
	Female	46 [*]	54 [*]
Non-Indigenous	Total	74	26
	Male	76 [#]	24
	Female	72	28 [#]

[#]Result is statistically significant between male and female sample, $p \leq .05$.

^{*}Result is statistically significant between Indigenous and non-Indigenous sample, $p \leq .05$.

²⁹ Indicators of disadvantage were drawn from data items available within this survey based on expansion of traditional SES measures as discussed in Price-Robertson (2011) and Vinson (2007).

10.4 The intersection between disadvantage, Indigenous status and gender and violence supportive attitudes

Having established that compared to the non-Indigenous sample a relatively high proportion of Indigenous sample members have multiple indicators of disadvantage, the task now becomes one of exploring the intersection between disadvantage, Indigenous status and gender and holding violence supportive attitudes.

Reference to Table 10.4a (below) shows, as previously noted, that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents are more likely to have a high VSA score (37%) than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents (28%). This difference is largely located among Indigenous males who are significantly more likely than non-Indigenous males (48% compared with 33%) to be classified as high on the VSA Construct. There is no significant difference between Indigenous and non-Indigenous females (27% and 23%).

While relative disadvantage is associated with higher VSA score for males and females across both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous samples, the main differences between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous samples with respect to the interplay between VSA scores and relative disadvantage is among ATSI males with multiple indicators of disadvantage. By way of explanation, while 43% of the Indigenous sample with multiple indicators of disadvantage have a high VSA score compared with 36% of the non-Indigenous sample this result, on its own, is not statistically significant. However, when gender is taken into account we see that Indigenous males with two or more indicators of disadvantage are significantly more likely to have a high VSA score (54%) than similarly disadvantaged non-Indigenous males (40%). The same is not true for females where disadvantaged Indigenous and non-Indigenous females are equally likely to have high VSA scores (32%).

In summary, the data suggest that:

- A high VSA score among the Indigenous sample is largely associated with disadvantaged Indigenous men.
- A high VSA score among Indigenous men is seemingly attributable to the intersecting influences of gender, social and economic disadvantage as well as other factors associated with being Indigenous.
- As discussed in the literature review, these are most likely to be the impact of historical and contemporary disadvantage uniquely experienced by Indigenous communities. While disadvantaged Indigenous women are more likely than their more advantaged counterparts to hold violence supportive attitudes, this is in similar proportion as non-Indigenous disadvantaged women.

In other words, in light of the lack of variation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous women, historical and contemporary disadvantage alone are not sufficient to explain the higher VSA score among Indigenous men. The influences of gender must also be taken into account.

Table 10.4a: Percent with a high VSA score by Indicators of disadvantage by Indigenous status and gender.

		% High VSA	
		Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
All indicators of disadvantage		<i>n</i> =341	<i>n</i> =17,176
	Total	37*	28
	Male	48*	33
	Female	27	23
0 or 1 indicators of disadvantage		<i>n</i> =148	<i>n</i> =12,682
	Total	30	26
	Male	39	31
	Female	22	19
2 or more indicators of disadvantage		<i>n</i> =193	<i>n</i> =4,441
	Total	43	36
	Male	54*	40
	Female	32	32

*Result is statistically significant between Indigenous and non-Indigenous sample, $p \leq .05$.

The substantial differences between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men in terms of the proportion with a high VSA score (48% compared with 33%) warrants further exploration (see Table 10.4b, Appendix A – detailed tables). These data show that the sizeable differences between ATSI and non-ATSI males are largely associated with the extent to which they justify and excuse violence. This is evidenced by the following:

A man is justified in using violence against his partner/ex-partner if:

- she admits to having sex with another man (ATSI males 21%, non-ATSI males 7%)
- she makes him look stupid or insults him in front of his friends (ATSI males 13%, non-ATSI males 5%)
- she ends or tries to end the relationship (ATSI males 16%, non-ATSI males 4%)
- in order to get access to the children (ATSI males 19%, non-ATSI males 5%)
- if she is unreasonable about property settlement and financial issues (ATSI males 17%, non-ATSI males 4%).

Domestic violence and/or sexual assault can be excused in the following circumstances:

- if the violent person is under a lot of stress (ATSI males 27%, non-ATSI males 14%)
- if the violence results from someone becoming so angry that they temporarily lose control (ATSI males 41%, non-ATSI males 23%)
- if the offender is heavily affected by alcohol (ATSI males 24%, non-ATSI males 9%)
- a man is less responsible for rape if he is drunk or affected by drugs at the time (ATSI males 17%, non-ATSI males 8%).

Apart from ATSI men tending to justify and excuse violence against women to a greater extent than non-ATSI men, there are relatively few other differences on the violence supportive attitudes measures.

The same pattern generally holds when comparing the violence supportive attitudes of ATSI and non-ATSI women. While the gap between ATSI and non-ATSI women is generally narrower (than is the case for men) ATSI women are more likely than non-ATSI women to endorse justifications and excuses for violence.

The results shown in Tables 10.4b – 10.4c (Appendix A – detailed tables) also enable a comparison of strength of violence supportive attitudes between Indigenous men and women. Attitudes which tend to justify, excuse or trivialise violence against women, or blame the victim, are held in similar proportions among ATSI men and women, whereas support for statements which *minimise* violence against women show significant variation. For example:

- Slapping or pushing the other partner to cause harm or fear (percent very serious: ATSI males 47%, ATSI females 61%).
- Forcing the other partner to have sex (percent very serious: ATSI males 73%, ATSI females 85%).
- Tries to scare or control by threatening to hurt other family members (percent very serious: ATSI males 66%, ATSI females 86%).
- Throws or smashes objects near the other partner to frighten them (percent very serious: ATSI males 56%, ATSI females 70%).
- Repeatedly criticises the other partner to make them feel bad or useless (percent very serious: ATSI males 54%, ATSI females 67%).
- Controls the social life of the other by preventing them from seeing family and friends (percent very serious: ATSI males 42%, ATSI females 67%).
- Tries to control the other partner by denying them money (percent very serious: ATSI males 32%, ATSI females 49%).
- Agreeing that women going through custody battles often make up or exaggerate claims of violence (percent strongly agree: ATSI males 77%, ATSI females 58%).

10.5 Violence supportive attitudes by selected subgroups within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population

The extent to which scores on the VSA Construct vary by selected subgroups within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is explored in Table 10.5a (next page).

Gender: See discussion in section 10.2.

Age: While there are no statistically significant findings by age group, the pattern found for the sample as a whole seems to hold true for the ATSI sample, this being that both the youngest and oldest respondents are more likely than other age groups to be classified as high on the Violence Supportive Attitudes Construct.

Socio-economic status: Given sample size limitations, occupation was collapsed into two categories (white collar³⁰ and blue collar³¹), with those employed in white collar occupations less likely to rate highly on the VSA Construct (17%, 82% of whom were female) than their blue collar counterparts (49%, 52% of whom are male).

³⁰ Manager, professional, community and personal service workers, clerical and administrative workers and sales.

³¹ Technicians and trade workers, machine operators/drivers and labourers.

Gender Equality: Sixty-two percent of those with a low GE score are classified as high on the VSA Construct compared with 20% of those who rate as high on the GE Scale.

Understanding of violence against women: Sixty-two per cent of those classified as having a low UVAW Scale are classified as high on the VSA Construct compared with 14% of those who rate as high on the UVAW Scale.

Table 10.5a: Violence supportive attitudes scores by selected characteristics, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sample.

		Base n	Low %	Moderate %	High %
Total Indigenous Sample		341	22	41	37
Gender	Male	152	14*	38	48*
	Female	189	28*	45	27*
Age Group	16 to 24 years	67	16	34	50
	25 to 34 years	61	25	38	37
	35 to 44 years	61	23	51	26
	45 to 54 years	57	23	47	29
	55 to 64 years	21	25	38	37
	65 years or more	34	19	41	40
Remoteness Area	Major cities	148	26	43	31
	Inner regional	57	22	43	35
	Outer regional	83	27	41	32
	Remote/ very remote	50	9	42	50
Socio-economic Status (Quintiles)	1 - Low (most disadvantaged)	90	18	31	51
	2	62	21	45	34
	3	53	31	48	21
	4	70	20	55	24
	5 - High (most advantaged)	54	27	40	34
Highest Education	University or higher	56	28	45	27
	Trade, certificate or diploma	91	26	46	28
	Secondary or below	193	19	40	40
Employment Status	Employed	195	26	45	29
	Unemployed	43	14	33	53
	Not in labour force	99	19	40	41
	Other	4	24	10	67
Occupation	White collar	130	34*	49	17*
	Blue collar	59	10	41	49
Family Composition Household	Lone person household	45	16	45	39
	Couple only	68	37	31	32
	Couple children at home	129	22	51	27
	Lone parent children at home	47	26	38	36
	Group household	23	16	37	47
	Other type of household	28	4	25	71
Understands VAW	Low understanding	80	4*	34	62*
	Moderate understanding	172	17	45	37
	High understanding	89	46	40	14*
Gender Equity Support	Low	87	6*	32	62*
	Medium	145	15	52	33
	High	109	47*	33	20*

*Result is statistically significant compared to total Indigenous sample, $p \leq .10$.

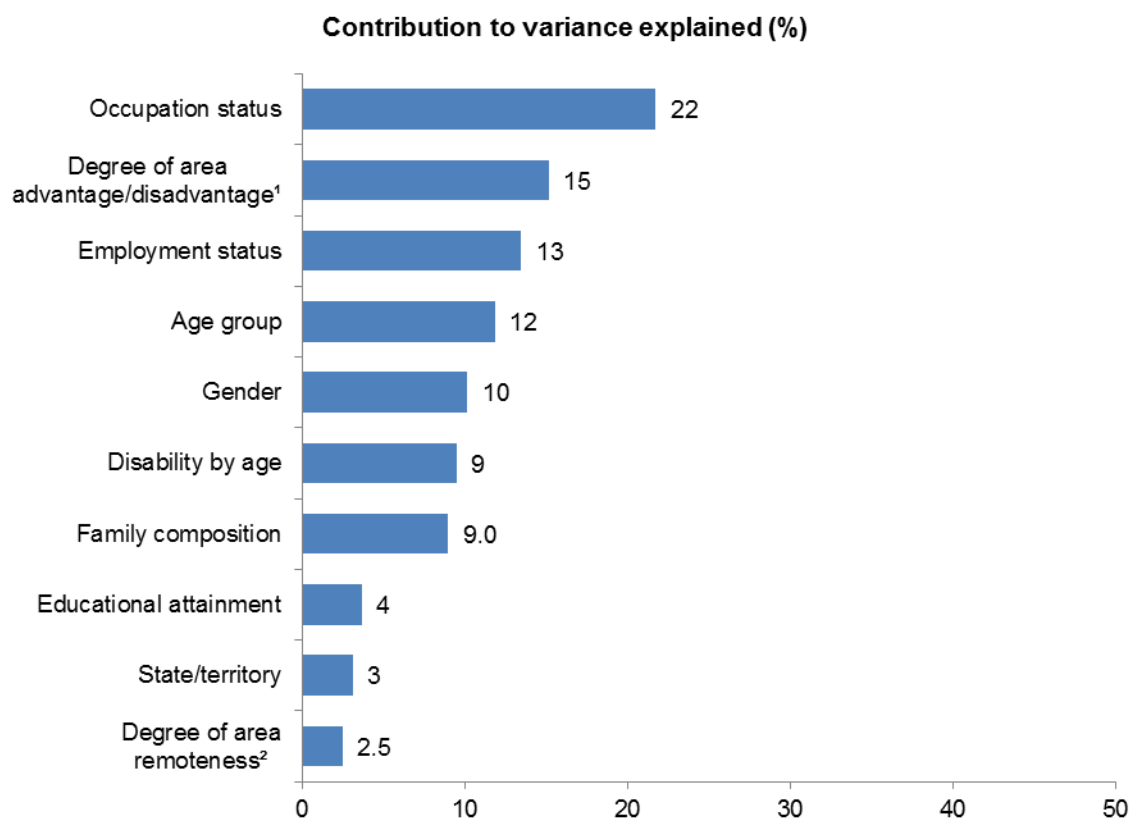
Don't know/refused not shown.

The bivariate findings showing that both socio-economic status and gender are strongly associated with high VSA scores amongst the Indigenous sample are reinforced by the results of the modelling undertaken (see Figure 10.5b).

The modelling undertaken shows that occupation, locational disadvantage and employment status have considerable explanatory power. However, it must also be taken into account that among the Indigenous sample 'occupation' and 'employment status' are highly correlated with gender (e.g. 62% of Indigenous males are employed compared with 46% of Indigenous females).

Given the interrelationships between gender and occupation, in particular, an additional test was undertaken to examine the influence of gender on occupation. As it stands the variance explained by this model is 22% but if gender within occupation is controlled for the variance explained by the model would increase to 27%. This suggests that the occupations most strongly influencing VSA scores are highly gendered and it is therefore likely that gender combined with occupation is more significant than occupation on its own.

Figure 10.5b: The relative importance of selected demographic items in explaining variance in the Violence Supportive Attitudes Construct (% variance explained) for the Indigenous sample.



¹ Measured with Australian Bureau of Statistics Index of Relative Advantage and Disadvantage (see Table 1.5)

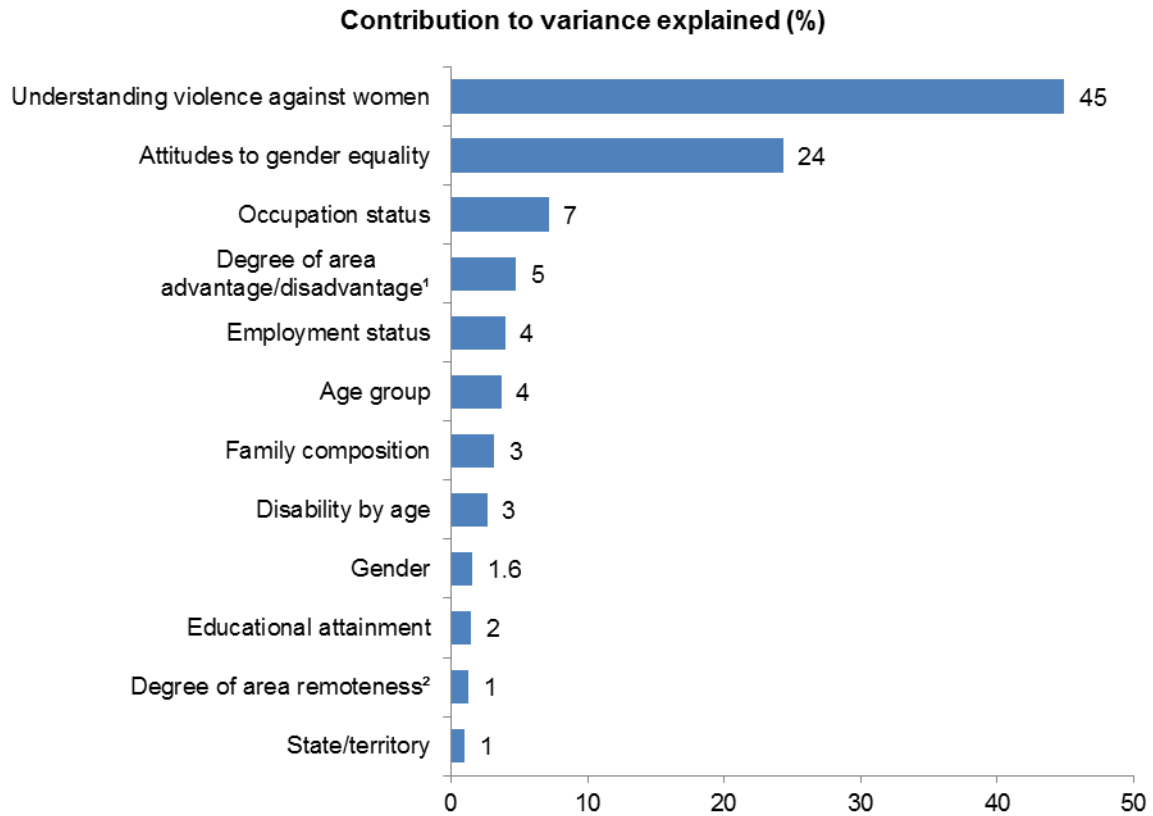
² Measured with Australian Bureau of Statistics remoteness areas classifications (see Table 1.5)

Total variance explained by model – 22%.

Note: Including the interaction between gender and occupation in the model increased the variance explained to 27%, suggesting different gender effects on violence supportive attitudes among occupation groups.

When the GE and UVAW scores are added to the model (see Figure 10.5c) the total variance explained increases to 54% with these two items accounting for 45% and 24% of the explained variance, respectively.

Figure 10.5c: The relative importance of selected demographic and attitudinal items in explaining variance in the Violence Supportive Attitudes Construct (% variance explained) for the Indigenous sample.



¹Measured with Australian Bureau of Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (see Table 1.5)

²Measured with Australian Bureau of Statistics remoteness areas classification (see Table 1.5)

Understanding measured using the Understanding of Violence Against Women Scale (see Table 1.5 and section 5.3)

Attitudes to gender equality measured using the Gender Equality Scale (see Table 1.5 and section 4.1.2)

Total variance explained by model – 54%.

11. Persons with a self-reported disability

11.1. Profile of the persons with a self-reported disability

The third population group further explored in this report is persons with a self-reported disability. To be classified as having a disability a respondent needed to have answered that they have a long-term difficulty which results in them always, often, sometimes or rarely having difficulty hearing, seeing, communicating, walking, climbing stairs, bending, learning or doing any similar activity (Dem17) AND that this reduces the amount or kind of activity they can do in their daily life (Dem17a). On this basis, 11% of the sample identified as being a person with a disability. The comparative profile of persons with a disability relative to persons not classified as having a disability is provided in Table 11.1.

These data show that relative to non-disabled persons, persons with a disability are considerably older (mean age 59.4 years compared with 43.8 years), and in particular, more likely to be aged 75 years and over (23% compared with 6%). Persons with a disability are also less likely to live in major cities (63% compared with 73%) and more likely to live in areas of greater socio-economic disadvantage (41% living in locations classified as SEIFA quintiles 1 and 2 compared with 29% of persons without a disability). While being more likely to be Australian-born (71% compared with 66%), those persons with a disability who are born overseas are more likely not to speak English well (29% compared with 19%). Compared to those without a disability, those with a disability are also more likely to be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (4% compared with 2%) and more likely not to be university graduates (10% compared with 21%). In terms of employment status, persons with a disability are also more likely to be retired (42% compared with 15%) or unable to work (16% compared with 1%), with only 28% being employed. Those with a disability are also more likely to live in couple only households (35% compared with 27%) or to live alone (28% compared with 11%).

Table 11.1: Comparative profile of persons with and without a self-reported disability by selected characteristics (%).

		Has a disability (n=2,059) %	Does not have a disability (n=15,458) %
Gender	Male	49	48
	Female	51	52
Age Group	16 to 17 years	*	2**
	18 to 24 years	3	14**
	25 to 34 years	6	18**
	35 to 44 years	10	19**
	45 to 54 years	17	18
	55 to 64 years	23**	14
	65 to 74 years	17**	9
	75 years or more	23**	6
	<i>Mean age</i>	59.4	43.8
State / Territory	New South Wales	29	32**
	Victoria	23	26
	Queensland	21	20
	South Australia	10**	7
	Western Australia	10	11
	Tasmania	4**	2
	Northern Territory	1	1
	ACT	2	2
Remoteness Area	Major city	63	73**
	Inner regional	21**	16
	Outer regional	14**	9
	Remote/very remote	2	2
Socio- economic Status (Quintiles)	1 - Low (most disadvantaged)	22**	14
	2	19**	15
	3	20	20
	4	20	22**
	5 - High (most advantaged)	19	28**
Birthplace	Australia	71**	66
	Main English Speaking countries	12**	10
	Other countries	17	24**
Migration Status	First generation	29	34**
	Second generation	18	19
	Third plus generation	53**	47
Language Proficiency	<i>Base: First generation Australians speak LOTE at home</i>		
	Speak English well	71	81**
	Does not speak English well	29**	19
Year of Arrival	<i>Base: First generation Australians</i>		
	Arrived before 2005	93**	69
	Arrived from 2005	6	30**

** Result is statistically significant between those with a disability and those without a disability, $p \leq 0.1$.
Don't know/refused not shown.

