Change the story

A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia

Framework Foundations 1:
A review of the evidence on correlates of violence against women and what works to prevent it

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ABSTRACT

This paper was prepared to inform the development of a national framework to prevent violence against women and their children in Australia. It reviews key existing syntheses of the research on violence against women and what works to prevent it, and draws on relevant theoretical literature to provide a conceptual framework within which to present the findings.

The paper points to gender inequality as an underlying, or root cause of violence against women, identifying specific dimensions of 'gender regimes' or 'gender orders' that are correlated with such violence. It notes that gender inequality operates in intersection with other social inequalities, and considers the differential impact of these intersections on different demographic groups. It then identifies specific factors that contribute to violence against women, grouping these into four categories: those associated with gender inequality; those associated with the practice of and response to violence against women; those associated with the practice of and response to violence in general; and those challenging gender hierarchies, compounding gender inequalities or weakening non-violent and gender equitable social norms. It further argues that these factors are influenced by three key mechanisms operating at multiple levels of the social ecology: social practices, social norms and social structures.

The paper then considers the literature on prevention. It draws on lessons learned from other areas of prevention, particularly tobacco use and road traffic accidents, to suggest a number of principles and approaches that might be applied to the prevention of violence against women. Finally, the paper turns to the literature specifically related to the prevention of violence against women, reviewing the state of evidence for different kinds of intervention, and identifying effective and promising practice. It concludes by synthesising the findings of the research in order to inform the development of a comprehensive approach to preventing violence against women in Australia.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1. Introduction

Violence perpetrated by men against women is a prevalent problem affecting more than one in three Australian women in their lifetime (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2013a). This violence contravenes women's human rights both in itself and because it acts as a barrier to the fulfilment of other human rights (United Nations Women 2013). The serious health, social and economic consequences of violence for both individual women and their children as well as for businesses, organisations and for society as a whole have been extensively documented (United Nations 2006; United Nations Women 2013). Critically, violence is both a cause and a consequence of gender inequality (United Nations 2006; United Nations Women 2013).

In recent decades there has been increasing recognition internationally of the importance of well-planned and concerted action to address this problem (United Nations Women 2012). Australia is among world leaders in this effort having developed the *National Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women and their Children 2010-2022*, a 12-year strategy which aims to bring together Commonwealth, state and territory efforts, as well as work being undertaken by civic society, the business sector and the wider community to achieve a sustained reduction in violence against women (Council of Australian Governments 2010).

There are opportunities to prevent violence against women at many levels. Work taking place in the response system by police, the courts, counsellors and women's refuges is vital not only to ensuring that the consequences of violence are minimised, but also to preventing recurring violence.

However, there is increasing recognition that the prevalence and costs of violence are too high to limit efforts to responding to affected individuals and to intervening after violence has occurred. Rather there is a need to take a population approach to prevent this violence; one that addresses influences in day-to-day environments that enable violence to occur both in the first place and as part of a recurring pattern. The potential in such an approach, often referred to as primary prevention, is indicated by the evidence linking violence to particular organisational, community and societal level influences, together with an emerging body of practice to address them.

Driving whole of community change to prevent violence against women is among the priorities of the National Plan, and the need to strengthen effort to address this priority was identified in the National Plan's *Second Action Plan, Moving Ahead* (Department of Social Services 2013, p. 19). The plan included a commitment to support the development of a National Framework to guide this work.

The Framework is being led by Our Watch, Australia's national non-government organisation dedicated to the prevention of violence against women, in partnership with Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS), established to build evidence to address the problem, and the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth). VicHealth brings to this partnership expertise gained from over a decade of research and practice to support population-level prevention of violence against women, together with the development of a framework to guide this work in Victoria (VicHealth 2007).

1.2. Purpose and method

This paper is one of the resources prepared to inform the development of the National Framework. It reviews key existing syntheses of the research and conceptualises the findings to help inform the development of a framework and ultimately guide action.

In recent decades a number of international bodies, including the European Commission, the World Bank and the World Health Organization, have assembled the available research to understand violence against women and what works to prevent it. The resources on which this research is based are listed in the reference list, with key sources highlighted in bold.

In addition, the Australian Government has supported two national surveys to be conducted every four years to strengthen understanding of violence against women:

- The Personal Safety Survey is a household survey of over 22,000 Australians aged 18 years and over about their safety at home and in the community (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2013a).
- The National Community Attitudes Towards Violence Against Women Survey is a survey of 17,500 Australians aged 16 years and over on their attitudes to gender inequality and violence against women (VicHealth 2014a; Webster et al. 2014).

As a first step in the development of a National Framework, key experts were engaged by Our Watch to develop papers addressing particular issues relevant to prevention in the Australian context (Campo 2015; Cox 2015; Frohmader et al. 2015; Joyce et al. 2015; Murdolo and Quiazon 2015; Pease 2015; Rees 2015; Robinson 2015).

In addition to these key sources, the paper draws on further research and theoretical work to resolve competing findings, more fully explain or illustrate key themes or to guide the conceptual presentation of existing findings. Its focus is on the evidence relating to:

- Population-level factors found to be correlated with violence against women. These are the focus of primary prevention, either by strengthening conditions understood to promote women's freedom from violence or addressing those understood to increase the probability of violence occurring
- Prevention actions, which are the strategies identified as effective or promising in preventing violence against women
- The resources and conditions required to establish, implement and sustain prevention of violence against women. Since population-level prevention of violence against women is an emerging area of practice this paper also draws on evidence from the practice of population-level prevention in tobacco control and road safety.

Consistent with the scope of the National Framework, the paper primarily draws on evidence from research and practice on intimate partner violence against women and non-partner sexual assault. These are the most common forms of violence against women in Australia and in many other countries (Heise 2011), and the subject of the most research and prevention action.

However, violence against women takes many forms including:
- violence in organisations, such as prisons and facilities for women with disabilities
- violence based on women's sexual orientation or gender identity
- forced pregnancy and abortion
- trafficking

- so-called 'honor crimes'
- violence against women on the basis of their race, ethnicity or faith
- sexual harassment and exploitation, including street harassment
- stalking
- sorcery or witchcraft-related violence
- gender-related killings such as femicide
- female genital mutilation or 'cutting'
- child, early and forced marriage.

While not drawing on evidence related to these forms of violence, this paper may also be relevant to informing responses to them, since many of these forms of violence share features and correlates in common with intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual assault (Heise 2011).

1.3.   Strengths and limitations of the existing research

The complexities in researching violence against women have been documented extensively elsewhere and it is beyond the scope of this paper to explore them in detail. However, in summary, the following are important to keep in mind when reading this paper:

- There are now numerous well-designed population-level studies on violence against women. However, there are continuing complexities in the measurement of this violence, in particular its non-physical forms (DeKeseredy 2000).
- Less is known about the prevalence and nature of violence in groups *within* the population, especially smaller groups. This is due to the difficulties in obtaining robust sample sizes of smaller groups in population-level studies.
- Findings from administrative datasets such as hospitals and the police are likely to *under-represent* violence against women, in particular non-physical forms of abuse (which are less likely to be reported or reportable) and *over-represent* violence experienced by people from minority ethnic and racial communities and those affected by socio-economic inequality. This is because violence affecting women in these groups is *more* likely to be reported to the police (Ackerman & Love 2014; Avakame et al. 1999; MacQueen & Norris 2014) and other public authorities.
- As discussed further below, the particular factors influencing violence against women in a given context vary. This means that the finding of a study in one context may not necessarily apply, or apply as strongly, in another. However, the literature reviewed by the sources included in this paper suggests that the correlates of violence against women are remarkably similar across settings and nations.
- Although there are a growing number of studies involving men and perpetrators of violence, until recently much of what was known about population-level factors influencing violence against women came from studies of women, commonly women who were victims of violence.
- The strongest studies are those that investigate a link between violence against women and a specific factor. An example of this is a study which explores whether men who use pornography are more likely to perpetrate violence against women. Most of the correlates discussed in this paper are those for which a direct association has been found with violence against women.
- However it is difficult to develop study designs that examine the direct link between a particular factor and violence, and so researchers and evaluators sometimes use measures that are indicators of violence against women. In the hypothetical example above, this might

involve the link between pornography use and attitudes towards violence against women or between pornography use and what men say they would do in certain scenarios. A small number of the correlates discussed here are based on a link with indicators of violence against women, such as individual or community attitudes or stated intentions.

- Most of the sources in this paper used internationally accepted methodologies for selecting and assessing evidence. While increasingly sophisticated research designs are being used to study violence against women, many findings are based on cross sectional study designs. Cross sectional studies look at the relationship between violence against women and a given factor, such as education, at a particular point in time. Where these show a correlation between violence against women and the factor concerned, it cannot be said from cross sectional studies alone that factors are causally related with violence against women.

1.4. Some important considerations

1.4.1. Accountability for violence as an overarching principle

Many of the factors discussed in this paper as increasing the probability of violence against women involve adversity for some perpetrators. They provide an important context for understanding and preventing violence. However, they are not an excuse for such violence. The principle underlying this paper is that men who use violence against women must remain accountable for their behaviour through either legal or formal or informal social sanctions. There are a number of reasons for this:

- The perpetration of violence against women is a violation of women's human rights. Excusing such violence in any circumstance contravenes this right and Australia's international human rights obligations.

- As discussed further below, social norms are a key influence on the perpetration of violence against women. An important means of maintaining social norms against violence is to demonstrate that individuals who use violence will be held accountable (Heise 2011; Salazar et al. 2003). Providing excuses for violence has the potential to undermine this accountability. This can compromise prevention effort as well as work being done in the response system. This is especially the case since men who use violence against women have been found to be particularly likely to justify and excuse their violent behaviour (Lila et al. 2008; Scott & Straus 2007; Weldon & Gilchrist 2012).

- Many men who use violence against women, especially in intimate and familial relationships, do not generally use violence elsewhere or against other people – their colleagues, bosses or friends for example (Mouzos & Makkai 2004). This strongly suggests that many men who use violence towards women are capable of making conscious decisions about it. Participants in men's behaviour change programs often describe situations outside of their intimate relationships that include various types of supposed 'provocations' or contributors such as stress, anger, drugs or alcohol, which do not result in them using violence. Such men tend to be very conscious of the potential negative consequences of using violence in other contexts, where the power dynamics are very different to those in their intimate relationships with women.

- The majority of men who have experienced adversity, such as child abuse, do not go on to perpetrate violence against women. The balance of the evidence presented in this paper suggests that factors involving adversity for men do not on their own provide an explanation for the perpetration of violence.

Ensuring the accountability of men who perpetrate violence on one hand and responding to their needs and respecting their human rights on the other are not mutually exclusive. This is demonstrated by a number of innovative programs working with men who use violence against women (Centre for Innovative Justice 2015).

1.4.2. A focus on population-level factors

This paper is concerned with the primary prevention of violence against women. Although some information in it may be relevant in a response setting, it is not designed to inform work with individual men and women affected by violence against women. Rather its focus is on population-level factors correlated with violence against women; factors that affect us all, albeit in different ways and to different degrees.

In a clinical setting there is a need to take into account all the factors that may influence violence perpetrated by a particular individual. This may include factors not canvassed in this paper because they are not sufficiently prevalent to be considered in a population-based approach and/or because they cannot be readily prevented at the population level such as factors of genetic origin or individual psychopathologies (Cunningham et al. 1998).

1.4.3. The use of the term 'culture'

The term 'culture' (and its derivatives cultural and cultures) is used extensively in this paper to mean the distinctive patterns of values, beliefs and ways of life of a group of people. This can be based on sharing a common ethnicity or race but can also apply to other shared characteristics such as gender, as well as to other social entities such as organisations (like football clubs, workplaces or schools) or communities or groups with a common interest or shared geographic origin.

Culture is viewed as a dynamic concept that is influenced by environmental, historical, political, geographical, linguistic, spiritual and social factors (Paradies et al. 2009). It is not fixed or unchangeable.

This is in contrast to the way culture is sometimes used in Australian social policy discourse to distinguish people from different ethnic groups or places of birth, often taking the dominant Anglo-Australian culture as a point of comparison.

The broader understanding of culture adopted in this paper is important given the particular role played by organisational, community and society wide cultural norms in the perpetration of, and responses to, violence against women. Such norms are present in all social groups.

1.4.4. The role of community attitudes in understanding of violence against women

This paper draws extensively on the National Community Attitudes Towards Violence Against Women Survey because attitudes are understood to both reflect and reinforce social norms. As discussed in section 2.2.4 of this paper, social norms regarding gender and violence, while not the only mechanism, are a key mechanism contributing to violence against women. Because collectively held attitudes form social norms, community attitudes are important measures of progress in relation to violence against women both in society as a whole and among particular groups (Webster et al. 2014), and can in turn help guide prevention effort. This is why the Australian Government has supported a periodic survey of community attitudes and why this paper draws on the survey findings. Nevertheless, it is important that attitudes are considered along with other indicators.

1.4.5. Relevance to interventions in particular contexts

As noted above, evidence presented in this paper is primarily from studies of non-partner sexual assault and intimate partner violence. There is considerable overlap between the factors influencing both these forms of violence against women. However there are also some differences (World Health Organization 2010). For this reason, when planning a particular intervention in a particular context, sources on factors specific to the form or forms of violence being addressed should be considered. These should be integrated into a theory of change or logic specific to the project concerned.

2. UNDERSTANDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

2.1. About violence against women

Violence against women is defined in the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women as any act of gender-based violence that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty whether occurring in public or private life (United Nations 1993).

Any coherent explanation for violence against women must take into account a number of key features of the phenomena of this violence itself. These common patterns have been discussed extensively elsewhere, and it is not the role of this paper to explore them in detail. In summary, key patterns of this particular type of violence that need to be taken into account are as follows:

- Violence, whether perpetrated against men or women, is overwhelmingly more likely to be perpetrated by men than women (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2013a). Intimate partner violence can be perpetrated by both men and women and both men and women can be its victims. However, intimate partner violence perpetrated by women against their male partners is significantly less common (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2013a). It is also less likely to be frequent, prolonged and extreme (Bagshaw et al. 2000; Belknap & Melton 2005; Holtzworth-Munroe 2005; Kimmel 2002) or involve co-occurring physical, sexual and emotional abuse (Swan et al. 2012; Caldwell & Swan 2012). Women are more likely than men to suffer negative consequences as a result of intimate partner violence, including anxiety and fear (Bagshaw et al. 2000; Caldwell & Swan 2012) and physical injuries, including injuries requiring medical treatment, time off from work and days in bed (Belknap & Melton 2005). Women are also more likely than men to be the victims of domestic homicide (Chan & Payne 2013).
- While most violence against men is perpetrated by a stranger, when women experience violence, their assailant is more likely to be a person known to them, and in a large proportion of cases this is a man who is an intimate partner (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2013a).
- Violence against women, in particular that occurring within relationships, is often repeated and perpetrated in a strategic manner with the intent of controlling, dominating and humiliating women (Stark 2009; Clark & Quadara 2010).
- When occurring in intimate relationships, physical, sexual and emotional forms of violence often co-occur and overlap. For some women, emotional forms of violence may occur alone or may be the predominant form of abuse, with physical and sexual violence occurring relatively infrequently (Wangmann 2011). This is in contrast to the nature of violence typically perpetrated against men which is more likely to be a single incident of physical violence and occur in a public place.

- While violence occurs across the social spectrum, as discussed further in section 4 rates of violence tend to be higher among groups experiencing other forms of social inequality, such as inequalities based on race and ethnicity, social class, disability and geographic location.

2.2. An overview of the key sources

Key national and international sources are introduced in 1.2 above and highlighted in bold in the reference list. They identify that:

- Gender inequality is a root cause, and is influenced by other forms of inequality.
- Multiple specific factors at different levels contribute to violence against women. (It is proposed in this paper that these factors can be grouped in four clusters)
- Three key mechanisms affect factors that contribute to violence against women.

These factors and mechanisms are discussed below and interrelationships shown in Figure 1.

2.2.1. Gender inequality is a root cause, and is itself influenced by other forms of inequality

While there remain some knowledge gaps, there is a large body of research that has explored factors associated with violence against women. This research suggests that violence is correlated with multiple factors and that these exist at multiple levels: in the life histories and characteristics of individuals, in families and relationships, organisations and communities, and at the broader societal level. Although the range of specific factors is discussed further below, most of the sources used for this review identify gender inequality as a root cause of violence against women, and point to specific manifestations or dimensions of this inequality as influential correlates. The sources also emphasise the importance of taking into account the impacts of other forms of social division and difference on both gender inequality and violence such as age, social class, race and ability.

2.2.2. Multiple specific factors at different levels contribute to violence against women

There is a consensus in the sources that a key means of understanding how the factors identified operate in society is to map them across the various levels of the socio-ecological model. This model, first developed to understand and respond to child development (Bronfenbrenner 1994), has subsequently been used to explain many complex social phenomena. It is based on the idea that the causes of such phenomena lie at multiple and interrelated levels of the social ecology. While these levels are conceptualised differently by different theorists, in the literature on violence against women three levels are commonly distinguished – individual and relationship, organisational and community, and societal. Certain factors, identified at each of these levels, are understood to increase the likelihood of violence against women. However it is important to note that this is a *probabilistic* rather than *deterministic* model (Heise 2012, p. 21). Not every individual whose circumstances involve these factors will become violent. Rather particular factors increase the probability of violence against women in a society, and this is increased further where multiple factors are present at multiple levels (Heise 2012, p. 21).

2.2.3. Four clusters of factors contribute to violence against women

Specific factors that are identified as contributing to violence against women can be understood as falling into four categories:

- factors associated with gender inequality
- factors associated with the practice *of violence against women* and responses to it
- factors associated with the practice of violence *in general* and responses to it
- factors challenging gender hierarchies, compounding gender inequalities or weakening non-violent and gender equitable social norms.

These are described in greater detail in section 3.

2.2.4. Three key mechanisms affect factors that contribute

An important feature of the ecological model is that factors at each of the levels are understood to be interrelated. For example, individual behaviours both influence and are influenced by factors at the organisational and community and societal levels. Three interrelated mechanisms can be distilled from the key sources as being influential at each of these layers including:

- **Social practices** – that is, individual and collective patterns of behaviour, including everyday interaction, sexual behaviour, child rearing practices such as the use of physical forms of discipline and gendered divisions of labour and patterns of decision-making in families, in organisations and at the societal level.
- **Social norms** – that is, rules of conduct and models of behaviour expected by a society or group. These are influential since the behaviour of individuals is influenced less by their own beliefs than by what they believe is expected of them or what they believe others would do in similar circumstances (Webster et al. 2014; VicHealth 2014a). Norms are transmitted through families, organisational and community cultures and through society-wide institutions such as the media. Social norms can be informal (such as a widely held expectation that childcare will be performed by women) or formal (such as a law stating that physical forms of violence are a crime). Social norms theory posits that certain behaviours (in this paper violence and disrespect of women) are more common when formal and informal sanctions against them are weak (Webster et al. 2014).

- **Social structures** – at the relationship, organisational and institutional levels. Social structures are patterned social arrangements in a given context. Like social norms, structures can be formal (such as legislation) or informal (such as the gender hierarchy in a family). Structures are both influenced by and influence human behaviour (Pease & Flood 2008).

Structures, norms and practices are understood to be internalised in individual psyches (Pease 2015) and in the form of attitudes, beliefs and behaviours of individuals. They influence both the perpetration of violence against women and its precursors as well as the ways in which we respond to violent or unequal or disrespectful behaviours in others.

By conceptualising the causes of violence as lying at a number of levels, the ecological model provides an accessible means of guiding policy makers and practitioners to think beyond the individuals affected by violence, to its broader organisational, community and societal level correlates, and to consider the implications of these for prevention efforts. In illustrating the multi-factor and multi-level nature of the problem, the ecological model also signals the importance of engaging players across sectors, as well as those working at all levels of the social ecology.

