

Report 4



December 2022

National primary prevention report

Evaluation and learning and engagement with the private sector



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Executive summary

Primary prevention of violence against women is an emerging area of work that focuses on stopping violence before it starts by addressing its deep-seated drivers and promoting gender equality. This is distinct from, but complements, activities to intervene early in and respond to violence against women. Primary prevention encompasses a diverse range of work at all levels of society, including with individuals, organisations and institutions.

In Australia, we are beginning to build strong foundations for primary prevention, and promising work is progressing at local, regional, state and national levels. However, prevention activity can occur in isolation and there are differences in the resources being dedicated to this work across jurisdictions. Evidence shows that primary prevention work will be most effective if it is done in collaboration, to ensure efforts are consistent and mutually reinforcing, irrespective of funding source or lead organisation.

The [National Primary Prevention Hub](#) (the Hub) contributes to this and aims to:

- facilitate a shared and deeper understanding of multifaceted primary prevention efforts among people working in primary prevention
- provide evidence-informed reports about the primary prevention landscape, gaps and opportunities to influence system level changes that enable and drive primary prevention
- provide national spaces and platforms to facilitate sharing, the coordination of efforts, and collaboration.

The Hub bolsters existing work by supporting information-sharing, enabling connection and collaboration, and contributing to facilitating coordination among organisations designing and delivering primary prevention policies, programs and campaigns. By connecting initiatives across jurisdictions, sectors and communities to facilitate sharing and learning, the Hub contributes to building the capacity of the prevention workforce across the country. It provides an entry point for sourcing information about primary prevention activity across the country, providing valuable insights to inform future investment in primary prevention.

- [National primary prevention report: Report 1](#) (September 2020) provided an overview of primary prevention in Australia, including the policy context, the prevention workforce, and prevention activities across the country. It also examined the initial impacts of COVID-19 on work to prevent violence against women.
- [National primary prevention report: Report 2](#) (July 2021) examined the kinds of coordination, collaboration and networks that currently exist among those working on the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia, and explored organisational development across different systems and settings as a prevention technique.
- [National primary prevention report: Report 3](#) (February 2022) outlined how primary prevention work is enabled and what contributes to primary prevention of violence against women activities and change across the country. It expanded on the continued impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and on how Australia's response to the pandemic has enabled prevention work in some cases and limited it in others.

This fourth national primary prevention report focuses on three distinct elements that contribute to the infrastructure necessary for a national, coordinated and reinforcing approach to prevent violence against women.

It begins with an overview of the Hub and its formal and informal engagement and coordination activities, including sector forums, publishing a series of national primary prevention reports focused on different themes, and convening a national Stakeholder Group. Through these activities, the Hub has captured different types of prevention initiatives occurring across the country and opportunities for supporting the workforce and the sector more broadly. This section summarises key activities and information gathered to date.

The second section of the report looks at monitoring and evaluation as a critical part of primary prevention infrastructure and its role in knowledge- and evidence-building. This includes building the capacity of the prevention workforce to undertake evaluation initiatives. Evaluation of prevention activities across all levels of the socio-ecological model plays a key role in extending and strengthening the evidence on primary prevention and contributes to learning about how change works. Quality evaluations of prevention initiatives require long-term and sustained investment, engage with and build capacity and knowledge of stakeholders, and prioritise methodologies, methods and approaches that are ethical, feminist, participatory and decolonising.

The third section of the report examines primary prevention activities occurring in the private sector. Given private sector organisations have significant influence over policy, the economy, and community norms and values, they have a critical role to play in undertaking prevention activity. This encompasses the private sector as workplaces (with a focus on their employees, workplace policies and cultures, and their clients/customers) and in advocating for gender equality and the prevention of violence against women within their spheres of influence. This section looks at the impacts of violence against women (including sexual harassment) on the private sector, at private sector organisations as workplaces, at whole-of-organisation and whole-of-sector approaches to primary prevention, and different partnerships, networks and collaborations within the private sector.

This report has been developed utilising several sources of information, drawing on key Our Watch frameworks and pieces of evidence and expertise referenced throughout the report. Peer-reviewed and grey literature was reviewed. Information was also gathered through review of material such as primary prevention, family and domestic violence newsletters, websites and funding announcements. Reflections on primary prevention initiatives, key issues and developments in work to prevent violence against women were provided by key Australian stakeholders who engaged with Our Watch and the Hub through online events and members of the Hub Stakeholder Group. In addition, a small number of participants who evaluate prevention of violence against women initiatives, coming from a range of organisations including not-for-profit and academia, participated in a Learning Inquiry into Evaluation of Prevention of Violence against Women through the Hub, undertaken by consultants Emma Thomas (Cultivating Change) and Natasha Ludowyk. Colleagues at Our Watch also provided input and information. The Hub team would like to thank everyone who contributed their time and expertise to this report.

The National Primary Prevention Hub: Two years on

[Change the story](#) identifies the need for mechanisms to enable coordination and collaboration across sectors and settings and across and between federal, state/territory, local and regional levels. This requires the development of, and investment in, quality standards, governance mechanisms to support coordination, and advisory bodies. These are essential parts of a national approach because they:

- enable mutually reinforcing activities across multiple levels and settings, alongside other social policy issues
- ensure consistency between legislative, regulatory and policy reforms, programs, communications campaigns, and other prevention efforts
- support the integration of gender equality and violence prevention into the work of established agencies, organisations and networks, and use existing infrastructure at the national, state, regional and local levels
- support the scale-up, systematisation and embedding of approaches that are effective at preventing violence against women, and funding initiatives to support evidence-building.¹

The National Primary Prevention Hub (the Hub) was established in 2020, with funding from the Department of Social Services under the Fourth Action Plan of the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022*. The Hub was developed to support information-sharing, enable connection and collaboration, and facilitate coordination among organisations designing and delivering primary prevention policies, programs and campaigns.

Through formal and informal engagement and coordination activities, the Hub team has learned about the different types of prevention activities occurring across the country and opportunities for supporting the prevention workforce and the sector more broadly. The Hub has engaged a diverse range of people across the prevention workforce in Australia, including those working in government and non-government organisations at local, regional, state and national levels. People have engaged with the Hub through:

- participating in forums for people working on primary prevention across the country
- reading and sharing forum summaries
- reading and sharing the national primary prevention reports published throughout the project
- sharing information and resources through the Hub mailing list.

Our Watch has also convened a Hub Stakeholder Group of key non-government organisations, peak bodies and alliances from across the country, who have fed into the direction of the Hub and the different topics and themes it has examined.

Since the Hub's inception, activities have focused on facilitating connection across stakeholders and organisations working in primary prevention, providing opportunities to share and profile prevention work occurring across Australia through written case studies and presentations through the Hub.

The national primary prevention reports

The Hub has periodically produced national primary prevention reports which have analysed different activities across jurisdictions, communities and settings. The reports have focused on providing illustrative examples across different settings and multifaceted approaches to primary prevention.

[*National primary prevention report: Report 1*](#) provided an overview of primary prevention in Australia, including the policy context, the prevention workforce, and an overview of prevention activity across the country. It began to build the ‘snapshot’ of what primary prevention looked like across the socio-ecological model and in different settings. It examined the initial impacts of COVID-19 on work to prevent violence against women.

[*National primary prevention report: Report 2*](#) concentrated on two aspects of primary prevention. First, the report looked at the kinds of coordination, collaboration and networks that currently exist for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia. It identified how existing mechanisms for collaboration on prevention at the local, regional and state levels offer a promising foundation for learning and expanding mutually reinforcing and impactful initiatives. While collaboration, relationships and network-building are central to effective primary prevention initiatives, this work takes time and, in many cases, sits outside of funded formal program delivery.

Second, the report explored organisational development across different systems and settings. Organisational development is a prevention technique which can be used to effect structural and cultural change to prevent violence against women. An enabling environment at policy, regulatory and leadership levels can provide a strong foundation for primary prevention in organisations. Organisational development needs to be holistic and take a whole-of-organisation approach to support sustained change to the drivers of violence against women. The report focused on the significant organisational development work occurring nationally and highlighted that to ensure long-term change, this momentum can be built upon through long-term investment and alignment with other prevention activities.

[*National primary prevention report: Report 3*](#) outlines how primary prevention work is enabled across the country and expands on the continued impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, including how the pandemic has driven prevention work in some instances and limited it in others. The factors and infrastructure examined in the third report include:

- **Community mobilisation and leadership** on preventing violence against women across the country, including by civil society organisations, victim-survivors, community members and governments, which is vital for creating change.
- **The prevention workforce**, which is critical to embedding approaches to address the drivers of violence against women. This workforce is currently under strain and experiencing reduced capacity due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Planning is needed to ensure that the workforce is supported, has requisite capacity, and can be sustained.
- **Innovative and community-focused programming**, which is a strength of Australia’s approach to preventing violence against women. Funding and policy settings can be designed to support sustainable and longer-term programming, and to allow organisations to adapt to the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Research, evidence and data** that can deepen our understanding of the drivers of violence against women and how to address them. Evidence translation is essential to ensure the utility of this work to a diverse range of stakeholders and practitioners.

Combined, the national reports have synthesised prevention activities occurring across Australia's jurisdictions, in different settings, and highlight case studies of promising and effective practice and evidence.

The forums

The Hub held nine events between December 2020 and December 2021 aimed to drive and support coordinated, collaborative and mutually reinforcing primary prevention action across Australia. The events have been attended by over 700 stakeholders, with a key focus on engaging practitioners working in non-government and community-based organisations across the response, early intervention and prevention sectors.

The goals of the events are to:

- foster connection, coordination, collaboration and information-sharing
- support the prevention workforce
- keep systems and structures in focus for primary prevention work.

Forums have been both open and closed events, and include:

- Introduction to the Hub – Promising Practice in Prevention (2020)
- Making Change Stick: Gender equality action to end violence against women (2021)
- Promising Practice in Primary Prevention forum: Building momentum to prevent violence against women (2021)
- Primary Prevention in Queensland webinar and discussion (2021)
- The Role of Men and Masculinities in Prevention (2021)
- Primary Prevention in Tasmania (2021)
- *Changing the picture* forum (2021).

The events have reached a breadth of stakeholders from across the country, concentrating on different themes related to primary prevention theory and practice and on different and specific place-based contexts. Through these events, the Hub team have gained key insights into the sector's interests, as well as identifying gaps and opportunities to support primary prevention work across Australia.