Table 11.1: Comparative profile of persons with and without a self-reported disability by selected characteristics (%) (cont.).

		Has a disability (n=2,059) %	Does not have a disability (n=15,458) %
Indigenous Status[#]	Indigenous	4**	2
	Non Indigenous	96	98**
Highest Education	University or higher	10	21**
	Trade, certificate or diploma	29	32
	Secondary or below	60**	46
Employment Status	Employed	28	66**
	Unemployed	6	5
	Home duties	6	6
	Retired	42**	15
	Student	1	7**
	unable to work	16**	1
Occupation	Manager	13	15
	Professional	16	21**
	Technicians and trade	19	16
	Community and Personal Service	13	13
	Clerical and administrative	10	12
	Sales worker	8	9
	Machinery operator and driver	9**	5
	Labourer	12**	8
	Other	*	*
Family Composition Household	Lone person household	28**	11
	Couple only	35**	27
	Couple children at home	22	43**
	Lone parent children at home	6	7
	Group household	3	5**
	Other type of household	6	5

** Result is statistically significant between those with a disability and those without a disability, $p \leq .01$.

Don't know/refused not shown.

[#]Weighted to independent population benchmarks.

11.2. Gender equality, understanding violence against women and violence supportive attitudes

Looking overall at the relative scores for persons with and without a disability in terms of gender equality, understanding violence and violence supportive attitudes, the results represented in Table 11.2a reveal a complex picture. While those with a disability are more likely to have a low gender equality score (35% compared with 25%) and more likely to have a high violence supportive attitudes score (38% compared with 27%), these attitudes are coupled with a slightly higher score on the Understanding Violence Against Women Scale (22% compared with 19%).

Table 11.2a: Comparative profile of persons with and without a self-reported disability by gender equality, understanding violence and violence supportive attitudes (%).

		Has a disability (n=2,059)	disability (n=15,458)
		%	%
Gender Equality Support	Low	35**	25
	Medium	41	44
	High	24	31**
Understands VAW	Low understanding	27	31**
	Moderate understanding	51	50
	High understanding	22**	19
Violence Supportive Attitudes	Low	18	22
	Moderate	44	51**
	High	38**	27

** Result is statistically significant between those with a disability and those without a disability, $p \leq .01$.

As indicated in Table 11.1 persons with a disability tend to be older than those without. Given that older age cohorts were found to be more likely to score low on the GE and UVAW Scales and high on VSA than the sample as a whole, a distinction was made in the analysis of individual questions between people with disabilities under the age of 65 years and those over the age of 65 years.

However, to guard against the possibility that this approach to categorisation did not mask differences for people with disabilities within age categories, data for people with and without disabilities were analysed by a larger number of age cohorts to see if there are any discernible differences in attitudes to violence against women once age is taken into account. The findings presented in Table 11.2b (see below) compare the disabled and non-disabled samples by age group, and show that while there are relatively few differences between the disabled and non-disabled samples by age group in terms of GE and UVAW scores, there are still differences with respect to VSA. Disabled persons aged 18 to 34 years (43%), 35 to 54 years (27%) and 55 years and over (41%) are more likely than non-disabled persons of the same age (30%, 20% and 32%, respectively) to have high VSA scores.

Table 11.2b: Comparative profile of persons with and without a self-reported disability by selected characteristics (%).

		Has a disability			Does not have a disability		
		18-34 years n=135 A %	35-54 years n=476 B %	55 years+ n=1,352 C %	18-34 years n=4,041 D %	35-54 years n=5,768 E %	55 years+ n=5,408 F %
Gender Equality Support	Low	26	25	41 ^F	23	21	32
	Medium	41	47	39	45	44	42
	High	33	28	20	31	35	26 ^C
Understands VAW	Low understanding	35	30	25	40	27	24
	Moderate understanding	47	46	53	48	50	53
	High understanding	18	24	22	12	23	23
Violence Supportive Attitudes	Low	20	25	15	17	28	20 ^C
	Moderate	36	48	44	53 ^A	51	48
	High	43 ^D	27 ^E	41 ^F	30	20	32

^{ABCDEF} Result is statistically significant between those with a disability and those without a disability and age group, $p \leq .01$.

This analysis was confirmed by running a simple model exploring the relationship between age and disability and violence supportive attitudes. This model showed that while age accounts for most of the variance in the VSA Construct, adding disability status to the model improves its predictive power (data not shown). This means that, independently of age, disability status is a significant (but weak) predictor of violence supportive attitudes.

As discussed earlier in this report gender is a predictor of scores on the GE and UVAW Scales and the VSA Construct. Analysis was undertaken to determine the extent to which these differences were apparent among men and women with a disability (see Table 11.2c and 11.2d below).

This shows that men with a disability are distinguished from both women with a disability and their non-disabled peers. In both age cohorts they are more likely than both the other groups to score low on GE and high on VSA. In the younger cohort they are also more likely to score lower on UVAW.

Women aged less than 65 years with a disability differed from their non-disabled peers on support for gender equality (this being moderately lower among women with a disability). However, this group were more likely to score high on the UVAW Scale, and were not distinguished from their non-disabled peers on the VSA Construct.

Table 11.2c: Comparative profile of persons aged less than 65 years with and without a self-reported disability by gender (%).

		Has a disability		Does not have a disability	
		Male n=514	Female n=620	Male n=5,826	Female n=6,983
		A	B	C	D
		%	%	%	%
Gender Equality Support	Low	35 ^{BCD}	15	30 ^{BD}	15
	Medium	45	45	47 ^D	42
	High	20	40 ^{AC}	23	43 ^{AC}
Understands VAW	Low understanding	36 ^{BD}	16	38 ^{BD}	26 ^B
	Moderate understanding	46	51	47	51 ^C
	High understanding	18	34 ^{ACD}	15	23 ^{AC}
Violence Supportive Attitudes	Low	15	32 ^{AC}	17	30 ^{AC}
	Moderate	49	46	53 ^{BD}	51
	High	36 ^{BCD}	22	30 ^{BD}	19

^{ABCD} Result is statistically significant between those with a disability and those without a disability and gender, $p \leq .01$.

Women with disabilities in the older age cohort were more likely to have low GE and high VSA scores than women without disabilities, and less likely to have high UVAW scores.

In summary, after accounting for age, having a disability is modestly associated with having high VSA among older women (i.e. those aged over 65 years) and men with a disability.

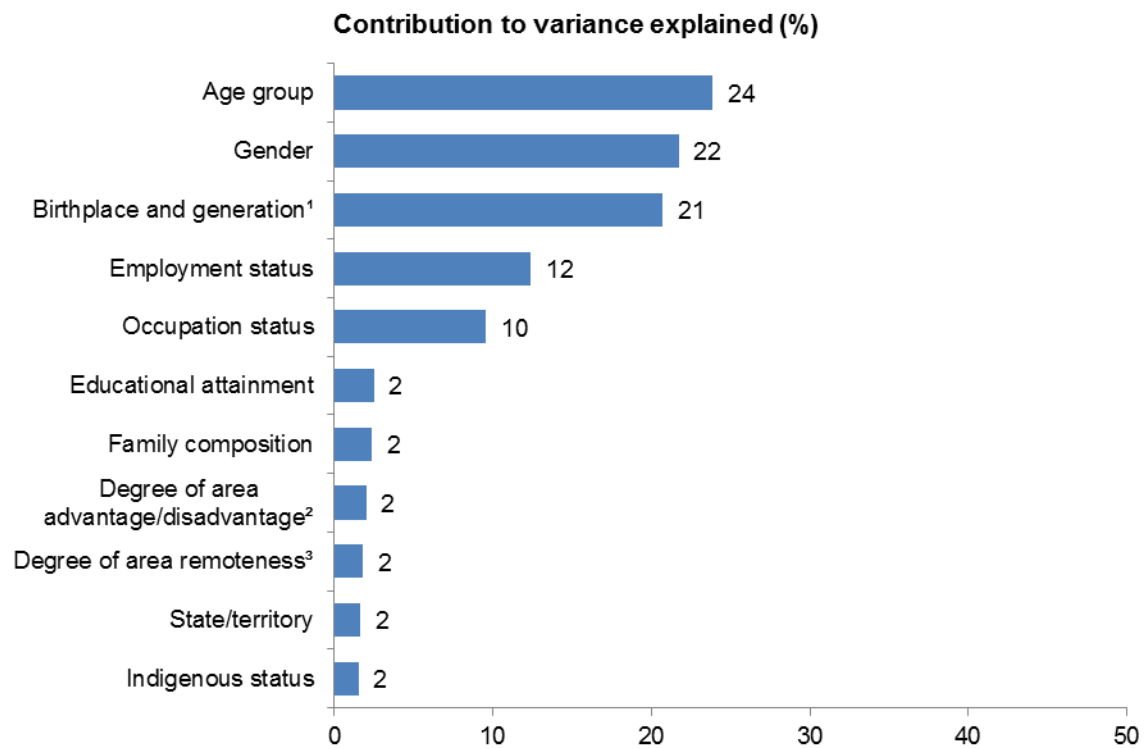
Table 11.2d: Comparative profile of persons aged over 65 years with and without a self-reported disability by gender (%).

		Has a disability		Does not have a disability	
		Male n=359	Female n=474	Male n=1,086	Female n=1,563
		A	B	C	D
		%	%	%	%
Gender Equality Support	Low	57 ^{BCD}	43 ^D	48 ^D	33
	Medium	32	40 ^A	39 ^A	43 ^A
	High	11	17	13	24 ^{ABC}
Understands VAW	Low understanding	37 ^{BD}	22	30 ^{BD}	20
	Moderate understanding	51	57	54	56
	High understanding	12	21 ^{AC}	16	24 ^{AC}
Violence Supportive Attitudes	Low	6	13 ^A	10	16 ^{AC}
	Moderate	39	41	45	47 ^{AB}
	High	55 ^{BCD}	46 ^D	45 ^D	37

^{ABCD} Result is statistically significant between those with a disability and those without a disability and gender, $p \leq .01$.

This result is confirmed in the model below (see Figure 11.2e) which explains 19% of the variance in VSA scores for persons with a disability. This shows that age accounts for most of the variation in VSA scores among persons with a disability (24%), closely followed by gender (22%) and birthplace/generation (21%).

Figure 11.2e: The relative importance of selected demographic items in explaining variance in the Violence Supportive Attitudes Construct (% variance explained) for persons with a disability.



¹ Included respondent's place of birth as well as the place of birth of their parents.

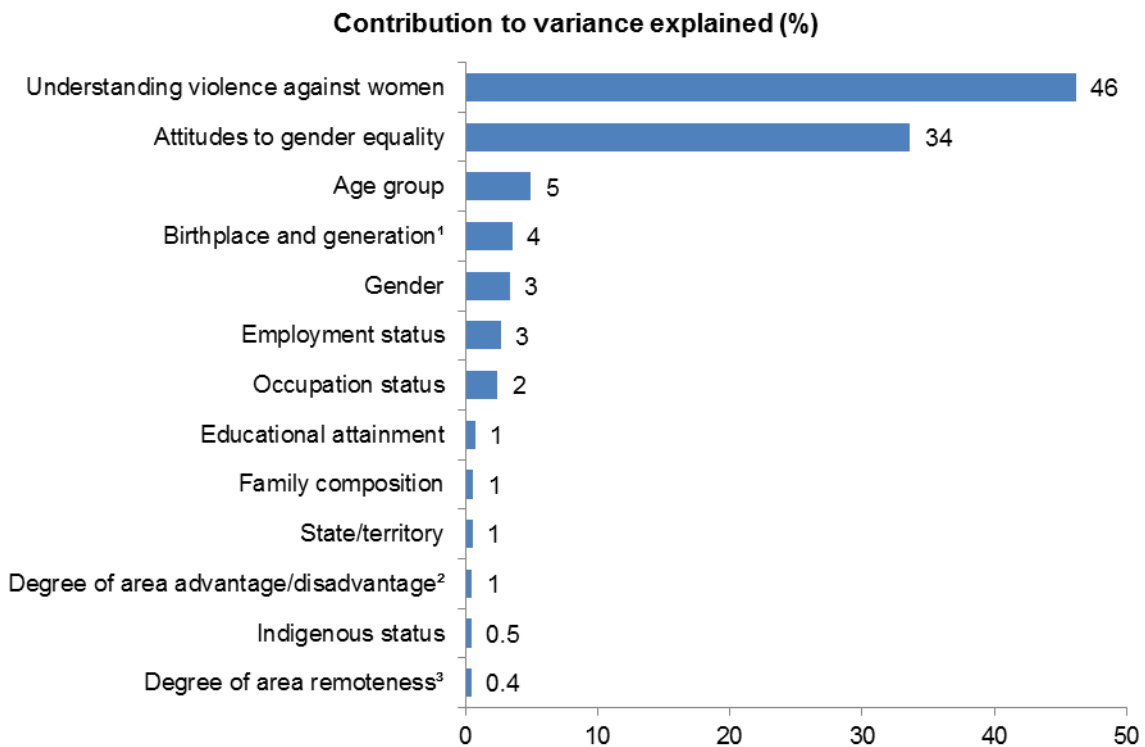
² Measured with Australian Bureau of Statistics Index of Relative Socio-Economic advantage and disadvantage (see Table 1.5)

³ Measured with Australian Bureau of Statistics remoteness areas classifications (see Table 1.5)

Total variance explained by model – 19%

Again, when the GE and UVAW variables are added to the model these two attributes account for the bulk of the explained variance (46% and 34%, respectively).

Figure 11.2f: The relative importance of selected demographic and attitudinal items in explaining variance in the Violence Supportive Attitudes Construct (% variance explained) for persons with a disability.



¹Included respondent's place of birth as well as the place of birth of their parents.

²Measured with Australian Bureau of Statistics Index of relative Socio-Economic advantage and disadvantage (see Table 1.5)

³Measured with Australian Bureau of Statistics remoteness areas classification (see Table 1.5)

Understanding measured using the Understanding Violence Against Women Scale (see Table 1.5 and section 5.3)

Attitudes to gender equality measured using the Gender Equality Index (see Table 1.5 and section 4.1.2)

Total variance explained by model – 51%

12. Summary and discussion of findings and their implications

12.1. Introduction and background

Violence against women is a prevalent problem with serious consequences for women and their children, communities, businesses and the economy (National Council to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2009b & c). There is a consensus among key expert bodies that violence against women is the result of multiple and interrelated influences, with individual behaviours being shaped by experiences in families and relationships, which are in turn influenced by community and organisational cultures and practices, as well as broader societal factors, such as the media and social policies (European Commission 2010b; UN 2006, 2012c; UNICEF et al. 2013; WHO 2002, 2010; WHO & London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine 2010). A primary factor underpinning this violence is adherence to rigid gender roles and identities and inequalities of power and resources between men and women. In this context attitudes are among the means through which violence or tolerance of violence towards women is learned by individuals. Attitudes also reflect and reinforce broader social norms contributing to the problem. Attitudes towards violence against women, both directly and via their influence on broader social norms, impact upon:

- the perpetration of violence
- women's responses to violence
- the responses of families, friends, work colleagues and others witnessing violence
- the way in which organisations, communities and governments respond to violence against women.

As a reflection of social norms, attitudes are also an important barometer of our progress in preventing and responding to violence against women.

While there is some variation in the way attitudes towards violence against women are conceptualised and measured in the literature, five key themes can be discerned. These include attitudes that:

- Justify violence against women based on the notion that it is legitimate for a man to use violence against women in certain circumstances (e.g. partner violence is justified if a partner has sex with another man).
- Excuse violence against women by attributing it to external causes (e.g. stress) or holding that men cannot be held fully responsible for violent behaviour (e.g. rape results from men not being able to control their need for sex).
- Trivialise violence against women, based on the view that the impacts are not sufficiently serious to warrant action by women themselves, the community or public agencies (e.g. women who are sexually harassed should sort it out themselves).
- Minimise the impact of violence against women, by denying its seriousness, denying that it occurs or denying that certain behaviours are indeed violence at all (e.g. it's only rape if the woman physically resisted).
- Shift blame for the violence from the perpetrator to the victim or hold women at least partially responsible for their victimisation or for preventing victimisation (e.g. women ask for rape).

Such attitudes are referred to collectively in this report as violence supportive attitudes.

As indicated earlier, individuals who hold such attitudes are not necessarily 'violent-prone' or would openly condone violence against women. However, when such attitudes are expressed by influential individuals or held by a substantial number of people this can have the effect of creating a culture in which violence is at best not clearly condemned and at worst condoned or encouraged.

There is a large body of evidence indicating an association between attitudes towards gender equality, gender relations and gender identities and attitudes towards violence against women (Flood & Pease 2006, 2009). That is, people who support a more equitable distribution of power and resources between men and women and more fluid gender roles and identities tend to be less likely to endorse attitudes supportive of violence against women (Flood & Pease 2006, 2009). Such attitudes have also been found to be associated both with violence itself (Foshee et al. 2008; Nabors & Jasinski 2009; Santana et al. 2006) and with responses to violence by women (Flood & Pease 2006) and those witnessing violence (Powell 2012).

12.2. Survey overview

The NCAS is a 20-minute telephone survey of a cross-section of 17,517 Australians aged 16 years and over. It measures:

- knowledge of violence against women
- attitudes towards this violence
- attitudes to gender equality
- views and understanding of responses to violence against women.

It has a focus on partner violence, sexual assault, sexual harassment and stalking and a particular emphasis on strengthening understanding of knowledge, attitudes and responses concerning violence against women among: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) Australians; those with a disability; and those born overseas in a country in which English is not the main language spoken (herein referred to as persons from non-main English speaking countries or N-MESCs).

12.3. Methodology overview

To assist with analysis, three analytical tools were developed on the basis of questions in the survey, as follows:

- ***Understanding Violence Against Women (UVAW) Scale***

The UVAW Scale was developed to look at the distribution of understanding of violence against women across the population and to explore the relationship between understanding of violence against women and violence supportive attitudes. The UVAW Scale is comprised of a series of questions in the survey gauging respondent's understanding of the behaviours constituting violence against women. The scale was designed to distinguish respondents who understand violence against women as comprising only overt physical violence and threats of violence from those appreciating that it may also comprise social and psychological behaviours designed to intimidate and control. This approach was taken based on the extensive body of literature indicating that this more nuanced understanding of violence against women is pivotal to framing appropriate responses to the problem (see 5.1).

- ***The Violence Supportive Attitudes Construct (VSA Construct)***

The VSA Construct was developed to provide a straightforward means of analysing relationships between the extent of endorsement of attitudes justifying, excusing, minimising and trivialising violence or shifting blame to the victim, and key demographic variables and the UVAW and GE Scales (see below). It comprises an amalgam of questions from each of the VSA themes explored in

the survey. Again respondents were ranked according to their degree of support as having high, moderate or low attitudinal support for violence against women.

- **Gender Equality (GE) Scale**

Numerous aspects of gender relations, and their associated attitudinal measures, are theoretically relevant to understanding violence against women (e.g. hostility towards women, attitudes towards masculinity) (see 4.1). There are also different attitudinal manifestations of gender inequality itself (e.g. traditional sexism, benevolent sexism) (Swim et al. 1995). In NCAS this relationship is explored via an eight-item scale adapted from Inglehart and Norris (2003) which measures support for gender equality. The scale has been augmented to include a statement measuring support for more subtle expressions of gender inequality (adapted from Swim et al. 1995) and two statements concerned with power dynamics in relationships (adapted from National Crime Prevention 2001). Based on their responses to the questions, respondents were classified as having low, medium or high scores on the scale, indicating low, medium or high support for gender equality, respectively.

To accommodate changes made to the survey instrument between 2009 and 2013, modified versions of the UVAW Scale and the VSA Construct were developed for the purposes of comparing changes between survey waves. More detail on the construction and psychometric properties of these scales and construct, and their limitations, can be found in Appendix C – scales and constructs.

Items measuring attitudes were sorted into the five themes (see above) identified on the basis of a review of the literature, enabling assessment of support for particular attitudinal types.