Figure 1. Understanding violence against women: an overview

Mutually reinforcing practices, norms and structures

A multi-level, multifactor approach

Root Causes

Gender inequality ← Other forms of inequality / difference

Social structures

Social norms

Social Practices

Societal — Community/ organisational — Individual/ relationship

Factors increasing the probability of VAW
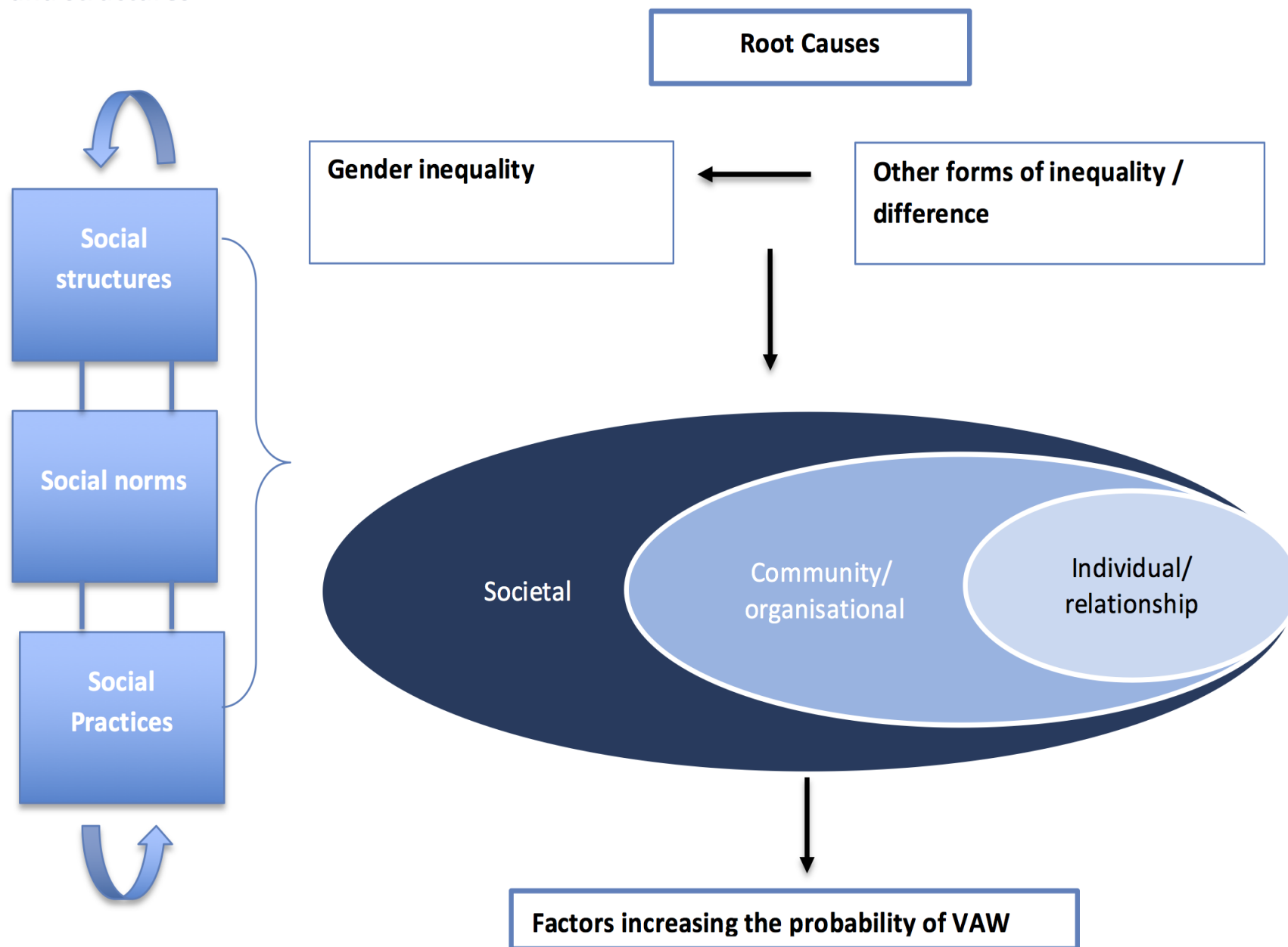
Draws on Heise et al 1999, Krug et al 2002; CDC 2004

FACTORS LIE AT MULTIPLE LEVELS
SOCIETAL: Macro level factors that influence the likelihood of violence. These include government policies and laws, deeply entrenched and widespread cultural belief systems or society-wide norms that discriminate against women and girls and/or condone, justify or even encourage the use of VAW, as well as socio-economic and political structure that support gender inequality.
COMMUNITY/ORGANISATIONAL: Factors related to the broader context of social relationships, including schools, workplaces and neighbourhoods. Such factors may include institutional policies and practices, and community norms and beliefs about the role of women and girls that condone or justify violence against them.
RELATIONSHIP: Factors related to close relationships (e.g. with peers, intimate partners and family members) that have been associated with an increased likelihood of victimisation or perpetration. Negative male peer groups, marital conflict, and male control of wealth and decision making in the family are examples of relationship-level factors often linked to a higher risk of intimate partner violence.
INDIVIDUAL: Factors related to an individual's personal history or profile that have been associated with a greater likelihood of them experiencing or perpetrating violence. For example, attitudes and beliefs that support/condone VAWG; or having a history of experiencing or witnessing violence.

FACTORS INCREASING THE PROBABILITY OF VAW
GENDER INEQUALITY is expressed in different ways, each of which may increase the risk of violence. Key ways are women's lack of autonomy and male dominance of decision-making in public and private life, rigid and harmful constructions of masculinity and femininity; stereotyped gender roles; and/or negative peer associations between men (e.g. highly masculinized peer cultures, peer cultures that promote sexual hostility toward women), adversarial perceptions of gender relations, weak associations; weak associations between women.
The probability of violence is higher when the influences of gender inequality interact with **FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PRACTICE VIOLENCE ITSELF**, including violence against women. These may include, violence being condoned, tolerated and or/positively portrayed, weak formal and informal sanctions against violence, or its use or acceptance as a means of resolving disputes. The probability of VAW is also higher in family, organisational, institutional and societal contexts where VAW and/or other forms of violence are perpetrated.
FACTORS COMPOUNDING THE INFLUENCES OF GENDER INEQUALITY AND VIOLENCE. These factors increase the probability of violence when they intersect or interact with the influences of gender inequality. In some contexts they co-exist with those perpetuating/reducing accountability for violence, increasing further the risk of violence. They may do this by amplifying the effects of gender inequalities, challenging existing gender hierarchies or undermining social-norms against violence and gender inequality. They include factors such as alcohol misuse, or economic down turn. There are also certain life-cycle stages and transitions at which there is a higher probability of violence (e.g. among young people, upon separation or divorce).

2.3 Root causes of violence against women

2.3.1 Gender inequality

A root cause is one that underlies and is responsible for initiating a problem. The root cause is not necessarily the only or even the main cause in every context. However it is typically a general, underlying condition or set of conditions that needs to be present for the problem to occur and is thus often referred to as a necessary condition. These general conditions are therefore an important consideration for a prevention agenda – along with other, more specific factors.

As indicated in section 2.1 above, a coherent understanding of violence against women needs to account for its gendered patterns. One explanation often suggested for the gendered dynamics of violence is the 'inherent' biological differences between women and men. This belief is manifest in popular culture and opinion, where male aggression is often attributed to men simply being 'wired differently', or justified as 'boys will be boys'. However if this were a sound explanation, there would be minimal variation in the prevalence of violence between and within societies. In practice, however, multi-country studies show marked variation between nations in the prevalence of violence against women, suggesting that social and cultural factors are in fact significant (Fleming et al. 2015; Fulu et al. 2013a; Garcia-Moreno et al. 2005).

In section 3.1 below the evidence on the link between gender inequality and violence against women is reviewed. It shows that numerous studies have found a correlation between various measures of gender inequality and violence against women. This includes a recent study using population-level data from 44 countries published in the prestigious medical journal *Lancet* (Heise & Kotsadam 2015). This, together with violence occurring across groups regardless of class, ethnicity, race or other forms of social division, supports the conceptualisation of gender inequality as an underlying or root cause of violence against women. This understanding underpins frameworks and strategies to address violence against women developed by a number of eminent international bodies, including the General Assembly of the United Nations, the World Health Organization and the World Bank (United Nations 2006; World Health Organization 2010; Arango et al. 2014).

Gender inequality is present in almost all human societies, with men generally having greater access to power, status and resources than women (World Economic Forum 2014). These inequalities are understood to be socially constructed, rather than the result of biological differences between the sexes (Gilmore 1990). This is suggested in research showing variation in gender roles and relationships between societies (Gilmore 1990). It is also evident in the ways gender roles, relationships and identities change over time and as one society comes into contact with another, for example through the processes of migration or colonisation (Elliston 2014; Gilmore 1990; Simister & Mehta 2010).

At the same time, however, some societies that are relatively gender equal, such as some of the Nordic countries, still have high rates of violence against women. This may be the result of increased disclosure of violence in surveys, as disclosing violence becomes less socially stigmatised in more gender equitable contexts (Nguyen 2014 cited in Pease 2015). However, it has also been suggested that it may be because gender inequalities are manifest in different ways and vary between

countries, but that significant gender inequalities persist in these countries and influence violence against women. For example, researchers have highlighted that efforts to achieve gender equality in Nordic countries have focused on women's role as workers and citizens through, for example, pay equity and the representation of women in political positions, with somewhat less effort placed on addressing inequalities in roles, responsibilities and power relations in the private sphere (Pease 2015). Further, until recently very little attention was given to the influence of the practice of violence against women *itself* as a key contributor to gender inequality in these countries (Pease 2015).

This analysis underscores that gender inequality is not a singular phenomenon, but needs to be understood as complex, and as manifesting in different ways, and varying between contexts, as discussed further in section 2.4 below.

The analysis above indicates that promoting gender equality is likely to be key to preventing violence against women. Referred to as the 'ameliorative hypothesis', this is well supported in both the research and practice literature as discussed further below. However, some studies also show that when women begin to gain autonomy and status in relationships or at the community or societal levels, violence against them may initially *increase* (Whaley et al. 2013). In the early literature this was thought to bring into question the pivotal role played by gender inequality in violence against women. However, more recent analysis suggests that this is likely to be due to men using violence in a bid to re-establish their authority and status. This is referred to in the literature as the 'backlash hypothesis'. As a consequence, both these patterns are now increasingly understood to have gender inequality as their underlying cause (Whaley et al. 2013). Backlash is understood as behaviour that needs to be anticipated, recognised and managed in prevention efforts.

2.3.2   Other forms of inequality and difference

Although gender divisions and gender inequalities are features of most human societies, gender is not the only basis on which roles are determined, power and resources distributed and identities formed. Other key influences contributing to inequalities and divisions between groups include, but are not limited to, colonialism, and discrimination on the basis of social class, ethnicity or race, sexuality and gender identity, ability and age.

The need to understand social inequalities as resulting from these multiple sources of oppression and discrimination has been increasingly recognised. The application of this approach to violence against women was first proposed by Crenshaw (1991) in seeking to understand differences in violence experienced by African American women. This approach enables diverse sources of oppression to be analysed as they 'intersect' with one another. These multiple and different forms of oppression operate together to create what intersectionality theorists describe as "unique and distinct" circumstances which are more powerful than the sum of their parts (Dhamoon 2011, p. 231; see also Rees 2015).

Gender inequalities are understood to be interwoven with structures shaping these other forms of social division (Connell & Pearse 2015). These forms of division influence violence against women in three key ways:

- They contribute to shaping the ways in which gender inequalities develop over time and in a particular group, organisation or context. For example, gender relations, structures and norms in contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander society have been shaped in part by cultures prevailing prior to European settlement and in part by the influences of

colonising powers (Atkinson & Woods 2008).

- They may influence the way particular aspects of gender inequality are manifest in the present. For example, constructions of masculinity among professional and white collar men differ from those among men in manual or labouring groups (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005).
- They may be associated with adversity such as poverty and unemployment which in turn shape the ways in which men and women in these groups experience gender relations (see section 3.3).

Some groups may be exposed to multiple and overlapping factors across the conceptual categories introduced above and outlined in greater detail in sections 3.3 and 3.4. For example, men from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds are more likely to experience adversities such as unemployment and poverty (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision, 2011) as well as to have been exposed to violence in the family, community and in institutional environments, in particular prisons (Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody 1991; Australian Human Rights Commission 2011). At the same time, different groups may also have factors that protect against violence such as a greater emphasis on collective responsibility.

Like gender inequalities, intersecting forms of oppression can be seen as root causes of violence against women in that, along with gender inequality, they are the fundamental conditions underlying variations in the prevalence, frequency and severity of violence experienced by particular groups of women and/or perpetrated by particular groups of men.

A further important insight offered by intersectional analysis is the notion that people can be both oppressed and privileged (Pease 2015). For example, men with disabilities are exposed to discrimination on the grounds of their disability, while at the same time holding certain privileges associated with being male in a gender unequal society. As noted in section 1.4.1 above, this does not excuse violence perpetrated by men experiencing intersecting forms of discrimination. However it suggests that strategies to prevent violence against women need to take this tension into account.

2.4 Operationalising gender inequality

Practitioners and researchers drawing on existing ecological models to understand violence against women have noted that it is challenging to determine from them the implications for prevention practice, in particular practice in specific settings (Pease 2015). They have also argued the need for gender inequality and its specific linkages to violence to be more clearly operationalised (Pease 2015; Wall 2014).

Distinguishing the different dimensions of gender inequality, and how they are associated with violence against women, is important, not only for understanding this violence, but for communicating clearly about its causes and for guiding prevention policy, programming and practice. In this section a schema for understanding the different dimensions of gender inequality is outlined. It is summarised in Table 1 below. The ways in which each dimension is linked to violence against women is discussed later in section 3.1 and illustrated in Figure 2 when specific correlates identified in the literature are explored.

2.4.1 The gender regime or gender order

A schema cited extensively in the literature is that developed by Connell and others who propose the 'gender regime' and the 'gender order' as ways of understanding gender as a structure of social

relations. A gender regime "describes the patterning of gender relations in an *institution*, and especially the continuing pattern, which provides the structural context of particular relationships and individual practices" (Connell 2005, p. 6). This is distinguished from the gender order which refers to the patterning of gender relations at the societal level. The gender regime of an institution (whether it be a football code, a school or a workplace) typically reflects the gender order, but may also vary from it in nature and/or the degree to which particular patterns are apparent.

Gender regime and gender order schemas are tools for thinking about gender. While they are rooted in theories explaining gender inequality, they do not on their own necessarily provide a comprehensive explanation for such inequality. For simplicity and clarity various researchers characterise gender regime and orders as comprising distinct domains (discussed further below). In practice each of these dimensions is understood to interact with and to reinforce one another, rather than to operate in isolation (Connell & Pearse 2015, p. 80).

Patterns of gender do not exist in a vacuum, but rather are shaped and change over time as the product of social, economic and environmental factors (Connell & Pearse 2015). For example, the global trend is toward improvements in gender equality with increasing development. However, gender relations have been slower to liberalise in East Asian countries compared with other countries with similar levels of development. This has been attributed to the fact that national policies in these countries, especially in the areas of employment and education, acted as countervailing forces by reinforcing gender divisions (Steel & Kabashima 2008). Similarly the relatively egalitarian gender relations in Nordic countries compared with those in the United Kingdom and Britain have been attributed to different national policies on wage earning and child care. In the Nordic countries, policies have been based on dual earning families and the notion that child care is a shared responsibility of the family and the state. In contrast in the United Kingdom and the United States, policies reflect the notion of a primary wage earner, with child care being the responsibility of the family and the market (Aboim 2010).

It is clearly important to maintain the distinction between the 'gender order' (societal level factors) and the 'gender regime' (community and organisational level factors) in a model to explain violence against women. However, the particular typology proposed by Connell (see below) is arguably a useful one for giving some order and meaning to the evidence arising from the literature on relationships between gender and violence and for identifying the particular aspects of gender unequal societies that are linked to violence against women.

2.4.2 Dimensions of gender regimes and gender orders and their relationship to violence against women

Connell proposes that gender relations can be considered in four dimensions. While examined in detail in a number of works (Connell 2009; Connell & Pearse 2015), these are summarised in the first two columns of Table 1, by drawing on Connell (2005). As is the case with the ecological model, gender regime and gender order schemas are probabilistic not deterministic.

The specific ways in which these dimensions manifest to increase the probability of violence against women in any particular context are discussed in greater detail in the following section, but are summarised in the third column of Table 1 by drawing on the key sources (highlighted in the reference list).

Table 1: Correlates of violence against women by dimensions of the gender order and gender regime

| Gender regime dimension	Description	Correlates of violence against women
Gender relations of power	The way in which control, authority, and force are exercised on gender lines, including organisational hierarchy, legal power, collective and individual violence.	Women's lack of autonomy and men's dominance of decision-making in public life as well as in families and relationships
Gender division of labour	The way in which production and consumption are arranged on gender lines, including the gendering of occupations, the division between paid work and domestic labour, etc.	Rigid adherence to stereotyped gender roles
Emotional and human relations	The way attachment and antagonism among people and groups are organised along gender lines, including feelings of solidarity, prejudice and disdain, sexual attraction and repulsion, etc.	a) negative peer relations between men b) weak attachments between women c) adversarial views of gender relations
Gender culture and symbolism	The way gender identities are defined in culture, the language and symbols of gender difference, and prevailing beliefs and attitudes about gender.	Rigid and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity

Summary and implications for prevention

- Gender regime and gender order schemas are useful for understanding violence against women and subsequently guiding policy and practice as they:

  - Enable the broad and multi-faceted phenomena of gender inequality to be broken down in ways that can help to aid understanding and assessment in particular policy and practice contexts.

  - Promote understanding of the range of ways in which gender inequality is manifest which is not limited to obvious indicators such as measures of distribution of power.

  - Recognise variability between gender orders from society to society and between organisational or institutional gender regimes, thus helping to explain why rates of violence may remain high in some contexts, despite positive performance on the more obvious dimensions of gender inequality.

  - Include both men (and masculinity) and women (and femininity) as well as the relationships between men and women (Connell 2005), all of which are implicated in the problem.

  - Enable intersectional influences to be integrated 'from the start', as opposed to being an 'add on'.

  - Provide a tool for thinking about historical influences contributing to violence against women, as well as contemporary factors. This is especially important for groups affected by histories of colonisation and migration, where the impacts of more than one 'gender order' and the interactions between the influences of different gender orders may be relevant (Patil 2013).

  - Provide an analytical frame that is relevant across levels of the social ecology which can be used to guide policy and program development at the national level, in larger institutions such as the media, as well as work with communities and organisations.

  - Originate from a credible source with an extensive academic track record in critical gender theory, research and practice.

- Both gender regimes and gender orders and other forms of inequality are affected by broader social and economic influences. In the next section, specific correlates arising from these are discussed. However, it is important to note that these factors and their impact on gender equality and violence, including their relative impact on particular groups are determined by macro-level economic and political policies, practices and structures, such as policies on taxation, industry or trade (True 2012; Weissman 2007). This makes assessing these macro-level policies, practices and structures for their impact on gender inequality and violence a legitimate area of concern and action for those seeking to prevent violence against women.

- In planning prevention activity there is a need to plan for and respond to the possibility of backlash – the possibility that violence may initially increase as women exercise greater power and autonomy. Backlash may also take the form of resistance to the establishment of prevention intervention itself.

3 CORRELATES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

As indicated in section 2.2.2, multiple factors have been identified through research as being correlated with violence against women. Drawing on the research and theory presented in key sources, these factors can be grouped into four categories, as summarised in Figure 2. Again, while these are described separately below, these are both interrelated and overlapping. The four categories are:

- Factors associated with gender inequality. This responds to the consensus in the literature that gender inequality is both a root cause or underlying condition of violence against women, and that common correlates of this violence arise from this underlying and broader inequality.
- Factors associated with the practice of violence against women. Factors within this cluster derive from gender inequality, and support the perpetration of violence as a learned or normative 'practice'.
- Factors associated with other forms of interpersonal and collective violence. These operate in interaction with the influences of gender inequality.
- Factors that compound gender inequalities in particular groups and contexts, challenge existing gender hierarchies or weaken social norms supporting non-violence and gender equality. These factors can help to explain changes in patterns of violence overtime as well as its distribution in a society.