For example, during the [Promising practice forum: Building momentum to prevent violence against women](#), stakeholders described that building effective collaborations is key to building momentum to prevent violence against women. Connection and collaboration within and across sectors can increase the reach of programs and initiatives. It can reduce isolation of the prevention workforce and supports contextualisation of prevention programs to the specific needs of communities. While this may take time to build, maintaining relationships with different stakeholders across a setting can increase the reach, impact and sustainability of prevention efforts.

During [The Role of Men and Masculinities in Prevention](#) events (which consisted of a webinar and a smaller forum), participants reiterated that work to address masculinities and engage men is fundamental to a gender transformative approach to prevent violence against women. Stakeholders emphasised that work to engage men and boys must centre intersectionality, which identifies and addresses the power dynamics operating across all levels of society, and shapes differing experiences of inequality and privilege.

Two place-based forums, one in [Queensland](#) and another in [Tasmania](#), underscored the importance of context-specific approaches to prevention that are underpinned by shared language and meaning, such as frameworks like *Change the story*. Effectively engaging individuals and communities in preventing violence requires an understanding of their unique circumstances, experiences and strengths. Meeting communities ‘where they are at’ improves engagement and facilitates the development of more targeted and sustainable initiatives. Adapting shared national prevention approaches like *Change the story*, while coordinating actions and building infrastructure at local, regional and state levels to suit the context, is vital.

Monitoring, evaluation and learning

Monitoring and evaluation of prevention initiatives, and building the evaluation capacity of the prevention workforce, is key to increasing knowledge of what works to prevent violence against women. Monitoring, evaluation and learning is a key element of the prevention infrastructure that enables and creates change to the drivers of violence against women (see [National primary prevention report: Report 3](#)). A strong prevention infrastructure should enable the design, implementation and evaluation of prevention efforts, in coordinated ways, across the various settings where people interact (such as schools, local communities, the media, workplaces, residential care settings, sporting clubs and faith communities).

While international and Australian evidence informs many prevention initiatives, most primary prevention of violence against women approaches are still emerging. Evaluation should aim to inform practice, contribute to evidence-building to guide future activities and foster learning.² There are a range of different forms of knowledge that inform the primary prevention evidence base, including programmatic and other evaluations; expertise from practitioners, academic research and governments; and the knowledge held by those with lived experiences of violence and/or gender inequality.³

The long-term goal of eliminating violence against women can only be achieved if essential actions are taken to address the gendered drivers of violence against women and the social context in which this violence occurs. To achieve this goal, insights and understanding about how the drivers of violence are changing in response to primary prevention initiatives are important. National monitoring can help identify where positive change is beginning to occur regarding norms, practices and structures at a societal level and where there is resistance to change.⁴ Collecting information on the impacts of prevention strategies to assess their value can inform and improve ongoing implementation, telling the story of what works well, how, for whom, and in what combinations—and importantly, what works less well and what lessons we can learn. These learnings and how they are produced should be considered in the context of specific prevention activities, and the broader context of plans, strategies and frameworks that guide prevention nationally and across jurisdictions.

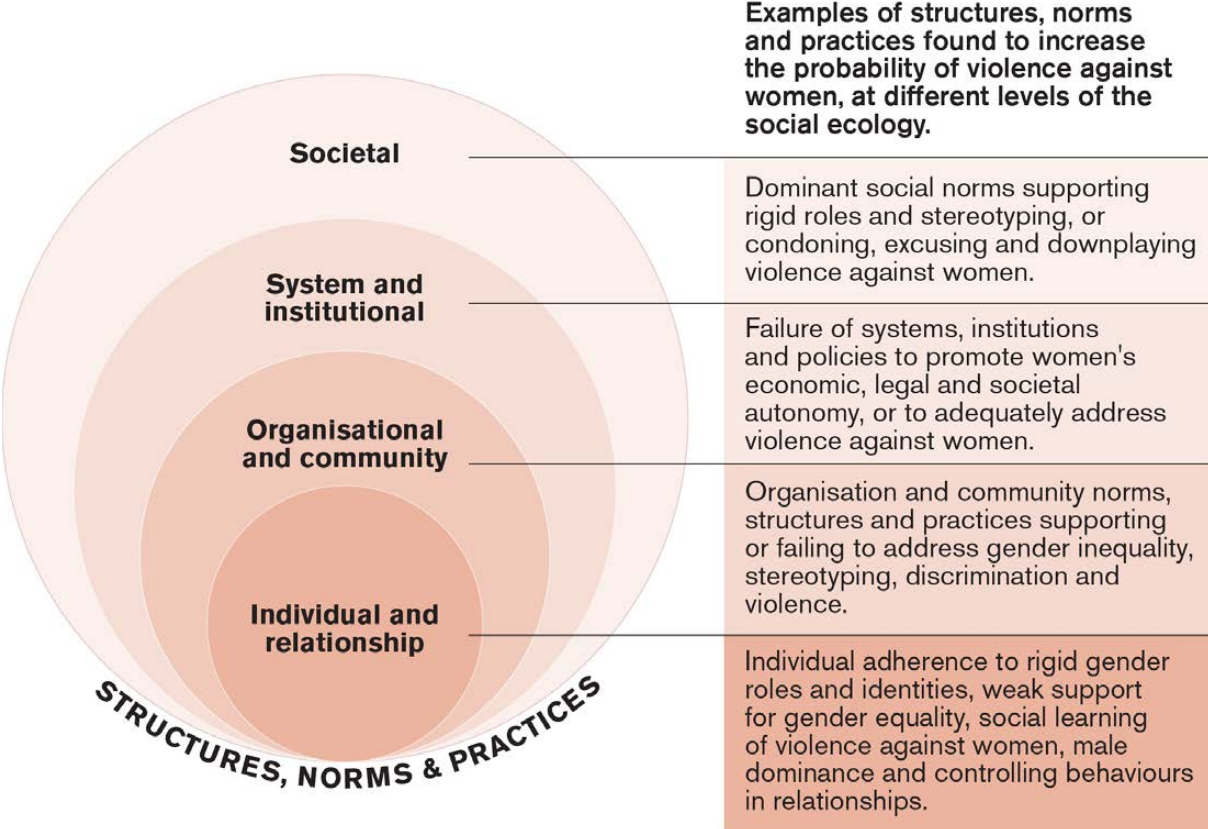
National-level monitoring of primary prevention

The elements necessary for successful primary prevention initiatives are multiple and varied, and monitoring the progress of prevention at a national population level is not straightforward. Monitoring prevalence rates of violence against women and tracking changes in individual attitudes towards violence or gender equality are only part of what is required. Monitoring progress towards the long-term goal of preventing violence against women also requires periodic assessments of change along the way – a means of measuring the smaller steps and shorter-term achievements that indicate we are heading in the right direction.⁵ We need to look at the short-, medium- and long-term changes across the drivers of violence against women.

Change may happen slowly, may not be linear and may at times be reversed. At a broader societal level, prevalence may remain static over a sustained period and there are even expected increases in prevalence rates in the short- to medium-term. While it may seem counterintuitive, demand for formal response services is expected to increase in the medium term as prevention infrastructure and programming improve. These improvements will raise community awareness, challenge attitudes that condone violence, and encourage reporting of violence. As a result, women experiencing violence are more likely to seek help from formal services. This may be amplified if adequate attention is not paid to addressing the resistance and backlash common to all efforts that challenge existing power dynamics.⁶

For this reason, it is important to conduct monitoring and evaluation at all levels of the socio-ecological model (where possible), including seeking feedback from groups across the community. (For the socio-ecological model, see Figure 1.) This will contribute to learning and adjustments to prevention strategies and programming ‘along the way’, acknowledging the complexity of the issue and the multiple indicators needed to form a complete picture.⁷

Figure 1. Socio-ecological model of violence against women



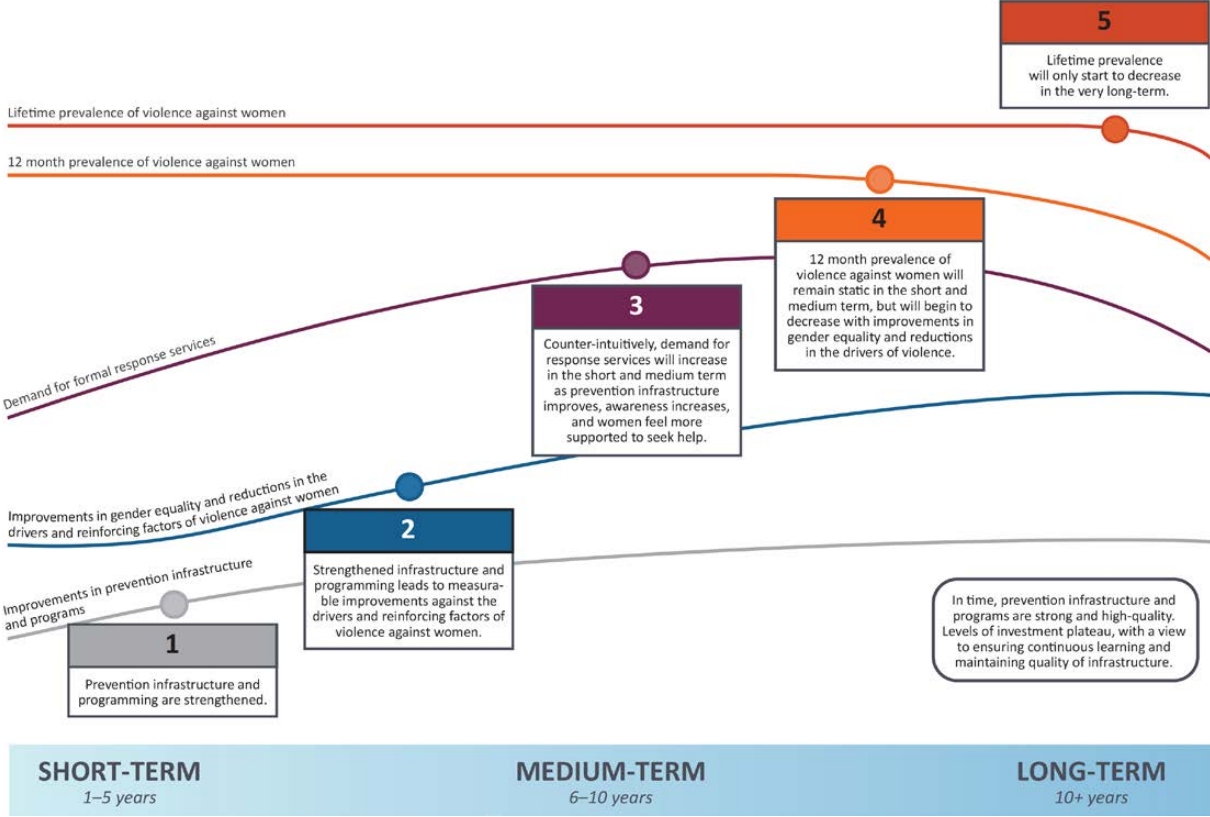
National monitoring of primary prevention is the purposeful and intentional collection and analysis of information (qualitative and quantitative) to track the progress of population-level changes to address the drivers and reinforcing factors of violence against women, and the development of associated infrastructure. *Change the story* details the infrastructure that can support national monitoring, which includes:

- coordinate efforts to promote rigorous evidence, shared learning and efficiencies in population-level monitoring
- develop mechanisms to encourage and compel population-level monitoring against the drivers and reinforcing factors of violence against women
- promote ongoing development and refinement of national indicators, ensuring these centre and remain accountable to the people and communities who are the intended beneficiaries of violence prevention
- provide for the different types and levels of monitoring and reporting (for example, population-level, quantitative, qualitative, those that evaluate in different ways, those that may correspond with all or different gendered drivers and essential actions, and those relevant to different levels of the socio-ecological model)
- investing in workforce capability and building capacity for monitoring
- investing in structures to support robust analysis and effective dissemination of learnings through collaborative leadership and coordination across different jurisdictions and fields of knowledge
- encouraging and compelling the use of evidence from shared national frameworks, guides and previous monitoring processes.⁸

[*Counting on change: A guide to prevention monitoring*](#) provides a national monitoring framework to support these efforts. It is a significant global advancement in the monitoring of population-level change to the drivers of violence against women (see Figure 2). Indicators are aligned with:

- *short-term or process-level change* – the efforts that are being made to prevent violence against women, and the ‘infrastructure’, or systems, structures and human capacities, that are being built and developed to support those primary prevention efforts
- *medium-term to long-term outcomes* – positive change to the gendered drivers and reinforcing factors of violence against women, as measured at a whole-of-population level
- *long-term change* – reductions in population-level prevalence rates of violence against women.

Figure 2. Measuring population-level progress towards the prevention of violence against women



Tracking progress in prevention was the first national monitoring report that operationalised and translated Counting on change into practice. It demonstrates the progress achieved in Australia between 2009–2019, including the development and implementation of the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and Their Children 2010–2022*. *Tracking progress in prevention* identifies how and where primary prevention infrastructure has developed and how different elements have supported and reinforced each other.

In November 2021, the Commonwealth Government announced the establishment of the [Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission](#). In the *National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022-2023* (the National Plan) the Commission has been identified as a vital part of the national infrastructure to ensure that real and tangible actions are achieved to prevent violence, intervene early, and better support victim-survivors. The Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission has a strong focus on accountability and ensuring activities are aligned and collaborative. As an independent agency, the Commission has a role in amplifying the voices of victims and survivors, and promote the coordination and consistency of data and evidence, including monitoring and evaluation. The Commission will play a critical role in bringing together data from the Commonwealth, states and territories, local governments and the service sector to better measure prevalence of family, domestic and sexual violence as well as guide the necessary support and activities. This includes annual reporting to the Australian parliament measuring the progress against the National Plan.

The Australian National Research Organisation for Women’s Safety (ANROWS) also has a guiding role in relation to monitoring and evaluation across Australia. ANROWS has developed [a national research agenda](#) and supports a range of organisations and stakeholders to undertake evaluation of prevention of violence against women initiatives. As a research organisation, ANROWS contributes to the building evidence of what works in preventing violence against women to guide both policy and practice.

Evaluating prevention of violence against women initiatives

Change the story highlights the critical ways in which evaluation contributes to the deep societal and structural transformation needed to prevent violence against women through:

- building evidence about the effectiveness of different approaches and techniques
- understanding how policy, regulatory and legislative levers support prevention
- describing the mechanisms, pathways and levers that can be used to sustain change.

Evaluation contributes to evidence and learning by purposefully and systematically collecting and analysing data about what has been implemented, its impact and the value of the activities for priority audiences. This means remaining accountable to, and listening to, the voices of those the initiatives seek to include. Evaluation often becomes powerful when audiences and stakeholders are invited to engage with, and make sense of, the learning; to identify the value of initiatives and what they mean for the prevention of violence against women. Evaluations are vital as the primary prevention evidence base evolves, including new prevention approaches and the scaling up of proven or promising strategies.⁹

Across all types of evaluations, the short-, medium- and long-term changes to the gendered drivers of violence against women, the reinforcing factors, and the social context in which violence against women occurs should be considered. With relevant and appropriate evaluation strategies and supports in place, improvements against the drivers and reinforcing factors can be expected to occur over the medium term. This expected trajectory of change can be seen in Figure 2: Measuring population-level progress towards the prevention of violence against women.

As the drivers and reinforcing factors of violence manifest at – and often cut across – different levels of the socio-ecological model, monitoring and evaluation frameworks can consider change at each level, and build understanding of the shifts in norms, practices and structures.¹⁰ While it is not always possible to implement activities that address each level of the socio-ecological model, and/or include evaluation methods that address each level, evaluations of projects or initiatives can consider where and how they contribute across the socio-ecological framework.

It is important to note there is no one-size-fits-all way of evaluating complex social initiatives and programs like those needed to prevent violence against women. The suitability of different evaluation approaches and methods depends on the purpose of the initiative, its context and key stakeholders.¹¹ Many organisations and stakeholders are not necessarily funded and do not have the capacity to undertake all the elements outlined, and there are many types of effective and credible evaluation that, for example, may only target one level of the socio-ecological model.

Evaluating prevention techniques

Change the story identifies five techniques for doing the work of prevention of violence against women:

- direct participation programs
- organisational development
- community mobilisation and strengthening
- communications and social marketing campaigns
- civil society advocacy and social movement activism.

Some techniques have proven effective, while others are considered promising in that implementation has resulted in significant improvement over the short to medium term, with a lack of longitudinal evaluations to measure long-term effectiveness. Prevention initiatives should use multiple techniques and address the gendered drivers of violence against women across the socio-ecological model.

For each technique, *Change the story* outlines considerations for evaluation under each prevention technique.

Evaluation of **direct participation programs** should focus on how the process of implementation has contributed to desired outcomes, including the reach of the program to the target audience, and short-term impacts such as changes in perceptions, attitudes, behavioural intentions and knowledge.

Evaluation and monitoring of **organisational development** should be integrated from the beginning of prevention activity and include specific data collection points that are tied to outcomes around prevention and equality. Where applicable, the activity should be linked to existing mechanisms or reporting cycles, so that reporting and learning remain visible and embedded in existing accountability processes. Organisational change needs to be measured at policy, culture and process levels, including by assessing formal and informal norms, practices, organisational structures, power relationships, and experiences of backlash or resistance to change processes. A framework for measuring the effectiveness of organisational development should identify where responsibility for each aspect of change lies, and aim to promote accountability for the changes identified as necessary to achieve equality.

Evaluation of **community mobilisation** should be context-specific and include participatory evaluation methods (see further discussion on page 18). Evaluation could explore and provide evidence for increased voice, confidence and collective identity; the emergence of strengthened and broader commitments to the prevention of violence against women within the community; the contributions made by key actors and leaders; the kinds of resources that are mobilised; and documenting any evidence of resistance or backlash.

Communications and social marketing evaluations should consider the reach of the campaign or messaging activity, the extent to which it has built engagement with the issues, and the role it has played in shaping public knowledge. It is also important to consider the impacts the messaging has had on perceptions, knowledge, behavioural intentions and attitudes, and identify the extent and type of any resistance and backlash. Evaluations should also identify how campaign messages have reached specific segments of the audience and what impacts they have on these audience segments. Since it is recommended that prevention techniques should also be implemented alongside others, evaluations can also consider the connections between communications and other strategies related to community mobilisation, advocacy, direct participation or organisational development.¹²

Evaluating **civil society advocacy and social movement activism** is not easily measured by linear methods. It is a long-term process involving multiple actors, strategies and tactics that change in response to new opportunities or barriers. It is not always possible to make direct connections between advocacy actions and the desired change, but it is important to understand, for example, the dynamics of stakeholder interactions, the influence of champions, the breadth of support for issues, and the strength of alliances. The success of social movement advocacy should not only be measured through policy change; evaluation needs to encompass social norm change and cultural shifts as important outcomes.

Principles for evaluating prevention activities

As strategies to address the drivers of violence against women operate within a complex system, this means conventional evaluation approaches and methods are not necessarily suitable as they often require evaluators to predict outcomes and change pathways before they emerge. It is important to consider iterative and flexible approaches to evaluating initiatives to prevent violence against women and contribute to learning about what works and what works less well.

[*Putting the prevention of violence against women into practice: How to Change the story*](#) provides guidance on evaluation of prevention initiatives, including key principles that apply to all evaluations of prevention strategies, initiatives, projects and campaigns. These include:

- focusing on the gendered drivers of violence against women, including the norms, structures and practices where possible
- integrating evaluation into prevention strategies from the beginning
- understanding the strategy's logic model and expected change, and focusing on assessing changes that can be attributable to that strategy
- ensuring findings are practical and relevant for the strategy's practitioners and key stakeholders
- building organisations' and practitioners' capacity to undertake good practice evaluation
- using a collaborative process between the funder, the project team, the participants or target community and the evaluator(s)
- basing the evaluation on the principle of gender transformative practice.¹³

Evaluations of initiatives to prevent violence against women should prioritise intersectional, community led, ethical and feminist approaches and methodologies. A feminist approach to evaluating prevention of violence against women does not privilege one 'type' of data over another and values diverse types of evidence and different methodologies in building evidence, including qualitative, ethnographic and context-specific approaches.

Examples of different approaches in evaluating primary prevention projects and strategies, and how they have been put into practice, are explored in the following sections. These approaches should be considered in future evaluation and learning approaches.

Intersectional and ethical evaluation

Evaluation design and implementation needs to engage the communities and individuals primary prevention seeks to target, and be underpinned by gender transformative and intersectional methodologies and analyses. The intersectional approach embedded in *Change the story* recognises that violence and gender inequality exist in relation to multiple and intersecting systems of inequality and discrimination, including racism; colonialism; classism; heteronormativity; cisnormativity; homo-, bi- and transphobia; ableism; and ageism; and their corresponding systems of power and privilege. There are opportunities to develop evaluations and evidence-building strategies that address these intersections of structural inequality and discrimination, as well as power and privilege, and how it impacts the prevention of violence against women.