Frequencies were developed for each question and analysis undertaken on each item on the basis of key socio-demographic variables and the GE and UVAW Scales and VSA Construct. Analysis in this report is based primarily on results reaching significance at the 99% confidence level ($p \leq .01$). Some results were statistically significant but not substantial in size. Where this is the case these results are generally only reported where a meaningful trend is apparent across a number of items. Multiple linear regression analysis was undertaken to explore relationships of interest arising out of the analysis.

Specific additional analyses have also been undertaken for the three sub-populations of interest (people born in a N-MESC, ATSI Australians and persons with a disability).

12.4. Knowledge of violence against women

Knowledge of violence against women is important to inform the response of families and friends to women affected by violence, as well as to engage the wider community in prevention efforts (Carlson & Worden 2005; McMahan & Baker 2011; O'Neil & Morgan 2010). There is also a strong relationship between understanding and attitudes (Azjen & Fishbein 2005; Chaiken & Trope 1999; Fazio 1990).

Overall, Australians have a high level of knowledge of violence against women. The majority (68%) recognise that it is common, although this is less than in 2009 (when 74% did so). There is a high level of understanding that domestic violence can be against the law with 96% agreeing to this proposition. Consistent with the law, and with legislation criminalising forced sex in marriage introduced into all Australian jurisdictions since the mid-1980s, most respondents recognise that 'a woman cannot be raped by someone she is in a relationship with'. However, nearly 1 in 10 agrees with this statement.

Although two-thirds (64%) of Australians agree, consistent with the evidence (ABS 2013b) that women are more likely to sexually assaulted by someone they know than by a stranger, the proportion doing so has declined from 2009 when 70% agreed. This decline is a particular concern given that this belief is understood to be pivotal to wider community misunderstanding of the circumstances in which sexual assault commonly occurs. The commonly held belief that women are more likely to be assaulted by a

stranger in turn has been identified as a key factor in the lower rates of reporting, prosecution and conviction in cases of sexual assault (Larcombe 2011).

There is wide community understanding that partner violence comprises a range of behaviours from overt physical violence through to social and psychological means to intimidate and control women. There is also wide recognition of stalking and harassment by phone and email as forms of violence against women. Although there is some variation in responses to the individual behaviours included in the survey, since 1995 there has been an overall improvement in the proportion recognising the various behaviours as domestic violence or violence against women. However, fewer recognise non-physical forms of violence than recognise physical violence and forced sex. For example:

- 97% of respondents agree that slapping or pushing one's partner to cause harm or fear is domestic violence.

However:

- only 85% recognise 'controlling the social life of one's partner by preventing them from seeing family and friends' as domestic violence.

This suggests that there is a continuing challenge to strengthen community understanding of the nature and dynamics of partner violence, and in particular the fact that it commonly extends beyond physical forms to include a constellation of behaviours used to harass, control and intimidate women (Stark 2009).

Of particular concern in this regard is the relatively small proportion of Australians recognising 'trying to control one's partner by denying them money' as a form of violence' (70%), and as serious (74%), the latter down from 77% in 1995. Several recent Australian and international studies have demonstrated the prevalence and serious impacts of this and other forms of economic abuse of women (MacDonald 2012; Postmus et al. 2011). This research suggests that economic abuse is among the strongest barriers to women leaving a violent relationship and is a significant contributor to the higher rates of poverty and unemployment among women who have experienced partner violence (Postmus et al. 2011).

Consistent with the evidence on the perpetration of partner violence and its impacts, the majority of Australians (71%) believe that partner violence is most likely to be perpetrated by men, and that women are more likely to suffer physical harm (86%). However, barely half (52%) believe that the level of fear is worse for women. There has also been a decline in all three of these items, that is, in the proportion recognising that:

- violence is perpetrated mainly or more often by men (from 86% in 1995 and 74% in 2009)
- women are more likely to suffer physical impacts (89% in 2009)
- women are more likely to experience fear (55% in 2009).

This is despite research evidence indicating that women are substantially more likely to experience fear and other negative impacts, a consequence of the more severe violence women experience than men from intimate other-sex partners; the particular dynamics of partner violence, where tactics to intimidate commonly co-occur with physical violence (e.g. threats to hurt others); and the distinctive barriers women face to seeking safety (see 6.3).

The small proportion of people believing that the level of fear associated with partner violence is greater for women, along with the decline on all three measures assessing understanding of the gendered patterns and impacts of partner violence, is further evidence of the need for a focus on strengthening community understanding of the dynamics and nature of this form of violence.

This is especially the case as poor understanding on these measures is evident even among some groups which, on other measures in the survey, demonstrate a high level of understanding and a disinclination to endorse violence supportive attitudes.

The need for such a focus can also be seen in responses to some of the questions in the survey measuring attitudes towards violence against women. For example, a large proportion lack appreciation of the barriers women face to leaving a violent relationship:

- Seventy-eight percent of respondents agree that 'it is hard to understand why women stay in a violent relationship'.
- Fifty-one percent agree that 'most women could leave a violent relationship if they wanted to'.

Poor understanding of violence against women is also implicit in the basis on which people are prepared to excuse violence. The excuses for partner violence attracting the highest level of support are 'violence can be excused if afterward the perpetrator genuinely regrets what they have done' (21%) and 'if the violent person gets so angry they temporarily lose control' (22%). The first of these excuses reflects a poor appreciation of the fact that violence is often characterised by a cyclical pattern with violent episodes being interspersed with periods of remorse and regret (Hale et al. 2006; Heise et al. 1999; VLRC 2006). The understanding of violence against women as essentially an anger management problem belies the evidence of only a modest association between poor anger management and partner violence (5.7). Indeed, contrary to this notion, studies suggest that violence is often used in a planned and strategic manner in order to intimidate and control (Stark 2009), with men who use violence often going to great lengths to perpetrate violence in ways that avoid detection (Pringle 1995; VLRC 2006). A focus on 'anger management' neglects the extent to which partner violence is intentional and planned, can imply that the victim is to blame by provoking violence, and over-emphasises individual psychological factors and neglects community factors (Gondolf & Russell 1986).

While there is an expert consensus that partner violence is the result of a confluence of factors, a primary influence is adherence to rigid gender roles and identities and differences in power between men and women. This understanding underpins contemporary policy and practice to reduce violence against women in Australia and internationally (Council of Australian Governments 2010; European Commission 2010b; UN 2006, 2012c; WHO 2010, WHO & London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine 2010). To gauge community understanding, respondents were asked to select the *main* cause of violence choosing between options reflecting:

- relationship-level gender role traditionalism and power inequalities ('the belief that men should be in charge of the relationship')
- an individual personality factor found to be moderately associated with violence, but which, as indicated above, is not widely regarded as a primary cause ('some men not being able to manage their anger')
- an external factor which may have a modest influence on violence, but typically in interaction with unequal power dynamics and masculine gender roles ('some men being under financial stress').

'Some men not being able to manage their anger' was the option identified as the main cause of violence against women by a majority of Australians overall (64%) and a majority of each of the sub-samples. Less than 1 in 5 Australians (18%) selected 'the belief that men should be in charge of the relationship'.

Although definitive conclusions regarding this complex phenomenon cannot be drawn on the basis of one question, the results also confirm the findings of previous research that there is a significant gap between the way in which violence against women is understood in the wider community and the understanding of

held by many professionals working with women and men affected by the problem, and researching and developing policy responses to prevent it (O'Neil & Morgan 2010). This prior research suggests that members of the community are more likely to attribute violence to individual characteristics (e.g. alcohol consumption) and are less likely to invoke broader social conditions, especially those related to the shaping of gender role, relations and identities (O'Neil & Morgan 2010). This gap in understanding has particular implications for the primary prevention of violence, which relies on the engagement of a wide range of people in day-to-day environments in which the antecedents of violence occur (e.g. workplaces, sport clubs). Such engagement will depend on their understanding of factors operating in these environments, despite the fact that they may seem distant from the behaviour of violence itself (e.g. the exclusion of women from decision-making in organisations, the sexualisation and objectification of women in the media, or policies and procedures that support masculine entitlement).

There is a low level of understanding of the greater risk of violence faced by women with disabilities, with only 41% recognising this.

12.5. Attitudes towards violence against women

12.5.1 *Justifications and excuses*

One of the aims of contemporary policy and legislative reform is to increase accountability for violent behaviour and strengthen legal and social sanctions against its use regardless of the circumstances (Council of Australian Governments 2010). A survey taken in Australia in 1987, when efforts to reform programs, policies and laws pertaining to violence against women began to be introduced, suggested that there was normative support for violence against women by way of justifying among a substantial minority of Australians (ANOP 1995). However, since 1995 only a very small proportion of Australians have agreed that violence can be *justified* in any of the circumstances put to them in successive waves of the NCAS (between 4% and 6% depending on the scenario concerned).

In 2013, this was similarly the case for the sample as whole and among people born overseas in a N-MESC and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, (although people in both the sub-samples were more inclined to endorse justifications than the sample as whole). This relatively low rate of support for violence being justified is consistent with the findings of other research conducted in high-income countries (Carlson & Worden 2005; European Commission 2010a; Harris/Decima 2009; Worden & Carlson 2005).

In contrast, there are substantial minorities believing that there are circumstances in which partner violence can be *excused* – ranging from 9% if the violent person is affected by alcohol and 12% if they were abused as a child or if currently under stress, to more than 1 in 5 (21%) if they are regretful afterwards or if a person 'gets so angry they lose control' (22%). Forty-three per cent believe that 'rape results from men not being able to control their need for sex', while 9% believe that men are less responsible for rape if affected by alcohol or drugs at the time.

12.5.2 *Trivialisation*

Whereas violence against women was once *trivialised* as largely a private matter, since the 1980s it has increasingly been recognised as a serious issue warranting attention by governments, communities and organisations. This is somewhat reflected in community attitudes with less than 1 in 10 (9%) agreeing that it's a woman's duty to stay in a violent relationship; and 12% agreeing that women who are sexually harassed should sort it out themselves. However, 17% believe that domestic violence is a private matter to be handled in the family.

Courts in all States and Territories in Australia have the power to include a provision to exclude a domestic violence perpetrator from the home as part of a protection order (National Council to Reduce Violence

against Women and their Children 2009a). The majority of the community supports the principle underpinning these provisions: that it is reasonable for the violent person to be made to leave the family home (89% supported this proposition in 2013). Recognition of the seriousness of, and shared responsibility for, partner violence is not matched by an appreciation of the continuing barriers women face to securing safety, however. As indicated above, around half (51%) agrees that most women could leave a violent relationship if they really wanted to; while 78% find it 'hard to understand why women stay in violent relationships'.

12.5.3 Minimising violence

The overwhelming majority of Australians believe that violence against women is a serious issue (95%), and most believe that the range of behaviours constituting partner violence and violence against women are serious. This suggests that violence against women is a highly salient issue for the Australian public. Similar findings have been found in surveys in other comparable countries (Carlson & Worden 2005; European Commission 2010a; Harris/Decima 2009; Worden & Carlson 2005).

However, a lower proportion recognises social, psychological and financial forms of violence to be as serious as physical forms. Similarly, indirect forms of harassment by email and phone were regarded as less serious forms of violence against women than was the more direct behaviour of stalking. Thirty-eight per cent believe that tracking of a woman's movements without her consent by electronic means may be acceptable in some circumstances (i.e that it is always, rarely or sometimes acceptable). However the majority, six in 10 respondents, believe this behaviour is never acceptable (61%). The majority believe that electronically tracking a woman is a serious behaviour (85%).

Contrary to the evidence that false allegations are rare (see 6.4.6), only three in five Australians (59%) believe this to be the case in regards to sexual assault, and over half (53%) believe that women often make false allegations of domestic violence in order to improve their prospects in court cases involving the care of children after separation or divorce. Nearly two in five (38%) Australians believe that 'women who say they were raped led the man on and later had regrets'. At law, sexual assault is no longer conceptualised as sex forced upon a woman against her will. Rather, consent must be freely given. Although this is appreciated by the majority of Australians, one in 10 still believes that if 'a woman doesn't physically resist then it isn't really rape'.

12.5.4 Victim-blaming

Sizeable minorities endorse statements attributing at least some blame for violence to the victim, including just over one in 10 agreeing that domestic violence can be excused if the victim is heavily affected by alcohol (11%) or 'if a woman goes into a room alone with a man it's her fault if she is raped' (12%). Higher proportions believe that 'women often say no when they mean yes' (16%) and if a woman is raped while drunk or affected by drugs she is at least partially responsible' (19%).

12.5.5 Attitudes to gender equality

Findings for the questions tapping attitudes to gender equality are mixed. In regards to questions exploring gender equality in the public sphere, 5% agree that 'a university education is more important for a boy than a girl'; just over one in 10 agrees that 'men have more right to a job than a woman' (12%); and that 'discrimination is no longer a problem in Australia' (13%). However, nearly three in 10 (27%) agree that 'men make better political leaders than women'.

Of particular concern are responses to the two questions directly relevant to the unequal relationship dynamics implicated in violence against women (see 4.1). Nearly one in five (19%) of respondents agreed

that 'men should take control in relationships and be the head of the household' and nearly three in 10 (28%) agreed that 'women prefer a man to be in charge of the relationship'.

In regards to attitudes to women's role in child bearing just over one in 10 (12%) agrees that 'a woman has to have a child to be fulfilled' while 66% agrees that 'It's OK for a woman to have a child as a single parent'.

12.5.6 Patterns across the themes and overall implications

Given the relationship between attitudes to violence and perpetration and victimisation and professional and community responses (see 3.5.1), the findings of the survey suggest the importance of ongoing work to address the factors responsible for shaping attitudes to violence against women.

Overall these findings suggest that while normative support for violence against women by way of justifying it is minimal, substantial numbers of Australians endorse attitudes that have the effect of excusing, minimising or trivialising violence or shifting responsibility from the perpetrator to the victim. These are areas warranting particular attention in future prevention activity.

As discussed further below the scale used to measure attitudinal support for gender equality taps only some of the theoretically relevant concepts related to gender equality, roles and identities that have been found to be linked to violence against women in prior research. Nevertheless, the responses, particularly to questions relevant to equality within intimate relationships, suggests that there is a continuing need to address attitudinal support for gender inequality as a key aspect of violence prevention.

12.6 Community responses

There is increasing recognition of the value of strengthening the capacity of those witnessing or becoming aware of violence and its antecedents to act to prevent violence, reduce the likelihood of violence escalating, or to respond to secure the safety of women and children subject to violence (McDonald & Flood 2012; Powell 2011, 2012). This is particularly the case given low rates of reporting to police and the fact that both violence and its antecedents often occur beyond the gaze of those responsible for enforcing laws or ensuring that organisational and community norms are observed.

Respondents were presented with two scenarios in which physical violence was being perpetrated against a woman by her partner. In the first the woman was presented as a close friend or family member and in the second as a stranger. For each case, half of the sample were presented with a scenario in which children were present, and half in which they were not.

Very large proportions of Australians indicate that if they were to witness physical violence against a woman, they would intend to take some form of action – either by saying or doing something, or physically intervening. They were more likely to state that they would intend to intervene in scenarios where the woman was a family member or close friend (98%) than if she was unknown to them (92%); but no more likely to state that they would intend to intervene in scenarios involving the presence of the victim's children than those without.

In contrast to their own intentions, however, the majority of Australians (81%) believe that 'most people turn a blind eye to domestic violence', suggesting that Australians have a poor assessment of the responses of others.

These findings indicate that there is some potential to engage members of the community in responding to violence against women. There are conflicting findings in the literature regarding whether intent is matched by action in practice and other studies indicate that it is often not (Gracia & Herrero 2006a). A large proportion of respondents, particularly men, say that they would 'physically intervene' rather than 'say or do something else to try and help'. Services working with people affected by partner violence

caution against a confrontational approach as this may compound the problem and increase risk for all involved (VicHealth 2010). Together these findings suggest that continued efforts to support positive bystander behaviour, particularly in response to violence affecting women who are not known, will be important.

Assessment of the likely efficacy of action, and bystander's confidence in taking action have been found to influence bystander behaviour (Powell 2011, 2012). However, despite intensive procedural reform to improve police response times in recent years, only 44% believe that the police now respond more quickly to domestic violence calls than they did in the past, with a further 42% stating that they didn't know. This is also problematic since there is evidence that awareness that the law will hold men who use violence accountable for their behaviour can help to shift wider community norms in relation to this violence (Salazar et al. 2003).

It is also of considerable concern that substantial and increasing numbers of Australians would not know where to go for outside advice or support for a domestic violence problem. Just over half the sample indicate that they would know where to get such support (57%) and this is down from 62% in 2009.

Although evidence indicates that not being believed is a significant barrier to women with disabilities securing safety and redress (Clark & Fileborn 2011), 42% of people disagree with the proposition that women with disabilities are less likely to be believed than other women, with a further 14% reporting that they do not know. This suggests the importance of raising wider community awareness of the barriers faced by women with disabilities. In addition there would be clear benefits in violence against women being the focus of workforce and organisational development, especially in settings with a high level of contact with people with disabilities.

This survey explored bystander responses to violence in the event of a critical incident. However, it is important to note that there is a potential role for bystanders in other scenarios, including responding to a disclosure of violence, when observing early signs of violent behaviour (early intervention), or when witnessing known risk factors for violence in organisational and community environments (primary prevention) (Powell 2011, 2012). Bystander engagement in these other areas of response is important to explore in future research, practice and policy.

12.7. Change in knowledge and attitudes over time

Marked change in community attitudes would not necessarily be expected in the relatively short period of time between the three waves of the survey. Given that there are only three survey waves, and that change in either direction on most measures is relatively small, it is also difficult to distinguish a clear and sustained trend from what may be fluctuations due to transitory factors. Further, data are not available for all questions across all waves, as some questions were introduced after 1995. Accordingly, the following discussion focuses on measures on which there is a trend, and those that are of particular concern for future policy and practice.

While there has been improvement in some areas, and a deteriorating trend in others, on most measures there has been very little change since 1995. At the overall level there has been no improvement in knowledge of violence against women (as measure by the UVAW Scale); endorsement of attitudes supportive of violence against women (as measured by the VSA Construct); or in attitudinal support for gender equality (as measured by the GE Scale). However in the separate analysis of data for young people (those aged 16-24 years), a sizeable reduction was found in the percentage of young men having a high level of attitudinal support for violence against women (see www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/ncas). Although there was no change in this cohort in understanding of violence against women or attitudes to gender equality, this change is encouraging since young men have been the primary target of recent efforts to prevent violence against women.

Together these findings suggest the importance of maintaining and strengthening efforts to strengthen knowledge and understanding of violence against women and to build positive attitudes and social norms. This is especially the case given the findings from the *2012 Personal Safety Survey* indicate that there has been no statistically significant reduction in the rates of physical and sexual violence affecting women between 2005 and 2012 (ABS 2013b).

A levelling and possible decline in support for gender equality since 1995 has been found in other Australian and international research (Bolzendahl & Myers 2004; Cotter et al. 2011; Pampel 2011; van Egmond et al. 2010). Given the well-established relationship between attitudes to gender equality and attitudes to violence against women, efforts to improve attitudes towards gender equality (and other aspects of gender roles and identities found to be influential in violence against women) are likely to be critical to future efforts to prevent this problem.

There are some positive trends including:

- A consistent reduction in the proportion of people agreeing that women who are sexually harassed should sort it out themselves, with support for this view declining from 20% in 1995 to 13% in 2009 and 12% in 2013.
- An increase in the proportion being aware that women with disabilities reporting sexual assault are less likely to be believed from 37% in 2009 to 42% in 2013.
- A gradual improvement in the proportion recognising most behaviours as partner violence between 1995 and 2013 (although not all changes are statistically significant).
- A similarly gradual improvement in the proportion of people regarding some forms of partner violence and violence as serious.

This trend applies particularly to some of the social and emotional forms of harassment, control and intimidation (such as 'repeatedly criticising one's partner to make them feel bad and useless' and 'controlling the social life of one's partner by preventing them from seeing family and friends').