Figure 2: Correlates of violence against women
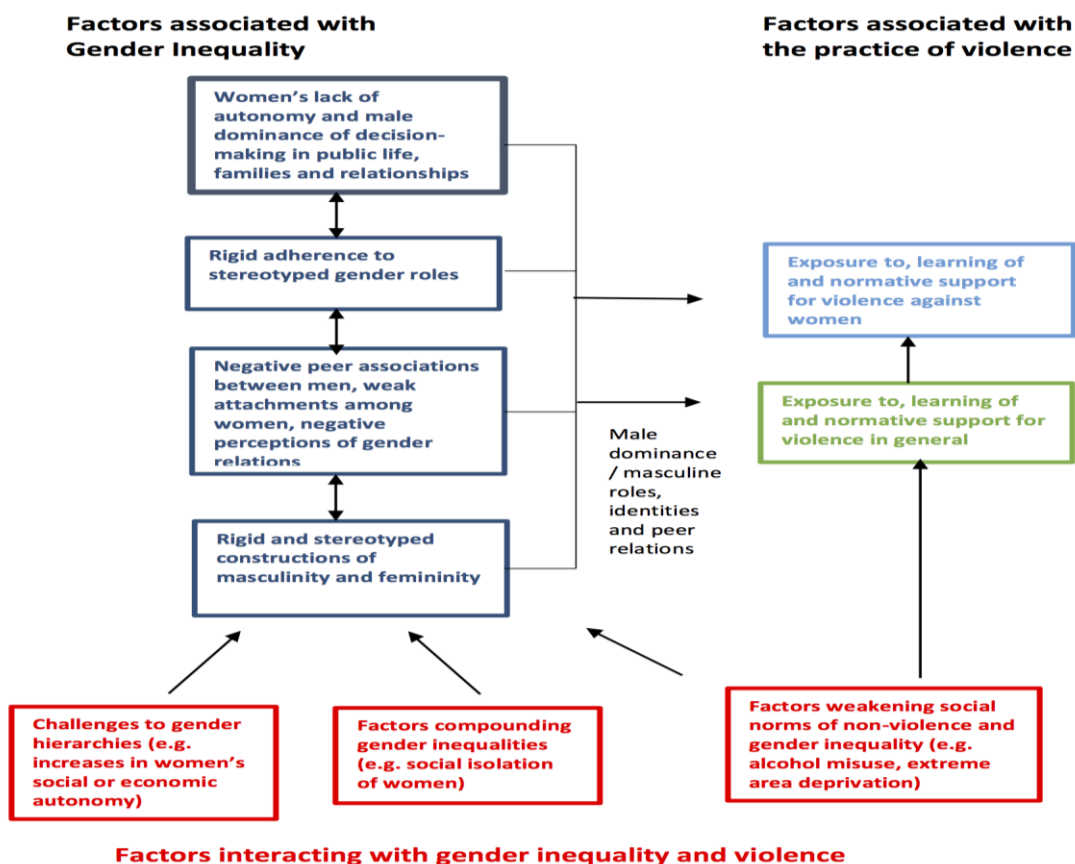
It is important to note that while each of the associations below are discussed individually, as if they were linear, in practice there is a complex interplay between factors and between factors at each of the ecological layers. So for example, a higher level of education has been found to reduce a woman's risk of violence. However, individual well-educated women may still have a high level of risk if they live in a community in which there is strong normative support for violence (for example, if many people in their community believe that violence against women is justified). Similarly, some factors operate in interaction with one another. For example, as discussed below, there is evidence that men exposed to child abuse may have a higher likelihood of perpetration of violence against women. One reason for this may be because this experience increases their likelihood of exposure to other precursors to violence against women, namely early delinquency, involving peer cultures that tolerate or even encourage such violence.

Each of these four clusters is now considered in turn, commencing with gender inequality.

3.1 Factors associated with gender inequality

Numerous specific factors arising from gender inequality have been found to be correlated with violence against women. While in practice these factors operate in interconnected ways, to enable these to be more clearly delineated for the purposes of policy, programming and practice, they have been grouped using the gender regime typology discussed above.

3.1.1 Gendered relations of power: women's lack of autonomy and men's dominance of decision-making in public life as well as in families and relationships

A key dimension of the gender order typology introduced above is the way in which power is distributed between men and women, both in public and in the private sphere of relationships and the family. In recent decades there have been substantial improvements in the status of women in countries like Australia. However, women continue to exercise less autonomy relative to men, while men have greater decision-making power in both the public and private spheres.

Since Federation in 1901, women have comprised only 11% of federal parliamentarians (McCann & Wilson 2014b). This proportion increased by nearly ten percentage points between 1997 (20.1%) and 2013 (29%), but subsequently declined (McCann & Wilson 2014). It remains just at the 30% threshold regarded by the United Nations as the minimum necessary for women to influence decision-making (McCann & Wilson 2014; Australian Bureau of Statistics 2015). Women's under representation in politics is reflected and reinforced in media representations. For example a study of top-rated movies across 11 countries found that men outnumbered women 9.6 to one as characters in positions of high office (Smith et al. 2014). It is also apparent in Australian community attitudes, with nearly three in ten Australians (27%) agreeing that 'men make better political leaders than women' (Webster et al. 2014, p. 64).

Similar patterns are also apparent in the workforce, where the representation of women declines with the increasing seniority of positions within organisations. Women comprise only 26.1% of key management personnel and only 17.3% of chief executive officer positions. Indeed one third of Australian employers have no women key management personnel (Australian Government Workplace Gender Equality Agency 2014). This disparity is yet greater in the top 200 publicly listed companies, in which men occupy 96.5% of CEO positions, are 88% of Board Directors and 89% of the executive managers (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2015). Since 2002, improvement in women's representation at any of these three levels has been marginal (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2015).

In the private sphere, studies show that family decision-making is also gendered. Men are more likely to exercise greater over all control and executive decision-making power, while women tend to be responsible for administrative decision-making such as managing household expenditure (Waseem 2004; Schneebaum & Mader 2013). A substantial proportion of Australians support this model with nearly one in five (19%) agreeing that 'men should take control in relationships and be the head of the household' and nearly three in ten (28%) agreeing that 'women prefer men to be in charge of the relationship' (Webster et al. 2014).

In contrast to women in many other countries (United Nations Women 2011), Australian women have largely secured autonomy at law. However, in practice autonomy may elude many women for substantial periods of their lives, a consequence of their primary role in caring for children, the ongoing gender pay gap and the substantial gap in men's and women's superannuation balances (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2015).

Table 2 shows that such conditions are linked with violence against women at each of the three ecological levels.

Table 2: The correlation between violence against women and gendered patterns of autonomy and decision-making

Ecological level	Correlates
Individual	• Men's controlling behaviours, especially in relationships (Garcia-Moreno et al. 2005; Clark & Quadara 2010) • Belief in unequal gender roles/weak support for gender equality (Webster et al. 2014) • Male dominance and control of wealth in relationships (Flood 2007)
Community/ organisational	• Low proportion of women with high level of autonomy (World Health Organization 2010) • Representation and participation of women in decision-making and civic society (Htun & Weldon 2012; Grey 2002; Jones 1997; Taylor-Robinson & Heath 2013)
Societal	• Traditional gender norms (World Health Organization 2010) • Low representation and participation of women in decision-making (Htun & Weldon 2012; Grey 2002; Jones 1997; Taylor-Robinson & Heath 2013)

There are at least four possible ways in which male dominance of decision-making and women's lack of autonomy may contribute to violence against women.

First, such inequality undermines women's participation in formal decision-making and civic action. When women do participate in these processes it is apparent that, collectively, they are more likely than men to act in the interests of securing women's freedom from violence (Htun & Weldon 2012; Grey 2002; Jones 1997; Taylor-Robinson & Heath 2013).

Second, women's lower status may serve a symbolic function, communicating to individual men (and women themselves) that women have a lower social value. Hence women may be seen (and indeed may see themselves) as less worthy of respectful treatment. For these reasons, violence may also be more readily accepted and legitimised in the wider community (Gilgun & McLeod 1999; Hill & Fischer 2001).

Third, such inequalities in power may make women economically dependent on men, such that men may believe they can perpetrate violence with impunity (European Commission 2010). Studies

exploring the barriers to women seeking safety from violence suggest that this dependency is a continuing barrier, especially for women with responsibility for children (Meyer 2012).

Fourth, when gender relations are based on a hierarchical model where men are in charge, and women play a subordinate role, violence may be used and accepted as a mechanism for maintaining this dynamic, especially when it is under threat. Violence against women has been found to be higher in a number of such scenarios, including when people migrate to countries with gender orders more liberal than those in their countries of origin (True 2012; Webster et al. 2014), when economic change or development gives women a greater role in society (Chon 2013; Jewkes 2002; Simister & Mehta 2010; Xie et al. 2012), or increases their economic power relative to men's, and in individual relationships when women have access to greater resources such as education, employment and income than their male partners (Atkinson et al. 2005; Flood 2007). However, in the latter scenario identities are also important as discussed in section 3.1.2 below. These are all examples of the backlash hypothesis introduced earlier.

Controlling behaviours have been found to be a consistent and strong correlate of intimate partner violence across time and context (Garcia-Moreno et al. 2005) and the desire to control women is a common motivation for sexual assault (Clark & Quadara 2010). Studies also show that people holding attitudes supporting a model for heterosexual relationships in which the man is 'in charge' are more likely to hold attitudes supportive of violence against women (Harris et al. 2015). Indeed in some 'sexual scripts' violence is seen as a normal part of heterosexual sexual and romantic relationships. These scripts are portrayed in popular culture as well as learned in peer groups and the family (Flood 2007).

3.1.2 Gendered division of labour: rigid adherence to stereotyped gender roles

The second dimension of the gender order typology introduced above is the gendered division of labour; that is the ways in which roles and responsibilities are distributed between men and women in both public life, especially work, and in relationships and the family.

The majority of Australian women are in the labour force, although women have a lower rate of participation in paid work than men (65.1% of women versus 78.3% of men) (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2015). However, there are stark gender differences in patterns of participation. These patterns reflect a traditional division of labour where domestic and caring roles in the home and community are seen to be primarily the responsibility of women, and wage earning in the public sphere primarily the domain of men. Women are substantially more likely than men to work only part time (43.8% of women versus only 14.6% of men) (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2015).

The gendered division of labour is apparent in occupations. Despite some improvement in recent decades (Rawstron 2012), men and women remain concentrated in particular occupations. For example women are 76% of clerical and administrative workers and 73% of community and personal service workers (Australian Government Workplace Gender Equality Agency 2014). However, they are only 11% of machinery operators and drivers and 12% of technicians and trades workers (Australian Government Workplace Gender Equality Agency 2014).

In the private sphere, as parents women spend nearly twice as many hours undertaking child care as men do (8.33 average hours per day for women versus 3.55 average hours per day for men). Compared with men, women are more likely to spend time caring for children on their own, to multi-task (that is to care for children while doing other household chores); and to undertake child care tasks involving hard physical labour that need to be completed 'on schedule' (such as bathing and feeding), as opposed to more pleasurable and creative activities (such as reading or playing with

children) (Craig 2006). These gender differences in childcare responsibilities are found even when women work full time (Craig 2006). Women are also more than twice as likely as men to be caring for someone with a disability (5.8% of women versus 2.6% of men) and are more likely to undertake voluntary work (33% of women versus 26.7% of men) (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2015).

These gendered patterns are reflected in popular culture with a global study of top-rated movies showing that women comprised only 22% of characters with paid work roles in the films (Smith et al. 2014), even though globally 39.8% of women are in paid work. Among the 11 countries in the study, the discrepancy between the actual percentage of women in paid work and the percentage of fictional working women was fourth highest in Australian cinematography. This gap was exceeded only by the United States, Russia and France. The same study found that men outnumbered women seven to one in film roles in the science, technology, engineering and maths fields (Smith et al. 2014), while males in roles as coaches, athletes or sports administrators outnumbered females by a massive 117 men for every five women (Smith et al. 2014).

Again, studies have found that support for a traditional gendered division of labour by individuals and at the community and societal levels is correlated with violence against women, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: The correlation between violence against women and stereotyped gender roles

Ecological level	Correlates
Individual	• Belief in rigid gender roles (Webster et al. 2014; European Commission 2010)
Community/ organisational	• Acceptance of traditional gender roles (World Health Organization 2010; European Commission 2010)
Societal	• Traditional gender norms (World Health Organization 2010; European Commission 2010)

Rigid gender roles may influence the perpetration of violence against women in a number of ways:

- Violence may be used to reinforce role divisions or 'punish' women when gender roles are breached, for example if the house is not kept tidy or the children are not well behaved. Studies show that violence commonly occurs in response to such expectations (Flood 2007) and that partner violence is more likely in communities with high levels of such justifications for violence against women (Antai 2011; Koenig et al. 2006; York 2011).
- Men who subscribe more rigidly to the dominant masculine gender role may be more likely to use violence when that role is under threat. For example, studies show that the likelihood of perpetrating intimate partner violence is at least partly influenced by the extent to which men identify with the 'breadwinner' role (Atkinson et al. 2005). Similarly, hyper-identification with the masculine role has been identified as a factor in the perpetration of sexual assault (Clark & Quadara 2010).
- Rigid gender roles contribute to gender segregation in the workforce, producing environments in which men predominate. This may, in turn, produce workplace cultures in which factors associated with an increased risk of violence are heightened. This is especially the case in environments where supposedly masculine characteristics, such as the ability to use physical force, are particularly valued, if not required to perform job roles, such as the military (Flood 2007).

- The gendered division between the public world of work and the private world of the home can serve to isolate women and make them dependent on men. This increases the probability that violence can be perpetrated against women with impunity. As discussed below (see section 3.3), women's social isolation is a specific risk factor for violence, while social support is a protective factor (Jeyaseelan et al. 2007; Stockl et al. 2011).

In addition to influencing the perpetration of violence, adherence to rigid gender roles also helps to maintain the unequal distribution of power between men and women. Implicated in violence, as discussed above. Occupations in which women predominate are generally less well remunerated and valued than those in which men predominate (Office of Fair and Safe Work Queensland 2004), and work in the public sphere (more often undertaken by men) is generally more highly valued than that in the private sphere (more likely to be undertaken by women) (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2015; 2008). This relationship illustrates the mutually reinforcing nature of the different dimensions of gender inequality.

3.1.3 Emotion and human relations: negative peer associations between men, weak attachments among women and adversarial views of gender relations

The third dimension of the gender order typology introduced above is patterns of emotional and symbolic attachments between and among men and women. The aspects of these relationships found to be particularly influential in violence against women are negative emotions held by men towards women and the nature of peer relations between men, as summarised in Table 4. Women's attachments play a further, although less significant, role.

Table 4: The correlation between violence against women and gendered peer attachments

Ecological level	Correlates
Individual	• Hostility toward women (Flood 2007; European Commission 2010) • Beliefs that gender relations are fundamentally adversarial (such as that women are out to exploit men) (European Commission 2010) • Negative peer associations among men (Flood 2007; European Commission 2010) • Weak peer attachments among women (Flood 2007; World Health Organization 2010; Heise 1998)
Community/ organisational	• Masculine peer and organisational cultures supportive of violence, disrespect or inequality (such as 'bro-culture', gangs, some sporting environments, male college fraternities, and workplaces such as the military (European Commission 2010; Flood 2007, Harris et al. 2015) • Norms privileging women's attachments to community or collective unity (United Nations 2006; Webster et al. 2014) • Limited collective activity among women (Flood 2007; Heise 1998)
Societal	NA

There are a number of processes through which attachment to male peers may increase the likelihood of violence. When men are encouraged to privilege their relationships with other men over those with women, this may result in men more readily excusing their peer's violent and disrespectful behaviour towards women (Powell 2010; European Commission 2010). Alternatively, they may be reluctant to take a stand against their peers' use of violence because they fear rejection (Carlson 2008). In some male peer contexts, men may be actively encouraged to perpetrate violence

against women (such as through forced sex) as part of proving their masculinity and being accepted by peers (Flood 2007). As a consequence, violence against and disrespect of women may become normalised in such contexts (Flood 2007).

The belief that gender roles are fundamentally adversarial may predispose some men to exert undue power in relationships to maintain the relationship gender order and for this to be justified by others. Hostility towards women, especially those who breach accepted roles (see above) or identities (such as women from some minority ethnic groups, sex workers), may mean that they are not perceived as people to whom a duty of care and respect is owed, or indeed there may be positive antagonism toward them (Quadra 2008). This may increase the probability of violence being perpetrated and contribute to the weak application of sanctions as a response to this violence such as by the police (Quadra 2008).

Women's attachments, both to each other, and to men, are also influential. Strong peer relations among women may offer sources of emotional and practical support that serve to build women's resistance to early signs of violence and strengthen their autonomy. Women who are socially isolated may also be perceived by men as individuals who can be assailed with impunity.

In some contexts women's attachments to men may be privileged over their right to safety or to solidarity with other women. Examples include societies in which the unity of the family is particularly valued (Webster et al. 2014; European Commission 2010) and women in minority ethnic groups experiencing discrimination and marginalisation. Women in these communities may be reluctant to acknowledge violence perpetrated by men in their communities because they fear it will contribute to community stigma and unfair treatment of men in their community (Webster et al. 2014).

3.1.4 Gender culture and symbolism: rigid and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity

A gender identity defines what it means to be a man or a woman in a particular society. Research shows that, like other aspects of the 'gender order' or 'gender regime', constructions of masculinity and femininity vary between contexts and over time. This means that there will be different forms of 'masculinity' or 'femininity' within a given society.   For example, as discussed above models of masculinity vary between professional and trade sub-cultures (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005). Nevertheless, experts in gender identity argue that most societies have an over-arching or dominant form of masculinity, sometimes referred to as 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005). This is seen as an ideal form of masculinity, even if not all men necessarily subscribe to it. Importantly this form of masculinity is positioned as superior to constructions of femininity (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005).   Although variable over time and context, dominant forms of masculinity tend to value characteristics such as strength, independence, confidence and aggression, while femininity is commonly associated with traits such as patience, sensitivity, passivity, dependence and moral purity (Brannon 2011, pp. 46-70). These constructions of masculinity and femininity are sustained through a range of social processes and sites (in particular the family and the media). Correlations are summarised in Table 5.

Table 5: The correlation between violence against women and constructions of masculinity and feminity

Ecological level	Correlates
Individual	• Belief in rigid gender identities (Flood 2007) • Belief in family honour linked to women's sexual purity (Heise 2011) • Masculine orientation/sense of entitlement (European Commission 2010; Fulu et al. 2013a) • Men's and women's media consumption patterns, including women's preferences for certain genres (Emmers-Sommer et al. 2006) and both men's and women's use of pornography (Flood 2007; Webster et al. 2014; Ramsay & Hoyt 2015)
Community/ organisational	• Masculine peer and organisational cultures (Flood 2007)
Societal	• Ideologies of male sexual entitlement (Flood 2007)

Constructions of masculinity and violence against women

Men are more likely than women to be victims of interpersonal violence and the perpetrators of violence are overwhelmingly male (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2013a). Masculine gender roles and identities have been identified as precursors to many forms of interpersonal and collective violence. For example, (Flood 2007) notes that:

- Men are more likely to perpetrate and have violence perpetrated against them in contexts where dominant constructions of masculinity emphasise aggressiveness, entitlement to power and emotional callousness.
- Violence is often used by men against men who do not conform to dominant constructs of masculinity such as gay men.
- Male on male public violence is often in response to contests over male honour.
- Violence is often perpetrated against men as part of their initiation into male peer groups such as college fraternities.
- Male aggression is socially legitimised and normalised in certain sports or may constitute the sport itself such as boxing.

Other writers have pointed to the causal relationships between constructions of masculinity and collective violence such as militarisation (Cockburn 2010) and institutional forms of violence such as prison violence (SpearIt 2011).

Just as they contribute to male on male violence, aspects of masculinity and masculine identity may also increase the probability of violence against women because they:

- contribute to gender hierarchies in which men's power over women is a core element
- involve a sense of entitlement, including entitlement to sex and to exercising their will in relationships
- contribute to the pressure to bond with other men
- valorise violence in general, and violence against women in particular
- involve characteristics such as callousness and insensitivity which serve as precursors to violence

- contribute to the perceptions that men are naturally more violent than women and are driven by uncontrollable sexual urges (Hlvaka 2014), which may lead to men justifying violent behaviour and to others being more inclined to excuse it (Flood 2007; European Commission 2010).

While it is proposed above that many forms of individual and collective violence have masculinity in common, this does not mean that violence against women can simply be seen as a subset of all forms of violence perpetrated by men. As indicated in section 2.1, men's violence towards women differs from male on male violence in key ways including:

- The victim and perpetrator are more likely to be known to one another.
- It is more likely to involve psychological, social and emotional forms and to involve repeated violence.
- It is more likely to be motivated by a desire to control and humiliate.

Further, at the individual level some men who are violent outside of their relationships do not perpetrate violence within them, while some are only violent in their intimate relationships with women (Mouzos & Makkai 2004).

