

Attitudes towards violence against women and gender equality among Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders

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

Dr Heather Nancarrow, CEO, ANROWS

Dr Kyllie Cripps, Faculty of Law, UNSW



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to Reduce Violence against Women & their Children

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ANROWS's role in conducting the NCAS

Dr Heather Nancarrow

CEO, ANROWS

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What is ANROWS?

- Not-for-profit, national research organisation:
- Established under the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022
- Provide national leadership on:
 - Production of evidence
 - Translation of evidence to policy and practice



The National Community Attitudes Survey (NCAS) asked Australians about their:

- **Knowledge** of violence against women
- **Attitudes** towards this violence and gender equality
- **Intentions** if they were to witness abuse or disrespect towards women

NCAS was conducted by telephone survey:

- Representative sample of 17,500 Australians
- Aged 16 and over, from across Australia
- 342 people identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- People from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds from very remote areas were under-represented.

Key findings

Dr Kyllie Cripps

Scientia Fellow and Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Law, UNSW

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Encouraging findings

- Most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have **good knowledge** of key aspects of violence against women.
- Most **support gender equality** and **do not endorse attitudes supportive of violence** against women.
- Between 2013 and 2017, the overall measure of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's **attitudes towards violence against women** improved.



ENCOURAGING FINDINGS

Knowledge and attitudes

- 99% recognise **forced sex** as domestic violence
- 91% recognise that **controlling social life** by preventing women from seeing family and friends is a form of domestic violence
- 3% think **it's OK for men to joke with their male friends** about being violent towards women
- 4% agree that **it's a women's duty to stay** in a violent relationship to keep the family together.

Reporting violence to police

- Most respondents (78%) recognise that **reporting violence to the police can bring trouble** for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls
- Yet most (93%) still **believe that a report should be made.**





Concerning findings

Between 2013 and 2017:

- There was no improvement in the overall measures of **understanding violence against women** and **attitudes to gender equality**.
- The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people recognising that **domestic violence is perpetrated mainly by men** decreased from 65% in 2013 to 44% in 2017.



CONCERNING FINDINGS

Attitude that gender inequality is no longer a problem

- **1 in 2** (51%) agree that 'Many women mistakenly interpret innocent remarks or acts as being sexist'.
- **1 in 3** (32%) agree that 'Many women fail to fully appreciate all that men do for them'.
- Nearly **1 in 2** (45%) agree that 'Many women exaggerate how unequally women are treated in Australia'.



CONCERNING FINDINGS

Attitude that women's reports of violence can't be trusted

- **More than 1 in 2** (58%) agree that 'Women going through custody battles often make up or exaggerate claims of domestic violence in order to improve their case'.
- **1 in 2** (51%) agree that 'It is common for sexual assault accusations to be used as a way of getting back at men'.
- **More than 1 in 3** (36%) agree that 'A lot of times, women who say they were raped had led the man on and then had regrets'.

Implications for policy and practice

- A “whole community” approach to prevention is needed.
- As well, NCAS findings suggest some grounds for targeting:
 - Men and boys
 - Elders
 - People with a low level of education
 - People living outside of major cities
 - Young people

Priority issues 1

- Addressing **gaps in knowledge** of violence against women, particularly in relation to
 - help-seeking
 - the gendered nature and dynamics of intimate partner violence
 - social factors contributing to violence
 - the greater risk of sexual assault by a known person compared to sexual assault by a stranger.

Priority issues 2

- Addressing **all aspects of gender inequality**, with a focus on:
 - challenging rigid gender roles and identities
 - the idea that gender inequality is no longer a problem.
- Promoting **attitudes** that:
 - foster a mutual respectful approach to gender relations
 - challenge the idea that women lie about violence or use claims of violence for tactical advantage.

Priority issues 3

- Addressing **barriers to bystander action** by:
 - informing people that they are likely to be supported by more of their friends than they might think
 - strengthening their knowledge and attitudes
 - focusing on people who feel uncomfortable and would like to act but say they would not know how.

Priority issues 4

- Addressing **excuses** for violence against women
 - particularly excuses involving alcohol (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men are particularly likely to hold such attitudes)
- Addressing the importance of **consent** in intimate relationships.
- Promoting the importance of **police and support services** for families in which violence reoccurs.

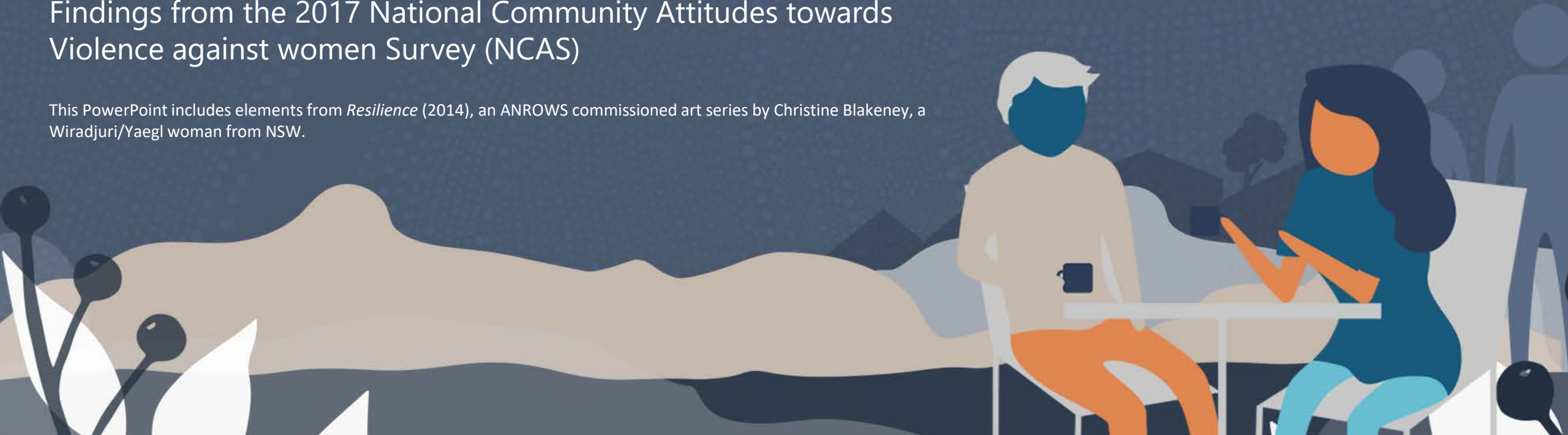
The strongest predictor of attitudes supportive of violence against women is **having attitudes that endorse gender inequality.**



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This PowerPoint includes elements from *Resilience* (2014), an ANROWS commissioned art series by Christine Blakeney, a Wiradjuri/Yaegl woman from NSW.



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