However, of concern are:

- The decline in the proportion agreeing that controlling one's partner by denying them money is serious from 77% in 1995 to 75% in 2009, and 74% in 2013.
- The continuing trend towards perceiving partner violence to be perpetrated equally by men and women, and for its impacts to be experienced equally by both sexes.
- The six percentage point decline between 2009 and 2013 in the proportion of people agreeing that violence is common (see above), with other population-based research suggesting that responses to this question are linked with other critical indicators, including a preparedness to intervene to assist a woman subject to violence and attitudes towards the acceptability of violence (Gracia & Herrero 2006a & b).
- That fewer people in 2013 (64%) agreed that women are more likely to be assaulted by someone they know than by a stranger, with this declining from 70% in 2009.
- The declining proportion saying that they would know where to go for assistance with a domestic violence problem (62% in 2009 to 57% in 2013).
- The increase in the proportion of people agreeing that men perpetrate sexual assault because they cannot control their need for sex, from 35% in 2009 to 43% in 2013.

The lack of change in a positive direction overall does not necessarily indicate that attitudes are not amenable to change. As indicated below in the discussion on age cohort patterns, the survey findings are suggestive of the amenability of attitudes to violence against women to the influences of policy and structural change.

There are a number of possible explanations for an increase in the proportion of people believing that the perpetration and impacts of partner violence are gender-equal (see above). First, as noted earlier in this report, community definitions of domestic violence have broadened to include non-physical abuse. Once community members recognise forms of verbal, psychological and emotional abuse in relationships, they may be more inclined to recognise women's use of these forms of violence.

Second, while contemporary policy to combat violence against women is informed by a clear understanding that women are primarily affected, this has not always been the case with past policies having been more gender neutral and based on the notions that its causes (and therefore solutions) lay in the characteristics of individuals and the dynamics of particular relationships. This approach has informed the roll-out of past programs, including community campaigns (Murray & Powell 2009; Phillips 2006). It is possible that this may have had an enduring influence on public perceptions.

Third, it is possible that intimate partner violence has been increasingly portrayed as a gender-equal phenomenon in the media and popular culture. A recent study of print media in Australia found that while there were areas in which reporting could be strengthened, very few articles showed men and women as equally violent (Morgan & Politoff 2012). However, there are no known studies across media and popular culture platforms that have explored this issue.

The fourth possibility is that 'men's rights' and 'fathers rights' groups have had an impact on community understanding. These groups have argued in campaigns, particularly around changes to family law and shared parenting, that violence is gender equal (Bryant 2009; Flood 2010a).

Finally, there has been increasing attention to the use of public violence by women and girls and this may have spilled over to influence community perceptions about women's use of violence in relationships (Chesney-Lind & Irwin 2008; Muncer et al. 2001). There remains some debate among experts as to whether the gender gap in the perpetration of public violence by women and girls is narrowing. Some commentators argue that this is apparent, while others believe it to be an artefact of media reporting, and of a shift in law and policy which has criminalised a broader range of low-level criminal behaviours, with the result that a larger proportion of women appear in crime statistics (Chesney-Lind & Irwin 2008). As indicated in section 1.4, the *2012 Personal Safety Survey* demonstrates that whether in public, or in the context of a relationship, both men and women are substantially more likely to be the victims of violence by a man. The proportion of people reporting that they were victimised by a woman remains small.

12.8. Factors associated with knowledge, attitudes and responses

In the literature reviewed for this report, an association was found between attitudes and understanding and between attitudes to violence against women and those relating to gender equality. A further key theme emerging from the review was that knowledge and attitudes may be influenced by a range of demographic factors including gender, age, socio-economic status and place of birth. Although no existing literature was identified on attitudes among Indigenous communities, people in non-urban areas and people with disabilities, it was hypothesised on the basis of the literature on violence against women that attitudes in these groups may vary from those of the population as whole.

To investigate factors contributing to understanding of violence and the formation of violence supportive attitudes, univariate, bivariate and simple multivariate analyses were undertaken as a first step to describe the socio-demographic factors associated with the variables. This was followed by multiple linear

regression analysis to investigate the strength and relative contribution of individual variables of interest controlling for all other factors included in the survey.

Given the particular interest in knowledge and attitudes among people from N-MESC backgrounds, those with disabilities and ATSI Australians, multiple linear regression analysis was also undertaken for each of these samples, along with additional analysis to explore issues arising out of both this and the multivariate analysis.

The results of the multiple linear regression analysis are summarised below. Following this, each of the main factors identified in this analysis, along with those noted in the literature review, are considered in turn. In each case, the patterns arising out of the univariate, bivariate and multivariate analyses are described, together with any additional analysis undertaken. These findings are then discussed in light of the literature presented in sections 3 and 4 of this report.

It is important to keep in mind when considering this analysis that the regression analysis shows that factors included in the NCAS survey do not account for all the influences on attitudes and that the socio-demographic factors considered accounted for a relatively small proportion of variance overall (see further discussion in Appendix B - technical and methodological notes). As discussed further below (12.9), this is consistent with other research on attitudes to both violence against women and to gender equality. This illustrates the multiple factors contributing to attitudes, only some of which are measured in this survey.

Although having a relatively limited influence on the *formation* of attitudes overall, as discussed below, some substantial differences were found in the univariate analysis for some groups on some individual questions and the overall measures of UVAW, VSA and GE. This makes demographic differences important for three reasons. First, understanding the distribution of attitudes within the population can help to guide targeting of prevention effort. Second, differences between particular groups and the whole population on particular constructs and scales, questions and question themes, can help to guide which particular areas should be given emphasis when undertaking prevention work with these groups. Third, by considering patterns in the light of other research, it is possible to identify subtle patterns in particular groups. This in turn can help to make sure that policies and programs are shaped to respond to specific factors likely to influence understanding and attitudes in particular groups, again helping to maximise the effectiveness of prevention approaches.

12.8.1 The relative contribution of factors to understanding and attitudes

Two models were used for the linear regression analysis. The first included only socio-demographic variables. In the second model, understanding of violence against women (as measured by the UVAW Scale) and attitudes to gender equality (as measured by the Gender Equality Scale) were added to the model.

While their relative contribution varies between measures and samples, the socio-demographic variables mainly associated with gender equality, understanding violence against women and violence supportive attitudes are:

- birthplace and generation
- gender
- age group.

Socio-economic status (SES) has only a minor influence, even when each of the measures (occupation, employment, education and degree of disadvantage) are combined.

The explanatory power of these variables, while statistically significant, is not particularly strong. This indicates that these complex phenomena are not readily explained by socio-demographic characteristics only. When the inputs into the UVAW model are expanded to include attitudes to gender equality (GE) and those in the VSA model are expanded to include GE and understanding of violence against women (UVAW) the explanatory power of the models is substantially increased. This confirms that while understanding and violence supportive attitudes vary by socio-demographic characteristics, they are also the result of a complex exchange of knowledge, attitudes and social and cultural norms.

Specifically:

- The main factor influencing attitudes to gender equality are gender (36% of variance explained); birth place and generation in Australia (25%); and age group (11%). SES factors explain 21% of the variance found when the influences of occupation, employment, education and the degree of disadvantage of the area are combined.
- The main demographic factors influencing variance in the UVAW model are age (32%); gender (27%); and birth place and generation in Australia (15%). SES variables combined to account for 16% of the variance. When GE (measuring attitudes to gender equality) is added to the model (i.e. to assess its influence controlling for all other factors), it becomes the most influential explanatory variable (47% of variance explained); followed by age group (20% of variance); gender (11%); and birthplace and generation (6%). The SES factors combined explain only 10% of variance in this model.
- When the inputs into the VSA model are limited to socio-demographic variables, birthplace and generation is the most influential factor (36% of variance), followed by gender (21%) and age (18%). SES factors combined account for 20% of variance. When UVAW and GE are added to the model (i.e. to assess their influence controlling for other factors), they explain the largest proportion of variance, 47% and 32% of variance explained, respectively. Birthplace and generation are the next most influential accounting for 7%, while SES variables combined account for less than 5% of the variance explained.

12.8.2 Factors influencing understanding and attitudes in particular groups

In the N-MESC sub-sample, country of origin accounts for 55% of variance explained in the VSA model and the relative importance of other factors is similar to the sample as whole, with gender accounting for 13% variance and age 8%. SES variables combined account for 17% (compared with 20% in the main sample). Again, when UVAW and gender equality are added to the model, they explain the largest proportion of variance – 42% explained by UVAW and 33% by GE. Country of origin becomes the third most influential variable (14%) and, as was the case with the main sample, SES variables had limited explanatory value (less than 5% of variance).

SES variables are notably more influential in the Indigenous sample as compared with other population groups. When the model is restricted to socio-demographic variables only, SES accounts for 54% of variance (22% by occupation, 15% by area advantage/disadvantage, 13% by employment status and 4% by educational attainment), compared with only 20% in the sample as whole. As is the case with the main sample, when UVAW and GE are added to the model, they account for a large proportion of the variance explained. The contribution made by the UVAW Scale was comparable to the main sample (45% in the Indigenous sample compared with 47% in the main sample). GE made an important but notably lower contribution than in the main sample (24% in the Indigenous sample compared with 32% in the sample as a whole). Other notable findings for this sample are the relatively large contribution to variance made by disability and family composition.

The main item distinguishing variance among people with disabilities when only socio-demographic variables are loaded into the model is age group. As indicated earlier this may be explained by the co-occurrence of age and disability in this population (with older people more likely to endorse violence supportive attitudes). Marginally more of the variation is explained in the disability sample by combined SES factors (26%) than in the sample as a whole (20%).

In the sections that follow the nature of the relationship between each of these factors and attitudes to violence against women are discussed, commencing with the influence of understanding of the problem.

12.8.3 Understanding of violence against women

In the broader literature on attitude formation, knowledge has been identified as a factor influencing the development of attitudes (Ajzen & Fishbein 2005; Chaiken & Trope 1999; Fazio 1990). This study confirms that this is the case for attitudes to violence against women, with this being the most influential factor measured in the survey for the sample as a whole and each of the sub-samples.

Respondents scoring high on the UVAW Scale (that is those understanding that violence comprises a continuum of behaviours) are:

- more likely to demonstrate a sound knowledge of other aspects of violence against women (e.g. the law as it relates to the problem)
- less likely to endorse statements providing attitudinal support for violence and to score high on the VSA Construct overall (only 8% scoring high on the UVAW Scale also scored high on the VSA Construct. This compares with 50% for those scoring low on the UVAW Scale).

They are also more likely to support gender equality (30% of those who scored high on the UVAW Scale also scored high on the GE Scale versus 19% for the sample as a whole).

There was only one item which was an exception to this general rule, the statement 'it's hard to understand why women stay in violent relationships'. Those who scored high on the UVAW Scale are no more or less likely than the sample as a whole to agree with this statement.

People with a low understanding of violence as measured by their UVAW score are also less likely to report that they would know where to get help for a domestic violence problem.

12.8.4 Support for gender equality

People who score high on the Gender Equality (GE) Scale (indicating a high level of support for gender equality):

- are more likely to score high on the UVAW Scale (i.e. to demonstrate a more nuanced understanding of violence against women)
- score low in the VSA Construct (i.e. are less likely to endorse attitudes supportive of violence against women).

This pattern also holds for all individual items gauging knowledge and attitudes, the only exception being the question concerning the experience of fear associated with partner violence (see discussion below). GE was the strongest predictor of UVAW for the sample overall and the second strongest predictor of violence supportive attitudes (as measured by the VSA). In each of the sub-samples it was the second strongest predictor of violence supportive attitudes (VSA) after UVAW.

Individuals with a high gender equality score were also more likely than the sample as whole to say that they would know where to get information about a domestic violence problem.

The consistent relationship found between attitudes to gender equality and both UVAW and VSA scores confirms the findings of numerous other studies: that is, higher scores on gender equality usually correlate with a higher level of understanding of violence and a disinclination to endorse attitudes that are supportive of violence. The relationship between attitudes towards gender equality and attitudes towards violence against women extends to other measures of gender equality as well as to attitudes towards other aspects of gender roles, relationships and identities (for reviews, see Flood & Pease 2006, 2009; Suarez & Gadalla 2010). That is, generally speaking, populations with higher levels of support for gender role egalitarianism, fluid gender role identities and more respectful attitudes towards women tend to be less likely to hold violence supportive attitudes.

This suggests that efforts to improve gender relations and strengthen gender role egalitarianism are likely to be important for strengthening positive attitudes and for reducing violence against women. It also suggests that it will be important to build content pertaining to gender roles, gender equality and gender identities in to programs designed to reduce violence against women.

One cautionary finding in this regard is that for the item gauging perceptions of the level of fear experienced as the consequence of partner violence. This is one of the few items for which findings are in an unexpected direction. People with a high score on the GE Scale might be expected to understand, consistent with the evidence, that the fear arising from domestic violence is worse for women. However, they are actually more likely than those with a low gender equality score (50% compared with 42%) to be of the view that the level of fear arising from domestic violence is equally bad for both sexes. This contrary pattern is also the case for female respondents and is the only item on which women respond indicating a lower level of knowledge than men.

One possible explanation for this is that persons with a high level of attitudinal support for gender equality have a keen appreciation of the impacts of a coercive dynamic of partner violence, and have this in mind when responding to this question, seeing this as harmful regardless of whether it is men or women subject to it. However, it of note that this contradictory pattern does not apply consistently across all groups that generally have a high level of understanding of violence. For example, it is not apparent among people in the middle-aged cohorts. Further, as discussed earlier in this report (see 3.2 and 5.5.2), the greater impact of partner violence on women is determined not only by the exercise of power within a relationship, but also because this is supported by gender inequalities in access to the resources required to secure safety from violence outside of the relationship (a concept women and those with a high support for gender equality would be expected to appreciate).

An alternative explanation is that respondents with high gender equality scores are comprised of two groups of people, each informed by different perspectives. Specifically, one perspective on gender equality is that equal outcomes between men and women are best achieved by treating both sexes the same (i.e. equally). This is often referred to as a 'formal equality' perspective (Graycar & Morgan 2002). An alternative perspective, often referred to as a 'substantive equality' approach, posits that existing and historical disadvantage experienced by women means that in many circumstances the status of men and women is not equal, and that women need to be treated differently in order to achieve equal outcomes (Graycar & Morgan 2002).

When the potential for fear is assessed from the point of view of an individual who supports gender equality via equal treatment, there may be little to distinguish men and women, other than differences in physical strength. Accordingly, they might be expected to conclude that both genders would be equally affected by violence. As discussed below, this may be a particular inclination among young people, especially young women. In contrast, respondents taking a substantive equality perspective might be expected to take into account the contextual factors that make the impact of violence greater for women (e.g. the unequal position of women and the resulting social and economic barriers to seeking safety, the

fact that male to female partner violence is often part of a broader pattern of control and intimidation). People with both these perspectives, however, would be likely to score high on the particular GE measure used in NCAS.

While it is difficult to draw conclusions from the results of one question, this finding does confirm the point made earlier that the challenges ahead, even among those generally knowledgeable about violence, is to strengthen understanding of the particular dynamics of violence and the unequal context in which it occurs.

This study did not specifically gauge attitudes towards social identities other than those related to gender (e.g. based on race, disability) and their impact on attitudes to violence affecting women experiencing intersecting forms of oppression (e.g. racism, discrimination on the grounds of disability). However, other research suggests that these attitudes intersect with attitudes towards gender to compound the experiences of women in marginalised groups (Allimant & Ostapiej-Piatkowski 2011; Esqueda & Harrison 2005; Kasturirangan et al. 2004; McGlade 2003; Warriar 2008). This suggests the importance of addressing these attitudes, along with those towards gender, in preventative activity.

12.8.5 Gender

At the overall scale and construct level, women are substantially more likely than men to score high on support for GE (39% for women compared with 21% for men), high on the UVAW Scale (24% versus 15%) and low on the VSA Construct (27% versus 16%). This pattern is also the case in each of the sub-samples. As discussed above, gender is among the top three most influential demographic predictors of support for gender equality, knowledge and violence supportive attitudes in the sample as a whole.

There are gender differences on a substantial number of questions, and where this is the case women are typically more likely to demonstrate a better level of knowledge of violence against women and less likely to endorse violence supportive statements:

- With the exceptions of 'forcing one's partner to have sex' and 'slapping and pushing to cause harm or fear' (on which there are no differences between men and women), men are less likely than women to identify the behaviours put to them in the survey as partner violence.
- The gender gap is larger for behaviours involving psychological and social means of control than for those involving overt physical violence and is largest for control by denying one's partner money: 28% of men believed this behaviour to be 'always' domestic violence, compared with 43% of women. Men are also less likely to identify stalking and phone and email harassment as violence against women.
- A larger proportion of women understand that women with disabilities are more likely than those without to experience violence (48% versus 33% for men).
- Women are also more likely to identify the 'belief that men should be in charge of the relationship' as a main cause of violence against women (22% of women compared with 14% of men).

An exception to this general pattern is that women are *more* likely than men to believe that the fear experienced as a result of partner violence is equally bad for both men and women (50% of women compared with 42% of men) (see discussion in 12.8.4 above). However, consistent with the evidence, women are more likely than men to believe that violence is perpetrated mainly or more often by men and that women are more likely to suffer physical harm.

With regard to attitudes, the larger differences between men and women are in the themes of trivialising and minimising violence. On measurements of support for trivialising violence, men are:

- less likely to understand the barriers to women leaving a relationship. Fifty-eight percent agree that a 'woman could leave a violent relationship if she really wants to' compared with 45% of women.
- more likely to agree that 'domestic violence is a private matter to be handled in the family' (20%, versus 14% of women); and
- less likely to agree that it is reasonable for the violent person to be made to leave the family home (87% compared with 91% of women).

On questions in the theme of minimising violence, men and women are equally likely to believe that violence against women is a serious issue for the community. However, men are:

- less likely to rate specific violent behaviours as very serious. For many measures in this theme the gender gap is substantial, ranging from eight percentage points for 'trying to scare one's partner by threatening to hurt others' to 17 percentage points for 'controlling the social life of one's partner' and 16 percentage points for 'controlling one's partner by denying them money'.
- more likely to believe that women make false allegations of partner violence and sexual assault. Fifty-nine percent of men agree that women make up or exaggerate claims of domestic violence compared with 46% of women; 54% of men agree that it is rare for women to make false allegations of sexual assault compared with 63% of women and 42% of men agree that often 'women who say they were raped had led the man on and later had regrets' compared with 34% of women.

In contrast to prior research in which men have been found to be more likely than women to blame the victim for violence (Grubb & Turner 2012; Suarez & Gadalla 2010), there are no differences between men and women except for two measures on which women were marginally more likely to support victim-blaming than men³². This is the only attitudes theme in which there are statements in which women are more likely to endorse violence supportive attitudes than men, albeit by a very modest amount.

Men and women vary on only one of the justifications and one of the excuses put to them in the survey. While the variation on the justification is modest, for the excuse ('violence can be excused if the person is genuinely regretful afterward') there is a nine percentage point difference between men (who are more likely to agree with this excuse) and women.

There were no statistically significant differences between men and women in their intentions to intervene in the scenarios put to them. However, men are more likely than women to say that they would physically intervene as opposed to 'saying or doing something else to help'. Sixty-five percent of men report that they would physically intervene if the woman was a family member or friend and 39% if the woman was a stranger. The corresponding figures for women are 49% and 18%.

In recent years, considerable effort has been invested in shifting the focus of prevention effort away from women as the victims and potential victims of violence, and towards men. In part this reflects increasing recognition that the ultimate responsibility for violence lies with those who perpetrate it, and that focusing on women's behaviour not only fails to address the proclivity for violence among some men, but reinforces victim-blaming and has the unintended effects of curtailing women's movements, freedom and right to autonomy (e.g. by encouraging women to prevent rape by dressing differently or not travelling alone at

³² Significant only when men and women are compared with each other. Neither men, nor women vary from the sample as whole on these measures.

night). This shift also recognises that some aspects of male socialisation may influence violence perpetration, and that engagement with the organisations and cultures in which men and boys are socialised is important for prevention (Flood 2010a; Powell 2011, 2012; Stanko 1994; VicHealth 2007).

The great majority of men do not perpetrate violence, and hence are potential collaborators in prevention efforts. There is substantial untapped potential to engage non-violent, egalitarian men in taking a stand when other men are violent or disrespectful, and holding them accountable for their behaviour. Non-violent men have the potential to play this role both in response to specific incidents, or antecedents to violence (eg disrespect), as well as by taking a leadership role on the issue of violence against women and its underlying causes. The findings of the NCAS support a continued emphasis on men and the organisational and social contexts in which male socialisation takes place.