This suggests that both male and female identities and the dynamics in the relationships between men and women need to be considered (as discussed above). It is also important to note that all forms of violence perpetrated by men cannot be reduced solely to constructions of masculinity or to gender relations since these generally operate in intersection with other social and economic conditions. For example, Cockburn (2010) in her work on the link between masculinity and militarism notes that the construction of gender relations is influential, but operates in intersection with broader economic and ethno-national relations.

Constructions of femininity and violence against women

Certain ways in which femininity is constructed may also lead to women being perceived as being deserving of violence or to sanctions against such violence being weak. Among these are:

- negative perceptions of women as inherently deceitful and unfaithful, and hence needing to be controlled, or deserving of violence and disrespect (European Commission 2010)
- the greater inclination to see women as naturally more passive and submissive
- objectified and sexualised identities which may potentially cast women as targets for hostility and exploitation (American Psychological Association 2010; Papadopoulos 2010). Turning a human being into a thing, it has been argued, is almost always the first step in justifying violence against that person (Kilbourne cited in Government of Western Australia 2012).
- ideas that women are 'morally pure' or the 'guardians of morality': women who transgress these identities have been found to be particularly vulnerable to violence (see above) and to attract less sympathy (Whatley 2005)
- when people identify strongly with identities of women as 'morally pure', their support and sympathy for women victims and censure of male perpetrators is conditional on women's behaviour conforming to this feminine ideal. For example, they may have sympathy for rape victims in general but are less likely to do so where the victim is affected by alcohol (Masser et al. 2010; Yamawaki et al. 2007). This is referred to in the literature as benevolent sexism.

The sexual objectification of women warrants particular comment. According to the American Psychological Association (2010, p. 1) sexualisation occurs when:

- a person's value comes only from his or her sexual appeal or behaviour, to the exclusion of other characteristics
- a person is held to a standard that equates physical attractiveness (narrowly defined) with being sexy
- a person is sexually objectified – that is, made into a thing for others' sexual use, rather than seen as a person with the capacity for independent action and decision-making
- sexuality is inappropriately imposed upon a person.

While both men and women can be sexually objectified, women are more likely to be so than men (American Psychological Association 2010). Indeed it has been argued that "that sexualisation is deeply gendered, and that its limited and reductive portrayals of women and girls reinforce gender as a social hierarchy" (Coy 2014, p. 2).

There are also substantial gender differences in patterns of consumption and impacts of sexually objectifying materials, most starkly illustrated in pornography. "Males are more likely than females to use pornography, to do so repeatedly, to use it for sexual excitement and masturbation, to initiate its use (rather than be introduced to it by an intimate partner), to view it alone and in same-sex groups, and to view more types of images" (Flood 2013, p. 1). Males are also more likely to be aroused by pornography and to have supportive attitudes towards it (Flood 2013). Men's violence against women is also likely to increase as a consequence of that exposure (see Table 5). The evidence suggests that men and women have comparable levels of arousal in response to pornographic material depicting mutually pleasurable and positive interaction (Glascock 2005). However, when exposed to violent and sexually explicit material, women are more likely than men exposed to the same content to feel a sense of greater powerlessness (Reid & Finchilescu 1995); to show negative emotional responses (Allen et al. 2007); lower levels of sexual arousal and higher levels of disgust (Koukounas & McCabe 1997; Paul & Kobach 2014).

Recent experimental studies demonstrate a link between the sexual objectification of women and indicators of violence against them:

- In a study of the influence of violent and sexist video games on attitudes towards violence against women, a video game depicting sexual objectification of women and violence against women resulted in an increase in acceptance of rape myths among male (but not female) participants (Beck et al. 2012).
- Men exposed to objectifying TV clips reported greater proclivity to engage in sexual coercion and manifested more gender-harassing behaviour than men who saw clips either showing women in professional roles or with women absent (Galdi et al. 2013).
- A United States study found that heterosexual men who objectify their female partners (assessed in terms of the extent to which they closely observed and judged their partners' bodies) also are more likely than other men to sexually pressure and coerce their partners. In turn, women who feel objectified by their male partners also are more likely than other women to report being sexually pressured or coerced by them, as well as more likely to objectify themselves and in turn to experience increased bodily shame and lowered sexual agency (Ramsey & Hoyt 2015).

The impacts of objectification and sexualisation on violence against women are likely to be significant especially in high income, liberal democracies such as Australia for six main reasons:

- Whereas once sexualised and objectifying imagery was confined largely to pornography, it has increasingly permeated other forms of popular culture, such as advertising, magazines, music videos, sports media, television, film and video games (Coy 2014; Squires et al. 2006).

This means that a wider audience is exposed to this imagery and this exposure is likely to be more frequent than was the case in the past.

- At the same time pornography itself has become more ubiquitous and more accessible (Mitchell et al. 2007; Ybarra et al. 2011). For example an Australian survey found that 44% of 9-16 year olds had seen obviously sexual images such as people who are naked or people having sex in the last 12 months, whether online or offline (Green et al. 2011, p. 28). Similar patterns have been found in other surveys and in other countries (Flood 2013).

- The advent of information communication technologies has increased the ways in which people access popular culture and has widened the potential audience for pornography, in particular increasing its accessibility to young people (Fleming et al. 2006; Flood 2013).

- People are more likely to be exposed to such imagery via both mainstream popular culture and pornography at a young age, often before their first sexual experiences, and this has implications for gender relations, in particular intimate relations, both in the present and later in the life course (American Psychological Association 2010).

- There are particular impacts on boys and men indicated by gendered patterns in the content and consumption of sexually explicit material, as well as responses to it (see above).

- Sexualised and objectified imagery often includes the portrayal and celebration of high levels of male aggression against women. Violence against women is commonly eroticised (Bridges et al. 2010; Klaassen & Peter 2015; Crabbe 2015; Tyler 2010) and portrayals of women's positive responses to aggression and degradation suggest not only that violence against women is normal and sexy, but that women *want and like* it (Bridges et al. 2010). As argued in the following section, it is the negative portrayal of negative gender norms *along with* norms supporting violence that provide a particularly potent environment for increasing the risk of the perpetration of violence against women.

Summary and implications for prevention

- Consistent correlations have been found between various aspects of gender inequality and violence against women including when:
  - women lack autonomy and decision-making is dominated by men
  - there is adherence to rigid and stereotyped gender roles
  - there are negative peer associations between men, connections between women are weak and gender relations are perceived in adversarial terms
  - there is rigid adherence to harmful constructions of masculinity and femininity.

- These correlations can be found at all levels of the social ecology.

- These aspects of gender inequality are important foci for the prevention of violence against women.

- Masculine roles and identities are key factors and suggest the need for a greater emphasis on men and the factors shaping men's behaviours, practices and norms. However women's roles and identities and the dynamics between men and women are also important to consider in prevention efforts.

- Addressing gender inequality and preventing violence against women are interlinked, complementary goals. An understanding of gender equality is necessary to enable the role of specific gender related factors to be identified and addressed in particular intervention contexts. At the same time it is necessary to address gender inequality more broadly, as continuing inequalities between men and women communicate a generally negative message about the

value and status of women that contradicts more specific prevention efforts. For example, a program seeking to address violence against women in a community-based football club may include group education sessions for young men to counter negative gender norms and violence and disrespect toward women. However, if women are under-represented in the club and its decision-making processes, this contradicts the messages of the program. In this example, efforts to promote women's equal participation in all levels of the club itself would reinforce the intent of the program.

3.2 Factors associated with the practice of violence against women

The second cluster of correlates identified in the literature are those associated with exposure to, and structures and norms responding to, the practice of violence against women itself. These are summarised in Table 6 below. In summary, this cluster shows that violence against women is correlated with:

- *exposure* to violence against women in the family, in peer relationships, in the community and organisations, and at the societal level (via institutions such as the media) as well as in the course of war and civil conflict
- the way key institutions and others *respond* to violence against women; for example whether peers support violence, or the strength of laws against violence.

Two possible and related explanations have been proposed for these associations:

- Violence against women is learned behaviour, often referred to as social learning theory.
- Violence is more likely to occur when social norms against it are weak, referred to as social norms theory.

A key question for prevent is whether normative support and/or social learning of violence against women as a practice are sufficient conditions for violence to occur. If they are, the practice of violence against women itself would be the focus of prevention (such as by strengthening laws relating to violence against women or strengthening social norms against it). There would be less need to address the gender related factors discussed in section 3.1 above.

Table 6: Correlations between structures, norms and practices pertaining to violence against women

Ecological level	Correlates with violence against women
Individual/ family	- Attitudes accepting or normalising violence against women, including rape myths (Heise 2011, Webster et al. 2014) - Exposure to intra-parental violence as a child (European Commission 2010; Fulu et al. 2013a) - Men's consumption of violent pornography (Malamuth et al. 2000, p. 53; Hald et al. 2010)
Community/ organisational	- Weak sanctions against violence against women (European Commission; Heise 2011) - Male peer cultures in which violence against women is normalised or accepted (Flood 2007) - Normative support and acceptance of violence against women (Heise 2011; European Commission 2010; Webster et al. 2014)

Ecological level	Correlates with violence against women
Societal	• Legislative impunity for violence against women (European Commission 2010; World Health Organization 2010) • Normative support and acceptance of violence against women (European Commission 2010; Fulu et al. 2013a; VicHealth 2014a; Webster et al. 2014) • Normalisation and acceptance of violence against women in media and popular culture (movies, television, video games) (Flood & Pease 2009; European Commission 2010)

3.2.1 Violence against women as a learned behaviour

Social learning theory is based on the position that violent behaviour is learned by observing the behaviour of others and the consequences of this behaviour in the form of rewards or the lack of punishment for negative behaviours (referred to as vicarious reinforcement). Observation may be via live modelling (such as witnessing parental violence in one's family), verbal instruction or in a symbolic form such as movies, television (Bandura 1971) or internet gaming.

The theory suggests that when people are exposed to models who demonstrate violent behaviour to achieve ends, they are likely to emulate such behaviour. Although the subject of some debate (see for example Freedman 2002), there is a strong body of evidence and expert opinion suggesting that violent behaviour is learned, particularly through the media (Anderson et al. 2003; Flood & Pease 2009) and the family (Orue et al. 2011). This learning has been found to apply to both physical and psychological forms of violence (Coyne et al. 2011). Further exposure to physical violence in the media has been found to increase the risk of both physical and psychological forms of aggression in relationships (Coyne et al. 2011). This is a significant finding on violence against women, since such violence is widely held both by experts (Stark 2009) and in the wider community (VicHealth 2014a) to comprise behaviours along a continuum from psychological, social, emotional and financial forms of abuse and control to physical violence and forced sex. Accordingly an explanation for violence must be able to account for forms of violence along this continuum.

However learning about violence against women as a practice does not take place in a vacuum. Rather, it occurs in a social context which is highly gendered. For example the gendered portrayal of men and women in the media is well documented (Gauntlett 2002; Lind 2004, Smith et al 2014). Representations of media violence typically involve men as perpetrators and male violence is more likely to be valorised. In contrast women are disproportionately represented as victims of violence and in passive or sexualised ways (see for example Dietz 1998; Dill & Thill 2007; Miller & Summers 2007), while female perpetrators of violence tend to be treated as aberrant (Brennan & Vandenberg 2009; Collins 2014). This suggests that learning of violence as a practice is most likely to take place in the context of learning about gender relations, gender identities and the relative rewards and costs of perpetrating violence for men as opposed to women.

Evidence from a review of the impacts of viewing pornography on aggression and attitudes supportive of violence against women suggests that learning about gender and learning about violence are both implicated. This review, which took into account the findings of many studies including both experimental and naturalistic research, showed that there is consistent and reliable evidence that exposure to or consumption of pornography, *violent or otherwise*, is related to male sexual aggression against women (Malamuth et al. 2000). However, this probability is higher in subjects exposed to *violent* pornography (Malamuth et al. 2000, p. 53; Hald et al. 2009). A number of studies have demonstrated that negative scripts about gender and gender relations, such as

objectifying women and masculine domination, are commonplace in contemporary pornography (Bridges et al. 2010). The association between viewing *non-violent* pornography and negative attitudes and behaviours suggests that these portrayals are influential as well as the portrayal of violence as a practice.

As discussed in section 3.4.1 there is also evidence of a gender difference in the way men and women respond to exposure to sexualised violence in the media.

Similarly in the family when children witness intra-parental violence, they are also learning about whom hits whom, in what context and why, as well as being exposed to the negative and heavily gendered dialogue that often accompanies violence against women such as justifications and put-downs (Humphreys et al. 2008). There is some evidence that this results in gendered patterns of response. That is, girls who have been subjected to child abuse or who have witnessed intra-parental violence, tend to have a higher probability of being victimised as adults, while boys as adults are more likely to perpetrate violence. This pattern was found in a study conducted in 2000 which took into account the findings of numerous previous studies (Stith et al. 2000). It has been confirmed in some subsequent studies (Millet et al. 2013; White & Chen 2002), but not in others (McCloskey & Lichter 2003; White & Widom 2003). Other studies indicate variable findings depending on the nature of the abuse experienced (Fang & Corso 2008).

3.2.2 Social norms and violence against women

A number of studies demonstrate the power of social norms to influence violent behaviour and the proclivity for violence, including violence against women (Powell 2011; Bohner et al. 2006; Brown & Messman-Moore 2009).

Social norms theory has also been used to explain high rates of violence against women in certain communities and contexts including:

- Communities affected by economic and social deprivation. This is thought to result in the breakdown of social cohesion and trust which works against the application of informal sanctions. In addition deprivation and chaos may lead to reduced investment in, or the breakdown of, systems responsible for maintaining formal sanctions against violence such as the police and judiciary. This is referred to in the literature as social disorganisation theory (Sampson & Groves 1989; Sampson & Wilson 1995).
- Communities in which traditional norms regulating violence have been undermined through processes of migration (Yoshihama 2009) or colonisation (Wundersitz 2010).
- Communities operating in the aftermath of natural and human disasters (Bolin et al. 1998; Dasgupta et al. 2010; Enarson & Meyreles 2004).

However, as is the case for social learning theory, the impacts of social norms on violence against women as a practice are most likely to exert an influence in intersection with norms about gender relations. This is indicated by the following:

- Both informal and formal social sanctions are themselves shaped by wider structures, norms and practices pertaining to gender relations (Flood & Pease 2009). For example, historically in Australia as in other high income societies, laws against violence against women have been weak relative to those against other forms of violence (see for example Scutt 1983; Douglas 2008) and this is currently the case in many countries (United Nations Women 2011).

- Situations in which there is a breakdown of sanctions against violence are also often accompanied by a breakdown of structures, practices and norms supporting gender equality (Bolin et al. 1998; Deasgupta et al. 2010; Enarson & Meyreles 2004). Given the relationship between gender inequality and violence against women, it is difficult to disentangle these impacts from the breakdown of violence related norms.
- A strong and consistent correlation has been found between attitudes towards gender relations and attitudes supportive of violence against women. Indeed in the National Community Attitudes Towards Violence Against Women Survey such attitudes were the second strongest influence on violence-supportive attitudes measured in the survey (VicHealth 2014a; Webster et al. 2014).

Summary and implications for prevention

- Social learning and social norms pertaining to violence against women are important mechanisms in understanding violence against women.

- However it is unlikely that learning and norms about gendered violence operate in isolation. Rather they need to be considered as they interact with gender norms, as shown in Figure 3 below.

- This means that activity to prevent violence against women is most likely to be successful when it addresses learning of, and normative support for violence against women, along with the norms, structures and practices supporting gender equality. Prevention efforts that focus on the practice of violence against women alone are likely to meet with limited success.

Figure 3: The relationship between gender inequality and violence against women
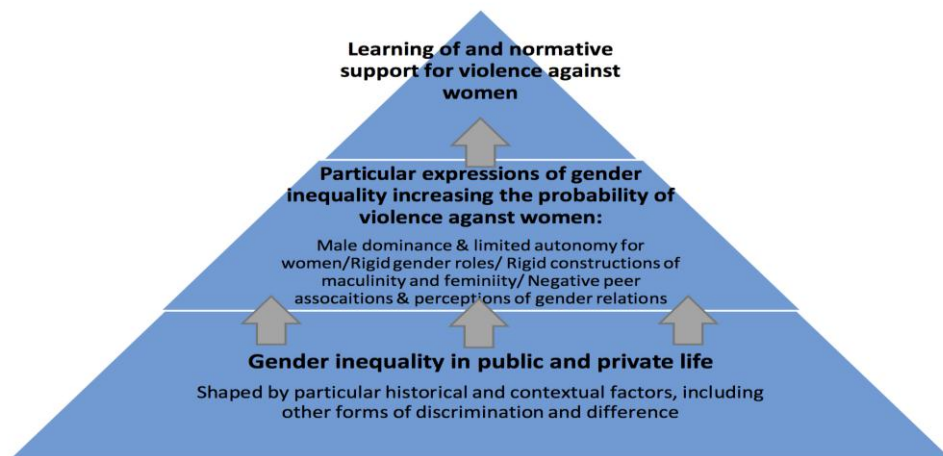
3.3 Factors associated with the practice of violence in general

A third cluster of correlates identified in the literature are those associated with other forms of violence, as identified in Table 7.

Table 7: Correlations between the practice of violence in general and violence against women

Ecological level	Correlates of violence against women
Individual/family	• Being subject to violence as a child (victimisation and perpetration) (World Health Organization 2010; European Commission 2010; Flood 2007; Fulu et al. 2013a; Fleming et al. 2015) • Perpetration of child physical abuse (European Commission 2010) • Acceptance of violence as a means of resolving personal disputes (Flood 2007) • Men's perpetration of public violence (Flood 2007) • Men's witnessing public violence (Flood 2007) • Men's exposure to civic/military violence and human rights abuses (Gupta et al. 2012) • Holding attitudes that are precursors to other forms of violence and abuse (such as racism, homophobia) (Aosved & Long 2006)
Community/ Organisational	• Working environments in which physical force may be required as a 'work practice', for example prisons and military (Cockburn 2010; Roberts 2004; Rosen et al. 2003) • High levels of institutional violence (such as in prisons) (Debowska et al. 2015) • High levels of public and intra-community violence in particular geographic and minority ethnic/racial communities (European Commission 2010; Heise 2011) • Peer engagement in violence, including through youth sub-cultures and 'gangs' (Flood 2007; Fulu et al. 2013a; European Commission 2010) • Communities affected by civil conflict or natural disasters (European Commission 2010; Sety et al. 2014)[1] • Use of harsh/corporal punishment of children (World Health Organization 2010)
Societal	• Legislative impunity for violence (Flood 2007; Heise 2011)[2] • Normalising representations of violence in the media and popular culture (Orue et al. 2011) • Natural disasters and civil conflict and war (United Nations 2002; Bolin et al. 1998; Dasgupta et al. 2010; Enarson & Meyreles 2004; Marsh et al. 2006, Stark & Ager 2011; Sety et al. 2014)

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1. There are methodological challenges in researching violence against women in these contexts. Study methodologies may not necessarily meet the standards of rigour applied to other factors.
2. Although proposed in theory there are no known studies systematically investigating the link between legislative sanctions against interpersonal violence in general and violence against women. However, Heise (2011) found a correlation between the level of partner violence and the State Fragility Index, a composite measure which includes among other things the functioning of the state and its governance.

The co-occurrence of these forms of violence and violence against women has led some researchers to suggest that exposure to one form of violence predisposes people to using other forms of violence. The propensity to emulate violent behaviour is understood to be cumulative across episodes of violence and types of violence (Orue et al. 2011). That is, the more violence to which a person is exposed the greater the likelihood they will perpetrate violence, while being exposed to one form of violence (such as child abuse) increases the probability of perpetrating other forms of violence (Orue et al. 2011). Continued exposure is thought to normalise violence and to predispose individuals to be implicitly favourable towards using violence, as opposed to other means of achieving desired ends or resolving conflict (such as verbal persuasion or mediation). There is also some evidence that this learning is transmitted across generations, contributing to an intergenerational cycle of violence (Wundersitz 2010).

It is difficult to assess the extent to which exposure to other forms of violence explains violence against women, since as discussed above, learning about violence occurs in a gendered social context. This makes it impossible to disentangle the influences of learning about violence as a practice from learning about gender roles and relationships. However, the learning of violence as a practice is unlikely to fully explain violence against women because it does not account for the gendered patterns of victimisation and perpetration. Moreover, while men exposed to or perpetrating other forms of violence are more likely to perpetrate violence against women, many do not. Likewise, many men who do use violence against women do not have a history of victimisation or of using violence in other contexts (Mouzos & Makkai 2004).