For evaluation, an intersectional analysis means accounting for these intersecting systems and structures throughout the research process: in the questions posed, the methods used for data gathering, capacity building of the workforce and organisations, the dissemination of evaluation findings, and ownership of the data and research.¹⁴

Intersectional and feminist methodologies and approaches take into consideration the power hierarchies and silences that can be embedded in research processes and evidence. As *Tracking progress in prevention* states:

*[e]vidence generation through research and data collection is not a neutral exercise. To be effective, choices about evidence generation need to be strategic and include discussions about the need for, and use of, evidence. Evidence-building choices need to be guided and interrogated by considerations of power and privilege, asking questions such as: what is the purpose of this research and data collection? Who will guide the process? How will the data be used? Who will own it? Which forms of knowledge are being privileged and which are not? What are the assumptions, silences and invisibilities in the process?*¹⁵

Ethical research and evaluations build evidence in collaboration with and benefit communities, rather than carrying out extractive knowledge and research processes. Ethical approaches to this kind of work are increasingly common. The Australian Productivity Commission developed an [Indigenous evaluation strategy](#) that establishes a set of guiding principles for government agencies and evaluators for planning, conducting, reporting and undertaking evaluation of policies and programs that affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This aims to ensure that evaluations are aligned with the needs and priorities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, with an overarching principle of ‘Centring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, perspectives, priorities and knowledges’, as the lens all other principles – credible, useful, ethical and transparent – should be viewed through.

An evaluation that aimed to work in partnership with Indigenous communities was the [Rante-rante ampe Marle and Urreye! \(Safe, Respected and Free from Violence\) project evaluation](#) led by the Equality Institute and ANROWS. The evaluation was guided by Indigenous methodologies and centred the evaluation in the context of colonisation and Indigenous self-determination.¹⁶ Evaluating two primary prevention projects, the [Girls Can](#) and the [Old Ways are Strong](#) projects, the evaluation team worked in partnership with community-based organisations and was governed by the Tangentyere Women’s Family Safety Group, a group of senior Aboriginal women from Alice Springs Town Camps.

The projects also had input and guidance from the Tangentyere Men's Family Safety Group. The evaluation aimed to be relevant to, and benefit, Aboriginal communities and enhance primary prevention in those communities. Methods were aligned with indigenist principles and the evaluation sought to support and uphold Indigenous data sovereignty. As profiled in [National primary prevention report: Report 3](#), principles of Indigenous data sovereignty ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities exercise ownership and control over Indigenous data and research processes. Principles of Indigenous data sovereignty aim to decolonise knowledge, data and evidence by ensuring meaningful engagement and reciprocity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the creation, collection, access, analysis, interpretation, management, dissemination and reuse of Indigenous data.

The findings from the *Rante-rante ampe Marle and Urreye!* evaluation helped identify specific recommendations for the partnerships between the evaluators and participating organisations and broader recommendations for primary prevention in the Northern Territory. For both project participants and the Northern Territory context, engagement and collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities in prevention initiatives is critical at national, state and territory levels. Primary prevention initiatives should be locally designed, context-specific, take a community development approach and be community-driven, including being governed by members from those communities.

An intersectional approach to evaluation must involve supporting autonomy, community ownership and control of the planning, design and implementation of projects, evaluation and its outputs. [Changing the landscape: A national resource to prevent violence against women and girls with disabilities](#) underscores that programs to prevent violence and promote gender and disability equality should be created with women and girls with disabilities, rather than for them. Evaluation should draw on their knowledge and strengths, be co-designed with women and girls with disabilities and their representative organisations, and centre their lived experiences.

Similarly, Women with Disabilities Victoria developed [inclusive planning guidelines for the prevention of violence against women with disabilities](#). Six interconnecting and reinforcing guidelines were developed to assist Victorian women's health services and partner organisations to develop priorities and actions that are inclusive, practical and evidence-based to prevent violence against women with disabilities. Guideline Six – Research, Monitoring and Evaluation – outlines five actions that organisations can undertake in their evaluation of initiatives to prevent violence against women and girls with disabilities.

Participatory approaches to evaluation

Evaluations of prevention of violence against women generally prioritise feminist principles of ethical research and inclusivity, and a participatory approach. Participatory approaches facilitate the involvement of the people and communities most affected by the project and/or initiative to provide feedback on the value and effectiveness of the activities and contributions to changes and outcomes. These approaches engage stakeholders throughout the evaluation process.¹⁷

This engagement may include knowledge-building through workshops, communities of practice and tailored support from an evaluator and/or facilitator. Participatory evaluation approaches not only contribute to building evidence, but also can build the capacity of practitioners and organisations to think 'evaluatively' and be involved in undertaking future evaluations.¹⁸

In [R4Respect](#), a respectful relationships peer education program delivered in Queensland and the Northern Territory, evaluators adopted a participatory action research approach that centred the views and experiences of young people in the design and implementation of, and critical reflection on, the program and research process. They used a mixed methods approach that included quantitative surveys, qualitative interviews with education and service providers, critical reflection meetings to gain feedback and input to adapt the program as it progressed, and knowledge transfer activities and learnings. Establishing and regularly engaging a Youth Research Group was a key activity in their participatory evaluation approach. Throughout the project, this group facilitated input from the R4Respect team and students in the evaluation design, including feedback on the survey tools and questions, the program delivery, and data entry and analysis. The R4Respect evaluation informed revisions of program content and delivery, ongoing critical reflection, and a commitment to ensuring that youth team members participate in the evaluation, develop research skills, and are aware of the importance of evidence-informing practice.¹⁹ Evaluators found that those who participated in the Youth Research Group showed increased knowledge of evidence and research skills.

Action research

Action research is collaborative and encourages participants, practitioners and community members to participate in the design, implementation and evaluation of a project to promote context-specific solutions. It is a research methodology that focuses on empowering those implementing prevention initiatives to collect evidence on their everyday work and use it to improve practice and outcomes: 'Action research pursues action (or change) and research (documentation and evidence-gathering) at the same time.'²⁰ It consists of iterative cycle of planning, acting, collecting data, observing and reflecting that tests and refines approaches for better impacts.

ANROWS offers a suite of [resources and guides to assist in planning, implementing and evaluating action research projects](#). The Department of Social Services funded ANROWS to support 40 [Building Safe Communities for Women and Their Children](#) projects through the [Action Research Support](#) initiative. This initiative supported the implementing organisations to reflect and document the learnings from the projects to facilitate information-sharing and collate the knowledge base around what works to build safer communities. Action research approaches are guided by relational accountability, meaning that they promote reciprocity, respectful representation and the rights of people participating in the research. The [Action Research Support](#) initiative included workshops and webinars that covered all aspects of the research process and invited participating organisations to share challenges, experiences and solutions. Resources were also developed, such as reflection templates. Individual support was offered to projects as well as support for planning, collecting and analysing data, and approaches to reporting and sharing findings.

Similarly, ANROWS led the [Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Projects with Action Research initiative](#), supporting 26 projects (funded by the Department of Social Services) to take an action research approach in their activities aimed to prevent violence against women and create safer pathways to support services for women who have experienced violence.

Evaluation capacity building across the socio-ecological model

Evaluation capacity is the ability to continuously ask questions about quality and value of a strategy or initiative; to collect, analyse, interpret and report on evidence; and to use that evidence to inform decision-making and action. Evaluation capacity building can work across different levels of the socio-ecological model where primary prevention strategies occur (see Figure 1, The socioecological model). Building evaluation capacity across all levels means establishing, strengthening, adapting and maintaining capacity to produce and use evaluations to support accountability and learning about primary prevention.²¹ These levels interact with and reinforce each other to enable a sustainable evaluation and learning environment.

At the **individual workforce level**, in their varying roles relating to primary prevention, practitioners need opportunities to develop monitoring and evaluation skills and knowledge, including methodologies and methods to collect and analyse data and communicate findings. This includes time and space for individuals to undertake the required learning and reflection regarding evaluation within their roles.

At an **organisational level**, evaluation capacity building ‘is the improvement of organisational leadership and culture, systems and structures, and capability to undertake collective Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning efforts’.²² It involves key prevention stakeholders including service providers, women’s health organisations, funders, policymakers and research bodies. This means ensuring organisations are adequately resourced in terms of both funding and staff capacity to conduct evaluation, and building a strong culture of valuing monitoring, evaluation and learning that prioritises transparency regarding what works well and areas for improvement.

Like broader primary prevention work, it is important that evaluation capacity building also works at a **systems level**. In practice this looks like developing and adjusting processes, structures and policies to encourage monitoring, evaluation and learning; leadership in building capacity; and engaging a range of stakeholders to work collaboratively and strengthen the investment in primary prevention. It incentivises and creates an enabling environment for evaluation at other levels of the socio-ecological model.²³

Based on this systems thinking, HealthWest Partnership’s Evaluation Capacity Building Project prioritised an evaluation needs assessment approach, to identify existing valuation capacities and areas for further development within a team, organisation or system. It includes identifying a number of evaluation elements, such as existing data collection methods, analysis, reporting, reflection and learning, and assessing the ways that they can be strengthened to best achieve organisational and system goals, such as prevention of violence against women. HealthWest Partnership developed the [Evaluation Capacity Health Check tool](#) to establish a baseline of current evaluations systems and strategies for organisations participating in the project. It checks the ‘evaluation health’ of an organisation or team across four areas: leadership and culture, staff capacity, systems and structures, and collective monitoring, evaluation and learning efforts. The project aimed to strengthen participating organisations’ evaluative practice within the primary health system in Melbourne’s western region by establishing a number of capacity building and learning opportunities such as the Evaluation Capacity Health Check tool, a community of practice, informal learning circles, and formal training sessions. While there were only moderately positive short-term results, stakeholders engaging with the project valued the evaluation capacity building efforts of HealthWest Partnership.

[The HealthWest Partnership Learning Inquiry](#) that examined the success of the project outlines several tangible options that can be used to support evaluation capacity building in the primary prevention space. It illustrates the benefits of embedding monitoring, evaluation and learning, underscoring the important and interconnected roles all levels of the prevention system have in enabling monitoring, evaluation and learning.²⁴

Investment in evaluation

Effective prevention activities require appropriate resourcing to support careful development and implementation, and to scale up or systematise effective initiatives to maximise impacts. Long-term funding is needed to support the development and maintenance of prevention initiatives and infrastructure, including evaluation.