The gender gap found in the survey supports that of other research on attitudes towards violence against women (Flood & Pease 2006, 2009; Suarez & Gadalla 2010) and suggests that a continuing emphasis on engaging men in preventative activity and in targeting intervention to factors influencing the attitudes of men is warranted. Nevertheless there is also a need to ensure that prevention messages continue to reach women since women's understanding of and attitudes towards violence have been found to influence how they respond to violence perpetrated against them, and subsequently their recovery. Women's generally more positive attitudes also mean that they are likely to be supporters and champions of change in families, organisations and communities. Both men and women are in roles, informally in the family and formally in schools and other settings, in which they have the potential to influence the formation of attitudes and values among children and young people.

Although men varied from women across a number of the survey themes, the larger gender gaps on questions trivialising and minimising violence against women suggest that there may be value in making these the focus of future activity to shift attitudes and norms.

12.8.6 Age

There are age differences with respect to both knowledge and attitudes regarding violence against women, with three cohorts discernible:

- younger respondents (16 to 17; 18 to 24 and 25 to 34 years)
- older respondents (65 to 75 years and 75 years and over)
- respondents in the middle years (35 to 44 years, 45 to 54 years and 55 to 64 years).

Younger respondents are more likely than the sample as a whole to have a low understanding of violence against women as measured by the UVAW Scale. Thirty-one percent of the sample as a whole score low on this measure. By comparison, 41% of 16–17 year olds, 42% of people aged 18–24 and 39% of those aged 25 to 34 have a low UVAW score. The reverse is also true. Respondents in the two youngest cohorts are less likely to score high on this scale (8% of 16–17 year olds and 9% of 18–24 year olds, compared with 19% overall).

In addition to demonstrating a low understanding of violence against women (as reported above) the two youngest age groups in the young cohort demonstrate they are also less likely to score low on the VSA Construct (signifying that they were less likely than the sample as a whole to have a low level of attitudinal support for violence against women). Eight percent of 16–17 year olds and 15% of 18–24 year olds are classified as having low VSA scores compared with 22% for the sample as a whole.

However, these two cohorts are also *less* likely than the sample as a whole to have low levels of support for gender equality (as measured by the GE Scale). Over one-quarter of the sample as whole had a low level of support for gender equality. By comparison only 18% of 16–18 year olds and 21% of 18–24 year olds did so.

The youth sample is the subject of a forthcoming report. Analysis undertaken for the report suggests that while people aged 16 to 24 are less likely to endorse statements undermining women's roles in public life, they are more prone than other age groups to endorse statements gauging attitudinal support for gender equality within relationships. Specifically they are slightly more likely to agree that 'men should take charge in relationships and be the head of the household' and are substantially more likely to agree that 'women prefer men to be in charge of the relationship' (data not shown in this report).

On the composite measure of understanding (the UVAW score), the proportion of people aged 65 to 75 years with a high understanding was similar to the sample as whole. This group were less likely to have a low score on this measure (23% compared with 31%). However, both of the older cohorts are more likely to have high VSA scores (signifying a higher level of support for attitudes underpinning violence against women). Thirty-five percent of people 65–74 years and more than half (53%) of those 75 years or more scored high on this measure, compared with only 28% for the whole sample. Respondents in these two cohorts are also more likely than people of other ages to be classified as having a low level of support for gender equality, and less likely to be classified as having a high level of support.

By comparison, respondents in the 'middle' cohorts (i.e. those aged 35–44, 45–54 and 55–64) are:

- more likely to have a more nuanced understanding of violence, with 22% of 35–44 year olds, 24% of 45–45 year olds and 27% of 55–64 year olds being classified as having a high understanding of violence against women, compared with 19% for whole sample. The older two cohorts in this group are also less likely to be classified as having a low level of support.
- less likely to have high VSA scores (i.e. to hold attitudes supportive of violence against women). Twenty percent of 35–44 year olds; 21% of 45–45 year olds and 23% of those aged 55–64 years are classified as having high support compared with 28% of the sample as a whole.
- more likely to have a high level of support for gender equality (as measured by the GE Scale) and less likely to have a low support for gender equality.

Turning now to patterns of responses for each of these three cohorts, it is noted that there was some variability *within* each group for individual questions within the constructs. However, the key items on which younger respondents varied from the sample as a whole in their knowledge of violence against women included their lower likelihood of agreeing that:

- social, emotional and financial forms of control and intimidation are partner violence, and indirect forms of harassment are violence against women
- violence against women is common
- a woman is more likely to be raped by someone she knows than by a stranger
- women with disabilities face a higher risk of violence.

Conversely, however, respondents in all three of the youngest age groups were more likely to understand the gender dynamics associated with violence against women. They were more likely to identify as the main cause of violence against women 'the belief that men should be in charge of the relationship'.

With regard to attitudes, the main differences between younger cohorts and the sample as a whole were in the themes of:

- trivialising violence, where 18–24 year olds are more inclined to agree that women could leave a violent relationship if they really wanted to and that domestic violence is a private matter. However, they are less likely to agree that women who are sexually harassed should sort things out themselves.

- minimising violence where they are less likely to identify many of the behaviours put to them in the survey as serious. Respondents aged 18–24 years are more likely than the sample as whole to disagree that 'women rarely make false claims of being raped' (33% versus 26%). They are also less likely to disagree that women often fabricate claims of domestic violence to improve their prospects in cases to decide care arrangements for children following separation or divorce (31% versus 25%).

Although those aged 18–24 years are more likely to agree that violence can be excused if the violent person is genuinely regretful afterward (26% versus 21%), those in this cohort, along with those aged 25 to 34 years, are more likely to disagree that 'rape results from men not being able to control their sexual urges' (55% compared with 49%)

Younger respondents are, with only one exception (the justification of using violence in order to gain access to children, which attracts a higher level of agreement among 16–17 year olds), no more likely to support statements justifying violence or to endorse those blaming the victim. Indeed respondents 18–24 years are less likely to agree that 'if a woman goes alone with a man into a room at a party, it is her fault if she is raped' (89% versus 85%).

While young people are more inclined to agree that police respond more quickly to domestic violence (66% of those 16–17 years and 52% of those 18–24 years versus 44% of the whole sample), those aged 18 to 24 years are less likely to say they would know where to get information for a domestic violence problem (52% versus 57%). Those aged 18 to 34 are also less likely to agree that women with disabilities who report sexual assault are less likely to be believed.

While there is some variation *within* the older cohorts on individual items gauging knowledge of violence, overall these cohorts are less likely to:

- identify various behaviours as partner violence (though they are more likely to identify phone and email harassment as violence against women)
- agree that 'domestic violence is a criminal offence' (those 75 years and over) and that a woman 'cannot be raped by someone she is in a sexual relationship with' (those 65 years and over)
- recognise the greater risk of violence faced by women with disabilities (those 75 years and over).

Older respondents are more likely to identify poor anger control (those 75 years and over) and financial stress (those 65 years and over) as main causes of violence.

With regard to attitudes, those 75 years and over are less likely to disagree that partner violence can be justified and excused, and this is the case for all items in these themes. People aged 65–74 are also less inclined to disagree with excuses and justifications for violence, though this is the case for fewer items.

People over 75 years also vary on items gauging attitudinal support for trivialising violence through being:

- less likely to agree that it's reasonable for the violent person to be made to leave the family home (84% versus 89%)
- less likely to disagree that it's hard to understand why women stay in violent relationships (13% versus 19%)
- substantially more likely to agree that domestic violence is a private matter to be dealt with in the family (30% versus 17%); that women who are sexually harassed should sort things out themselves (19% versus 12%); and that it is women's duty to stay in a violent relationship (17% versus 9%).

Throughout the theme of minimising violence, older cohorts are more likely to identify some of the behaviours put to them as serious (e.g. harassment by phone), and less likely to do so with others (e.g.

forced sex as a form of partner violence). They are more likely to agree that women make false claims of domestic violence in cases of contested custody, and that 'a lot of time women who say they are raped had led the man on and later had regrets' while those aged over 75 years are more likely to disagree that false claims of rape are rare.

People over the age of 75 are also more likely to endorse statements gauging preparedness to blame the victim for violence. This is also the case for those aged 65 to 74 years, although for fewer statements.

There is considerable variation on individual items *within* the three cohorts in the middle years (35–44, 45–54 and 55–64 years). However, in general, as indicated by the results on the composite measures for these cohorts, where there was variation this tended to be in the direction of these cohorts having a higher level of understanding of violence against women and a lower endorsement of attitudes supportive of violence against women.

There are several questions for which there are notably different age-related patterns to those described above:

- There is minimal variation on questions pertaining to the seriousness of violence against women overall and patterns of perpetration and impact of partner violence.
- There is a clear age divide on perceptions of the acceptability and seriousness of electronic tracking whereby those aged 44 years and younger are less likely than the sample as a whole to regard electronic tracking as serious and more likely to see it as acceptable, while those over the age of 44 hold the reverse of these views.
- People 55 - 64 years, while generally either not varying from the sample as a whole or being less likely to endorse violence supportive attitudes, are more likely to agree that 'a lot of time women who say they are raped had led the man on and later had regrets' (43% versus 38%).

The cohort patterning of attitudes to gender equality found in the survey is reflected in other research on attitudes to gender equality (Bolzendahl & Myers 2004; Cotter et al. 2011; Pampel 2011; van Egmond et al. 2010). This data suggests that attitudes towards gender equality became increasingly egalitarian from the 1960s, largely in response to marked social change in gender roles and relations, but have levelled since the 1990s. There is also some evidence that change in attitudes towards gender relations may have stalled, a trend which has been attributed in part to younger cohorts holding more conservative views (van Egmond et al. 2010). The findings of the survey suggest that this patterning is also reflected in attitudes towards violence against women.

While it is possible that the patterns evident for older cohorts are a product of people becoming more conservative in their attitudes as they age, an alternative explanation proposed in the literature is that this is a cohort effect among this group which experienced adult socialisation in a period predating the substantial changes in gender relations commencing in the mid-1960s (Bolzendahl & Myers 2004; Pampel 2011; van Egmond et al. 2010), including changes in responses to violence against women (Carlson & Worden 2005). For example, many in this group will have reached adulthood when marriage was assumed to give men immunity from prosecution for marital rape, and assault laws were rarely enforced in cases of partner violence (Scutt 1983). The impacts of this are apparent in responses to particular questions, with older respondents being less likely to agree that 'domestic violence is a crime' (respondents 75 years and over) and that 'a woman cannot be raped by someone she is in a sexual relationship with' (respondents 65 years and over). It is also apparent in the fact members of the older cohort are the only ones more likely than the sample as a whole to support or resist rejecting some justifications for violence. As discussed earlier, Australian research conducted in the 1980s (that is, at a time when significant reforms in responses to violence against women were just beginning to be introduced) showed a relatively high level of support

for justifications for violence (ANOP 1995). This contrasts with the findings of successive waves of NCAS since 1995, in which overall support for justifying violence is considerably lower. These older cohorts also had lower levels of exposure to the liberalising effects of tertiary education (Alwin et al. 1991; Alwin & Crosnick 1991).

Developmental factors may explain some of the differences found in the survey among young people (e.g. that young people have had limited experience of relationships). However, there are similarly a number of broader social factors which may have had a negative impact on knowledge and attitudes among younger cohorts. While these are the subject of a more detailed forthcoming report, they include:

- A greater emphasis on individual responsibility (Alloway & Dalley-Trim 2009; Wyn & White 2013;), which may be associated with a tendency to reject broader social and structural contributors to problems such as violence against women (Baker 2008).
- A social climate in which many of the battles of the women's movement are perceived to be won (Bulbeck 2008, 2009; Jonsson & Flanagan 2000) and in which women are seen to be as powerful as men (Bulbeck 2008, 2009; Rich 2005). This may lead young people to understate the difficulties women face and to resist supporting paradigms that risk casting women as 'weak'.
- The rise of 'raunch culture' and the sexualisation and objectification of women in social media (Squires et al. 2006).

In contrast to both their younger and older counterparts, those in the middle cohorts reached adulthood at a time during which there was substantial change and reform effort in relation to both gender equality and violence against women (Bolzendahl & Myers 2004; Murray & Powell 2009). This may explain the tendency of these groups to demonstrate a higher level of attitudinal support for gender equality, a higher level of understanding and a lower level of endorsement of attitudes supportive of violence against women.

Determining the relative influence of developmental factors associated with being young or ageing, as opposed to the influence of the particular times in which various cohorts currently live or experienced their adult socialisation, would be a sophisticated statistical task beyond the scope of this particular project. It would be a fruitful area for future research. Nevertheless, the likelihood, suggested in other research on gender attitudes, that the explanation for the patterns found in the survey lies at least in part in the social conditions experienced by different cohorts is encouraging. Notwithstanding that the survey finds no overall change in attitudes towards violence against women, these patterns suggest that attitudes are not fixed, but rather are amenable to the influences of both structural and policy change, and possibly legal reform. At the same time, the contrasting findings between young people and those in the middle age cohorts suggest the importance of maintaining preventative effort and ensuring that this is tailored and targeted to young men and women and the organisations and social contexts in which young people's attitudes are shaped.

12.8.7 Place of birth and generation

For the purposes of analysis the sample was divided into three groups – people born in Australia, people born overseas in a main English speaking country and people born overseas in non-main English speaking countries (N-MESC).

At the scale and construct level, overseas-born persons from a mainly English speaking country are more likely than the Australian-born to score high for GE (that is, have a higher level of support for gender equality), high for UVAW (that is, have a more nuanced understanding of violence) and low for VSA (that is, to be less likely to endorse attitudes supportive of violence against women), while those born in a N-MESC are less likely to do so. This overall pattern is reflected in responses to most individual questions.

The survey findings support prior research involving people from non-English speaking backgrounds in societies settling immigrants and hosting long-term international visitors (e.g. as students or guest workers). This research suggests that they tend to hold more traditional attitudes towards gender relations and to be more inclined to endorse violence supportive statements (Bhanot & Senn 2007; Yamawaki & Tschanz 2005). This was similarly a finding of the 2009 NCAS (McGregor 2009). This is also apparent in global variation, with people in the main English speaking and western European countries generally being more likely than those in other countries to have strong attitudinal support for gender equality (Wike et al. 2009) and lower attitudinal support for violence against women (Waltermauer 2012). There is also substantial variation in attitudes between countries within these categories. This variability is most likely to be due to differences in gender cultures in countries and regions of origin (Aboim 2010; Steel & Kabashima 2008).

The relatively favourable findings for respondents from mainly English speaking countries may be due to people migrating from societies with more egalitarian gender cultures, and/or to compositional effects (i.e. to this cohort being comprised of a greater proportion of people of higher SES and people in age cohorts in which positive attitudes and higher levels of knowledge are more likely to be found).

Three factors should be borne in mind when considering the results for the N-MESC sample. First, the sample comprises individuals from a large number of countries across the globe, and hence cannot be said to represent outcomes for any individual birth country or cultural background.

Second, research on survey methodology has identified numerous points in the life-cycle of a survey in which cultural differences may influence outcomes (Survey Research Centre 2011). That is, outcomes may be the result of cultural and language differences in research participation, rather than a representation of actual differences or similarities in behaviours or attitudes between groups. A number of strategies proposed in best practice guidelines (Survey Research Centre 2011) were used in the survey design to reduce the impact of some of these differences including:

- Engaging experts working with people from non-English speaking backgrounds in the survey review.
- Special training of interviewers to maximise response rates by people from N-MESCs.
- More active follow-up of people from certain N-MESC backgrounds with the aim of converting initial refusals into interviews.
- Bilingual interviewing in twelve community languages with translated versions of the questionnaire being used for eight of these language groups. The aim was to strengthen the comprehensibility of questions to respondents from N-MESCs and reduce the ambiguity which may result from language differences.

Although it is impossible to discern with certainty, it is probable that the diverse composition of the N-MESC sample itself has the effect of containing the influence on outcomes of some cultural differences identified in the literature. For example, there is wide cultural variation in the tendency to give socially desirable responses or to respond to question scales in different ways (in some cultures involving a tendency to select responses at the extreme ends of a scale, while in others involving a bias towards the midpoint) (Schwarz, Oyserman & Peytcheva 2010; Smith 2003). However, these effects are likely to have been diluted to some extent by the fact that the NCAS N-MESC sample contains groups identified as being both less and more inclined to exhibit these tendencies.

It is also important to note that the patterns identified in the survey were based on multiple items within each of the survey categories and themes. The use of multiple items has been identified as a strategy to help to reduce the likelihood that outcomes are influenced by misunderstanding of questions by

respondents. Hence while there are a small number of questions in the NCAS that could be said to be too idiomatic to be readily understood by some people from N-MESCs (e.g. 'women say no when they mean yes'), many others are less subject to misinterpretation. Other patterns found in the main sample (e.g. based on gender and socio-economic status) are also found in the N-MESC sample.

It is also noteworthy that the direction of the variation between the N-MESC sample and the main sample is consistent with that which would be expected based on the literature, and the largest differences are on items identified as particularly distinguishing people from N-MESCs in prior research. Specifically, variation is especially high for questions concerning the privacy and unity of the family, beliefs which are especially strong in the collectivist cultures from which many of Australia's overseas-born persons originate (see section 6.3). Respondents born in N-MESCs were nearly two and half times as likely as those born in Australia to agree that 'domestic violence is a private matter to be handled in the family' (31% versus 13%) and over three times more likely to agree that 'It's a woman's duty to stay in a violent relationship to keep the family together' (19% versus 6%). The patterns identified in the survey are also supported by a large body of qualitative research with N-MESC communities (See for example, Fisher 2009; Pittaway 2004; Rees & Pease 2006, 2007; Zannetino 2012).

When people consider responses to questions in a survey they do so in ways that reflect both their literal and pragmatic meaning. Schwarz, Oyserman and Peytcheva (2010) note:

Language comprehension is not about words per se, but about speaker meaning. When asked, "What have you done today?" respondents understand the words, but they still need to determine which behaviors the researcher might be interested in before they can give a meaningful answer. To infer the intended or pragmatic meaning of the question, respondents make extensive use of contextual information, from the researcher's institutional affiliation and the topic of the survey to the content of preceding questions and the nature of the response alternatives. Reliance on contextual information is licensed by the tacit assumptions that underlie the conduct of conversations in daily life, where contributions are expected to be meaningfully related to the goal of the conversation, the content of preceding utterances, and the questioner's interest and background knowledge (p. 180).

While the use of contextual information in this way transcends cultures, assessing the pragmatic meaning of question context is a more straightforward task for the respondent who shares the cultural and linguistic background of the researcher. NCAS respondents born in Australia or other main English speaking countries are more likely than their counterparts born in a N-MESC to be familiar with the context of the survey and to have been exposed to dialogue about violence against women in the media and the community. The possibility that this places them in a better position than their N-MESC counterparts to offer socially desirable responses, and that this makes some contribution to variation between the samples, cannot be excluded.

A third important factor when considering the N-MESC results is that attitudes, practices and social norms concerning gender relations and violence are neither inherent or immutable products of individual cultures, but rather are themselves shaped by historical and social and economic forces (Aboim 2010; Steel & Kabashima 2008; Waltermaurer 2012). Indeed there is some evidence to suggest that colonisation of non-western countries, and increasing interaction with the cultures of high-income countries have been factors in increasing gender inequality and normative support for violence in some low-income countries (Elliston 2004; Simister & Mehta 2010).

Studies suggest that, generally speaking, the attitudes of immigrants towards gender relations and violence against women change over time to more closely resemble those of host societies (Taylor & Mouzos 2006). There is some evidence that this is linked to measures of acculturation (Bhanot & Senn 2007). This is explored within this report by assessing variation between:

- overseas-born persons arriving in different time periods (before 2005 and 2005 onwards)

- first-, second- and third-generation Australians (those born overseas, those born in Australia with at least one parent born overseas and those born in Australia with both parents born in Australia, respectively)
- between overseas-born persons with good as opposed to poor proficiency in English. Proficiency in English is a commonly used indicator of acculturation and settlement (Australian Survey Research Group 2011).

There is a gradient, such that first-generation Australians (compared with subsequent generations), people arriving after 2005 (compared with before 2005), and people with a low level of proficiency in English (compared with those whose proficiency was high) are less likely to score high on the GE and UVAW Scales and more likely to score high on the VSA Construct. This trend is also evident across most individual questions in the survey.