Another possible explanation for the co-occurrence of violence against women with other forms of violence is that they share the breakdown of social norms against violence as a common factor (see for example Browning 2002; Frye 2007). This, it has been argued, may particularly explain the increase in violence against women in circumstances when social norms are weakened, such as in times of war, disaster or extreme economic deprivation. As is the case with social learning theory, however, it is impossible to disentangle the impacts of the breakdown of social norms against violence per se, from the impacts of the breakdown of norms pertaining to gender equality. As indicated above there is good evidence that these norms operate in interaction with one another. Similarly, it does not explain why patterns of violence remain gendered in these circumstances.

A third possible explanation for the co-occurrence of violence against women and the practice of violence proposed in the literature is violence-related trauma. This explanation posits that when violence features in a person's life history, particularly when occurring in childhood, it induces a trauma response. This in turn impacts on development (in the case of children) and impairs skills that enable non-violent conflict resolution such as impulse control, empathy, anger management and problem-solving skills (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention 2014a; Moffitt & Klaus-Grawe 2012 Think Tank 2013). This may in turn lead to a greater likelihood of perpetrating violence against women.

The impact of trauma may also be manifest at the community level. For example as discussed further below, many experts have attributed high rates of violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to trauma resulting from violence inflicted against Indigenous people in Australia both historically (such as frontier violence and child removal) and in the present (such as high rates of incarceration) (see Wundersitz 2010).

However, the principal limitation of trauma as a sole explanation is that it is an explanation based on violence being part of the life histories of individuals. For this reason, it is limited in explaining the

range of normative and structural correlates in Tables 6 and 7 such as violence in the media, and weak legislative sanctions against violence. In addition:

- Many individuals who have experienced violence and who suffer resulting trauma do not perpetrate violence against women, while others without either in their personal histories do so (Holt et al. 2008).
- Trauma does not explain the gendered patterns of violence against women. As indicated above, patterns of violence in communities affected by collective trauma follow the gendered pattern apparent in the population as a whole.
- Responses to trauma may be gendered. There is evidence that boys are more likely to show more externalised problems such as hostility and aggression, while girls show more internalised problems such as depression and somatic complaints (Evans et al. 2008; Fang & Corso 2008; Holt et al. 2008).

There is also some evidence to suggest an alternative pathway between trauma and violence against women. This explanation proposes that such exposure may increase the risk of early delinquency, and consequently young men's early exposure to masculinised peer cultures (see Flood 2007). As discussed above, such cultures are associated with an increased risk of the perpetration of violence against women.

Summary and implications for prevention

- Although violence against women cannot be fully explained by exposure and responses to the practice of other forms of violence, these other forms are likely to be a factor. This means that it is probable that reducing these other forms of violence will contribute to reductions in violence against women. This is likely to be particularly the case for violence in childhood (both child abuse and intra-parental violence).
- The analysis above suggests that many of the factors leading to a weakening of social norms against violence against women (such as area deprivation) also apply to the weakening of norms against other forms of violence. This makes addressing these norms and the factors underpinning them common goals of those addressing violence against women and other forms of violence. It also suggests the importance of integrating efforts to promote gender inequality and violence against women into policies and programs to address other forms of violence and their underlying causes.
- However, the balance of the evidence suggests that violence against women is the product of the intersecting influences of practices and social norms about violence (in particular violence against women) and the influences of structures, norms and practices relating to gender roles and relationships and constructions of masculinity and femininity.

3.4 Factors challenging existing gender hierarchies, compounding gender inequalities or weakening positive social norms of non-violence and gender equality

The sources on which this paper draws identify a third group of factors that are correlated with violence against women (see Table 8). None of these factors can explain violence against women on their own for two main reasons:

- Violence occurs among people without these characteristics, whereas many people with these characteristics do not perpetrate violence against women. For example some men who perpetrate violence have poor mental health, but not all do. Likewise, many men who perpetrate violence do not have poor mental health.
- Many of these factors, such as poverty, affect both men and women. However, patterns of violence remain gendered.

There are three possible pathways or mechanisms that may help explain how the factors in Table 8 contribute to violence against women:
- Some factors may challenge existing gender hierarchies that are seen by many to be traditional or natural, consistent with the backlash hypothesis introduced in section 2.3.1.
- Some factors may compound the impacts of gender inequality, consistent with the ameliorative hypothesis.
- Other factors may undermine or compromise adherence to social norms against violence and gender inequality and disrespect (consistent with social norms theory introduced in section 2.2.4).

Table 8: Factors impacting on genders inequality, challenging gender hierarchies and compromising norms relating to gender and violence

Ecological level	Correlates
Individual/ relationship	- Men's unemployment - Poverty (European Commission 2010) - Low income - Lower levels of education (among men and women) (World Health Organization 2010) - Depression/low life satisfaction (among men and women) (World Health Organization 2010; Fulu et al. 2013a) - Harmful alcohol and drug use (European Commission 2010; World Health Organization 2010) - Disparity in educational levels in relationships (World Health Organization 2010) - Marital dissatisfaction and discord (especially gender role disputes) (World Health Organization 2010) - Relationship separation (Flood 2007; World Health Organization 2010) - Disability among women - Social isolation
Community/ organisational	- Weak social connections - Limited collective efficacy - Natural and environmental disasters - Rapid economic and social change - Norms, structures and practices leading to harmful use of alcohol
Societal	- Laws on divorce (World Health Organization 2010) - Support for family privacy and autonomy (World Health Organization 2010) - Norms, structures and practices leading to harmful use of alcohol

3.4.1 Challenges to existing gender hierarchies

Social learning theory suggests that people in sub-groups affected by social and economic deprivation are more likely to use violence because they are more likely to experience conditions that serve as 'tipping-points' for violence, such as relationship breakdown and unemployment. In such circumstances violence can be understood as a response to stress or as a means of securing, or resolving competition over, resources (Netshitangani 2014). This has led some researchers to propose similar explanations for violence against women (Smith & Weatherburn 2013; Weatherburn 2011). However, a problem with this as a sole explanation is that it fails to account for gendered patterns of violence in such contexts.

Further, recent research investigating the relationship between income at the macro-level, as measured by Gross Domestic Product, and violence against women, indicates that national income is influential, but largely because increasing Gross Domestic Product is associated with social transformations that result in liberalising gender relations (Heise & Kotsadam 2015). At the population level there is unlikely to be a direct causal relationship between economic deprivation and violence against women.

An alternative explanation is that such conditions challenge men's ability to fulfil socially expected gender roles or undermine their power or status in the family or community. For example, violence

may be used as a means of restoring men's authority, power or status when it is threatened in the context of unemployment, economic downturn and/or when women secure a more powerful role in the economy as a consequence of social and economic change (Chon 2013; Jewkes 2002; Simister and Mehta 2010; True 2012; Weissman 2007; Xie et al. 2012).

This possibility is also suggested in the correlation between intimate partner violence and relationships in which women hold a higher level of education than their male partners. However it is important to note other studies demonstrating that this risk is confined largely to men for whom the breadwinner role is integral to their identity (Flood 2007; European Commission 2010), suggesting that individual perceptions of gender roles and identities are also influential.

The notion that some men may be more inclined to use violence when existing gender hierarchies are under threat has also been advanced to explain the increased risk of violence during divorce or separation. This is a circumstance that may be experienced by some men as the ultimate threat to their power in or control over their family (DeKeseredy et al. 2004).

The association between violence against women and both marital dissatisfaction and marital discord or 'quarrelling' may indicate – consistent with social learning theory – that violence against women is used as a default response over non-violent means of achieving desired outcomes (see section 3.2.2). However it is not known whether quarrelling and dissatisfaction are a cause or a consequence of intimate partner violence (Flood 2007; European Commission 2010; Stith et al. 2008). Further there is some evidence that quarrelling often concerns issues of power, control and gender roles. This suggests that both violence and quarrelling may be a product of this common factor, rather than violence being a direct result of quarrelling (World Health Organization 2010). It has also been suggested that the probability of quarrelling resulting in violence is higher in relationships in which there is an existing asymmetry of power than in those in which power is more equally shared (Flood 2007 citing Heise 2006).

3.4.2 Factors compounding gender inequality

As indicated in Table 8, norms regarding the autonomy and privacy of the family have been found to be correlated with violence against women. Such norms can compete with those promoting women's right to autonomy and safety in certain contexts. For example, a barrier to securing effective action on violence against women in the international arena has been the privileging of family privacy in some countries (United Nations 2006, p. 36). It is important to note, however, that these norms do not in themselves cause violence against women – indeed some may actually help protect women. Rather they are of concern when they are used to justify and excuse violence and disrespect toward women or prevent women from seeking help (Mederos 2004). Laws making divorce difficult to obtain, meanwhile, may compound existing inequalities in relationships and reduce men's accountability for their use of violence.

Some of these factors may add to the impact of gender inequality on the perceived worth of some groups of women, such as women with disabilities, or the social and economic power they hold (Brownridge 2006). Women with limited resources may also be more vulnerable to violence because they lack the means to protect themselves such as money for taxi fares when needing to travel alone (Humphreys 2007). More positively, however, some of these factors can help to ameliorate the impacts of gender inequality. For example, education has been found to have a liberalising impact on gender relations among both men and women (Alwin et al. 1991; Alwin & Krosnick 1991) and this may in part in explain the higher rates of violence found among those with lower levels of education.

3.4.3 Factors weakening social norms against violence

Another possible explanation for how some of the factors in Table 8 above contribute to violence against women is that some of them may result in a weakening of social norms against violence or compromise adherence to them. For example, in communities with low levels of collective efficacy, there may be few formal controls on violence in general and violence against women in particular.

A weakening of social norms about violence and gender is also likely to feature in the correlation that has been found between violence against women and alcohol misuse. Partner violence has been found to be more prevalent among men who misuse alcohol (Foran & O'Leary 2008). The correlation between alcohol and violence against women is 'dose dependent' both at the individual level, meaning the more alcohol consumed the greater the likelihood and severity of violence (Bennet & Bland 2008; Graham et al. 2010; Abramsky et al. 2011; Avila-Burgos et al. 2009), and at the population level, meaning the greater the local availability of alcohol the higher the prevalence of violence against women in that area (Grubesic et al. 2013; McKinney et al 2009).

The pharmacological impacts of alcohol in disinhibiting usual social controls on behaviour have been identified as a factor in the link between alcohol and violence against women (Abbey 2011). However, the cultural context in which alcohol is consumed is also significant. There is an expectation in some cultures that alcohol will negatively impact on the ability to conform to expected norms of behaviour, evidenced by studies showing that behavioural changes occur at very low levels of alcohol consumption, at levels unlikely physiologically to influence behaviour (Pernanen 1991, cited in Bennet & Bland 2008). There is also evidence that some men make a conscious decision to drink to give themselves 'time out' to behave in ways they know are not socially acceptable (Bennet & Bland 2008; Rothman et al. 2011). Further most men who drink do not use violence against women (Mouzos & Makkai 2004).

In addition, factors associated with gender shape the ways in which people behave when intoxicated and the ways they perceive others who are intoxicated. Alcohol is sometimes consumed in drinking cultures that emphasise male conquest and aggression (Abbey 2008; Humphreys et al. 2005; Schwartz & DeKeseredy 2000). Men and women also tend to behave in ways that reflect their gender socialisation, with only a minority of women becoming aggressive when intoxicated (Taft & Toomey 2005).

Population-level research suggests that the type of outlets through which alcohol is dispensed is also a factor in whether alcohol availability is associated with an increase in violence against women. The density of restaurants and small bars has no impact, and a higher density of these outlets may even convey a 'protective' effect (Cunradi et al. 2012; Livingston 2010; McKinney et al. 2009). In contrast increases in the density of packaged liquor outlets have been found to be associated with increases in domestic violence reported to the police (Livingston 2011). This is further evidence that the social context in which alcohol is consumed is significant.

Together this literature suggests that alcohol must be understood in the context of its impacts on social norms related to gender, violence and alcohol itself. Addressing alcohol misuse alone will help to reduce the prevalence of violence against women but is unlikely to eradicate it altogether unless combined with strategies to address underlying cultural factors related to gender roles, violence and the expected effects of alcohol on behaviour.

Summary and implications for prevention

- Along with gender inequality and the practice of violence, there are a range of other factors that may increase the likelihood of violence against women occurring. However, they do not fully explain such violence, since many people affected by these factors do not perpetrate violence, while many who are not affected by them do use violence against women.

- These factors are best understood as interacting with the influences of gender inequality and the practice of violence to:
  - compound existing gender inequalities
  - challenge gender hierarchies
  - undermine social norms of non-violence and gender equality.

- There are existing policies and frameworks to address these issues. People concerned with preventing violence against women have an important common cause with those addressing these other factors. Since gender inequality and violence compound many of these problems, there are also good grounds for integrating efforts to promote gender inequality and reduce violence against women into these other policy frameworks. Likewise, the influence of these factors on gender inequality and the practice of violence needs to be taken into account in activity focusing specifically on the prevention of violence against women.

- Within a whole-of-population approach, there are likely to be benefits in targeting prevention efforts to:

- groups who are particularly affected by these factors (see section 4)

- particular contexts in which these factors are likely to prevail, such as areas experiencing locational deprivation or natural disasters

- particular social and individual transitions involving adjustments to gender relations, such as childhood and adolescence, separation, migration and economic restructuring.

4 THE DIFFERENTIAL IMPACT OF INFLUENCES ON DIFFERENT GROUPS

In section 2.4 the concepts of the gender regime and gender order as schemas for understanding gender inequality were introduced. Gender regimes may vary between groups as they are shaped by both longstanding historical factors as well as broader social and economic conditions, including other forms of inequality (sometimes referred to as intersecting forms of oppression or discrimination).

In addition, these forms of discrimination and inequality may influence the degree of exposure to other factors such as poverty, unemployment and neighbourhood disadvantage, increasing the probability of violence against women discussed in section 3.3 above. Figure 4 shows the ways in which intersecting forms of inequality influence violence against women.

Figure 4: The impact of intersecting forms of inequality and difference on violence against women
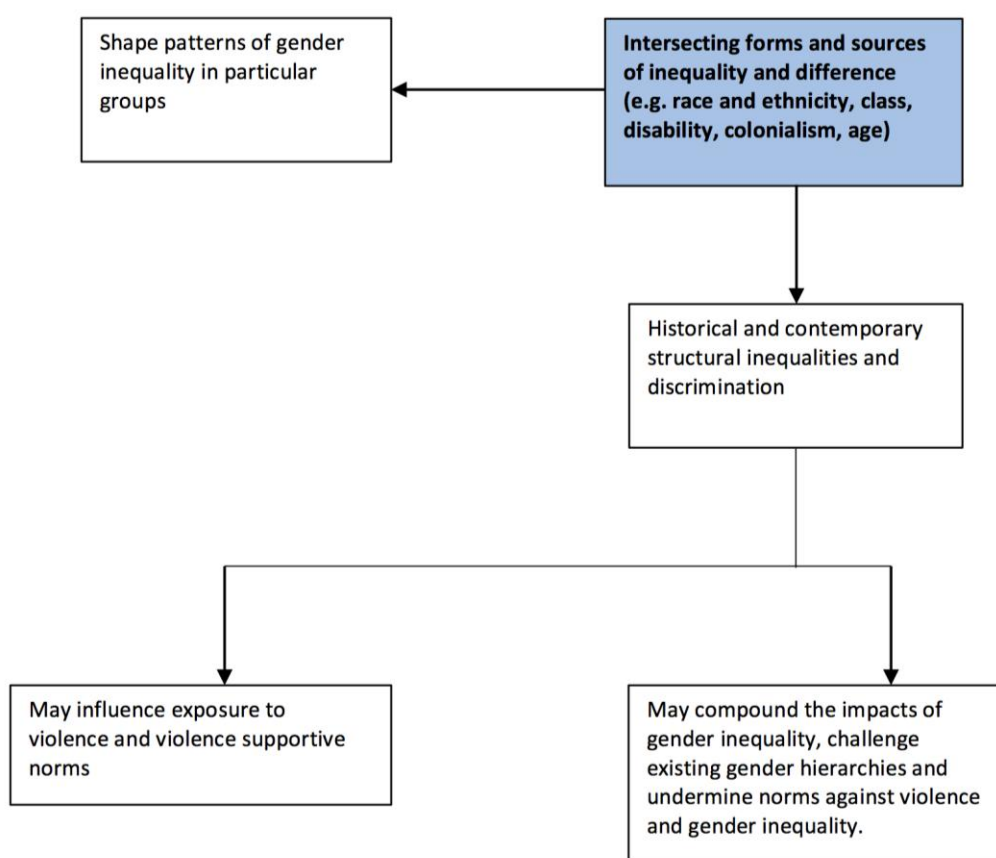
Four considerations are important in understanding patterns of violence in particular groups in the population:

- Patterns of violence within these groups reflect patterns in the general population in that men are most likely to perpetrate violence and women to be victims, indicating that gender inequality is similarly an underlying cause. However, as is the case for the community as a whole, no single factor can explain violence against women.

- While identifying patterns of violence among these groups themselves is important to guide action, many of the drivers of and contributors to violence do not lie with these groups but rather in the structures, norms and practices of the wider society. For example, a United States study shows that people are more likely to feel sympathy for a white victim of domestic violence than a black woman in the same circumstances (Esqueda & Harrison 2005). This tendency may lead to race-based differences in the application of informal social sanctions against women. A strategy to address this would need to reach the wider community, rather than 'targeting' racial minorities. Similarly, historical violence, a factor implicated in violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities (as discussed below), was imposed by European settlers, rather than originating within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities themselves.
- While elevated rates of violence in each of these groups are often due to the adverse consequences of discrimination, each group also has strengths that serve to protect against violence. An example of this is the greater emphasis on collective responsibility in some minority ethnic cultures and some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The challenge in prevention is to strengthen such protective factors as well as addressing those that increase the likelihood of violence.

This section discusses the following groups:
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- minority ethnic communities
- people with disabilities
- people in rural and remote areas
- people of different socio-economic status
- people at different ages and life cycle stages.

4.1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are located across Australia and there is significant diversity between them in geographic location, group and cultural identification, language and social and economic conditions (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2012). Research comparing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities shows that there is also variation on many indicators that are important in understanding violence against women (see for example McCausland & Vivian 2009). This needs to be considered in the following discussion, much of which may mask this diversity because it is based on studies involving samples of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population as a whole.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in Australia experience higher rates of non-partner sexual assault and intimate partner violence than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. This higher prevalence has also been found in many other indigenous communities around the world (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) et al. 2013). While definitive data is poor, it is estimated that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are around twice as likely to report being victims of violence as other women (Al-Yaman et al. 2006, p. 41) and 35 times more likely to be hospitalised for injuries inflicted by family violence related assaults (Al-Yaman et al. 2006, p. 71). They are between 2.5 and 3.7 times more likely to have been sexually assaulted according to police data (Taylor & Putt 2007, p. 2) and three times more likely to report this in population-level surveys (Mouzos & Makkai 2004, p. 30).

Eliminating violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women has been identified as a key concern of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders (Dodson 2003; Langton 2008) and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to achieve this goal is a priority in the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children (Council of Australian Governments 2010).

While data on violence experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is not directly comparable, there are some differences:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women are equally likely to experience physical violence, compared with the Australian population as a whole in which women are slightly less likely than men to experience violence.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are more likely than other people to know their assailant (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2013b).

However, beyond these differences, the gendered patterns in the relationship between perpetrator and victim evident in the Australian population as a whole are similar. That is, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women reporting violence are more likely than Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men to experience violence by a known person (94% of women reporting violence versus 77% of men), and are markedly more likely to identify the perpetrator as a current or previous partner (32% of women versus 2% of men) (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2013b).

It is important to note in considering this data that although much violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women is understood to be intra-community violence, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are also vulnerable to violence perpetrated by non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men (Cripps & Webster 2015; Carrington & Scott 2008, p. 648). There are no known studies asking Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men about their perpetration of violence.

There is some debate in the literature on the reasons for the higher rate of violence against women among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Some writers have claimed that violence in general and violence against women in particular was part of the culture practised by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities before European settlement (Jarrett 2013; Kimm 2004; Nowra 2007). Others have claimed that while violence occurred in pre-colonial times (as it did in other colonial societies of the era), it was strictly regulated and controlled (Atkinson & Woods 2008; Langton 2008; Lucashenko 1996; McGlade 2012).

However, key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander scholars and leaders are in agreement that violence has no place in contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander society and that elevated rates of such violence need to be understood in the context of historical and contemporary influences associated with the process of colonisation (Atkinson 1990; Atkinson & Woods 2008; Cripps & Adams 2014; Lucashenko 1996; McGlade 2003).