The resourcing of evaluation for prevention initiatives across Australia is varied and impacts the prevention workforce's ability to undertake evaluation, and the type and depth of evaluation they are able to do. For example, fewer than half of the respondents to the *Tracking progress in prevention* survey indicate that the organisation they worked for conducted formal evaluations. Of those, there were different levels of funding allocated specifically to evaluation, with 11% not funded at all.

Evaluation and associated capacity building can be integrated into grant rounds and activities. For example, in 2019–2022, the Department of Social Services funded 15 organisations to deliver community-based primary projects through a grants initiative. These projects are delivered in a range of settings, including schools, faith communities and in the justice system, as well as in LGBTIQ communities and in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. These grants promote intersectional, locally embedded, context-specific solutions and strategies to address violence against women, and are structured by two similar but distinct funding streams:

- community-led projects to prevent violence against women and their children
- men as role models for preventing violence against women and their children.

The community-led projects focus on engaging particular cohorts, groups or communities to lead prevention initiatives. This stream recognises that the nature, drivers and forms of violence vary depending on local community context. The men as role models stream sees three projects deliver activities that involve men as positive role models to drive changes in the behaviours, attitudes or other social and cultural factors that contribute to violence against women and their children.

To ensure consistent and evidence-based design, implementation and evaluation across the diverse settings of this program, projects are required to align with key frameworks, including *Change the story*, [*Changing the picture: A national resource to support the prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children*](#), and *Counting on change*. From late 2019 to mid-2022, Our Watch was funded by the Department of Social Services to support grant recipients to understand and apply evidence and best practice in design, implementation and monitoring of their prevention activities. This includes specific support to monitor and evaluate their prevention initiatives.

Opportunities to strengthen the evaluation of prevention of violence against women

Stakeholders undertaking evaluation activities who have engaged with the Hub have reiterated the challenges of evaluating primary prevention initiatives. These learnings should be considered in the scaling up of prevention activity across the country.

The Hub team heard from multiple stakeholders that they operate in an environment that occasionally does not support the sharing of learnings, where prevention of violence against women initiatives has high visibility and often high political stakes. Despite organisations wanting to learn from others, some stakeholders reflected that there are pressures to share success stories only and they do not feel 'safe to fail'. These challenges to foster a supportive learning environment can be compounded by a lack of resourcing for prevention work and a competitive funding environment, and pressures organisations can face to achieve successful outcomes. Consequently, evaluations can be focused on reporting on short-term outcomes at the expense of longer-term and systemic change.

The stakeholder survey undertaken as part of *Tracking progress in prevention* found that only a limited number of evaluations and outcomes are published, with less than a quarter of respondents reporting that their prevention reports, evaluations and reflections are always or mostly publicly available. This means the key insights, learning and outcomes are often not shared and aren't able to inform the planning, implementation and design undertaken by others. This was reiterated in the semi-structured interviews as part of the qualitative component of *Tracking progress in prevention*, with one participant stating that:

a lot of the (evaluation) work gets done [but] the only people who know about the evaluation findings are the people who fund it and the people who implement it. So I think more work can be done to share the knowledge, not only with the rest of the sector but with the community as well.

Stakeholders engaging with the Hub have identified the need for evaluation approaches to be aligned with the particular context or focus of the prevention initiative. Outcomes frameworks and data measurements at the population level and standardised instruments such as the [National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey \(NCAS\)](#) are valuable. However, long-term and longitudinal monitoring and evaluations that are context-specific and speak to the needs of communities need to occur simultaneously. This would help in understanding changes to the drivers of violence and essential actions across Australia's diverse communities, locations, settings and sectors.

Another identified challenge is the limited number of long-term and longitudinal evaluations of primary prevention initiatives in Australia. For example, [in an analysis of effective primary prevention of sexual violence and harassment interventions](#), the authors found that follow-up timeframes in evaluation studies were often short, with impact rarely measured beyond six months post-intervention. They identified that longitudinal evaluation studies are needed in future to measure sustained prevention and change.²⁵

A longer-term focus on evaluation can also be enabled by using participatory and co-designed approaches to evaluation, which aim to build a more sustainable and supportive environment for evaluation and learning. Tensions can exist in the goals of evaluation between

- a) a focus on process outcomes and short-term funding cycles and evaluations, and
- b) the long-term focus on primary prevention impacts and outcomes that participating organisations, communities and individuals are looking for.

Evaluation activities need to be supported by a strong prevention infrastructure (as described on page 11). As the prevention workforce grows, so does the demand for evaluation skills, activities and guidance. This includes both the skills to inform the development of good-practice prevention initiatives and to plan and implement evaluation activities within the prevention workforce, and proportionate investment necessary to support this. Workforce development in monitoring, evaluation and learning need to be incorporated in future frameworks and policies that guide prevention at national and state and territory levels.

To inform this growth and demand, *Tracking progress in prevention* identifies principles that can guide the development of effective prevention evaluation infrastructure:

- comprehensive and coordinated systems for data collection and analysis, monitoring, accountability, reporting and evaluation at all levels
- all partners implementing prevention activity (governments, civil society, public and private sector institutions and organisations) report on progress, and evaluate their efforts, against shared short-, mid- and long-term objectives
- evaluations are developed using an intersectional approach and reflect those outlined in *Counting on change*, where appropriate. Additional methodological considerations reflect the specific context and objectives of the activity/policy in question.

As the primary prevention evidence base continues to evolve, innovation and evaluation of new approaches is critical. This should prioritise the sharing of learnings in order to scale up promising practices and techniques, and support the workforce with appropriate resources and capacity to undertake evaluations in ethical and intersectional ways.

These principles and approaches may inform future development of monitoring, evaluation and learning, including the National Plan Outcomes framework, the impact evaluations of the National Plan scheduled for 2026 and 2031-2032, and key national survey collections and the implementation of new data collections and data development projects as part of the National Plan. The release of the National Plan offers an opportunity to embed monitoring, evaluation and learning as a key part of 'doing' prevention work and foster a participatory and positive learning environment for all stakeholders to understand what they can do to change the story of violence against women.

The private sector

Private workplaces, corporations and organisations have a key role in preventing violence against women. The private sector is important in providing leadership and supporting and encouraging prevention efforts. Private organisations can undertake prevention work themselves as well as encourage action within their sectors and industries, and among their members and networks. They can also contribute to public and community discourse, and collaborate to encourage and support policy and legislative reform.²⁶

The private sector includes for profit organisations such as businesses and corporations, industry bodies, networks, unions and employment agencies. While there are many sectors, industries and organisations that are considered part of the private sector, this report examines private businesses and some of the prevention initiatives undertaken by the private sector as organisations, workplaces and in partnership with others in their sector.

Change the story outlines eight essential actions to address the gendered drivers of violence against women and the social context in which this violence occurs. The private sector has a role to play in addressing each of these actions by, for example:

- **Challenging the condoning of violence against women** by reforming policies, systems and practices in the private sector that implicitly or explicitly condone violence against women or reduce men’s accountability for their violence – for example, using the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012* to strengthen data and public reporting on gender equality in a wide range of workplaces and industries.
- **Promoting women’s independence and decision-making** by increasing women’s leadership and representation at all levels of private organisations, and strengthening women’s economic security, participation and decision-making to equalise access to resources and power between men and women. This may include undertaking gender audits and gender pay analysis, superannuation payments during parental leave, increasing paid parental leave for fathers, and gender quotas to increase women’s participation at all levels of decision making.
- **Challenging attitudes and norms that normalise male control and dominance** and privilege masculine behaviours and character traits in certain sectors, industries and leadership positions. Example actions could include recruitment strategies to increase diverse representation within certain industries such as construction and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).
- **Building new social norms that foster personal identities not constrained by rigid gender stereotypes and support men and boys in developing healthy masculinities and positive, supportive male peer relationships** by countering constructions of masculinity as dominant, aggressive, controlling or hypersexual in particular professions and roles.
- **Promoting and normalising gender equality in public and private life** by increasing women’s workforce participation, addressing the gender pay gap and superannuation gap, and promoting more equitable, accessible and affordable parental leave and childcare arrangements for both women and men.

- **Addressing the intersections between gender inequality and other forms of systemic and structural oppression and discrimination and promoting broader social justice** by identifying and addressing the intersections between gender inequality and racism; colonialism; heteronormativity; cisnormativity; homo-, bi- and transphobia; ageism; ableism; and class discrimination. This can also support embedding a gendered analysis within other work to address other forms of systemic and structural discrimination and oppression.
- **Building a safe, fair and equitable private sector by focusing on policy and systems change** by using policy, regulatory and legislative mechanisms and processes to equalise access to power and decision making between women and men in private organisations, enabling long-term and whole-of-organisations approaches to prevention, and addressing masculine organisational cultures.
- **Strengthening positive, equal and respectful relations between and among women and men, girls and boys** by building organisational and institutional cultures that promote and demonstrate the importance of equality, respect, safety and fairness in professional contexts, and building people’s confidence to act as prosocial bystanders.

Private sector workplace gender equality

Every workplace conversation, policy and action has the potential to either reinforce or challenge gender inequality and the kinds of attitudes and norms that drive violence. All workplaces can influence the structures, norms and practices that support ongoing gender inequality in Australia. Workplace policies and practices can perpetuate gender inequality by devaluing, excluding or marginalising women. This can result in unconscious bias steering decision-making or the status quo of gender inequality being preserved. On the other hand, workplaces can drive change by developing policies and practices that proactively support women and men to equally share care responsibilities and unpaid work, take up senior roles and be economically independent.²⁷

Workplaces need to take active steps to promote and normalise gender equality and challenge sexism and discrimination because:

- violence, sexual harassment and sexism occurs in workplaces
- violence that occurs at home or in the community can also have impacts at work
- workplace structures and cultures influence gender inequality.

A [2019 Deloitte Report](#) modelled that the private sector in Australia shouldered the vast majority of lost productivity costs related to workplace sexual harassment, estimated at \$2.2 billion (in comparison to the public sector, where it was \$393.7 million).

At a policy, legislative and regulatory level, private sector workplaces have certain obligations relating to gender equality. The Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) is the main regulatory body for private sector organisations (including universities and corporate structures) that have 100 or more employees. It is an Australian government statutory agency created by the [Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012](#). Organisations are required to report on indicators that measure progress in, and limitations to, gender equality in workplaces, many of which contribute to the prevention of violence against women. [WGEA data](#) provides a snapshot of women's and men's economic life in Australian private organisations, including:

- the gender pay gap
- employment status (casual, part-time, full-time)
- organisations providing paid parental leave
- policies and strategies supporting flexible working
- policies and strategies in place targeting sexual harassment
- percentage of women and men in leadership and decision-making positions.