First-generation Australians, people arriving after 2005 and those with low proficiency in English are also less likely to say they would know where to go to get information about a domestic violence problem.

Analysis was undertaken to exclude the possibility that this was due to compositional effects (i.e. variations in the make-up of the population of persons born on a N-MESC at particular points of time). Five groups were formed from the sample. Three of these were individual countries for which there were sufficient respondent numbers for analysis and two were formed by grouping respondents into regions according to the classification system used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS 2011c). The particular regions were selected on the basis of respondent numbers and that they were the least heterogeneous in terms of country of birth and period of arrival. Maximising homogeneity was important to minimise the influences of marked socio-demographic and country-of-birth variation *within* groups which may confound the analysis. For the purposes of this analysis, three time periods were used – before 1995, between 1995 and 2004 and 2005 onwards. This analysis confirmed that the pattern of change in understanding and attitudes towards violence and gender equality over time and generations does hold, but that this occurs at different rates for different N-MESC groups.

This variability is most likely to be due to differences in gender cultures in countries and regions of origin (see above) and to negative pre-arrival experiences endured by some groups (especially the case for refugee and humanitarian entrants) (Pittaway 2004; Rees & Pease 2007). However, studies also show that experiences following arrival are important with some immigrant communities adhering more strongly to culture of origin norms than their compatriots in countries of origin as a response to marginalisation and racial intolerance in host societies (Yoshihama 2009).

These findings do not necessarily support the conclusion that immigrant societies import negative cultural norms, which lessen in host societies, thereby reducing the risk of violence. While there is very little longitudinal research exploring patterns of violence against women in immigrant communities and findings are mixed, there is some evidence that violence *increases* over time since arrival and in subsequent generations, and with increasing levels of acculturation (Garcia et al. 2005; Harris et al. 2005; Du Mont et al. 2012). Changes over time are possibly due to violence occurring in response to women asserting greater freedoms in host societies with more egalitarian gender cultures (True 2012). However, the possibility that violence may also increase over generations and with acculturation suggests that negative factors in the host society are also likely to be implicated. Consistent with the literature on the impacts of acculturation on broader wellbeing (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2006; Fuller-Thomson et al. 2011; Jatrana et al. 2013), it is likely that immigrants arrive with a complex set of cultural norms and practices that variously protect against and increase the risk of violence. Similarly, host society cultures involve exposure to both liberalising and 'protective' social norms as well as those that increase the risk of violence. Notable examples of negative factors in the settlement environment in immigrant societies are greater access or

exposure to violent pornography and degrading imagery of women in western media and popular culture, both of which are associated with violence supportive attitudes (Flood 2009b; Flood & Pease 2006, 2009). This suggests the importance of strategies that seek to identify and build on cultural norms that are likely to protect immigrant women from violence, while also countering those factors in both immigrant *and* host society cultures that increase risk.

There are also some notable gender contrasts within the N-MESC sample. With regard to attitudinal support for violence, women born in a N-MESC vary proportionately more from their same-sex Australian-born peers than men born in a N-MESC vary from theirs. In contrast, the difference between women born in a N-MESC and Australian-born women on attitudes to gender equality is much smaller. This is contrary to the patterns for the sample as a whole and for most of the sub-samples where these two measures vary in accordance with one another. In comparison, the proportionate variation between N-MESC and Australian-born men on these measures is of the same magnitude. Put in other words, the attitudes of women born in a N-MESC to gender equality more closely approximate those of women born in Australia, than do their attitudes to violence against women, whereas for men the differences in attitudes to both gender equality and violence between Australian-born men and men born in N-MESCs are of a similar size.

The extent to which the N-MESC sample varied from their peers of the same sex on the UVAW Scale (measuring understanding of violence against women) is similar for both men and women

There are a number of possible explanations for this pattern. In international studies, women in some N-MESCs have been found to have particularly strong violence supportive attitudes; in many countries this is higher than the levels for men (Waltermauer 2012). The NCAS findings may reflect this. There is also some evidence to suggest that in some country-background groups, women have lower rates of participation in employment, education and civic society (Cheung & Phillimore 2013; Kofman 2003; Nawyn 2010) and this may mean that they have lower levels of exposure than do N-MESC men to different cultural norms in countries of settlement. However, while these explanations may account for the findings for the VSA Construct, they do not explain the atypical relationship between the VSA and GE for women born in a N-MESC. In other words, for both of these explanations, attitudes to gender equality would be expected to vary in accordance with attitudes to violence.

In the literature reviewed for this study, it was suggested that violence supportive attitudes may be stronger within communities experiencing racism and other forms of marginalisation. This is because they may serve as a means of protecting these communities from being further stigmatised. For example, attitudes excusing violence enable the causes of violence to be attributed to external factors, as opposed to what may be perceived as failings within communities. For women, they may also provide justification for resisting engaging mainstream legal and social service systems to hold men accountable for violent behaviour. Such an inclination has been identified in other research in contexts where these systems are implicated in historical and contemporary maltreatment of marginalised communities (see 3.9.1). Women in some N-MESC communities may be particularly sensitive to these effects (Fisher 2009; Kasturirangan et al. 2004; Zannettino 2012).

An alternative explanation may be that gender equality attitudes are less sensitive to these external forces than are attitudes to violence against women. This might especially be the case given that the Gender Equality Scale in NCAS involves assessing support for a very moderate range of attitudes towards gender roles and relations, which arguably could be relatively readily accepted without creating dissonance.

Policies and programs to support migrant and refugee resettlement are important to serve a range of objectives. The above findings suggest that they are also likely to provide an essential foundation for efforts to prevent violence against women by both supporting acculturation and ensuring that people from a diverse range of backgrounds feel welcome and included and are treated equitably within key systems. The

importance of ensuring that both general settlement programs and specific initiatives to prevent violence against women engage and are carefully targeted towards both men *and* women (and the organisational and community environments influencing their attitudes and behaviours) are underscored by the gendered patterns identified in the survey.

The fact that respondents born in N-MESCs vary considerably and consistently from the sample as whole suggests the importance of targeting violence prevention efforts to this group.

12.8.8 Socio-economic status

There are mixed findings in the literature regarding whether people of lower socio-economic status or in areas of disadvantage are more likely to perpetrate or be victims of gender-based violence or to hold violence supportive attitudes (see 3.9.4). Attitudes to gender equality have been found to vary by education (becoming more egalitarian with higher levels of education), but not by income or occupational prestige (Bolzendahl & Myers 2004; Davis & Greenstein 2009; van Egmond et al. 2010).

The linear regression analysis indicates that individually socio-economic status variables have only a small influence on understanding and attitudes. However, their combined influence is noteworthy.

The multivariate analysis for each of the SES variables suggests that:

- Variation between employed persons and unemployed persons is minimal on understanding of violence against women as measured by the UVAW Scale. However, employed respondents are more likely to score high on the GE Scale and low on the VSA Construct (signifying that they are less likely to hold attitudes supportive of violence against women).
- Higher levels of education are associated with higher scores on the GE Scale and lower scores on the VSA Construct, supporting findings in the literature. However, people with a university education are more likely than those with a trade certificate or diploma to score low on the UVAW Scale (i.e. to have a less nuanced understanding of violence).
- When comparing areas based on their relative disadvantage, there is evidence of a slight gradient whereby people in more disadvantaged areas are less likely to score high for GE and more likely to score high for VSA, whereas those in the most advantaged areas are most likely to be classified as having high attitudinal support for gender equality and a low level of attitudinal support for violence. The variations on the basis of area, however, are modest and are statistically significant only for respondents in the most and least disadvantaged areas.

With regard to occupation:

- People working as machine operators, drivers and labourers are less likely to score high for GE but more likely to score high on the VSA Construct.
- People in trade and technical occupations are less likely to score high for GE and more likely to score moderate for VSA.
- Those in professional, community and personal services positions are more likely to score high for GE and low for VSA.
- Sales workers and people in clerical and administrative positions are less likely to have low support for GE and less likely to score high for VSA.

On the UVAW score there is variation between people in technical and trade occupations (more likely to score low) and community and personal services workers and clerical and administrative workers (more likely to score high). Professionals are less likely to be classified as having a high understanding of violence against women as measured by the UVAW Scale.

It is unclear whether the variation by occupation in attitudes towards gender equality and violence is due to socio-economic status or to gender. This is because the clusters of occupations (machinery operators and driving, labouring and technical and trades occupations with relatively high support for violence and low support for gender equality on one hand, and professional, community and personal services, sales and clerical and administrative occupations with low support for violence and high support for gender equality on the other) cannot be clearly distinguished on the grounds of income and occupational standing. Both contain groups that are relatively low prestige and that are relatively low paid as well groups that are relatively high paid with high prestige.

Another explanation for the differences between occupations may be that people in labouring, trades and machinery and driving occupations tend to be employed in male-dominated workplaces, whereas those in the community services, clerical and administration, sales and professional occupational groupings are more likely to be employed in workplaces that are female dominated or more gender equal. Noting from above that women generally have a better understanding of violence and tend to be less likely to endorse violence supportive attitudes, the differences may reflect the gender composition of these occupational groups and the workplaces. For example, in 2011 women comprised only 15% of people in technical and trade occupations, 10% of machinery operators and drivers and 35% of labourers, but were 69% of community and personal services workers, 76% of clerical and administration workers, 62% of sales workers and just over half of all professionals (ABS 2011a). However, this may not be related only to the composition of these workforces, since there is also evidence that certain highly masculinised environments may be associated with cultural practices that engender disrespect of and hostility towards women (Flood & Pease 2006, 2009). Attitudes supportive of violence towards women have been found to be more prevalent in these environments (Flood & Pease 2006, 2009).

The discussion above has focused on whether SES factors exert a broad influence at the population level on attitudes towards violence against women, concluding that their influence is weak and in some cases, possibly attributable to other factors. However, there is evidence of support for one of the key propositions advanced in intersectionality theory (Nixon & Humphreys 2010; Sokoloff & Dupont 2005; Winker & Degele 2011): that is, that the risk of holding violence supportive attitudes is markedly elevated when SES factors combine with other forms of social marginalisation. This is illustrated in the case of disability. Disability (controlling for age) does not emerge as a strong determinant of VSA in the sample as whole (explaining just 1% of the variance in the socio-demographic model and .2% in the full model). Other research indicates that there is a higher prevalence of disability among Indigenous Australians (AIHW 2011a), and this is also the case in the NCAS. Among the Indigenous sample, disability explains a greater proportion of the variance (9% of variance in the socio-demographic model and 3% in the full model). The influence of intersecting factors is also illustrated in the higher VSA among both disadvantaged Indigenous men and men with disabilities. As discussed below these patterns are likely to be due to the intersecting influences of gender, socio-economic disadvantage and the additional disadvantage associated with Indigenous or disability status.

The literature reviewed for this study indicates that the impacts of violence are likely to be greater for women the more limited their access to the material and social resources required to secure safety from violence. This provides a compelling case to target interventions to respond to and prevent violence in accordance with levels of disadvantage. However, in regards to interventions focusing on attitudinal change, the survey suggests that the strongest case for targeting is among groups experiencing entrenched and multiple forms of disadvantage and in areas in which these groups are over-represented.

Taken together, the data above on understanding of violence against women suggest that being of high SES is not associated with a higher understanding of violence against women, despite higher levels of attitudinal support for gender equality and lower attitudinal support of violence. A similar pattern is

evident for the question concerning whether violence is common. People in advantaged areas and those with a university education are less likely than the sample as a whole to believe violence is common.

While violence occurs across the population and definitive data on socio-demographic variations are lacking, violence is hypothesised variously to be either less common and/or less visible in high SES sub-populations (see section 3.9.4). Other studies suggest a link between knowledge of violence against women and exposure to it via direct or second-hand experience (i.e. knowing someone else who has been subject to violence) (Gracia & Herrero 2006b; McMahan 2010). This (i.e. limited exposure) may explain the findings for this group. Many people in influential positions whose cooperation will be required to plan and implement preventative activities will be of high SES (e.g. school principals, senior judicial staff, company chief executive officers). These findings suggest while the attitudes of this group (which scores high on GE and is low on VSA) are less likely to be a barrier, securing their engagement may require efforts to strengthen appreciation of the prevalence and nature of violence against women. It also suggests that lack of awareness of the problem may be an additional barrier to violence being identified when violence affects women in HSES communities.

Prior research indicates that some highly marginalised groups may lack knowledge about violence, or violence may have become so normalised that they find it hard to name it as such (Cripps 2008). This was not supported in the NCAS for all groups affected by socio-economic disadvantage and/or higher levels of violence. Indeed, a number of these groups (people with disabilities, ATSI Australians) either were more likely to score high on the UVAW Scale, or did not vary from the main sample on this measure. Marginalised groups and those more likely to experience violence are also more likely to agree that violence is common.

At the same time, however, respondents in male-dominated occupations often regarded as low in status (e.g. labourers, technicians and trades workers), were more likely to score low on the UVAW Scale, indicating a lower level of understanding of violence against women.

These mixed findings suggest that it is important, in planning prevention, to establish the level of understanding of violence, for the purposes of determining the relative emphasis to be placed on shifting attitudes, as opposed to strengthening knowledge.

12.8.9 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background

Population level studies suggest a high prevalence of violence against women among Indigenous communities (ABS 2013a; Al-Yaman et al. 2006; Mouzos & Makkai 2004; Taylor & Putt 2007) and a high level of normative support for violence per se (Wundersitz 2010). However, this does not mean that these patterns characterise all Indigenous communities, since there is evidence of variation between them (McCausland & Vivian 2009). Such variation is masked by population-level studies. This should also be kept in mind when interpreting findings from the NCAS (a population-level survey).

Apart from NCAS 2009 (McGregor 2009; VicHealth 2010) in which non-probability sampling was used to form the Indigenous sample, there is no known quantitative Australian research on attitudes to violence against women in Indigenous communities.

The multivariate analysis suggests that Indigenous respondents score higher than non-Indigenous respondents on understanding of violence against women (measured by the UVAW Scale)³³, and do not vary on attitudes to gender equality (measured by the GE Scale). However, the Indigenous sample has a higher proportion of respondents scoring high on the VSA (indicating a higher level of endorsement of attitudes supportive of violence against women).

³³ Statistically significant at the 95% confidence level

On the UVAW Scale (measuring understanding of violence against women), Indigenous women are more likely to score higher than Indigenous men (30% compared with 20%). However, there are no statistically significant differences between Indigenous women and non-Indigenous women, or between Indigenous and non-Indigenous men.

On the GE Scale and the VSA Construct gender differences within the Indigenous sample are in a similar direction to those in the sample as whole, in that Indigenous men are significantly less likely than Indigenous women to have high support for gender equality (16% of men compared with 39% of women) and are significantly more likely to endorse violence supportive attitudes. However, these gender differences are very much more pronounced in the ATSI sample than among non-Indigenous respondents:

- ATSI women are nearly 2.5 times more likely to have high support for gender equality (39%) than ATSI men (16%).
- ATSI men are 1.8 times less likely to score high on VSA, that is, to have a high level of violence supportive attitudes (27% of women are classified as having high support compared with 48% of men).

By comparison the gender differences among non-Indigenous respondents are somewhat smaller: women are 1.9 times more likely than men to score high for gender equality and 1.4 times less likely to do so on the VSA Construct.

Indeed on the data for the GE Scale and the VSA Construct, Indigenous women and men vary more from each other than they do from their non-Indigenous peers. Indigenous men are 1.5 times more likely to be classified as having a high level of support for violence (as measured by the VSA Construct) than non-Indigenous men and are 1.8 times more likely to do so than Indigenous women. In regards to gender equality, there is no statistically significant difference between Indigenous and non-Indigenous men. Similarly, Indigenous women do not vary from non-Indigenous women on gender equality, and while there is a difference in their VSA scores, this is non-significant.

Indigenous respondents are more likely than non-Indigenous respondents to demonstrate sound knowledge of violence against women across a number of measures. They are more likely than the non-Indigenous sample to:

- agree violence against women is common (87% versus 68%)
- agree that criticising one's partner to make them feel bad and useless is 'always' a form of partner violence (61% versus 50%)
- identify that men wanting to be in charge of the relationship as the main cause of violence (27% compared with 18% of non-ATSI respondents)
- strongly agree that a woman is more likely to be raped by someone she knows than by a stranger (ATSI 45%, non-ATSI 33%) (data not shown).

The two samples did not vary on other knowledge-related items.

The main gender differences on individual questions within the ATSI sample are that Indigenous men are less likely to agree that some of the non-physical behaviours put to them in the survey are domestic violence, and that domestic violence is a criminal offence (97% of women agreed with this, compared with 84% of Indigenous men).

With regard to specific questions in the five attitudinal themes, the Indigenous sample varies from the main sample primarily on the themes of justifications and excuses. The exceptions are the excuses of the violent person being genuinely regretful afterward and the violent person having been a victim of abuse as a child

(in the case of partner violence) and men not being able to control their need for sex (in the case of sexual assault). There were no statistically significant differences between Indigenous men and women on these measures.

Indigenous men were more likely than non-Indigenous men to agree that sexual assault can be excused if the perpetrator is affected by alcohol or drugs. However, Indigenous women did not vary from non-Indigenous women on this measure.

There are no statistically significant differences between the samples or between Indigenous men and women in the theme of *trivialising* violence.

In the theme of *minimising*, the Indigenous sample are *more* likely than the non-Indigenous sample to recognise certain behaviours as serious, including:

- repeated criticism (61% of the Indigenous sample recognised this as serious compared with 41% of the non-Indigenous sample)
- harassment via repeated phone calls (59% versus 47%)
- harassment by email and text messaging (54% versus 44%).

Indigenous women are more likely than Indigenous men to recognise these behaviours as serious, and on several measures more likely to do so than non-Indigenous women. On other measures in this theme there are no statistically significant differences between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous samples. Nor are there gender differences within the Indigenous sample. The only exception to this is the level of agreement with the statement that women make false allegations of domestic violence in cases of contested custody. Sixty-seven percent of the Indigenous sample agreed that this was the case compared with 52% of the non-Indigenous sample. Indigenous women are less likely to agree with this statement (58%), than Indigenous men (77%).

In the theme of *victim-blaming*, the only question on which the Indigenous sample varies from non-ATSI respondents is agreement with the statement that domestic violence can be excused if the woman is affected by alcohol (25% in the Indigenous sample compared to 10% in the non-Indigenous sample). There is no statistically significant difference between Indigenous men and women on this measure.

On questions related to responses to violence, ATSI respondents vary consistently and favourably from non-Indigenous respondents, being more likely to:

- agree that police response times have improved
- report that they would know where to go to get help in relation to a domestic violence issue.

Indigenous respondents do not vary overall on their stated intentions to intervene to help a woman being assaulted by her partner, but are more likely than non-Indigenous respondents to say that they would intervene physically as opposed to saying or doing something else to try and help.

Indigenous respondents are also more likely than non-Indigenous respondents to believe that people turn a blind eye to domestic violence.

In the literature reviewed for this study, the prevalence of violence against Indigenous women was found to be considerably higher than is the case for non-Indigenous women. In this literature it was proposed that violence against women in Indigenous communities (and hypothetically attitudes towards the problem) were influenced by the intersecting factors of:

- norms and practices relating to gender equality and associated roles and identities. As is the case in the wider community these may particularly influence the proclivity for violence among men

- socio-economic disadvantage
- unique historical and contemporary factors experienced by Indigenous communities (e.g. frontier violence associated with colonisation, child removal, higher rates of incarceration).

Accordingly, further analysis was undertaken to establish the extent to which these differences are influenced by gender, socio-economic disadvantage and factors associated with Indigenous status. This analysis suggests that:

- The high VSA score in the Indigenous sample is largely associated with disadvantaged Indigenous men.
- While disadvantaged Indigenous women are more likely than their more advantaged counterparts to hold violence supportive attitudes, this is in similar proportion as non-Indigenous disadvantaged women.

There are a range of possible explanations for these findings. As discussed above the positive findings for the Indigenous sample on the UVAW Scale (measuring understanding of violence against women) are likely to be the result of the higher level of exposure to violence among this sample. Media coverage of the issue of violence in Indigenous communities and community education about violence may also contribute to a higher level of understanding and awareness.