Following the arrival of European settlers, many Aboriginal people were forcibly removed from their lands. This was followed by a pattern of state intervention in and control of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family, social and economic life. Such control was manifest in numerous expressions of racism and discrimination, including a range of specific practices such as forced child removal, restriction of people's movements, withdrawal and management of income, and high rates of incarceration (Cripps & Adams 2014; Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody 1991). Some of these patterns continue to the present day, exemplified in the substantially higher rates of imprisonment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (Bartels 2010) and the high rates of interpersonal and systemic racism they experience (Ferdinand et al. 2013; Paradies et al. 2009).

These practices have contributed to the breakdown of cultural norms against violence and the social processes required to support and maintain those norms (Atkinson 1990; Langton 2008). For example norms and practices that had been passed through families and traditional sources of authority prior to European settlement, were disrupted both through the undermining of the authority of elders and the forced removal of children. The impacts of child removal are demonstrated in research showing that people affected by this practice are more likely to report being victims of violence (Cripps et al. 2009).

The consequences of this history are intergenerational, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people being more likely to experience contemporary disadvantage, in turn increasing their probability of exposure to the range of factors discussed in section 3.3 (Cripps & Adams 2014; Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody 1991). For similar reasons Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people also have a high probability of having been exposed to those forms of interpersonal and collective violence, identified in section 3.2 as increasing the risk of violence against women. Specific forms identified in studies include racially motivated violence (Ferdinand et al. 2013; Paradies et al. 2009), child-maltreatment in the family and institutional settings (Australian Human Rights Commission 2011), and violence in prisons (Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody 1991).

Research also shows that severe and entrenched oppression and racism can result in people internalising negative views about themselves and other members of their community, so that they may be more inclined to turn upon one another (Lipsky 1987; Pyke 2010). This form of violence, commonly referred to as 'lateral violence', has been identified as a significant issue by leaders in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities (Langton 2008; Australian Human Rights Commission 2011). Oppression and discrimination can also lead to people lowering their expectations of themselves and the ways they will be treated by others, in turn increasing their vulnerability to violence (Lipsky 1987; Pyke 2010).

The legacy of colonisation, along with contemporary racism and discrimination experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is such that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are reluctant or find it difficult to access the legal system. For example, the fear of having children removed and concerns about the treatment of men in the justice system have both been identified as barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women seeking the protection of the law (Nixon & Cripps 2014). The application of the law is one way of establishing social norms against violence. These barriers may mean that the police are less likely to be engaged and that the law is less likely to be applied among some groups. As well as compromising the safety of women and children, this works against opportunities for the law to work to reinforce non-violent social norms at the community level.

The factors above, although widely understood to be crucial to understanding violence affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, do not fully account for its gendered patterns, since many of these factors impact upon both men and women. For example Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women are equally likely to experience violence (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2013b) and disadvantage (Webster et al. 2014), while the proportion of the female prison population that is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander is higher than the proportion of the male prison population that is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Bartels 2010).

There is debate in the literature as to whether pre-settlement Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander society involved gender subordination, with some arguing that this was marked (Jarret 2013; Kimm 2004) and others maintaining that gender inequality in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander society

was comparable to other societies of the era (Atkinson & Woods 2008; Lucashenko 1996). Studies of the impact of colonisation across the globe show that it typically involves the imposition of gender relations evident in colonial societies on indigenous populations (Patil 2013) and this has been observed to be the case for Australian Indigenous communities (Atkinson & Woods 2013). This suggests that many of the gender related factors impinging on the community as a whole (discussed in section 3 above) are also likely to be relevant in understanding violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This is demonstrated in the National Community Attitudes Towards Violence Against Women Survey in which the attitudes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents to gender equality were very similar to those in the population as a whole. Similar to the whole sample, among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents a low level of attitudinal support for gender equality was the second strongest predictor of holding attitudes supportive of violence against women (Webster et al. 2014). The strongest predictor was the respondent's understanding of the nature of violence as comprising a continuum of behaviours designed to control and humiliate.

Some writers have argued that colonisation and subsequent oppression experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have had particularly significant implications for men, because they have undermined traditional masculine roles and identities, while denying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men meaningful sources of power and status in post-colonial society. Violence is seen by these writers as a means used by some men to reassert their status (Day et al. 2012). An alternative view is that colonisation had negative impacts for the roles and identities of both men and women, with women often experiencing the compounding impacts of both racism and sexism, the latter both within their own communities and in their interactions in the wider society (Davis 2007; McGlade 2012). Those holding this view argue that attributing men's violence against women solely to the impacts of colonialism risks making excuses for violence and places an unfair burden on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women (McGlade 2012).

As noted earlier, collectively held attitudes are understood to form social norms. In the National Community Attitudes Survey it was found that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men were more likely than Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to hold attitudes supportive of violence against women (Cripps & Webster 2015). When gender and disadvantage were taken into account, only disadvantaged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men were more likely than similarly disadvantaged non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men to hold such attitudes. There were no differences between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and other women regardless of their level of disadvantage, or between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and other men who were not classified as disadvantaged. This lends support for the notion that the elevated rates of violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities may be due to the intersecting influences of gender-related factors and to unique aspects of the historical and contemporary experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men.

4.2 Minority ethnic communities

A separate research and consultation process was led by AMES Australia on primary prevention of violence against women in culturally and linguistically diverse communities. This section draws on the key findings of this work (AMES Australia 2015).

Various measures of diversity, such as language proficiency, length of residence in Australia and ancestry have been used to understand the experiences of people born overseas, each with its strengths and limitations. In this paper the term non-main English speaking country is used when referring to data from the Personal Safety Survey and the National Community Attitudes Towards

Violence Against Women Survey because it is technically accurate. However, minority ethnic group is used when referring in a general sense to groups with an ethnic identity different from the dominant Anglo-Australian identity. This approach of avoiding the use of birthplace recognises that people from the same birthplace may have different ethnicities.

Australia is among the most diverse countries in the world, with almost half of all Australians being born overseas or having at least one parent born overseas (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2013c). Australians speak almost 400 different languages and identify with 270 ancestries, with 75% identifying ancestries other than Australian. While the majority of Australians identifying a religion are Christian, there are a growing number of people identifying with other faiths. For example, in NSW this includes Buddhism (2.4%), Islam (2.1%), Hinduism (1.28%) and Judaism (0.45%) (NSW Government 2013).

There is a consensus in the literature that once violence occurs, women from minority ethnic backgrounds face particular difficulties in securing safety from violence and as a consequence may be subject to more severe and prolonged violence (Kasturirangan et al. 2004). However, the picture is less clear. Earlier population-based studies indicated that the prevalence of violence against women was about the same for those born overseas as for those born in Australia (Mitchell 2011; Mouzos & Makkai 2004). However, the latest Personal Safety Survey found that women born overseas in a non-main English speaking country were less likely than those born in Australia to experience violence by a man (Webster et al. 2014). The extent to which this reflects actual prevalence is unknown since the survey did not have bilingual interviewing in all languages and for safety and privacy reasons interpreters could not be used (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2013a). There may also be cultural barriers to disclosure of violence in surveys (Mitchell 2011).

The data summarised above is based on an aggregate of all people born in a non-main English speaking country and hence does not illustrate variations between birthplace groups. Cross-country studies of the experience (Garcia-Moreno et al. 2005) and perpetration (Fulu et al. 2013a; Fleming et al. 2015) of violence against women show marked variability in the prevalence of violence against women between countries. For example, the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES), involving 10,490 participants in eight low- and middle-income countries, found rates of perpetration among men varied from 17.5% to 46% (Levtov et al. 2014, p. 482). In a study of women's experiences of violence involving over 24,000 women in ten countries, the proportion of women reporting physical or sexual violence by a partner in their lifetime varied between countries from 15% to 71% (Garcia-Moreno et al. 2005). It is likely that this variability is represented within the overseas-born population in Australia: some groups are likely to have a higher rate of violence than the overseas born as a whole and in others it is probable that the rate is lower. A number of Australian qualitative studies do suggest that violence against women may be a particular concern in some minority ethnic communities (Fisher 2009; Zannettino 2012).

Data from the National Community Attitudes Towards Violence Against Women Survey demonstrates that people from non-main English speaking countries are more likely than the Australian born to have a low level of support for gender equality and are more likely to hold attitudes supportive of violence against women, although support for gender equality increases and support for violence lessens the longer people live in Australia (VicHealth 2014a; Webster et al. 2014; Webster 2015). This does not mean that violence is inevitably more common in these communities, because attitudes are only one factor influencing violence. For similar reasons the lessening of violence-tolerant attitudes does not necessarily mean that the overall risk of violence is reduced. New arrivals to Australia may be exposed to other factors in the settlement environment

that increase their risk, such as the objectification and sexualisation of women in the media and popular culture, while the influence of protective country of origin norms may diminish. Indeed some international studies suggest that violence may actually increase in immigrant populations in settlement societies with increasing years of settlement, levels of acculturation and across generations (Garcia et al. 2005; Harris et al. 2005; Du Mont et al. 2012).

When determining factors involved in violence against women in minority ethnic communities it is necessary to consider environments encountered both in Australia as well as prior to their arrival (in countries of origin, or in the case of people from refugee backgrounds, countries of asylum). With an increasing trend toward migrants maintaining strong connections with their country of origin, often referred to as transnationalism (International Organization for Migration 2010), country of origin influences are likely to remain relevant among some current cohorts of arrivals.

The gender orders of origin countries of migrants and refugees to Australia have been shaped by a complex range of forces including deep rooted and long held cultural practices, histories of war and/or colonialism, and by various trajectories of economic development and globalisation (Webster 2015). Some of these countries perform relatively poorly on indices of women's equality and empowerment (United Nations DP 2013; World Economic Forum 2014), have higher proportions of the population rejecting gender equality (Wike et al. 2009) and have relatively poor policy and legislative infrastructure with which to strengthen the status of women (United Nations Women 2011). For these reasons gender orders vary widely between countries (see for example Aboim 2010; Brandt 2011; Steel & Kabashima 2008). On arrival, migrants and refugees are also exposed to the contemporary Australian gender order, which as discussed above, has a number of features that drive or contribute to violence against women.

As is the case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women (see above), women in some minority ethnic groups may be reluctant to report violence because they lack trust in authorities or fear that their partners may be badly treated by them (a fear that may be borne of negative experiences of police prior to arrival, with police in some countries being complicit in state persecution) (Kaplan & Webster 2003; Pittaway 2004). Women may also fear the impact of police involvement and stigma on already fragile communities. This may in turn increase women's vulnerability and, as discussed in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (see sections 4.1 above), reduce opportunities for the law to be applied to strengthen non-violent social norms.

Some groups may also have particular cultural norms that are associated with a higher risk of violence (Flood 2007; United Nations 2006). However the extent to which these can be seen to cause violence is the subject of some debate. Those working with minority ethnic communities have argued that particular cultural norms do not inevitably increase the risk of violence. Rather, they have the potential to do so when they are used as part of a 'script' for excusing or justifying violence (Mederos 2012). This is most likely to occur in a climate in which women's rights to equality, respect and safety are compromised.

Four particular groups may warrant particular attention in the prevention of violence against women: people in the early arrival period, new and emerging communities, groups affected by entrenched discrimination and exclusion, and female secondary migrants and their communities.

4.2.1   People in the early arrival period

While acculturation and settlement are regarded as life-long processes, the early settlement period is widely regarded as a period of stress for many people, as it is when they may have difficulties in

securing basic resources as well as facing adjustment to a new culture and way of life (Berry 1997). There are a number of benefits in focussing on and tailoring prevention efforts to new arrivals:

- For groups originating from countries with less egalitarian gender regimes there may be particular challenges in adjusting to more egalitarian gender and family relationships as women exercise new found freedoms in Australia. This may also be a time when people are introduced to new risks such as the sexualisation of women in Australian media. More positively, it is also a time when people may be open to making changes as they adapt to a new way of life. Supporting people as soon as possible after arrival can help to address or prevent problems.

- The period following arrival is a time when people may be particularly likely to be exposed to many of the factors known to increase the risk of violence occurring, as outlined in section 3.2 and 3.3 above.

- Recent arrivals are less likely than longstanding immigrants to be proficient in English, and so may not be reached by strategies designed for the population as a whole.

- People in recent arrival groups are on average considerably younger than longstanding immigrants (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2013c), and as indicated in section 4.6 below, there are particular benefits in reaching young people with prevention efforts.

- This approach is consistent with contemporary settlement policy which emphasises the importance of early intervention (Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs 2003).

4.2.2 New and emerging communities

Historically, Australia's migration program has tended to have relatively large waves of migrants from particular groups, and this remains a feature. However, in the last three decades there has also been increasing diversity in source countries in the Australian migration and humanitarian programs, with new arrivals originating from an increasingly large number of birthplaces.

New and emerging communities are relatively small communities that have undergone rapid growth between census years, and do not have an existing community in Australia (Jupp 2010). Not all new and emerging communities face settlement challenges. However they are more likely to do so. Further, approaches to supporting settlement that work well for large waves of immigration from particular countries have proven inadequate to meet the needs of new and emerging communities (Jupp 2010).

New and emerging communities may require a tailored approach as, compared to longstanding migrant groups, they are less likely to:

- have access to family and community support (social isolation is a risk for violence against women)

- be well established as communities (collective efficacy is important to protect against violence and many of its precursors, such as poverty).

New and emerging communities are more likely to:

- be from refugee backgrounds and therefore may have been exposed to many factors known to increase the risk of perpetrating, or being the victims of, violence in their countries of origin and asylum

- be from countries with low levels of gender equality and limited legislative protection against gender-based discrimination and violence against women, such as one of the 120 countries across the globe where rape in marriage remains legal (United Nations Women 2011)

- originate from countries undergoing rapid urbanisation and industrialisation, where women may gain increasing economic and social power and this may result in violence being used by some men as a means to reassert their authority over women (see section 2.3)

- lack proficiency in English and literacy in their first language

- be visibly identifiable as immigrants and subject to racism, discrimination and social and economic exclusion in Australia (Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia 2010; Jupp 2010)

- originate from countries with very different cultural norms for family and gender relations than those prevailing in Australia, with in particular, far greater emphasis on the sanctity and privacy of the family and/or on collective responsibility for community wellbeing (Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia 2010; Jupp 2010).

4.2.3 Groups affected by entrenched discrimination and exclusion

Over the long term many non-main English speaking country communities and individuals in them do as well, if not better than, the Australian born on key indicators such as employment and education (Community Relations Commission 2011). However, data suggests that in contrast to most longstanding migrant groups, some face continuing challenges to settlement. This is understood to be due to exposure to extended deprivation and oppression prior to arrival, inadequate or inappropriate settlement support and racism, discrimination and social exclusion in Australia (Dunn et al. 2004; Murdolo & Quiazon 2015; Poynting & Noble 2004; VicHealth 2014b). These factors may also impact at the community level, with evidence suggesting that communities affected by racism and exclusion may often adhere more strongly to country-of-origin cultural norms they held on arrival than compatriots back home. This may not always be adaptive, including for relationships between men and women (Yoshihama 2009).

4.2.4 Female secondary migrants and their communities

Women from non-main English speaking countries may enter Australia as a spouse of a skilled migrant, or be sponsored by a spouse already in Australia through the family stream of the migration program. People migrating in these circumstances are sometimes referred to as secondary migrants (Webb 2015). There is growing evidence that the experience of migration for female secondary migrants from non-main English speaking countries has particularly negative impacts for gender equality. This group may experience rapid downward social mobility and owing to difficulties in securing employment, reorient away from professional careers held prior to migration, and become re-immersed in domestic and caring responsibilities in the family (Webb 2015; Lee & Kim 2011). They may also experience retraining challenges since they are required to pay full fees for post-secondary education and training. These changes may have impacts for gender dynamics in families by reducing women's economic power and increasing their dependence and may increase social isolation. As indicated above, these are established risk factors for partner violence.

4.3 People with disabilities

Reviews of the international evidence show that women with disabilities face a higher risk of violence than other women (Healy 2013). However, there is very little Australian evidence on the prevalence of violence among women with a disability. A question was included in the Personal Safety Survey for the first time in 2012 to establish a person's disability status. While no statistically significant differences were found between women with a disability and other women in the experience of violence by a man in the last 12 months, women with disabilities were significantly more likely to have experienced violence over their lifetime (Webster et al. 2014). It is likely that women with certain types of disability were under-represented in the survey because privacy and safety considerations prevented interviews being undertaken among women requiring assistance with communication. Further the survey only includes women in private dwellings and hence excludes women living in residential facilities for people with disabilities.

Canadian research suggests that there is little to distinguish women with disabilities experiencing violence from other women subject to violence (other than their disability). However, partners who perpetrate violence against women with disabilities are more likely to engage in domineering and possessive behaviours and to demonstrate sexual jealousy than other men (Brownridge 2009, p. 254).

There are no known studies on the perpetration of violence against women by men with disabilities. However, the National Community Attitudes Towards Violence Against Women Survey showed that men with disabilities were more likely than men without disabilities to hold attitudes supportive of violence against women, and less likely to hold attitudes supportive of gender equality (Webster et al. 2014). This contrasted with the attitudes of women, among whom there were no differences between those with and without disabilities, except among women aged 65 years and over (Webster et al. 2014).

People with disabilities experience high levels of systemic and interpersonal discrimination on the basis of their disability and have been found to be more likely to be affected by social and economic marginalisation. For example, in Australia, people with disabilities are over-represented in disadvantaged areas and are more likely to have lower levels of education, to be on low incomes and to be unemployed (Bradbury et al. 2001). These are all factors identified in sections 3.2 and 3.3 above as being associated with a higher probability of both victimisation and perpetration of violence against women. People with disabilities are also more likely to be victims of other forms of community and institutional violence (Dillon 2010; World Health Organization 2011, p. 59; Khalifeh et al. 2013), again factors that are associated with a higher probability of violence against women.

The combined impacts of gender and disability discrimination may contribute to women with disabilities facing barriers to seeking safety from violence and to a lack of accountability for perpetrators in the criminal justice system. This may in turn increase women's vulnerability and, as discussed in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and minority ethnic communities (see sections 4.1 and 4.2 above), reduce opportunities for the law to be applied to strengthen non-violent social norms.

The higher rates of violence-supportive attitudes among men with disabilities suggests that gender-related factors are also likely to be relevant, in particular the possibility that economic marginalisation compromises men's capacity to fulfil socially constructed expectations for masculinity.

People with disabilities may be infantilised and perceived as asexual or incapable of forming intimate relationships (Healey 2013). This has led to the neglect of people with disabilities in the delivery of health and human relations education and campaigns to provide information about and address gender-based violence (Frawley & Bigby 2014).

4.4 People in rural and remote areas

There is evidence that women in rural and remote areas face particular barriers to seeking safety from violence once it has started (Neame & Heenan 2004; Rees 2015) and experience more severe violence than women in urban areas (Peek-Asa et al. 2011). While there are no definitive data, the balance of the evidence suggests that violence may be more prevalent in some rural and remote areas. It is important to note that there is considerable diversity among rural and remote areas in Australia, and this needs to be taken into account in considering the following (Rees 2015).

In the 2012 Personal Safety Survey no differences in the prevalence of violence against women in the last 12 months by remoteness of residence were found. However, women living in inner regional, outer regional and remote areas were more likely to have experienced violence since the age of 15 than those living in major cities (Webster et al 2014). Since the survey did not ask women where they were living at the time of the violence, some caution needs to be exercised in concluding that violence is more likely in these areas. However, administrative datasets such as police reports and hospitals admissions data do indicate that violence against women is more likely to be reported in rural and remote areas (Carrington & Hogg 2007; Grech & Burgess 2011). Data on violence in general shows that this is higher among both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in rural and remote areas. This suggests the higher rates are unlikely to be explained by the larger proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in rural and regional areas alone (Carrington & Scott 2008).

Many of the factors discussed in sections 3.1 to 3.3 above may have a particular impact in rural and regional areas, including:

- a greater inclination toward political and social conservatism in some rural areas, a trend which may extend to norms and practices regarding gender relations (Neame & Heenan 2004; Pease 2010)
- rural restructuring and its particular impacts on male unemployment and identity (Carrington & Hogg 2007; Carrington & Scott 2008)
- the density and interconnectedness of social networks in rural areas which can increase the tendency to preserve family privacy and unity (Carrington & Scott 2008; Neame & Heenan 2004; Pease 2010)
- lower rates of participation in tertiary education and exposure to its liberalising influences (Carrington & Scott 2008, p. 643).