Every year, WGEA publishes the key findings from the reporting data. The [2020–2021 annual scorecard](#) illustrates that despite some progress, gender inequalities continue to persist in Australia's private sector. Findings include:

- Although there is a downward trend in the gender pay gap, women still earned less \$25.8K less, on average, than men.
- Over 85% of Australian employers pay men more than women on average, and this is across roles and industries.
- Feminised industries are less likely to analyse their pay gaps and take action, despite persistent gender pay gaps in favour of men in those female-dominated industries.
- While women make up over 50% of the workforce, they comprise less than 20% of CEOs, and dominate part-time and casual roles.
- Only 12% of men are taking primary carers leave.

Industries continue to be heavily gender segregated, with only seven of 19 industries in Australia having gender-balanced workforces. Women continue to be concentrated in health care, social assistance, and education and training, with men concentrated in mining, electricity, gas, water and waste services, construction and manufacturing. High-earning industries such as financial and insurance services, construction, and professional, scientific and technical services, which are dominated by men, tend to have larger pay gaps compared to the more feminised industries that have lower average earnings (for example, retail). Across all industries, regardless of gender balance, men are overrepresented in senior and executive roles.²⁸ For example, [WGEA data from 2020–2021](#) demonstrates that while women make up 63.7% of the education and training workforce, only 34% of women make up top leadership positions (CEO equivalent). For retail, women make up 56.4% of the workforce, while only 16.9% of leadership positions (CEO level) are held by women.

Despite these persistent gender inequalities, there has been some progress in gender equality in Australian private sector organisations. WGEA data shows that over half of employers offer paid domestic violence leave.²⁹ In 2020–21, for the first time in the WGEA dataset, women comprised 41% (or two in five) of all managers. There have also been increases in the proportion of organisations with policies and practices aimed at promoting gender equality and eliminating gender bias in employment processes.

Every year, WGEA also names [Australia's Employers of Choice for Gender Equality](#), with [Australian employers](#) (private businesses and higher education) attaining the WGEA yellow tick to certify that they are progressing to make their workplaces more equal. While voluntary, it is a leading practice recognition program that is designed to encourage, recognise and promote organisations' active commitment to achieving gender equality in workplaces. [Research shows](#) the kind of targeted and strategic actions employers are taking under the citation are driving improved gender equality outcomes in Australian workplaces. Improvements in key gender equality metrics are being achieved at a faster rate than in other organisations that report to WGEA, with gender equality becoming an integral component of business practices of citation holders. This includes a faster reduction in the gender pay gap, a greater proportion of women in all levels of management, and a higher representation of women on their boards.

There are several examples of large workplaces and organisations making strides to promote gender equality and/or prevent violence against women. For example, these organisations, among others, are official [WGEA Employer of Choice for Gender Equality citation holders](#).

- [Medibank](#) has put in place gender-balanced leadership throughout the organisation, and committed to addressing gender bias, pay equity, sharing of parental responsibilities such as increasing male take-up of parental leave, and processes to address domestic and family violence.
- [Aurecon](#), an engineering, design and infrastructure advisory company, has implemented strategies to improve the gender balance of its workforce. These have included a focus on advancing women's leadership, reviewing organisational policies to promote inclusivity, attention to inclusive language and behaviour, and setting targets for female representation in the workforce. For example, organisational policies support gender diversity and inclusion through flexible working ('all roles are flex') parental leave, and domestic and family violence leave.
- [Mercy Health](#) has sought to increase male recruitment into the aged care industry, which is highly feminised. By breaking down gender stereotypes around care-giving and perceptions of what is 'men's work', the health and community services organisations have put in place a high school volunteering strategy to introduce young men to the possibility of a career in caring.

As a foundation for prevention work in workplaces, it is important to have response systems (including policies, processes and leadership support and training) in place to support people experiencing violence.

The Commonwealth Bank of Australia (CommBank) has led a number of organisational initiatives aimed at addressing, responding to and preventing domestic and family violence. CommBank has partnered with Our Watch to provide employers across the country with access to free online resources that support impacted employees and communities. These ['employee support' resources](#) include an informative series of videos and links to help organisations better understand the issues related to domestic and family violence, as well as informing and educating employers, employees and managers about the best way to respond. This includes highlighting why domestic and family violence is a workplace issue; the role of the workplace in supporting employees; what people managers can do; and workplace strategies to address this important issue.

Since 2015, CommBank has been committed to addressing domestic and financial abuse and they extended their commitment in 2020 by launching [CommBank Next Chapter](#), a program designed to address domestic violence and also financial abuse. One of the key priorities under Next Chapter is to work in partnership with experts to increase community and industry understanding of domestic violence and financial abuse. CommBank Next Chapter involves action in four key areas:

- leading the industry in providing care for customers in vulnerable circumstances
- supporting people (not only CommBank customers) who are recovering from financial abuse through access to the [Financial Independence Hub](#) (a free support service delivered in partnership with Good Shepherd)
- building the fact base and raising public awareness of financial abuse, and
- finding and fixing known issues with their own products and services that could impact those experiencing domestic and family violence.

Ensuring workplaces across Australia understand the complex range of issues related to domestic and family violence and helping equip them to offer the right support at the right time will ultimately achieve better long-term outcomes for people who have experienced domestic violence and financial abuse.

Large organisations are increasingly undertaking work to respond to and prevent violence against women and advance gender equality. Such organisations are sharing the resources, processes and outcomes with others to encourage work in smaller organisations.

Small and medium-sized organisations and workplaces

WGEA data covers just over 4 million of Australia's workforce and over 4000 employers. However, more than half of the Australian workforce are employed in small and medium-sized businesses that are not captured in WGEA data. The majority of Australian businesses employ fewer than 20 people.³⁰ In many regional, rural and remote locations, small businesses are the main employers in key industries. For example, in 2017–2018, small businesses employed over 80% of private sector employees in the agriculture, forestry and fishing industry nationally.³¹

[Some of the key challenges small and medium businesses](#) encounter when trying to achieve more gender equal workplaces involve implementing or attaining gender pay equity. Limited awareness of gender equality and pay equity within some small and medium businesses, as well as lack of reporting incentives, can mean that there are few factors motivating organisations to achieve equal pay. Small and medium organisations often have competing priorities, including small business management issues such as low turnover rates, higher impacts of parental leave, challenges to implementing flexible work options, limited or no human resources functions, limited resources to develop gender strategies, and limited data collection systems and processes to report on the gendered aspects. These can be further compounded in challenging economic environments and have been amplified in the COVID-19 context. WGEA, in collaboration with *economic Security4Women* (eS4W) have developed a [three-step guide](#) for small businesses to address pay inequities.

Recent research undertaken by the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, supported by Industrial Relations Victoria and Equal Workplaces Advisory Council, examines gender pay equality in small and medium organisations. Focusing on three industries, [Equal pay matters](#) recommends the need for tailored education and targeted strategies to respond to the unique challenges and needs of small and medium organisations to implement pay equity. It provides a framework for achieving pay equality in these organisations and [a guide to help small-to-medium businesses understand why and how to achieve pay equality](#).

Sexual harassment against women in workplaces and industries

Sexual harassment in Australia is highly gendered. Women are much more likely than men to have experienced sexual harassment in their lifetime (85% compared to 56%). Almost four out of five incidents of workplace sexual harassment are perpetrated by men.³² Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, unwelcome requests for sexual favours, or other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature which makes a person feel offended, humiliated and/or intimidated.

Some groups of women disproportionately experience sexual harassment due to intersecting forms of structural discrimination, marginalisation and oppression. Power structures and social and cultural norms create conditions that disproportionately increase the likelihood of some groups of women to experience sexual harassment and can create barriers in reporting it.³³ Many of these groups tend to be in casual and lower-paid roles, insecure work, and excluded from leadership and decision-making positions of power.³⁴ This is illustrated in some key findings from [Everyone's business: Fourth national survey on sexual harassment in Australian workplaces \(2018\)](#), which found that:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are substantially more likely to have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace (55% compared with 39% of all women).
- Women living with a disability are more likely to experience sexual harassment in the workplace (52% compared with 39% of all women).
- People of diverse sexual orientation are more likely to experience workplace sexual harassment compared to heterosexual people (52% compared with 31%).
- Young women (aged 18–24) experience a higher rate of sexual harassment than workers from other age groups.

There are a range of workplace characteristics and practices that contribute to the risk of workplace sexual harassment. This includes workplaces that are male-dominated or characterised by hierarchical structures, or where there is a high level of contact with customers or clients. Many of these factors are prominent in particular industries, sectors or occupations, such as construction and mining, where professions are based around stereotyped gender norms and practices and women perform tasks that are 'atypical'. Furthermore, isolated workplaces can also increase the risk of sexual harassment.³⁵

Nearly all large organisations that reported to WGEA in 2021 (98%) have policies and/or strategies to prevent sexual harassment and discrimination, with 96% having specific discrimination and harassment grievance processes. However, while having grievance and reporting processes is important, as detailed in the [Respect@Work: National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces 2020 report](#) many people encounter barriers when reporting sexual harassment despite the existence of policies. This is amplified for some workers who face intersecting forms of discrimination. While the significant majority of organisations and workplaces have grievance processes for people experiencing sexual harassment and discrimination, there are opportunities to enhance these to be more supportive and victim-centred, and to have flexible mechanisms that accommodate the needs of workers, and a range of reporting options.³⁶

Small businesses face particular challenges in preventing and responding to sexual harassment. This is concerning given that nearly three out of five people who experienced workplace sexual harassment in the last five years said the most recent incident occurred in an organisation with fewer than 200 people, with nearly a quarter of those incidents occurring in workplaces with 19 or fewer employees.³⁷ As the [Respect@Work](#) report notes, the ‘small size of the workplace and high degree of informal and personal interactions can increase the risk of sexual harassment and create barriers to reporting’.³⁸

Barriers include the lack of resources and skills to handle complaints of sexual harassment. In addition, in regional, rural and remote locations, internal reporting can be difficult due to non-existent complaints pathways, a lack of anonymity, and the level of personal and direct relationships between employer and employees as well as clients.³⁹ Preventing and responding to sexual harassment in small businesses can be further complicated by the blurring of professional and personal relationships, which can create conflicts of interest and impact victims’ willingness and/or ability to speak up about harassment.⁴⁰ The size and make-up of small businesses means that managers and business owners have a high level of influence on workplace culture and formal policies and practices.

