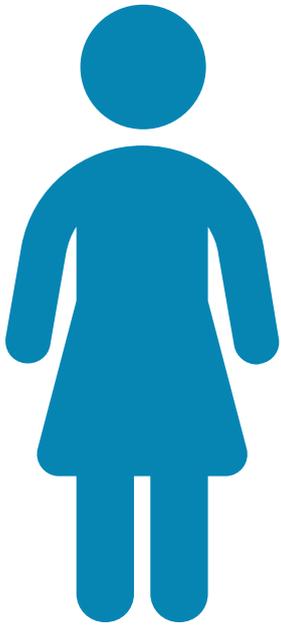


PEOPLE WHO EXPERIENCE FAMILY VIOLENCE

FAMILY VIOLENCE IS ENDEMIC IN AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY



In 2014–15, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women were

32 TIMES MORE LIKELY

to be hospitalised due to family violence than non-Indigenous women.¹

On average,

8 WOMEN A DAY

were hospitalised after being assaulted by a spouse or partner in 2018.²

Approximately

1 WOMAN IS KILLED

by her current or former partner each week in Australia.³

Australian police deal with

5,000 family violence matters on average every week
1 MATTER EVERY 2 MINUTES.⁴

In 2013, an estimated

80% OF WOMEN and **95% OF MEN**

never contacted the police about violence by their current partner.⁵

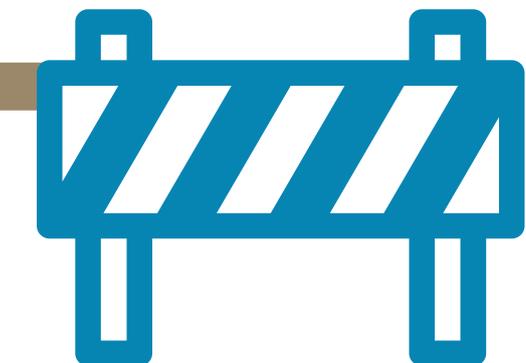


A policy focus on family violence has not included sufficient resource investment to manage downstream impact on the justice system.

- The Federation of Community Legal Centres Victoria reported that Victorian legal assistance services experienced a 490% increase in family violence cases in the ten years to 2016.¹⁰
- Rates of self-representation are at around 30% in the family courts.¹¹
- Due to delays, many face a wait time of about 17 months in family courts.¹²
- In 2014, crisis accommodation services were forced to turn away approximately half of all who seek accommodation.¹⁴
- There was an 89% increase in the number of family violence orders in the Victorian Magistrates Courts over the ten years to 2013.¹⁵
- A consequence of a lack of legal assistance and delays may well be the continuation or escalation of violence.¹³

VICTIMS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE FACE SIGNIFICANT BARRIERS

- The top reason for not reporting violence in a 2013 survey was 'fear of revenge/future violence.'⁶
- Family violence is the biggest reason for people seeking homelessness assistance.⁷
- Victims face misperceptions and stigma in the justice system and the public sphere.
 - In 2014, nearly 80% of surveyed participants agreed it was hard to understand why women stayed in violent relationships, and more than half agreed that women often fabricate cases of family violence.⁸
 - Police do not always identify family violence when it involves same-sex relationships.⁹



- Due to the complex and fragmented family violence system, victims, including children, may fall through the cracks.



PEOPLE WHO EXPERIENCE FAMILY VIOLENCE



Priorities in this area include:

- Increase funding to the Family Court of Australia, the Federal Circuit Court and the Family Court of Western Australia, as well as relevant state and territory courts, to better respond to the increases in demand.
- Ensure stable and adequate funding of legal assistance services for victims and perpetrators of family violence to meet rising demand, including resourcing specialist service providers to deliver culturally competent services.
- Prioritise homeless prevention, including by investing in safe, secure and appropriate housing, including inclusive crisis accommodation and engaging in law reform.
- Facilitate ongoing family violence education for legal practitioners, judicial officers and professionals working within the family courts and within state and territory courts, as well as ongoing training for staff in broader support services.
- Invest in evidence-based prevention and early intervention initiatives, such as family support programs, education campaigns, and behaviour change programs for perpetrators, without diverting from frontline responses.
- Implement ongoing education and training for police regarding appropriate practices in the context of family violence investigations and prosecutions. Review police protocols to:
 - ensure that police do not act on outstanding warrants when responding to incidents of family violence, or inappropriately issue dual family violence orders; and
 - prioritise the appropriate recognition and provision of support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children subject to family violence.
- Address the specific needs of children in family violence responses.
- Address problems associated with the nexus between the child protection system and the family violence system, including by reviewing child protection protocols and oversight mechanisms.
- Address fragmentation of the system by increasing links between courts, creating single gateways for services and referrals and facilitating information sharing, alongside comprehensive privacy frameworks.
- Consult with diverse women and LGBTI+ people when developing family violence policy and implementing multifaceted responses.

1. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018.
2. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018.
3. ANROWS, 2018.
4. Blumer, 2016.

5. ABS, 2013.
6. Birdsey and Snowball, 2013.
7. Mutha-Merennege, 2017; Australian Government, 2008.
8. VicHealth, 2014.
9. Victorian Royal Commission, 2016.

10. Federation of Community Legal Centres Victoria.
11. Productivity Commission, 2014.
12. The Hon Diana Bryant, 2017.
13. Productivity Commission, 2014; Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs, 2017.

14. ACOSS, 2015.
15. Noone, 2017.