However it is noteworthy that the National Community Attitudes Towards Violence Against Women Survey found few differences in attitudes toward gender inequality and violence against women on the basis of area remoteness and this did not emerge as a strong predictor of attitudes (Webster et al. 2014).

4.5 People of different socio-economic status

As is the case with women in rural and remote areas, women of lower socio-economic status suffer more extreme and prolonged violence (Evans 2005) and greater barriers to seeking protection

(Nixon & Humphreys 2010; Sokoloff & DuPont 2005). However the evidence regarding whether they are more likely to experience violence in the first place is less clear.

A number of indicators of socio-economic status have been used in studies on the perpetration of violence against women and attitudes towards this violence, including income, occupation, educational attainment and location. Some studies using these measures in countries comparable to Australia find that the prevalence of violence varies by socio-economic status (Aaltonnen et al. 2012; Benson et al. 2003; Fox & Benson 2006; Humphreys 2007; Nixon & Humphreys 2010; Rees 2015; Sabina 2013), while others do not (European Commission 2010; Kiss et al. 2012; VanderEnde et al. 2012). Where a difference has been found, it tends to be modest (Buzawa & Buzawa 2013; Jewkes 2012; Jewkes et al. 2012).

There is consensus in the international sources on which this paper draws that higher rates of violence are associated with extreme poverty and disadvantage, particularly at the area level (European Commission 2010). Some Australian administrative datasets also suggest a higher prevalence of violence against women in areas experiencing locational disadvantage (Grech & Burgess 2011; People 2005). However, as indicated in section 1.3, caution needs to be exercised in interpreting the meaning of this data given evidence that people in disadvantaged areas are *more* likely to report violence to, and come into contact with, the police.

In the National Community Attitudes Towards Violence Against Women Survey, there were minor differences on the basis of the various measures of socio-economic status, but these tended to be sporadic across survey measures and measures of socio-economic status (Webster et al 2014). When the results from various survey questions were combined to create an index, people in disadvantaged areas and without post-secondary education were marginally less likely to support gender equality and marginally more likely to hold attitudes tolerant of violence (Webster et al. 2014). However when socio-economic status measures were combined with other measures of disadvantage such as such as disability, being a sole parent, living in a remote area, a more substantial difference was found, again supporting the pattern that the probability of violence is higher when deprivation is more extreme and/or results from multiple dimensions of discrimination, disadvantage and inequality.

People of lower socio-economic status may be more likely to be exposed to factors discussed in section 3 for the following reasons:

- People in disadvantaged circumstances may be exposed to higher rates of other forms of violence and violent crime.
- Men may face more challenges in meeting masculine role expectations, such as poverty or unemployment, and have fewer other resources to reinforce traditional symbolic structures of male dominance (Kiss et al. 2012).
- Constructions of feminine identities are negatively affected by the dual influences of both class and gender-based prejudices and may render women vulnerable to violence and sanctions against such violence being weak. For example, research shows that working class women are often portrayed as bad mothers, who are vulgar, crass, and excessively sexual (Pini & Previte 2013, p. 358).
- Higher levels of normative support for the use of interpersonal violence have been found among people of lower socio-economic status (Markowitz 2003).
- Deprivation at the neighbourhood level is associated with increased social isolation and reduced collective efficacy.

- People of lower socio-economic status are less likely to have been exposed to the liberalising impact of tertiary education on gender relations (Alwin et al. 1991; Alwin & Krosnick 1991).

4.6 People at different ages and life cycle stages

4.6.1 Childhood and adolescence as key life cycle stages for prevention

Experiences in childhood and adolescence are understood to have a particular influence, one which may impact health and wellbeing later into the life course (Flood & Fergus 2008). Childhood and adolescence are stages during which gender roles and identities are being formed (Flood & Fergus 2008). Adolescence is a key time for establishing sexual identities and intimate relationships (Flood & Fergus 2008).

4.6.2 Adolescence and young adulthood as key life cycle stages for perpetration and victimisation

Adolescence and young adulthood stages are also times of vulnerability to violence in the family, including child physical and sexual abuse and witnessing intra-parental violence. Such exposure increases the risk of perpetration (for men) and victimisation (for women) as an adult (see section 3.2 above). However most children so exposed do not become victims or perpetrators as adults.

Although violence against women occurs across the life cycle, it is particularly prevalent among women in their reproductive years (15-44 years). Young women are at a particularly high risk. In the 2012 Personal Safety Survey, 13% of women in this age group reported having experienced violence by a man in the last 12 months and this was the highest proportion of any age group (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Women's experience of physical or sexual violence by a man in the previous 12 months by age, 2012
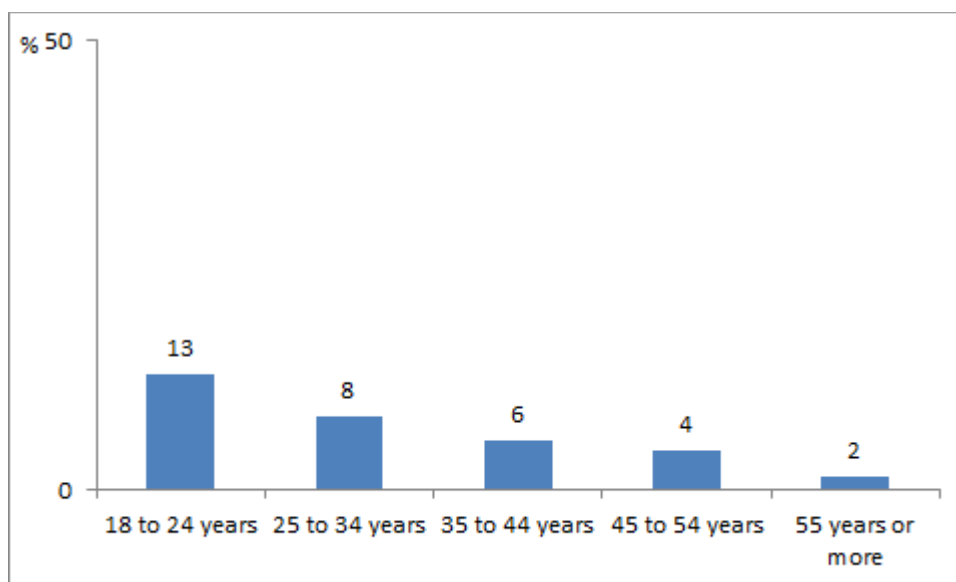
Data source: Personal Safety Survey, Table 7, Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013a).

The limited data available on the perpetration of violence suggests that age may also be a factor in perpetration. For example, a study involving interviews with over 10,000 men in Asia and Pacific countries found that among respondents who disclosed having perpetrated sexual assault, half did so for the first time before reaching 20 years of age (Fulu et al. 2013a).

Three recent Australian surveys have explored the attitudes of young people (Cale & Breckenridge 2015; Harris et al. 2015; Hall and Partners 2015). They suggest that while there are some strengths among young Australians, there are also areas of concern. The National Community Attitudes Towards Violence Against Women Survey found that compared with their parent's generation young people tended to be less likely to have a good understanding of violence against women and more likely to hold attitudes tolerant of violence against women (Harris et al. 2015). Age was the second strongest demographic predictor of attitudes tolerant of violence against women in the population as a whole (Webster et al. 2014).

In the survey people were also asked about their attitudes to various aspects of gender equality. Young people (those aged 16-24 years) were equally likely to hold attitudes supportive of gender equality in the public sphere in education, employment and political life as people in their parent's generation (those aged 35-64 years). However, they were *less* likely to support equality between men and women in relationships (Harris et al. 2015).

Young people's responses to violence are subject to the same influences as those in other age groups and hence many of the factors discussed above are relevant. However these may have a particular influence on young people as:

- They are at a life stage when their identity (in particular gender identity) and values are being formed (Brannon 2011).
- In contrast to older people, the contemporary context is the only world known to young people, who have less prior life experience to call upon (Harris et al. 2015).
- Many of the factors discussed in section 3 pertain to consumption and leisure practices, especially through the media and sport. These have particularly strong impact on young people given they are at an age with the highest levels of consumption of media and engagement in leisure practices (Connolly et al. 2010).

Research shows that Australian young people are well-disposed toward the achievements of feminism and to issues of equality, human rights and justice and this is likely to be a strength in working with young people to address violence against women (Harris et al. 2015).

However, there are also particular factors associated with the contemporary context in which young people live their lives that may have a negative influence on their behaviours and attitudes in relation to violence against women (Harris et al. 2015) including:

- The rise of new media and sexualised and objectified imagery of women discussed in section 3.1.4 has meant that many more young people are exposed to sexually explicit and often violent imagery at a younger age than in the past.
- A contemporary social climate in which many of the battles of the women's movement are perceived to have been won (Bulbeck 2008, 2009; Jonsson & Flanagan 2000) and in which women are seen to be as powerful as men (Bulbeck 2008, 2009; Rich 2005) may reduce the likelihood of young people understanding violence in terms of power differences between men and women, and especially their capacity or willingness to see women as 'victims'. It may also create challenges for young men as they deal with shifts in gender roles and gendered power (Keith 2013; Phipps & Young 2014; Robinson 2005).

4.6.3   Preventing violence against older women

Although older women are less likely to experience violence, it is important that prevention is tailored to this group as:

- Older women may be in relationships and social environments in which 'traditional' or conservative norms about violence and gender relations prevail (Webster et al. 2014).
- As in other areas of life the experiences and problems of older women risk being rendered invisible (Hightower & Smith 2001).
- The current cohort of older women may have a relatively high degree of economic dependence on male partners and this may increase their vulnerability to violence and their prospects of seeking safety.

Summary and implications for prevention

- There are particular opportunities to prevent violence against women among children and young people and benefits in doing so.
- Violence against women is prevalent across the population and many of the factors that influence its occurrence at the population level affect us all, including people in different groups within the population. These need to be the primary focus of prevention.
- However the factors contributing to violence against women and gender inequality are not distributed evenly across the population. As a consequence, violence against women is more prevalent in some groups, among whom the impact of gender inequality is also greater. This is not because these groups are inherently more violent or necessarily lacking in commitment to gender equality, but rather because they are more likely to be exposed to factors undermining gender equality and linked to violence, including violence against women. These groups include:
  - people living in areas affected by social and economic deprivation
  - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
  - people in some minority ethnic groups
  - people in rural and remote areas.
- More intensive effort is required for these groups to avoid increasing further the gaps between groups in relation to both gender equality and the prevalence of violence.
- Work to prevent violence against women in particular groups needs to understand and respond to intersecting factors that influence particular patterns of violence. Consistent with the ecological approach, this needs to involve work with the groups themselves, but also address broader community and societal level factors responsible for the elevated risk, such as the impact of racism on responses to women, or limited systemic capacity to maintain social norms against violence in areas affected by economic deprivation.
- Prevention strategies need to be tailored to particular groups such as by taking account of particular cultural norms or particular expressions of masculinity or femininity, or by communicating in multi-lingual formats.
- It is also important to ensure that approaches designed for the population as a whole reach and are relevant to these groups.
- Tailored efforts are also required to ensure that violence prevention strategies reach older women.
- Efforts to reduce violence against women are more likely to be successful when the root causes of social inequality are addressed. This makes these issues a common cause of those seeking to prevent violence against women and those seeking to reduce other forms of inequality.
- While men in many of the groups considered in this section occupy a position of privilege and power as men in a gender unequal society, they are also members of

oppressed minorities. As indicated in section 1.4.1, the resulting adversity does not excuse men's violence. However when devising strategies to address violence against women and strengthen perpetrator accountability, it is important to ensure that these do not entrench other forms of inequality. This is in the interests of protecting men's human rights, as well as preventing violence against women. For example, evidence from the United States suggests that attempts to strengthen legal sanctions against violence against women have contributed to high rates of incarceration of men in certain groups (a general pattern that many have argued is in itself a collective human rights violation) (Crenshaw 2012). In prisons men may be exposed to further systemic and interpersonal violence and other influences entrenching negative aspects of masculinity (SpearIt 2011), both of which are known risks for the perpetration of violence against women. In addition to increasing the likelihood of perpetration upon release, this may fundamentally alter norms toward gender and violence in the communities concerned (Roberts 2004). This is because imprisonment tends to be concentrated in particular geographic areas and among minority ethnic and racial groups (Roberts 2004). An approach designed with the intention of preventing violence against women may have the unintended consequence of compounding the problem if it does not account for intersectional influences. In the example cited above, this may involve considering a range of ways of achieving accountability, in addition to imprisonment (see for example Centre for Innovative Justice 2014), addressing the intersecting influences of poverty and social exclusion on gender relations and identifying prison environments as targets for delivering multi-level approaches to promoting gender equality (in particular addressing harmful aspects of masculinity) and preventing violence, including violence against women.

5   LESSONS FROM OTHER AREAS OF PREVENTION

Although many countries across the world have invested substantial effort in developing responses to violence against women after it has occurred, population-level prevention is a relatively new area of activity, and the literature on the conditions required to support this form of prevention is not extensive.

Potentially useful evidence is available from other areas of prevention. In the last 50 years major reductions have been achieved in death, illness and injury associated with tobacco use and with road traffic accidents (World Bank 2009; MacKay et al. 2015; World Health Organization 2013a). Different health, social and human rights issues have different causes, and so the specific programs required to prevent them on the ground vary greatly. Social and political dynamics and associated barriers and enablers also vary depending on the issue being addressed. Nevertheless, experience in addressing tobacco use and traffic-related death and injury suggests that there are a number of common elements in the success of prevention efforts in both these areas.

This section draws on evidence from these other areas of population-level prevention to identify key lessons and approaches likely to be relevant in the prevention of violence against women.

5.1   Moving the focus beyond the individual – a comprehensive, multi-level approach

In both tobacco control and road safety the focus of prevention effort was broadened beyond individuals affected by the problem (such as tobacco users and crash victims) to the contribution made by organisations, communities and wider institutions and their shared responsibility for addressing the problems concerned. In road safety, greater emphasis was placed on working with car manufacturers to improve vehicle safety and with road builders to reduce safety hazards (World Health Organization 2004b; World Bank 2009).

This multi-level approach was also based on the understanding that actions undertaken at one level reinforced actions at another. In tobacco control, creating smoke-free environments in public spaces such as schools and restaurants had the effect of reinforcing individual smoking cessation programs, both by reducing opportunities to smoke and shifting social norms regarding the acceptability of smoking (United States Department of Health and Human Services 2010).

5.2   An evidence informed approach

In road safety and tobacco control prevention, effort was informed by an understanding of the specific factors contributing to the problem, or protecting against it (World Health Organization 2004a; 2004b). Addressing these factors has been the focus of prevention. Likewise, specific strategies adopted were based on the evidence of what works. The objectives of prevention were clearly stated and strategies consciously selected on the basis of their likely impact and their potential for synergistic effects.

In the early stages of movements to address these other key health and social issues, population-level prevention was an emerging modality and there was very little practice or evidence to draw upon. Accordingly, initial practice was firstly built from evidence of the prevalence and patterns of the problems, as well as theories about their causes. Interventions were then trialed and evaluated, enabling an evidence base for future practice to be built iteratively, and subsequently 'scaled' to a wider range of practice environments. Such an approach recognises the high human, social and

economic costs of inaction. It also reflects the reality that generating evidence for practice ultimately depends on first building a practice base to evaluate. This does not mean that practice simply proceeds on the basis of 'trial and error'. Rather it is informed by evidence from available evaluations along with theory and evidence on the causes of the problem concerned. This approach is dependent upon a strong research and evaluation capacity.

5.3   A multi-sector approach

Relevant sectors and settings were consciously identified. Investment was made in mechanisms to coordinate activities across these sectors and to build partnerships between key organisations. This was based on the understanding that, as is the case with violence against women, contributing factors existed across multiple sectors and settings in society.

Since prevention required input from a range of sectors and disciplines it was important to reach a shared understanding of the problem to enable coordinated action and consistent messaging. A shared understanding also ensured a united approach to threats to the success of prevention efforts, which in tobacco control was the practices of the tobacco industry (World Health Organization 2004a). Engagement of a wide range of players has also been identified as a factor in the sustainability of prevention efforts in both areas.

5.4 A multi-strategy approach

A multi-strategy approach was adopted, recognising that because these problems could not be reduced to a single cause, multiple contributing factors would need to be addressed (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention 2014b; World Bank 2009). While specific strategies vary, broadly they include:

- legislative and regulatory reform
- community mobilisation to engage communities in shifting practices and norms
- communications and social marketing to shift social norms and practices
- organisational development to change policies, structures and cultures
- education of key workforces to enable them to build prevention into their job roles
- development of the skills of individuals to engage in prevention such as driving skills and smoking cessation programs
- advocacy to ensure that attention is given to the problem and that barriers to addressing it are addressed.

Experience in both areas indicates that strategies are most likely to be successful when they are combined, and implemented together to produce synergistic effects (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention 2014b; World Bank 2009).

5.5 Surveillance and monitoring

Systems were designed to collect data on the magnitude, scope, characteristics and consequences of the problem (World Health Organization 2004a; 2004b). Such surveillance facilitates prevention effort by strengthening understanding of the problem. Since surveillance systems provide information on the distribution of a problem across a population, they are an important aid to targeting and tailoring prevention efforts to relevant populations and to ensure equity (see further discussion below). Such systems also enable progress to be monitored. This ensures that prevention

effort is appropriately prioritised, emerging issues identified and quickly attended to and adjustments made where necessary.

In both cases, it was recognised that achieving ultimate goals was a long term proposition and that, intermediate goals were also needed. Intermediate goals are the conditions it is believed necessary to achieve in order to meet long term goals. For example, increasing the proportion of journeys in which seat belts are worn by a given percentage is an intermediate target for achieving the long term goal of reducing road traffic deaths. Intermediate targets are generally the focus of monitoring (World Bank 2009).

5.6 Prioritising effort to maximise results and ensure equity

The premise of population-level prevention is that optimal results are achieved by addressing causal factors affecting the population as whole. Such an approach has proven to be very successful in both tobacco control and road safety. Notwithstanding the proven benefits in a population approach, early experience, particularly in the area of tobacco control, showed that efforts targeted to the general population tended to be more successful among groups within the population who are better resourced (Amos et al. 2011). This is for two main reasons:

- People in these populations were more likely to be reached by efforts designed for majority groups because such programs are more likely to be accessible and relevant to them.

- Adopting behavioural change is more readily achieved by people who are relatively well resourced (Solar & Irwin 2010). This is because they are in a better position to prioritise it, have better options available to them, and face fewer adversities and pressures in their day-to-day environments that may work against such change.

- As a consequence, there were concerns that public health successes, while improving overall population health, were indeed widening inequalities between groups within the population (the gap between those with good and poor health). Importantly, failing to adequately reach significant groups within the population was a barrier to overall success.

Accordingly, in recent years increasing emphasis in both road safety and tobacco control has been placed on prioritising effort to strengthen the prospects of more equal outcomes across the population (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention 2014b).

5.7 Capacity building – comprehensive, sustained and accountable prevention effort

It was recognised that prevention was likely to require a long term effort, involving perseverance, commitment and a high level of leadership and political will, as well as specific financial and human resources and careful monitoring of progress (World Health Organization 2004a; 2004b). The Centres for Disease Control (2014) in its summary of the evidence on tobacco control suggests that successful prevention is dependent on effort that is:

- comprehensive
- sustained
- accountable.

In both areas, capacity building involved relevant levels of government (national, state and local), the private sector, and civic society. While capacity building needs to be sensitive to particular local contexts (World Health Organization 2004a; 2004b), key elements included:

- detailed assessment, data collection and analysis to determine an appropriate mix and intensity of strategies

- overall plans to guide prevention at the national and jurisdictional levels, which typically included the setting of specific goals and targets, the allocation of responsibilities and identification of means of ensuring accountability
- multi-sector coordinating mechanisms, wherever possible integrated into existing bodies to ensure sustainability
- cross-sector partnerships to enable implementation of strategies requiring multi-sector input
- initial and ongoing awareness raising and other strategies to build a critical mass of public support and shift attitudes in favour of prevention
- building enlightened political leadership
- building civic society support for and engagement in prevention
- media partnerships to promote support for prevention and ensure robust responses to threats to its implementation, such as industry or community backlash
- workforce development and training and institutional capacity building including investment in positions with specific responsibility for coordinating effort and training of personnel in planning, establishing, monitoring and evaluating prevention. This was achieved through developing institutions to support these aspects of prevention, or vesting these functions in existing organisations
- systems for monitoring and evaluating effort, sharing lessons learned and promoting the 'scaling up' of effective approaches.