In response to the endemic nature of sexual harassment in Australian workplaces, the [Respect@Work](#) enquiry aimed to review and report on the prevalence, nature and reporting of sexual harassment in Australian workplaces. The report sets out 55 recommendations, directed to all levels of government and the private sector to prevent and respond to sexual harassment. Referred to as the Roadmap to Respect, these recommendations are aimed at policy and legislative reforms and actions to support meaningful change in workplaces. Some recommendations include:

- the establishment of the [Respect@Work Council](#)
- amendment of the Sex Discrimination Act to include a positive duty, which places the onus on employers to take reasonable and proportionate measures to eliminate sex discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation
- establishing consistent sexual harassment laws across jurisdictions
- the development of evidence-based strategies for the prevention of sexual harassment, led by Our Watch and in partnership with the Workplace Sexual Harassment Council, the Australian Communications and Media Authority, and the Australian Press Council to promote and support best practice reporting on sexual harassment by the media
- collaboration between key industry and professional groups (unions, employer associations, employers and other industry bodies) to establish industry and profession-wide initiatives to address sexual harassment regardless of workplace size.

In addition, a new evidence-based and victim focused model is proposed to improve the coordination, consistency and clarity to respond to sexual harassment in workplaces, centring a gender and intersectional lens. This shift from a reactive model reliant on individual complaints, to a proactive model requiring positive actions from employers and governments, requires actively adopting and implementing primary prevention strategies and initiatives in workplaces.

Resources to support workplace gender equality and primary prevention

There are a number of resources that have been developed to support workplace initiatives addressing gender equality and the prevention of violence against women. A range of organisations across Australia have developed resources and training to support workplaces to undertake primary prevention initiatives. One example is [White Ribbon's Workplace Accreditation Program](#). The Multicultural Centre for Women's Health has also undertaken work in this area and has centred intersectional approaches, developing resources to support this including [5 ways to apply intersectionality to gender equality planning and action in the workplace](#).

Women's Health Victoria has a long history in this area, and developed [Take a Stand against Domestic Violence: It's Everyone's Business](#), one of the first workplace-based programs for the prevention of violence against women in Australia. Piloted between 2007 and 2011, it is an award-winning program that has been delivered in a range of private, public and not-for-profit sectors. It encourages individuals to be active bystanders and 'take a stand' against violence against women, creating long-lasting cultural change in workplaces. It provides participants with the knowledge and practical tools to become active bystanders and promote respectful relationships between men and women. This includes challenging sexist jokes and comments, the condoning of violence against women, and discrimination based on gender. They deliver [a suite of training](#) focused on preventing and responding to violence in the workplace.

[Full Stop Australia](#) provides [a suite of trainings](#) to help workplaces and professionals be able to respond to violence against women and develop policies and processes to prevent violence. This includes training on vicarious trauma management and ethical leadership, and working with organisations to develop domestic and family violence and/or sexual assault/sexual harassment strategies, as well as reviewing existing policies and processes.

Regardless of size, organisational change processes can help private sector workplaces create an environment where women are not only safe but also respected, valued and treated as equals at work, at home and in their communities. Despite different complexities for large, medium and small private organisations, and while there may be different policies and regulatory mechanisms, similar approaches can be taken to prevent violence against women.

A **whole-of-organisation approach** aims to develop a holistic approach to primary prevention within an organisation, regardless of size. For example, it asks organisational leaders to consider how prevention activities can target all the individuals and different groups in the organisation; how formal organisational policies and procedures can be used to drive change; how to engage the leadership and shift organisational culture; and how to embed prevention into the day-to-day business of the organisation. This includes all stakeholders engaging with the organisation, including external clients and communities.⁴¹

As detailed in the [National primary prevention report: Report 2](#), there is significant organisational development work occurring across Australia. Workplace gender equality initiatives are one of the most common and recognisable forms of primary prevention approaches in organisations. There has been significant uptake of workplace initiatives to address violence against women over recent years and a number of gender equality and prevention organisations and consultants deliver a range of training, support, standards, accreditation processes and capacity building. These include Our Watch's [Workplace Equality and Respect](#).

Taking a whole-of-organisation approach, the [Workplace Equality and Respect tools and resources](#) support organisations in implementing actions and assessing workplace initiatives before and during the process. The resources feature good practice examples from workplaces across Australia, such as organisation action plans, and an equitable flexible work policy. There are also templates, videos and guides to help workplaces tailor the process to the context.

There is significant overlap between the drivers of violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) people and the drivers of violence against women.⁴² In particular, rigid, binary and hierarchical constructions of sex, gender and sexuality have a significant impact on the violence that women and LGBTIQ people and communities experience. Implementing organisational and diversity and inclusion initiatives such as those related to LGBTIQ discrimination can also contribute to addressing the gendered drivers of violence against women and LGBTIQ people. It is important that these efforts are led by organisations and individuals within LGBTIQ communities, informed by specific and nuanced frameworks and gender transformative approaches, and include actions to address relevant drivers, particularly the relationship between rigid gender roles and socially dominant forms of masculinity, heteronormativity, cisnormativity and homophobia.⁴³

[Rainbow Health Australia](#) have developed the [Rainbow Tick](#), a framework that helps health and human services organisations show that they are safe, inclusive and affirming services and employers for the LGBTIQ community. While aimed at health and human service organisations, the Rainbow Tick standards are designed to build lasting LGBTIQ inclusion and can guide the private sector and other industries. The six standards include:

- building capabilities and demonstrating that the organisation has embedded LGBTIQ-inclusive practices across all of its systems and continuously seeks opportunities for improvement
- developing the workforce so that all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities to LGBTIQ consumers and are trained and able to deliver LGBTIQ-inclusive services
- ensuring that LGBTIQ consumers are consulted and participate in the planning, development and review of the organisation's services
- creating a welcoming and accessible organisation where LGBTIQ consumers can easily and confidently access services
- ensuring that LGBTIQ consumers, staff and volunteers feel safe to disclose and provide personal information, because they know that information will be treated respectfully and that systems are in place to ensure their privacy
- ensuring that all organisational services and programs are culturally safe and acceptable.

To achieve the Rainbow Tick accreditation, organisations can become accredited with mandatory, additional or alternative actions. Large organisations such as The Melbourne Clinic, Australia's largest private mental health service, have received accreditation. The Rainbow Tick is an important framework in preventing gendered violence by building safe, inclusive and affirming organisations and services for LGBTIQ people.

Similarly, [ACON's Pride Inclusion programs](#) offer a range of services to assist employers, sporting organisations and service providers with LGBTIQ inclusion. For example, the [Pride in Sport Index](#) is a benchmark instrument designed to assess the inclusion of people with diverse sexualities and genders within Australian sporting organisations and codes. Participation in the Index allows sporting organisations to assess their own practice. It also allows sporting organisations to benchmark their own initiatives against an external measure and other sporting organisations. ACON has also developed the [Australian Workplace Equality Index](#), which is the national benchmark on LGBTIQ workplace inclusion. It comprises the largest and only national employee survey designed to gauge the overall impact of inclusion initiatives on organisational culture, as well as impacts on LGBTIQ-identifying and non-identifying employees. The index drives best practice in Australia and sets a comparative benchmark for Australian employers across all sectors, with organisations such as Macquarie Group, IBM and Deloitte participating. There is [a database of LGBTI-inclusive employers](#), ranked depending on the stage of their LGBTIQ workplace inclusion.

Private sector collaboration, coordination and partnerships

Change the story articulates the need for coordination and collaboration across jurisdictions, sectors and settings, and for consistency among prevention efforts and quality assurance. This includes between public, private and not-for profit sectors, and also within them.

A **whole-of-setting/sector approach** works with a group of like organisations – for example, particular industries and professions in the private sector that are governed by the same policy, regulatory or legislative framework. While it may include organisations implementing organisation-wide actions, a whole-of-setting approach goes beyond this to focus on the connections between these individual organisations and the shared opportunities for change across that setting or sector. It considers how prevention goals can be achieved through consistent approaches, sharing resources, coordination, setting/sector-wide infrastructure and shared approaches. A number of industries, sectors and organisations have formed coalitions and alliances to collaborate to progress gender equality and prevent violence against women. While there are too many initiatives to detail them all, examples from a range of industries are summarised below.

[The Champions of Change Coalition](#) (formerly Male Champions of Change) brings together representatives from business, government, community, academic and not-for-profit organisations covering every major sector of the Australian economy. Founded by Elizabeth Broderick AO, the former Australian Sex Discrimination Commissioner, it is a high-profile coalition that involves male leaders stepping up to drive gender equality, advance more and diverse women in leadership, and build respectful and inclusive workplaces and organisations. By being ‘champions’, leaders publicly commit to progressing change. The Coalition has formed [16 groups](#) (amounting to over 250 leaders) that are either cross-industry or industry-specific. Industry-specific groups include those focused on sport; sciences, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM); property; and insurance to address specific challenges to gender equality in those industries. The Coalition prioritises six [practical actions](#) for leaders to take, as leaders in their organisations and in their industries, sectors and broader society, to accelerate changes to gender inequality.

The Coalition also release [reports and resources](#) to continue building the evidence base to assist industries, organisations and leaders to progress gender equality in their settings and contexts. These cover topics such as leading on gender equality, pay equality, and domestic and family violence. In collaboration with the prevention and violence response sector, the Coalition released [Playing Our Part: A Framework for Workplace Action on Domestic and Family Violence](#) in 2021, to help organisations refine their actions on domestic and family violence and capture current leading practice. [Disrupting the system: Preventing and responding to sexual harassment in the workplace](#) brings a CEO lens and everyday experiences of employees across the Coalition to identify effective approaches leaders can take to preventing and responding to workplace sexual harassment. This involves taking clear stances on sexual harassment as a leadership priority; demonstrating compassionate leadership; having shared language and practical knowledge of the issues; taking disruptive actions; and providing tools and resources to support people and policies.

[Chief Executive Women \(CEW\)](#) consists of 800 members who hold leading roles in Australia’s largest private and public organisations. Since 1985, CEW has provided advocacy, research, programs and scholarships to help remove barriers to women’s progression and ensure equal opportunity. CEW developed a [Respect Toolkit](#) consisting of a suite of resources to initiate critical conversations at work about sexual harassment and gender inequality. These tools are designed to help people and organisations navigate resistance and backlash, and to provide models to frame prevention activities and goals, and offer examples of monitoring and reporting frameworks. In 2022, CEW members identified [the outstanding issues facing women in Australia](#), with respondents naming women’s economic participation and progression as one of the most important priorities, followed by the care economy, safety in workplaces, homes and communities, climate change, and economic growth.