In contrast to *understanding*, higher levels of exposure to violence (for example, in the family, community or institutional environments) have been found to influence *attitudes* in a negative direction (see 3.8.1). The higher rates of violence in general experienced by Indigenous men may explain the higher VSA score in this group. However, this explanation is not sufficient alone as it does not account for gender differences between Indigenous men and women and the similarity in responses between Indigenous and non-Indigenous women in regards to violence supportive attitudes (as measured by the VSA Construct). This is especially the case given that rates of violence affecting Indigenous men and women are comparable (based on data from 2008 NATSISS, ABS 2013a), whereas there is a gender gap in violence exposure among all men and women, albeit a small one (ABS 2013b).

Similarly, while higher rates of imprisonment have been identified as a risk factor for violence and violence supportive attitudes, this is a risk borne by both Indigenous men and women. The rate of imprisonment of Indigenous women has increased in recent years, with the female prison population having a higher proportion of Indigenous persons than is the case for the male prison population (Bartels 2010).

Substantially more variation in the Indigenous sample is explained by SES factors than is the case in the main sample. This lends support to theories locating violence in marginalised communities either to social disorganisation (the breakdown of informal and formal sanctions against violence in the face of persistent disadvantage, deprivation and neglect) (Atkinson 1990a; Button 2008; Langton 2008) or to the material and psychological stresses associated with such marginalisation (Weatherburn 2011). However, again these explanations are insufficient on their own since they do not account for the gender differences in attitudes among similarly disadvantaged men and women in the Indigenous sample. In other words, marginalisation needs to be understood as a gendered phenomenon which has differential impacts on men and women and their attitudes. Further this explanation does not account for the differences found between disadvantaged Indigenous and disadvantaged non-Indigenous men. Together these differences seemingly provide support for the contention in the literature that factors uniquely affecting Indigenous communities intersect with gender and other forms of disadvantage to shape attitudes towards violence amongst ATSI men. These unique factors arise from the status of Indigenous Australians as colonised people. While they negatively affect both men and women (McGlade 2012), when they combine with the influences of gender

(see section 3.8.1), they have a particular impact upon shaping attitudes towards violence against women among Indigenous men. These factors include:

- forced removal from land
- the undermining of traditional cultural practices and family structures, resulting in the breakdown of cultural norms against violence and social processes responsible for supporting them (e.g. respect for elders)
- the loss of status and authority associated with gender roles in pre-colonial Indigenous societies, coupled with limited access to alternative sources of status in the post-colonial era (e.g. through employment or education)
- exposure to violence in the course of colonisation and its aftermath (e.g. frontier violence, the violence associated with forced child removal, exposure to violence in the course of incarceration)
- the imposition of gendered roles and identities of colonial societies on Indigenous communities (including aspects associated with violence proclivity)
- contemporary racism.

Social disorganisation theory predicts that individuals in communities affected by entrenched disadvantage will be less likely to intervene to assist a woman experiencing violence. To the extent that intention (as stated in research) can be said to predict behaviour, this hypothesis was not borne out for the Indigenous sample which did not vary from the sample as a whole in response to questions about intentions to intervene.

Looking at responses to specific questions in the five attitudinal themes, it appears that the relatively high VSA score for Indigenous men is largely explained by the greater likelihood of this group supporting statements measuring normative support for violence. That is, for justifications and excuses. Indigenous women are similarly more likely than non-Indigenous women to endorse statements in these themes. This provides support for a further possible explanation proposed in the literature. As discussed above in relation to immigrant communities, this explanation proposes that marginalised groups respond to violence in different ways as a result of both historical and contemporary experiences of marginalisation (Atkinson 1990b; Lucashenko 1996; Nancarrow 2006; Nash 2005). For example, in her research with African American women Nash found an inclination to displace responsibility for violence from individual men to external factors such as the stresses placed on relationships by racism and oppression, as well as the historical legacy of extreme human rights abuses. She argues that women have internalised the importance of defending black men in light of these experiences (Nash 2005). A similar argument has been made for Indigenous men and women in the Australian context (Langton 2008; Lucaschenko 1996. See also Huggins et al. 1991).

The bid to reduce violence in the wider community has had an emphasis on holding men accountable when they use violence and increasing women's protection under the law. However, such an approach is more problematic for Indigenous communities, given the negative contemporary and historical experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, especially men, in the criminal justice system (Atkinson 1996). Indigenous women may also resist invoking criminal justice responses, owing to the risk of child protection involvement (McGlade 2012; Nixon & Cripps 2013). A NSW review found that domestic violence was the most common factor raised by police in child protection reports involving Indigenous children (Wood 2008, para 17.9). Both individual and collective action on violence may also be perceived as threatening the solidarity and integrity of already fragile Indigenous communities (Nancarrow 2006; Nixon & Cripps 2013). Justifying or excusing violence may be a way of resolving the dissonance between competing objectives. On one hand Indigenous respondents are clearly aware that violence is problematic

and serious. On the other, they may perceive that acting on that understanding may have serious negative impacts for relationships, families and communities.

The patterns discussed above suggest that for Indigenous communities a greater emphasis on strengthening attitudes (as opposed to strengthening knowledge about the prevalence and nature of violence and the role of the law) is warranted in efforts to prevent violence against women. There has been considerable leadership among men in Indigenous communities to address violence against women and their children. A number of Indigenous men have taken a strong stand against this violence.

A significant landmark in this leadership was Indigenous leader Mick Dodson's address to the National Press Club in 2003 in which he called for the need to

"acknowledge that the extent of violence in our communities is unacceptable. It is extreme and requires extreme action. Our behaviours of silencing and not talking about violence can no longer be excused" (Dodson 2003).

Dodson proposed that:

"Aboriginal leadership in this country, men and women together, call on the Australian government to work with us in partnership to acknowledge the centrality of violence induced trauma and its debilitating effects and to combat family violence as a national priority" (Dodson 2003).

In 2008 many hundreds of men participating in the inaugural national Aboriginal Men's Health Conference were signatory to the Inteyerrkwe Statement which included a pledge to take steps to

"develop strategies to ensure our future roles as grandfathers, fathers, uncles, nephews, brothers, grandsons and sons in caring for our children in a safe family environment that will lead to a happier, longer life that reflects opportunities experienced by the wider community".

The statement also includes an acknowledgement and an apology for the

"hurt, pain and suffering caused by Aboriginal males to our wives, to our children, to our mothers, to our grandmothers, to our granddaughters, to our aunts to our nieces and to our sisters".

The higher proportion of Indigenous men, in particular those experiencing disadvantage, scoring high on the VSA Construct suggests that there would be merit in continuing to support such efforts to work with men in Indigenous communities and the community and organisational environments shaping Indigenous men's attitudes to violence.

The probability that attitudes in this group are influenced by both the historical and contemporary social context experienced by Indigenous Australians, including high levels of exposure to institutional and community violence and negative interactions with the criminal justice system, also suggests the need for continuing efforts to reduce social and economic inequality between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. This would include addressing factors responsible for the disproportionate number of Indigenous persons in prisons and child welfare environments, as well as factors in those settings which may contribute to the proclivity for violence. Similarly important are strategies that improve access to the law for Indigenous women affected by violence, both to improve safety and to contribute to establishing clear social norms against the use of violence.

In recent decades, there has been a growth in both formal and informal leadership among Indigenous women to address violence affecting women and children (COAG 2010). Supporting this leadership is among the current policy directions in the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children (COAG 2010). The positive findings for women in the NCAS affirm the importance of this focus.

Another notable pattern in the Indigenous sample is the inclination to excuse partner and sexual violence when either the victim or perpetrator is affected by alcohol, with the percentage agreeing that this was an excuse being higher for the Indigenous sample on the items 'A man is less responsible for rape if he is drunk or affected by drugs at the time' and 'Domestic violence can be excused if the offender is affected by alcohol'. With regard to alcohol and victim-blaming, Indigenous respondents were more inclined to agree that 'domestic violence can be excused if the victim is affected by alcohol', but were no more likely than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents to believe that 'If a woman is raped while she is drunk or affected by drugs, she is at least partly responsible'. There are some Indigenous communities in which alcohol abuse is a significant issue (Smith et al. 2013) and Indigenous persons are over-represented among persons who are 'binge drinkers' (AIHW 2011b). However, population-level surveys indicate that Indigenous Australians are no more likely to drink at levels harmful to their long-term health than non-Indigenous Australians and are *more likely not* to have consumed alcohol in the 12 months prior to being surveyed (29% of Indigenous Australians compared with 15% of non-Indigenous Australians had not consumed alcohol) (AIHW 2011b). This is contrary to the popular perception of alcohol abuse being pervasive among Indigenous Australians evident in the extensive media coverage of the issues (Langton 1993), in which violence against women and children and alcohol are often presented as inseparable social problems. The results on questions involving alcohol may be part of the general pattern of justifying and excusing partner violence discussed above. However, they may also be suggestive of an internalisation of the expectation that excessive alcohol consumption is inevitably associated with the perpetration of violence towards women and children. As discussed elsewhere in this report (see 6.2.1), there is a relationship between alcohol and the frequency and severity of violence against women. However, there is evidence that this relationship may result from the interaction between the effects of alcohol and other social and behavioural risk factors (e.g. controlling behaviours). Also relevant are the social context in which drinking takes place and socially determined expectancies of the effects of alcohol consumption on behaviour. Importantly, being affected by alcohol is not an excuse for violent behaviour.

It is of note that, in contrast to the responses on questions involving alcohol, Indigenous respondents are no more likely to endorse childhood experience of violence as an excuse for partner violence. This is despite evidence that Indigenous children, in particular those who were part of the stolen generation, are disproportionately affected by child abuse (Commonwealth of Australia 1997; Cummins et al. 2012).

12.8.10 People with disabilities

Women with disabilities experience a higher rate of violence, particularly sexual violence, more severe violence and violence over longer periods and by a broader range of perpetrators compared with women without disabilities (Plummer & Findley 2012). In addition to experiencing the same kinds of violence as women without disabilities, they also experience 'disability-specific' forms of violence (Healey 2013). Prior research suggests that other than their disabilities, there is little to distinguish disabled and non-disabled victims of violence. However, partners of women with disabilities have been found to be more likely to behave in a domineering and possessive manner and to demonstrate sexual jealousy than the partners of women without a disability (Brownridge 2009, p. 254).

Data for people with disabilities were analysed for individual questions and each of the scales as well as the VSA Construct in two age categories – people 16–64 years of age and 65 years and over. This was to account for the impact of age on both disability and attitudes towards violence against women. That is, the fact that people over 65 years are more likely to have a disability and they are also more likely to vary from the community as a whole on their attitudes to gender equality and violence against women. This analysis indicated that people with disabilities under the age of 65 years:

- were more likely to be classified as having a high level of understanding as measured by the UVAW Scale (25% for people with disabilities versus 19% for those without disabilities)
- did not vary from the sample on attitudinal support for gender equality or the VSA Construct.

To exclude the possibility that this approach to categorisation masked differences between people with and without a disability at different ages, analysis was undertaken to control for the effects of age. This showed that:

- There is no variation between people with and without disabilities on their GE and UVAW scores, with the exception that people with a disability aged over 55 years are more likely to have a low GE score.

However,

- People with disabilities are more likely to score high on the VSA Construct than their same-age peers (43% of disabled persons aged 18–34 compared with only 30% of their non-disabled peers, 27% of disabled persons 35–54 years compared with 20% of peers, and 41% of disabled persons over 55 years compared with 32% of peers).

Further statistical analysis confirms this, suggesting that while age accounts for most of the difference between people with and without disabilities, disability has a moderate influence on attitudes independent of age.

Further analysis by gender indicated that:

- Men of all ages with a disability had higher VSA scores than women with disabilities and men in the sample as a whole.
- Overall, women scored lower than men on VSA regardless of whether they had a disability or not, the exception being women older than 65 years with a disability who scored higher on VSA than their counterparts without a disability.

Turning to specific questions, people with disabilities who are under the age of 65 years are more likely to:

- perceive violence against women as common
- agree that women are more likely to be raped by someone they know than a stranger (71% versus 63% for people without a disability)
- agree that women make up or exaggerate claims of domestic violence to improve their prospects in contested custody cases (61% versus 51%).

There is no known research gauging the knowledge of, and attitudes towards, violence against women among people with disabilities. However, based on the broader body of literature pertaining to violence affecting persons with disabilities, it was hypothesised that this group would have a lower level of understanding and knowledge of violence against women (based on barriers to accessing education and information on gender relations, intimacy and sexuality) (Frawley & Bigby 2014; Healey 2013) and a higher level of attitudinal support for violence (resulting from the greater likelihood of exposure to violence via their first-hand experience of violence in the family, community and in institutional settings (Fitzsimons 2009; French et al. 2009; Healey 2013; Plummer & Findley 2012; Sobsey 1994) and the impacts of the intersecting influences of oppression associated with gender, disability and the social marginalisation which may often co-occur with disability).

The findings above support the hypotheses for men with disabilities, but only for women aged 65 years and over. The greater propensity to hold violence supportive attitudes in these groups is possibly the consequence of the fact that disability co-occurs with many the other factors identified in the survey as being associated with attitudes supportive of violence against women. Disability can be both a cause and a consequence of social and economic marginalisation (Bradbury et al. 2001; OHCHR 2012; WHO 2011; WWDA & WWDV 2011). This is evident in the sample of people with a disability in NCAS with respondents with disabilities being more likely to be Indigenous (4% compared with 2% overall); 16 times more likely to be unable to work; half as likely to have a university education and much more likely to live in the most and second most disadvantaged areas (41% of persons with a disability compared with 29% of peers). Respondents with disabilities who were born overseas are also more likely than their peers to have poor proficiency in English (29% compared with 19%). Nevertheless the variation between younger women and men with a disability suggests that the findings need to be understood in the context of the intersecting influences of gender socialisation, discrimination and prejudice affecting people with disabilities, and other forms of social marginalisation.

The fact that women over the age of 65 with a disability have higher VSA scores than younger women and their non-disabled peers is suggestive of two related influences:

- an age cohort effect, with this age group having gained their adult socialisation at a time preceding changes in responses towards both gender relations and disability in the 1980s and 1990s
- the cumulative impacts of exposure to intersecting forms of disadvantage over a lifetime.

That is, not only are many in this group likely to have lived longer with a disability (increasing the likelihood of internalising negative attitudes), but they will have experienced their socialisation in a period of Australian history when the treatment of people with disabilities, especially in some institutional environments, was particularly abusive (Dillon 2010).

These findings suggest the importance of targeting interventions to institutional, organisational and community environments in which attitudes supportive of violence, violence against women and violence against people with disabilities may be engendered. While targeting resident men with a disability, particular emphasis would need to be placed on targeting care-givers and administrators as well as systemic factors that support violence (Dillon 2010).

The fact that only small proportions of the sample as a whole are aware that women with disabilities are at higher risk of violence and are less likely to be believed when reporting victimisation suggests the importance of education and awareness raising both in the wider community and among relevant professionals pertaining to violence affecting women with disabilities.

12.8.11 Remoteness of the area

The likelihood of violence supportive attitudes being higher in non-urban areas is raised in the literature (Neame & Heenan 2004). The reasons proposed for this are:

- a greater level of conservatism in non-urban areas
- lower levels of participation in tertiary education
- the impacts of economic downturn and rural restructuring on men and masculinity in rural areas
- the greater emphasis on family privacy and self-reliance (Carrington & Scott 2008; Neame & Heenan 2004).

However, the relative remoteness of areas did not emerge as a major influence in the linear regression analysis in the main sample or any of the sub-samples. There are very few measures on which there is a substantial variance by remoteness (major city, inner regional, outer regional, remote, very remote), and where differences were apparent, they mainly affect:

- outer-regional areas
- inner-regional areas (tending to demonstrate a higher level of understanding and lesser tendency to endorse violence supportive statements).

Remote areas varied on only two measures, one in a positive and one in a negative direction.

The differences in outer-regional areas were primarily in response to questions about patterns of perpetration and impacts of partner violence. Specifically, respondents in these areas are:

- more likely than the sample as whole to agree that men and women were equally likely to commit partner violence (29% in outer-regional areas compared with 25% for the sample as whole); and that men and women were equally likely to suffer harm (12% in outer-regional areas compared with 9% for the sample as whole).
- less likely to disagree that 'women who say they are raped led the man on and later had regrets' (42% versus 47%).

However, they are more likely to disagree that:

- 'violence can be excused if the violent person is genuinely regretful afterward' than the sample as whole (79% versus 74%)
- 'it's hard to understand why women stay' (84% versus 78%).

Respondents in inner-regional areas are marginally more likely than the sample as whole to identify certain non-physical behaviours as domestic violence or violence against women and to rate them as serious; and less likely to endorse some justifications and excuses for violence.

At the scale and construct level however, only inner-regional areas varied from the sample as whole and this was on all three measures. That is, persons residing in these areas are:

- less likely to have low GE scores (22% versus 26%)
- more likely to have a high score on the understanding scale (23% versus 19%)
- less likely to have a high score on the VSA Construct (25% versus 28%).

This lack of variation by area type may be due to a number of factors including the:

- lower proportions of overseas-born persons (who tend to be more likely to hold the violence supportive attitudes measured in the survey) in non-metropolitan areas (ABS 2011a).
- impact of regional development on some regional centres. This may have reduced the influence of factors increasing the propensity to hold violence supportive attitudes in regional areas relative to metropolitan areas (e.g. the increasing availability of tertiary education in regional centres, increasing social diversity resulting from people in metropolitan areas settling in regional cities).

The lack of difference may also be due to the particular analytical approach used. Specifically, researchers have noted the high level of variability in rates of violence and violence against women *between* non-urban communities. That is, while there are overall higher rates in non-urban areas, this is not true of all such

communities. Rather some have relatively low levels of violence, while others are violence 'hot-spots' (Grech & Burgess 2011; People 2005). Such differences would be masked in the analytical approach taken in the NCAS (which aggregated data for all areas by their degree of remoteness).

It is also possible that attitudes supportive of violence do differ between urban and rural settings but in ways which while identified in the literature, are not tapped via the NCAS survey instrument (e.g. the greater emphasis in rural communities on self-reliance).

Carrington and Scott (2008) propose that the challenges to masculinity in regional areas resulting from rural restructuring and economic downturn have led to some men in rural areas being particularly inclined to align themselves with men's rights groups. There are two areas of inquiry in the NCAS that have been a particular concern of these groups. The first concerns false allegations, particularly of domestic violence, and the second whether violence is perpetrated equally by men and women and whether the harms accrue equally to both sexes (Flood 2010a). There is only modest support for this hypothesis in the survey findings. Specifically, as indicated above, there are small differences on questions relating to whether the perpetration and impacts of partner violence are gender-symmetrical. Outer-regional respondents are slightly more likely to agree that men and women are equally likely to commit partner violence and that men and women are equally likely to suffer harm from partner violence. However, of the four questions in the survey tapping false allegations, people in outer-regional areas vary on only one – the belief that 'women who are raped led the man on and later had regrets'. Although these differences are small they are notable for being among a very small number of measures on which outer-regional areas varied from the main sample. These differences are found when the population as a whole (ie both men and women) are considered. It is possible that they would be more marked if questions were analysed by gender, making the exploration of gender differences among non-urban respondents a potentially fruitful avenue for future research.

The findings above suggest that efforts to prevent violence against women are at least as important in rural and remote areas as they are in urban areas. Arguably more intensive targeting is warranted when these findings are considered alongside those presented in the literature review indicating a higher prevalence of violence in some rural communities, the greater impacts of violence once it has started and the particular barriers to help-seeking faced by women in rural and remote communities.

12.8.12 Jurisdiction

One of the purposes of conducting the NCAS is to monitor progress of the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children, a plan to which all Australian States and Territories are signatories. For this reason there was a particular interest in establishing if there were significant differences between Australian jurisdictions. There were very few measures on which such variations were apparent, and where these existed, they were typically modest. The main differences are as follows:

- Victoria had the highest proportion of people disagreeing that women were more likely to be raped by a known person (23% versus 20% for the sample as whole and 13% for the jurisdiction with the lowest proportion, the ACT).³⁴
- The number of respondents believing that domestic violence is perpetrated equally by men and women is higher in Queensland (28% versus 25% overall). The proportion believing that the physical impacts of partner violence are the same for both men and women is

³⁴ Administration of the survey coincided with the committal hearing and trial of the person accused of the fatal physical and sexual assault of Ms Jill Meagher in Victoria. Her assailant was unknown to her. This case was the subject of extensive media coverage.

marginally higher in Queensland (11%), Tasmania (13%) and the Northern Territory (13%) than the national figure of 9%.

