

MEDIA RELEASE

30th of November 2018

Long-term commitment to prevention will change attitudes

The findings of the latest National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS) have been released. Led by Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS), the survey shows that, overall, our attitudes towards gender equality and violence against women are improving.

For example, most people agree men and women can play a range of roles regardless of gender, with 86% of people disagreeing that men are more capable in politics and in the workplace. In addition, 97% of Australians reject the idea that it is okay for men to joke with their male friends about being violent towards women. However the survey also highlights that too many Australian's continue to hold opinions that are at odds with both women's lived experience and evidence.

Amongst the concerning results, the survey showed that Australians are in denial about the problem of violence. The number of people who think that many women exaggerate the problem of male violence (23%), and the fact that almost half (42%) think it is common for sexual assault accusations to be used as a way of getting back at men, is cause for great concern.

The results also show a disturbing downward trend in the percentage of people who recognise that men are more likely than women to use violence in relationships (down 22% points since 1995), or that women are more likely to suffer greater physical harm from this violence (down 8% points since 2009).

Commenting on the findings, Gender Equity Victoria (GEN VIC) Chair Kristine Olaris emphasises that, *"the attitudes that Australians hold towards gender equality and violence against women are strong predictors of violence. The survey results make clear that it is only through a consistent focus on prevention that we will see a decline in violence against women"*.

As the Victorian peak body for gender equity, women's health, and the prevention of violence against women, GEN VIC has advocated strongly for the amount allocated to prevention to be at minimum, 10% of the amount spent on the delivery of services for responding to violence against women.

Reflecting on this figure Olaris said *"adequate, specific and recurrent funding for prevention is crucial to changing attitudes towards violence against women and gender equality. In Australia, Victoria is leading this change. Across the state, women's health services are doing the critical work of preventing violence against women. We need to recognise this work with ongoing funding and resources for regional-prevention partnerships. These partnerships work and provide a template for the rest of Australia"*.

"This is large term social change that will take time. However the survey also tells us that prevention works. A consistent focus on prevention will continue to close the gap between women's lived experience, evidence and attitudes. We will undoubtedly see this work positively reflected in future surveys."

The full NCAS research report can be accessed from 30 November at <https://ncas.anrows.org.au/>

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ABOUT GENDER EQUITY VICTORIA

Gender Equity Victoria (GEN VIC) the Victorian peak body for gender equity, women's health and the prevention of violence against women.

Our vision is equality, wellbeing and freedom from violence for every woman and girl in every community of Victoria.

GEN VIC's strategic priorities are to:

- Advance gender equity
- Promote women's sexual and reproductive health
- Prevent violence against women and
- Build an influential and sustainable peak body.

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