[The Parlour Collective](#) brings together research and resources to generate debate and discussion and expand spaces for women in architecture and the built environment professions. Covering topics such as gender in the workplace, sexual harassment, work–life balance and diversity, it brings together architects to connect and share information on how to help architecture move towards being a more equitable profession. Parlour have developed [a set of guides for equitable practice](#) that outline key issues facing women in architecture and aim to equip employees and the architecture sector with positive, productive strategies and make suggestions for change. Parlour runs a number of events unpacking both architecture firms as workplaces, and the building of equity and diversity into architectural practice.

The Australian advertising industry still relies heavily on gender stereotypes. Despite some shifts, key themes remaining in contemporary advertisements include the hyper-feminisation, sexualisation and objectification of women; depictions of ideal masculinity that promote stoicism, dominance, and even violence; and an underrepresentation of diverse gender identities. The [shEqual](#) project, led by Women's Health Victoria, works with researchers, advertising agencies and regulatory bodies to establish a robust evidence base and enact meaningful change at multiple levels in the advertising industry. shEqual's aim is to ensure advertising reflects the diversity and multidimensionality of Australian communities and contributes to creating a society in which all people are viewed and treated as equal and live free from violence. It adopts an intersectional approach, with a focus on the ways in which gendered representations intersect with disability, race, Indigeneity and sexuality.

shEqual works across the socio-ecological model, working with policy, organisations, communities and individuals through the [Seeing is Believing national strategic framework](#). The framework is based on research and consultation with the advertising industry, industry regulators, and the prevention sector. It establishes the impetus for change and highlights the importance of doing so via a whole-of-community approach that includes cultural change in the industry, community engagement and empowerment, and more effective regulation and policy. Activities within the framework include:

- changing regulation and policy through lobbying the [Australian Association of National Advertisers \(AANA\)](#) and [Ad Standards](#) – as a result, the AANA recently changed their [Code of Ethics](#), which now prohibits the focus on body parts or use of overly sexual imagery where this is not relevant to the product or service being advertised
- engaging and empowering the community through social media and campaigns such as #SnapSexism
- promoting cultural change in the industry by creating an online [pledge](#) that takes advantage of the competitive nature of the industry, to build a critical mass of individuals and companies committed to achieving advertising equality.

Most recently, shEqual released a ['how to' guide](#) that unpacks what gender stereotypes are, their impact, and how they can be avoided. The guide breaks down seven common female stereotypes seen in advertisements today – and notes who is missing altogether from ads – to start conversations and create change by challenging common depictions of women and girls that accurately represent women's lives and promote gender equality.

[Diversity Council Australia \(DCA\)](#) is an independent peak body leading diversity and inclusion in the workplace. There are over 1,000 organisational members (including private sector and non-private sector employers) who represent some of Australia's biggest employers and make up to 20% of the workforce (nearly 2 million Australians). DCA focuses on providing research, events and programs, resources and expert advice across diversity and inclusion topics, including but not limited to gender, LGBTIQ issues, Indigenous issues, flexibility and work-life balance, and family and domestic violence. They provide [diversity and inclusion planning](#), to help organisations begin to embed policies, plans and diversity and inclusion initiatives, coupled with facilitating [learning](#) and support. DCA events bring together leaders in different settings and sectors to discuss and share information on different issues in the diversity and inclusion space, and they have established networks to support this work such as the Gender Equality Network (GEN).

Further, DCA works in partnership with its members to contribute to [building the evidence base](#) across the full spectrum of diversity and inclusion to enable Australian organisations to implement initiatives. This includes investigating age, caring responsibilities, gender, cultural and religious diversity, disability, Indigeneity, sexual orientation, and work organisation. DCA and Our Watch developed a resource focused on [Myth Busting Domestic and Family Violence at Work](#). Using evidence to tackle some common myths about domestic and family violence, the resource provides tools and resources to help Australian organisations implement prevention strategies in their workplaces.

In collaboration with the UTS Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research and WGEA, DCA released a [gendered insights report](#) into the Gari Yala (Speak the Truth) project, which documents workplace experiences and recommendations of over 1,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers. Findings reveal that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women experience an intersection of disadvantage and marginalisation in the workplace due to issues such as ‘identity strain’ (their identity not matching the norms and expectations of their broader organisation or workforce) and lack of cultural safety.⁴⁴ The intersection of indigeneity, gender and caring responsibilities leads to particular vulnerability in the workplace for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who are carers.⁴⁵ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, especially those with caring responsibilities, have significantly less support in culturally unsafe situations such as racially discriminatory treatment or harassment, and carry the highest cultural load. The report found that women especially benefit from positive workplace cultures in which organisations prioritise cultural safety, authenticity and organisational activity (the number of events, initiatives and programs organisations undertook relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and cultures).⁴⁶

Analysing data from the [Inclusion@Work Index](#), which maps the state of inclusion in Australian organisations and provides a business case for inclusion, DCA released a special edition report of the 2021–2022 Index titled [Mapping the state of flex in the Australian workforce](#). The report looked at the positive links between flexible work and workplace inclusion. The analysis finds that there has been little change in the gendered uptake of flexible work options: despite the ‘working from home revolution’ brought on by COVID-19, there is still a significant gap in who takes up flexible working options. Men who use flexible work options reported significantly more discrimination and/or harassment at work compared to male workers not using flexible work or women who do use flexible work. This may speak to the gendered stereotypes of the ‘ideal worker’ regarding caring responsibilities. DCA’s [Let’s share the care at home and work](#) report sets out how flexible work and time out of the workforce, coupled with women’s disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work, are key contributors to the gender pay gap. DCA offers [‘Future-flex’ guidelines](#) to help organisations across all sectors to implement inclusive equitable flexible work options.

Gaps and opportunities

Focused effort and resourcing are essential for the coordination, information-sharing and collaboration to continue, to build knowledge of primary prevention across jurisdictions, sectors and the prevention workforce.

Primary prevention of violence against women is an emerging area of work that focuses on stopping violence before it starts by addressing its drivers and promoting gender equality. This is distinct from, but complements, early intervention and responses to violence against women. Primary prevention encompasses a diverse range of work at all levels of society, including with individuals, organisations and institutions. Prevention activity in Australia can often be done in isolation and there are differences in resources being dedicated to this work across jurisdictions. However, evidence shows that primary prevention work will be most effective if it is done in collaboration among and between stakeholders, led by women's organisations are leading in prevention, to ensure efforts are consistent and mutually reinforcing.

By aiming to connect work on initiatives across jurisdictions, sectors and communities to facilitate sharing and learning, the Hub helps contribute to building the capacity of the prevention workforce across Australia. It provides an entry point for sourcing information about primary prevention activity across the country, providing valuable insights to inform future investment in primary prevention. Into the future, the Hub will continue to play a central role in Our Watch's efforts to develop the prevention workforce across Australia. Our Watch, through the newly established Prevention in Action directorate, will strengthen, increase and scale up effective prevention activity in order to create positive change in the norms, structures and practices that drive violence against women. Increasing the skill, number, coordination and diversity of people working to prevent violence against all women is key to this, as is engagement and outreach across key settings to increase capacity and confidence to implement prevention activity. Our Watch will have a dual focus on increasing prevention activity within specific settings (including but not limited to workplaces, universities and sport) and engaging with the sector, supporting the maturity of prevention infrastructure and developing the workforce. We will do this work alongside many others across the country. The Hub will play an essential role in connecting this growing activity across jurisdictions, regions, industries and settings.

Monitoring, evaluation and building learning and capacity are critical parts of prevention infrastructure, contributing to the evidence base and the upskilling of the prevention workforce.

Primary prevention of violence against women seeks deep transformation of gendered power relations and the status quo. Primary prevention initiatives should be contextualised in a broader theory or hypothesis of how change will happen. Therefore, monitoring and evaluation approaches should avoid confusing or conflating any short-term outputs or outcomes with sustainable change by identifying how we can best describe and take into account successes along the way while remaining focused on the need for long-term transformation. [Counting on change](#) and [Tracking progress in prevention](#) provide important frameworks and foundations for this work as well as learnings from the ethical, intersectional and participatory evaluation approaches described in this report.

Evaluation of prevention activities has a key role to play in extending and strengthening evidence and contributing to learning and insight about how change works and for whom/ which groups. It requires long-term and sustained investment that contributes to the evidence base, engages with and builds the capacity and knowledge of stakeholders, and prioritises methodologies, methods and approaches that are ethical, feminist, participatory and decolonising. There are opportunities to prioritise existing strategies and emerging platforms such as data sovereignty and investment in evaluation capacity building. Fostering a supportive learning environment between and among stakeholders is critical to contribute to best practice and knowledge of what works, and what works less well in preventing violence against women.

Evaluation capacity building is critical for the development and upskilling of the primary prevention workforce and would benefit from significant investment to continue building existing guidance and resources, as opportunities to increase promising practice. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have added to the complex and changing nature of prevention, reinforcing the need for consistent monitoring and evaluation.

There are opportunities to embed monitoring, evaluation and learning principles and approaches discussed in this report in the development of Commonwealth and state and territory government's plans, strategies and frameworks that address the prevention of violence against women.

The private sector has a key role in preventing violence against women.

There are many initiatives across the Australian private sector to support gender equality and the prevention of violence against women, with an increased momentum and investment by many organisations. The private sector's influence over policy, the economy and community norms and values means that organisations, industries and institutions have a key role to play in undertaking prevention activity:

- as a workplace (with a focus on their employees, workplaces and clients/customers)
- in collaboration with other parts of the private sector
- in partnership with not-for-profit and public sector organisations, and
- in advocating for a strong focus on gender equality and the prevention of violence against women within their spheres of influence.

There are opportunities for sectors and organisations, regardless of size, to take 'whole-of' approaches to preventing violence against women. This work can be done in collaboration within the private sector itself, but also in partnership with prevention stakeholders and governments. In putting in place policies and practices, as well as addressing gender stereotypes and harmful norms, the private sector can contribute to addressing the gendered drivers where Australians work, live, play and learn. This includes creating workplaces that prioritise gender equality, where women are safe, respected and valued. There is a need to support this increasing momentum in the private sector, and to make resources available to workplaces, regardless of size, where promising work done to date can be used as a model to learn from and build on.

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