- People in Victoria are slightly less likely than the Australian average to identify some of the behaviours put to them as partner violence or violence against women (stalking, controlling the social life of one's partner by preventing them from seeing family and friends and denying one's partner money).
- A larger proportion of respondents in the NT identified violence as common (79% versus 68% for the sample as a whole).
- Respondents in the NT are more likely to say that they would know where to get help with a domestic violence problem (69% versus 57%).

At the scale and construct level there are jurisdictional variations on the

- GE Scale with ACT and Victorian respondents being more likely to have high GE scores and SA residents low scores
- UVAW (understanding of violence against women) Scale on which Victorians are more likely to have a low score (35%) than the sample as a whole (31%)
- VSA (violence supportive attitudes) Construct: Queenslanders were more likely to have a moderate score (54% compared with 50%) and residents of the ACT were less likely to have a high score (22% versus 28%), indicating a lower likelihood of endorsing violence supportive attitudes in this jurisdiction.

12.9. Other factors contributing to knowledge about violence against women and violence supportive attitudes

While the variance found provides some guidance for targeting interventions, the fact that it was relatively limited on the demographic variables included in the survey suggests the importance of ensuring that prevention efforts reach the whole population. That is, while particular groups (e.g. men, the overseas born) are more likely to have a poor understanding of violence and endorse violence supportive attitudes, so too do substantial proportions in other groups (women, the Australian-born). The relatively small amount of variance explained also suggests that factors not included in this study are also likely to hold a high level of explanatory value.

There are a number of categories of influence apparent in the literature:

- attitudes on other dimensions of gender equality, gender equity and gender roles and identities
- other attitudinal domains (e.g. towards various political or philosophical orientations or human rights, or towards the use of violence in other contexts, 'just world' beliefs)
- prior use of, or exposure to, violence as a victim or witness
- specific contextual factors in communities and organisations (e.g. membership of an ultra-masculine, male-dominated work place or sports organisation or a community with a high level of social disorganisation)
- other factors (e.g. media consumption patterns, including exposure to violent pornography and video games, socialisation in the family and relationship practices).

Each of these factors is discussed in the following passages.

There is a large and complex body of literature on gender equality, roles, relationships and identities and the ways in which these can be measured. The scale used in this analysis distinguishes respondents holding traditional gender role beliefs. However, attitudinal support for gender inequality can be expressed in other ways, for example in the form of benevolent sexism (Glick & Fiske 1997) or neo-sexism (Tougas et al. 1995), which have also been found to influence attitudes towards violence against women (Chapleau et al. 2007; Cohn et al. 2009; Durán et al. 2010; Masser 2006; Rebeiz & Harb 2010; Suarez & Gadalla 2010; Yamawaki et al. 2007). Further, contained within the broad area of gender roles and identities are a range of theoretically relevant dimensions not addressed in the scale currently used in NCAS (e.g. hostility towards women, beliefs about masculinity and beliefs about the division of labour in the private sphere). These dimensions, if explored, may hold additional or greater explanatory power.

There is also some evidence to suggest that attitudes towards gender equality are influenced by broader socio-political leanings. Gender equality is more likely to be supported among those with liberal philosophical orientations (Bolzendahl & Myers 2004, p. 777) and to be rejected by those with a high level of attitudinal support for authoritarianism and social dominance (Carvacho et al. 2013; Cohrs et al. 2007; Peterson & Zurbriggen 2010). Given the relationship between attitudes to gender equality and violence against women, it is possible that orientations in other domains intersect with attitudes towards gender to determine attitudes held towards violence against women both directly and indirectly via their influence on gender equality attitudes. This is suggested in a number of studies exploring the relationship between these orientations and rape myth acceptance (Suarez & Gadalla 2010).

Another possible explanatory factor is exposure to or attitudes towards the use of violence generally. Prior research suggests a link between:

- support for the use of violence in general and attitudes towards violence against women (Suarez & Gadalla 2010)
- men's use of violence against women and their use of violence in other contexts (Mouzos and Makkai 2004; Garcia-Moreno et al. 2006).
- exposure to violence as a child either as witnesses to violence perpetrated against mothers or as victims of child abuse, and endorsement of attitudes supportive of violence against women (Speizer 2010).

This suggests that efforts to address violence generally, and other forms of violence, such as child abuse, are likely to contribute to the prevention of violence against women. It is important to note, however, that attitudes towards these other forms of violence are themselves understood to be influenced by gender socialisation with men being more likely to endorse attitudes supportive of the use of violence in other interpersonal and collective contexts (Anderson et al. 2006; Davidson & Canivez 2012; Kelty et al. 2011; Walker 2005). In view of these relationships, prevention is likely to be most effective when it addresses the intersecting issues of violence and gender roles, gender relations and gender identities.

The limited variance in NCAS findings on socio-demographic variables reflects prior research indicating an increasing *depolarisation* between groups on their attitudes to gender equality (van Egmond et al. 2010). That is, although people can be distinguished to some extent on the basis of demographic variables such as age and SES, differences between groups are becoming less influential as explanatory variables (Pampel 2011). In part this is because support for gender equality has become increasingly diffused throughout the population (Bolzendahl & Myers 2004; Pampel 2011). However, given that studies continue to find substantial support for gender inequality on various measures (van Egmond et al. 2010; Wike et al. 2009), it is probable that other factors are influential in distinguishing people on their attitudes to gender equality and that this is also the case for attitudes towards violence against women. Some influences identified in the literature as influencing attitudes toward violence and/or gender equality include:

- socialisation and role modelling of gender relations and identities in families (Brannon p. 137)
- attitudes toward and engagement in potentially harmful and disrespectful relationship practices, such as infidelity and transactional sex (Fulu et al 2013)
- exposure to and consumption of popular culture, especially violent pornography (Hald et al. 2010); the depiction of violence against women and sex-stereo-typed imagery of women in gaming applications and devices (Dill et al 2008; Fox & Balenson 2009); and the reinforcement of violence mythology in reporting on violence against women (Franiuck et al. 2008).
- the extent of exposure to gendered social norms in organisations (for example, sports clubs, in education) and communities (e.g. peer cultures) (Flood & Pease 2006; Powell 2011; 2012)
- the influences of social movements and social policy (Bolzendahl & Myers 2004; Davis & Greenstein 2009; Flood & Pease 2006).

These influences would be important lines of inquiry in future research on attitudes towards violence against women. The media and popular culture are particularly important settings in this regard in light of increasing evidence of substantial increases in consumption of some media forms, such as violent pornography and gaming devices, especially by young people (Braun-Courville & Rojas 2009, Bryant 2010; Dowdell et al 2011; Flood 2009; Papadopoulos 2010). Evidence is also increasing of the use of social media as a site for harassing and abusive behaviour towards women (eg through the transmission of sexually explicit imagery of women without their permission) (Strassberg et al. 2012).

Some studies also suggest that violence against women may be in part a consequence of social disorganisation and its effects on formal and informal social sanctions or on social connections with others who may communicate their disapproval of violence or violence supportive attitudes (Pinchevsky & Wright 2012). These studies suggest that those seeking to prevent violence against women may find 'common cause' with those supporting strategies to address locational disadvantage and social isolation.

12.10. The relationship between attitudes and prevalence

The literature used to inform this study indicates that there is a relationship between attitudes and behaviour, either directly or via the impact of attitudes on social norms. While change in attitudes in many of the areas assessed in this survey has been at best modest, there is evidence of a substantial reduction in normative support for violence by way of justifying it since the 1980s (ANOP 1995). Moreover, there are many other measures in the survey where results indicate low levels of endorsement of attitudes supportive of violence against women. There are mixed signals as to whether there has been a commensurate reduction in violence against women. Homicide data indicates a reduction in domestic homicides, the majority of victims of which are women, between the late 1980s and the mid-2000s (Chan & Payne 2013). The female homicide rate has also reduced in this time. However the rate of intimate-partner homicide (a category within domestic homicide, and again disproportionately affecting women) has remained stable (Chan & Payne 2013, p 30). The evidence from surveys on the experience of violence is similarly mixed. The first survey measuring violence prevalence was conducted in 1996 and there have been only two further waves of this survey since (2005 and 2012). There was an increase in respondents who had experienced domestic and sexual violence indicating that they reported to the police between 1996 and 2005. However, there was only a modest reduction in the proportion of women experiencing violence in the 12 months prior to the surveys (5.8% of women experienced violence in 2005 compared to 7.1% in 1996). There was no statistically significant reduction in violence between 2005 and 2012 (ABS 2013b). The data above suggests that it is possible that reduction in blatant normative support for violence against women has not been matched by reductions in violence itself.

Studies on research into attitudes suggest that this may be an artefact of the survey methodology, coupled with increasing recognition of the issue. That is, as awareness and understanding of the problem has increased respondents have learned to answer survey questions in ways they understand are socially desirable, rather than to reflect the way they actually feel or would act in a given situation (see literature review for further discussion).

It is also noted that although only small proportions of Australians endorse statements directly releasing perpetrators of accountability for violence (e.g. by justifying or excusing violence or blaming the victim), substantial numbers hold views that work against a clear stand being taken against violence and which, at their worst, may have a collusive effect in the perpetration of violence. This is evident in the relatively high proportions of people supporting attitudes that trivialise or minimise violence (e.g. believing that some forms of violence are not serious or that women falsify claims of violence or could leave a violent relationship if they really wanted to).

Social-psychological research suggests that it is a combination of attitudes held by members of the community plus social normalisation which can provide a permissive platform for individual attitudes to manifest in behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein 2005). It is possible that these relatively widely held trivialising and minimising attitudes play a role in creating such a climate.

It is also currently unknown what level of agreement constitutes a problem. That is, are certain beliefs only a real problem when substantial numbers support them, and what constitutes the 'tipping point'? In responding to these questions in their review of rape myths, Edwards et al. (2011) propose that even low levels of agreement are a concern and this is for four reasons. First, questions contained in survey instruments (including the NCAS) are framed in ways that gauge explicit rather than implicit beliefs. These are particularly vulnerable to the social desirability bias discussed above. They note that measures gauging more covert beliefs tend to yield higher levels of endorsement. Second, rejecting a particular belief does not mean that a given individual's behaviour will not be influenced by it, given the influence of the formal and informal social norms climate on behaviour. Third, they argue that there are likely cumulative effects of the range of beliefs that provide cultural support for violence against women. That is, while any individual belief may be supported by a small proportion of the population and some groups tend to endorse many violence supportive attitudes, a larger proportion is likely to endorse at least one violence supportive belief. Fourth, drawing on social psychology theory, Edwards et al. argue that a view can have deleterious consequences when held by a few individuals if those individuals happen to occupy positions of social power that in turn can exert an influence on many people. For example, the proclamations of a judge, a prominent media figure or a religious cleric have the potential to exert significant influence over others, both directly and via their impact on the cultures of the institutions in which they are located (in these examples, the courts and the legal fraternity, the media and faith institutions, respectively). Arguably, a similar case applies in critical contexts, juries being a particular notable example.

Alternatively it may be that the process of individual changes in knowledge and attitudes becoming embedded in social norms is one that may take some years, possibly generations, to achieve and hence is yet to manifest in reduced incidence of violence.

Another possible explanation is that while there has been substantial investment in addressing violence against women at an individual level (in the form of laws and support services), less work has been done to address broader violence supportive systems and cultures (e.g. the sexualisation of women in popular culture; the availability of violent pornography) or the wider structures and cultures that create the conditions for violence by maintaining rigid gender roles and identities and inequalities of power between men and women. Although Australia has made some progress in this regard relative to other nations with comparable levels of economic development it has some way to go. For example, it currently ranks 17th among the 186 nations in the United Nations Human Development Program Gender Inequality Index, a

measure of women's disadvantage (UNDP 2013 p. 156), and 24th out of 136 nations in the Global Gender Gap Index, a measure of the magnitude and scope of gender disparities in nations (World Economic Forum 2013, p. 8).

12.11. The role of attitudinal change in a preventing violence against women

In the literature on which this study was based (see section 3), two key themes emerge. The first is that a significant factor in whether attitudes are manifest in behaviour is the strength of social and other sanctions against the behaviour of concern. This evidence suggests that strategies that seek to change attitudes alone (e.g. community education, social marketing campaigns) are unlikely to be effective unless they are part of a broader range of strategies targeting behaviour via social and other sanctions (e.g. law reform, policy change in organisations, incentives or strong leadership against violence supportive cultures) (Pease & Flood 2008). Indeed, some experts have argued that it is more effective to seek to change behaviours using these strategies, in the knowledge that attitudinal change will follow, than it is to target attitudes for change directly (Pease & Flood 2008).

The second theme emerging in the literature is that attitudes are not innate, immutable features of individuals, but rather are socially constructed via exposure to both cultural influences (e.g. prevailing norms about the roles of men and women) and structural arrangements (e.g. the extent of participation of women in education) (Davis & Greenstein 2009; Pease & Flood 2008).

Together this evidence suggests that the goal of preventing violence against women will be best met by a multi-pronged strategy. Thus, while including activities that seek to change attitudes directly it also includes approaches to build social norms and sanctions against violence; strengthens factors contributing to the development of positive attitudes (e.g. gender equality, respectful gender relations); and address those factors understood to influence attitudes in a negative direction (e.g. negative representations of violence against women and gender relations in the media, popular culture and violent pornography).

This survey, together with the body of research and literature on which this report draws provide some encouraging indications that further change is possible. This is indicated by:

- the change in attitudes among immigrants as they come into contact with different approaches to gender relations in host societies (though as discussed earlier this change may not necessarily be in a positive direction)
- levels of understanding and positive attitudes being more likely among those reaching adulthood in the decades between the mid-1960s and 1990s when there was rapid social change in the areas of gender equality (e.g. increase in women's participation in paid work); gender relations (e.g. greater freedoms that came with the advent of the contraceptive pill) and violence against women (e.g. public funding of women's refuges and legislation specifically prohibiting forced sex in marriage). This pattern of change is confirmed in other research (Carlson & Worden 2005; Cotter et al. 2011; van Egmond et al. 2010)
- The positive change in attitudes among young men found in the separate analysis of the youth cohort (www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/ncas). This is encouraging since young men have been a primary target of recent effort to prevent violence against women.
- International studies showing that attitudes in low and middle income countries have changed in response to multi-pronged strategies resulting from collaborations between the international development agencies and local women's groups (Pierotti 2013) and that there are lower rates of both violence supportive attitudes and violence itself in countries with comprehensive legislative programs to combat the problem compared with those without such programs (UN Women 2011 p 34).

12.12. Conclusion

This study suggests that although normative support for violence is limited in Australia, there are still substantial minorities (and on some items a majority) prepared to excuse, trivialise or minimise violence, or apportion blame to the victim. Although there has been improvement on some measures, progress on many others has been minimal or there has been a worsening trend. This is reflected in the stalling of attitudes towards gender equality (an established correlate of violence supportive attitudes) in this and other surveys.

Having a nuanced understanding of violence and high support for gender equality are the most influential variables in violence supportive attitudes, suggesting that addressing these factors will be important in future prevention efforts.

There would be some merit in targeting interventions to men, young people, Indigenous communities (especially men), first-generation Australians born in a N-MESC (again especially men), and men and older women with disabilities. While associations with SES factors are weak, there is some evidence that the probability of violence supportive attitudes is highest when multiple forms of disadvantage intersect, suggesting the need for violence prevention interventions targeted to groups experiencing extreme disadvantage. However, in light of the relatively small variance on demographic variables and the relatively strong influence of broader social norms on attitudes and behaviours, it is also important to maintain efforts targeted to the population as a whole.

Only a small proportion of the variance in attitudes could be explained by variables included in this study, suggesting the need for further research and of addressing other factors contributing to both gender inequality and violence supportive attitudes.

While attitudes play an influential part in the problem of violence against women, they are among a myriad of factors. Moreover, attitudes are a product of cultural and structural influences, as is whether they are ultimately manifest in behaviour. This suggests while strategies targeted to individuals to strengthen their attitudes are valuable, an effective prevention approach will need to also address the community, organisational and societal-level determinants of attitudes, and of violence against women itself.

13. Concluding remarks

The NCAS Technical Report is the main publicly available report for the 2013 NCAS project. The report has been prepared for a research audience with a particular interest in violence against women, and has been designed to make methodological detail publicly available.

A number of methodological advances were introduced to the 2013 survey program to ensure that the survey provides the best possible contemporary measure of community attitudes towards violence against women. These methodological enhancements include:

- The adoption of a dual-frame survey design and the move to a larger sample size. This enabled the *random* sampling of persons from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, persons identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders and persons not contactable via a residential landline telephone. These innovations both reduced the cost of mounting the survey program and improved the representativeness of the achieved sample.
- The utilisation of a Raking approach to weighting the survey data. This enabled additional population parameters such as educational attainment and birthplace to be taken into account in the weighting solution.
- The re-weighting of the 2009 data to take account of these improved weighting procedures so as to provide a robust basis for comparisons over time.

Some of the analytical approaches adopted were also subject to innovation. In particular, these included the development of an 'Understanding Violence Against Women' Scale and the creation of an overarching 'Violence Supportive Attitudes' Construct. These new variables, alongside the previously developed Gender Equality Scale, add analytical power to the interpretation of the survey findings. The other advance made in 2013 was to better align the analysis of the survey findings with previously identified violence supportive categories of justifying, excusing, trivialising and minimising violence and attributing blame to the victim.

The key findings of the 2013 NCAS project are as follows:

- As was the case in 2009, 'most people in the community have a broad understanding of domestic and sexual violence, and its impacts, and do not condone it' (VicHealth 2010). That said, at the overall level (measured using scales of understanding and attitudinal support for gender equality and a construct to assess support for violence), there has been no change since 2009. In addition, a substantial minority of the population continue to hold violence supportive attitudes, and on some measures this is a majority. Evidence of the above is found in the following results:
 - There has been a decline in the proportion of the community agreeing that violence against women is common (down from 74% in 2009 to 68% in 2013).
 - Despite evidence that it is mainly men who commit acts of domestic violence (ABS 2013b), there has been a continuing decline in the proportion of the community who believe this (from 86% in 1995 to 74% in 2009 and 71% in 2013).
 - There has been a significant decrease in the level of community agreement that women are more likely to be raped by someone they know (down from 70% to 64%) and a corresponding increase (from 6% to 9%) in community agreement that a woman cannot be raped by someone she is in a relationship with.
 - Since 2009 there has been an increase in the extent to which rape is thought to result from men not being able to control their need for sex (35% in 2009 to 43% in 2013).

- There has been a decline from 62% in 2009 to 57% in 2013 in the proportion of the community agreeing that they would know where to go if in need of outside help or support in relation to a domestic violence issue.

At the same time, there has been an increased appreciation since 1995 that the more subtle forms of coercion and control within relationships constitute domestic violence. For example, the increase from 71% (1995) to 85% (2009) to 86% (2013) holding the view that repeatedly criticising a partner to make them feel bad or useless is a form of domestic violence.

Consistent with previous surveys (McGregor 2009; Taylor & Mouzos 2006; VicHealth 2006, 2010), the 2013 survey identifies the following groups of the population as being more likely to hold attitudes that are considered to be violence supportive:

- persons born overseas in non-main English speaking countries
- males
- younger persons (aged 16 to 24 years) and older persons (especially those aged 75 years and over)
- persons living in lower socio-economic circumstances as measured by a variety of indicators including locational disadvantage, educational attainment, employment status and occupation.

The survey findings also show that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men, men with a self-reported disability, and women aged 65 years with a self-reported disability are more likely to have high violence supportive attitudes scores.

The results of the linear regression modelling presented in this report tell us that, generally speaking, subgroups of the population with low scores on the GE and UVAW Scales are also more likely to be classified as having high VSA scores.

Analysis of the 2013 NCAS data also tell us that while birthplace, gender, age and socio-economic status discriminate the extent to which violence supportive attitudes are held, other factors, canvassed in the literature, but not directly measured by the survey, are also important correlates.

14. References

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