6   SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS TO PREVENT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The prevention of violence against women is a relatively new area of policy, practice and programming. As a consequence, high quality impact evaluations are relatively rare. Nevertheless there is a strong body of promising and emerging practice.

Consistent with the experience in other areas of population-level prevention, overall the evidence suggests that interventions are most likely to be successful when they combine multiple strategies and target more than one level of the community or organisational ecology (Fulu et al. 2013b; 2014). For example, whole-of-school interventions are more effective than implementing a single strategy such as a group education program. Similarly, media campaigns are more likely to be successful when combined with group training and efforts to develop leadership.

The most successful interventions are those that seek to transform gender relations rather than simply changing attitudes and behaviours (Fulu et al. 2013b; 2014). Gender transformative approaches "encourage critical awareness of gender roles and norms. They include ways to change harmful to more equitable gender norms in order to foster more equitable power relationships between women and men, and between women and others in the community. They promote women's rights and dignity; challenge unfair and unequal distribution of resources and allocation of duties between men and women; and consider specific needs of women and men" (World Health Organization 2013a).

There is emerging evidence that interventions involving both men and women (whether in mixed-sex or single-sex groups) are more effective than interventions engaging only men or only women (Fulu et al. 2013b; 2014). As well as having better prospects for change this can help to avoid the backlash from men that may otherwise occur.

Specific interventions identified in the sources are described in Table 9 below, along with an assessment of their effectiveness.

Interventions are considered:

- *effective* – if they have been shown to be effective in preventing violence against women

- *promising* – if found to have an impact on risk factors , but not on violence directly

- *conflicting* – where some evaluations show the interventions to be effective and others show that they are not

- *ineffective* – when current studies have not established a positive impact on violence against women or its risk factors.

Successfully implemented, but not yet evaluated means there are currently insufficient studies of an appropriate quality to make an assessment regarding effectiveness. However, such interventions have been successfully implemented in practice and are underpinned by plausible theory and logic.

Some interventions in the tables below comprise multiple *strategies* (such as the community mobilisation and whole-of-school interventions), while others are based on evaluations of a single strategy (such as bystander programs). Evaluations of multi-strategy interventions are generally of the net impact of the intervention, rather than of the individual strategies that make up the intervention as a whole. It is possible that individual strategies found to be ineffective on their own may be effective when implemented as part of a multi-strategy approach.

It is also important to note that many of the factors identified in the previous sections are influenced by macro-level political and economic structures, policies and practices, such as those relating to international trade, taxation or industry (True 2011; Weissman 2007). This will make assessment of these policies and practices for their potential impact on violence against women and gender inequality, especially on particular groups within the population, an important focus of the prevention of violence against women. For example, industry policy may impact on employment which has in turn been identified as an influence on violence against women (Weissman 2007).

Table 9: Interventions to prevent violence against women —- current state of evidence for effectiveness

Intervention	Assessment based on available evidence of effectiveness
Policy, legislative and institutional reform	
Macro-level reforms designed to address specific aspects of human rights and gender inequality established in research to be strongly linked with violence against women (for example, ensuring women's economic autonomy through reform of superannuation policy)	Successfully implemented but not yet evaluated for impact on violence/precursors to violence
Efforts to reform the media's representation/reporting of gender relations, women and violence against women (including self-regulation)	Successfully implemented but not yet evaluated for impact on violence/precursors to violence
Strengthening infrastructure and transport, for example by improving the safety of public transport and street lighting[3]	Successfully implemented but not yet evaluated for impact on violence/precursors to violence
Community mobilisation and strengthening	
Community mobilisation, involving community driven, participatory projects that engage multiple stakeholders to address gender norms	Effective[4]
Organisational development	
Whole-of-school programs involving teachers and other school staff, pupils, reporting mechanisms, parents and the local community, along with national advocacy. A variety of strategies are used (such as curriculum and group-based programs, policy reform, advocacy	Promising
Multi-strategy approaches with media outlets to promote the responsible portrayal of women, girls and violence against women in the media (such as involving advocacy, training, guidelines	Successfully implemented but not yet evaluated for impact on violence/precursors to violence

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[3] Interventions evaluated were for the purposes of preventing non-partner sexual assault only.

[4] Evidence from low and middle income countries only.

Intervention	Assessment based on available evidence of effectiveness
Organisational auditing processes to identify and address structures and practices contributing to gender inequality and violence against women. Involves developing audit tools and processes for engaging staff, community members and volunteers in using these to reflect on organisational cultures and processes and plan reform. Inducements may be used to encourage or support compliance (funding, awards)	Successfully implemented but not yet evaluated for impact on violence/precursors to violence
Communications and social marketing	
Social marketing campaigns or edutainment (that is, education built into entertainment such as a drama series) plus group education. Long-term programs engaging social media, mobile applications, thematic television series, posters, together with interpersonal communication activities	Promising
Single component communications campaigns (such as a campaign with advertisements through television and print media)	Ineffective
Advocacy	
Skills training and capacity-building for organisations and community members advocating for gender equality and the elimination of violence against women	Successfully implemented but not yet evaluated for impact on violence/precursors to violence
Leadership programs that identify and support influential, non-violent individuals to speak out and play a leadership role regarding gender inequality and the elimination of violence against women. These may be targeted to prominent individuals or be delivered through informal peer groups (such as among young people) or organisational settings (such as workplaces). These are based on social norms theory which proposes that the views of prominent others are influential in shifting social norms (Webster et al. 2014).	Successfully implemented but not yet evaluated for impact on violence/precursors to violence
Individual or group direct participation programs providing education, support and skills development	
School or community programs to improve women's and girls' agency. Can include other components such as safe spaces, mentoring and life skills training	Effective
Economic empowerment and income supplements including micro-finance, vocational training, job placement or cash or asset transfers (such as land reform)	Conflicting evidence
Economic empowerment and income supplements plus gender equality training	Effective

Intervention	Assessment based on available evidence of effectiveness
Collectivisation. Supporting women's and girls' empowerment by strengthening supportive links to other women and girls in similar circumstances (such as a collective for sex workers)	Effective
Peer education - Supporting individuals from particular sub-populations to educate their peers on gender norms and violence against women	Successfully implemented but not yet evaluated for impact on violence/precursors to violence
School programs and community workshops with men and boys to promote changes in social norms and behaviours that encourage violence against women and gender inequality	Effective
School and community workshops to promote changes in norms and behaviour that encourage violence against women and gender inequality, which in contrast to the above, involve both men and women	Effective
Programs to support young people to engage critically with media and popular culture representations of women and gender relations, often referred to as strengthening media literacy. Based on the theory that the negative influences of the media on constructions of masculinities and femininities and on behaviours can be lessened by encouraging young people to engage in a critical way with the media	Successfully implemented but not yet evaluated for impact on violence/precursors to violence
Programs to strengthen individual skills and knowledge to take positive or pro-social action in relation to attitudes and behaviours supporting violence (such as the belief that women deserve violence) and precursors to violence (such as sexist attitudes). Often referred to as 'bystander' programs. Typically implemented as part of a broader program of community/organisational mobilisation	Conflicting evidence (emphasis in many current evaluations is on bystander responses to violence, as opposed to its precursors, and on bystander approaches as 'stand-alone' interventions)

Have been successfully implemented in Australia |
| Programs to support the skills of parents (both men and women) to promote gender equality and non-violence in their parenting practices (noting that these programs differ from the parenting programs below which have the goals of preventing child abuse) | Not yet systematically assessed |

Intervention	Assessment based on available evidence of effectiveness
Group or relationship-level interventions for equitable and respectful relationships Couple interventions to support them to maintain equitable and respectful relationships have been successfully implemented (e.g. among couples expecting a first child). There may be some potential in such programs as preventive measures at the population or sub-population level. However, relationship level interventions without a gender transformative approach may inadvertently compound gender inequality and hence be harmful to women.	Conflicting evidence
Protective behaviours programs^. Group programs teaching women and girls how to modify their behaviour to reduce the risk of sexual assault and/or to defend themselves in the event of being threatened with assault.	Conflicting evidence. Such programs may increase victim-blaming (itself contributing by way of social norms to sexual violence). If they encourage women and girls to curtail their movements and divert attention from perpetration as a human rights violation, such programs would be incompatible with a rights-based approach. Promoting self-defence in the absence of comprehensive skills training has been found to increase risk. Ideally these programs would be implemented alongside those promoting changes in norms pertaining to gender and violence among men and boys.
Collaborating with other policy settings to address issues of common concern	
Nurse home-visiting programs aimed to strengthen parenting attitudes and skills, noting that the primary purpose and benefits of such programs are the prevention of child abuse. These programs are distinguished from those above which have an emphasis on promoting skills to raise children in ways that promote gender equality and non-violence.	Promising for intimate partner violence (effective for reducing child abuse and neglect)

Intervention	Assessment based on available evidence of effectiveness
Regulation to reduce the density of alcohol outlets or reduce alcohol consumption (through taxation, rationing, regulating trading hours)	Effective[5], although optimally should be implemented alongside other interventions addressing normative support for violence against women

[5] Evidence from high income countries only.

Sources: Table adapted from Arango et al. 2014; Ellsberg et al. 2014; Flood 2015; Fulu et al. 2013b; Fulu et al. 2014 and World Health Organization 2010.

7 BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER – A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO PREVENT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The evidence presented in sections 2 and 3 of this paper demonstrates that factors influencing violence against women occur at multiple levels, including in individual attitudes and practices, in the dynamics of relationships, and in organisational, community and society wide practices, norms and structures. These influences can be found in day-to-day environments in which we all live, learn, work and enjoy leisure time. This suggests the need for an approach that responds to this complexity, one that involves reinforcing actions at multiple levels, and is implemented across multiple sectors and settings.

There is an existing, albeit under-developed, system in Australia to support policy development, programming and practice in responding to women and children affected by violence and holding men who use this violence accountable. There is a need for continued resourcing and development of this response system. However, the challenge in Australia is to build a comprehensive population-level prevention approach to eliminating violence against women to complement existing policy, programming and practice infrastructure designed to respond to individuals already affected by violence.

While there remains much to be learned, the evidence reviewed in this report suggests that four common clusters of correlates emerge consistently in reviews conducted across the globe. These should form the basis for the development of specific goals for prevention. As discussed in section 2.3.1, gender inequality (and its specific manifestations) are key, with correlates in the other clusters needing to be addressed as they interact or intersect with the influences of gender inequality. For example, a social norms campaign should address norms related to gender and norms about the use of violence against women as a practice.

7.1 A multi-strategy approach

The range of factors involved in violence against women, together with the different levels at which they operate, suggest the need for multiple and reinforcing strategies implemented at different levels of the social ecology. These have been identified in section 5.

7.2 A multi-sector approach

Key sectors and settings likely to be relevant in the prevention of violence against women are shown in Table 10. Many of the factors influencing violence against women discussed in section 3 have to do with the ways in which men's roles and identities, and the relationships between men are shaped. This makes these important foci of prevention. For this reason environments through which men can be engaged and reached or which have a particular influence on male norms and identities are especially important in prevention such as male dominated sports, workplaces and prisons.

Likewise, given the significant influence of gender inequality on violence against women, within each of the sectors and settings, it is vital to engage units and personnel responsible for promoting gender equality. Examples include human resources personnel responsible for monitoring equal employment provisions in workplaces and women's policy units in central governments.

Challenging entrenched gender norms can be sensitive and practice experience suggests the need to protect against the inclination to portray and address the issue in gender neutral terms (Murray & Powell 2009). There is a particular need for an assertive gender focus when undertaking work on a

collaborative basis with other sectors such as in the areas of preventing violence against women by reducing child maltreatment or alcohol misuse. Research into some of these areas demonstrates that consideration of gendered impacts is remarkably absent (see for example Heise 2011, p. ix).

Table 10: Sectors and settings for preventing violence against women

Sector	Specific settings
Government and the legislature	State and national jurisdictions Local government and local authorities Whole-of-government coordinating bodies Women's policy and coordination units
Civic society	Men's groups Autonomous women's groups Human rights networks Organisations working with and/or representing the interests of specific groups (such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, refugees and asylum seekers, people with disabilities)
Non-government and community sector	Unions Faith-based organisations See also specific sectors below
Private sector	Businesses Workplaces Employer and industry associations
Media, popular culture and information and communications technology	Media organisations Various media forms (newspapers, the internet, social media) Media regulatory bodies
Transport and physical infrastructure	Transport companies and authorities Planning organisations and authorities
Education	Schools Post school education Academic and research organisations
Sports and recreation	Community based sports Elite sports Sports associations
Arts	Community based arts Professional arts Arts associations
Economic and social development	Economic empowerment programs Programs to promote social cohesion
Health and social service sector	Public health Organisations working with groups affected by multiple forms of oppression (such as young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people)
Legal and justice sector	Police, courts, prisons

7.3 A population-based approach with more intense or tailored effort for particular sub-populations

A whole-of-population approach is indicated in the prevention of violence against women because many of its correlates lie in norms, structures and practices affecting us all. For example in the National Community Attitudes Towards Violence Against Women Survey, while women were generally less likely to hold attitudes suggesting tolerance of violence and gender equality, the differences between men and women were not large. There was more similarity than difference in attitudes between the sexes (Webster et al. 2014). This suggests that women are susceptible to internalising negative attitudes, even though they may not necessarily be in their interests (Webster et al. 2014). Accordingly, strategies to shift normative support for violence need to reach both men and women.

Nevertheless, most violence is perpetrated by men and many of the contributing factors identified relate to masculine roles and identities. Further, peer censure has been found to be one of the most powerful influences on violent and disrespectful behavior (Powell 2011). This makes the majority of men who are not violent important partners in prevention. For these reasons, there are sound arguments to place particular emphasis on environments and strategies influencing the norms and practices of men.

At the same time, the evidence presented in section 3 suggests that there are opportunities to prevent violence against women by focusing on:
- building connections between women
- supporting women's social and economic empowerment and autonomy
- promoting healthy gender roles and constructions of femininity (such as addressing sexual objectification).

As discussed in section 6, there is emerging evidence that optimal results are achieved by working with both men and women and addressing both male and female gender identities and roles. For reasons discussed in section 4.6, there are also powerful reasons for targeting effort to young people and environments affecting their responses to gender relations and violence.

In section 4 the importance of prioritising certain groups for prevention effort was identified. Prioritising needs to take place both:
- within population-level strategies. An example of this would be ensuring that a social norms campaign reaches groups whose first language is not English
- through efforts that are planned and delivered in partnership with specific groups and which are specifically tailored to address factors influencing violence prevalence in the groups concerned. Many of these factors do not lie within these groups themselves, but rather stem from factors in the broader social environment.

7.4 Laying the foundations for prevention

In section 5 the factors contributing to the success in reducing motor vehicle and tobacco related illness, injury and death were reviewed. It was noted that these successes were in part due to the investment in policies, systems and human capital to support prevention. International experience in the prevention of violence against women (Michau et al. 2015) suggests that these are similarly important for supporting prevention effort in this area as indicated in Table 11.

Table 11: Key foundations for the prevention of violence against women

Foundational element	Purpose
Overall plans	Such plans, at the national and jurisdictional levels, as well as in specific intervention environments are important for guiding prevention. They would typically include specific goals and targets, the allocation of responsibilities and identification of means of ensuring accountability.
Mechanisms to coordinate activity across sectors and between response and prevention systems	Cross sector coordinating mechanisms will be important at the jurisdictional level as well in particular community or organisational environments in which prevention is being implemented. Strong linkages between population-level prevention and the response system will also be required to ensure that activities and communications in both parts of a comprehensive system are mutually reinforcing. If the response system fails to hold men accountable for their use of violence, this risks undermining activity being undertaken to prevent violence against women. Likewise efforts in the response system to hold individual men accountable will be compromised if communication in the prevention system infers that violence can in any way be tolerated. So while a strong response system is important in its own right, it is also a vital foundation for effective prevention. Also international experience suggests that effective prevention is likely to result in an initial increase in reporting as awareness of violence against women increases and tolerance for this behaviour diminishes. Sound linkages can ensure that increased demand in the response system is sensitively managed.
Cross-sector partnerships	Actions to prevent violence against women will be dependent upon being able to effectively harness resources and expertise across settings, along with expertise in preventing violence against women. This makes partnerships across different sectors important. Partnerships led by or engaging groups affected by intersecting forms of oppression will be needed in both whole-of-population initiatives, and those targeted to particular groups or the structures affecting them.
Awareness raising	There is little evidence that awareness raising *in itself* is effective in preventing violence against women and this is particularly the case for population-level awareness raising campaigns (World Health Organization 2010). However, raising awareness of the prevalence, nature and consequences of the problem is necessary to engage key stakeholders in prevention and as such is a necessary foundation for prevention activity. Prevention of violence against women may be poorly understood, often being seen only in terms of awareness raising or confused with the prevention work that is undertaken in the response system, either with individuals affected by violence or those working with them. Accordingly there will also be benefits in communicating about the nature and scope of population-level prevention in initial awareness raising activity among stakeholders.
Building enlightened political leadership	The obligation of governments to play a leadership role in preventing violence against women is well established in a number of key human rights instruments (Fileborn 2010). This support will be especially

Foundational element	Purpose
	important given that prevention often involves issues that may be of a sensitive or contested nature. Governments also play an important role in coordinating activity across the range of sectors involved in prevention (such as education, employment and health), and in providing resources to support prevention. As indicated in section 2.2.4, social norms are an important influence on violence against women and political leaders are influential in setting these. This is a further reason for strong political leadership and support being important in an overall prevention strategy.
Building civic society support for and engagement in prevention	Prevention may involve sensitive issues, as indicated above and, if perceived to disrupt existing gender power hierarchies or challenge long held gender norms, may result in a backlash from some groups in the community, in particular some men's groups. Informed and engaged civic society networks can assist in countering this backlash. Civic society networks can also be important sources of leadership in prevention (with leadership being critical as noted above). Importantly, since they exist independently of government civic society groups can help to ensure that commitment to prevention is maintained over time and that it transcends the terms of individual governments. International evidence shows that the existence of a strong, autonomous women's movement is a critical success factor in prevention of violence against women (Htun & Weldon 2012).
Media partnerships	These partnerships will be important both to promote support for prevention and ensure robust responses to threats to its implementation.
Workforce development and training and institutional capacity building	In section 5 skills development in key workforces was identified as a key prevention strategy. This refers to development of the skills of personnel in relevant sectors to contribute to prevention in the course of undertaking their primary roles (such as teachers and football coaches). However, there is also a need for a workforce skilled in *establishing and supporting prevention.* Australia has a workforce that is highly skilled in responding to individuals affected by violence against women. However, arguably different or additional skills are required to support prevention including skills in program planning and coordination, advocacy and monitoring and evaluation. Further, since much prevention takes place in settings outside of the response system, it requires knowledge of the particular sector in which it is to take place. This suggests that workforce development in the planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of population-level prevention will be an important foundation.
Systems to support assessment, planning, monitoring, evaluation	Research will be important to ensure that prevention is appropriate to context and is based on the best available evidence of 'what works'. Ongoing evaluation will help to build the evidence base. Systems to enable the ready exchange of knowledge are also important to promote the 'scaling-up' of proven approaches. Data will be important to help ensure that effort is appropriately targeted, to monitor progress of prevention effort and to ensure accountability.

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APPENDIX

Long text alternative for Figure 3

The relationship between gender inequality and violence against women

Figure 3 is a pyramid divided into three tiers. The largest tier at the bottom of the pyramid is entitled, 'Gender inequality in public and private life' and is followed by the text: Shaped by particular historical and contextual factors, including other forms of discrimination and difference. Arrows direct the reader up to the middle tier entitled 'Particular expressions of gender inequality increasing the probability of violence against women', and is followed by the text: Male dominance & limited autonomy for women/Rigid constructions of masculinity and femininity/Negative peer associations & perceptions of gender relations. A single arrow directs the reader up the top tier, entitled 'Learning of and normative support for violence against women'.

Long text alternative for Figure 4

The impact of intersecting forms of inequality and difference on violence against women

Figure 4 shows a main text box with the following text: Intersecting forms and sources of inequality and difference (e.g. race and ethnicity, class, disability, colonialism, age). An arrow points sideways from this box to a second box with the following text: Shape patterns of gender inequality in particular groups.

An arrow also points downwards from the main box to another box with the following text: Historical and contemporary structural inequalities and discrimination. A double-pronged arrow points downwards from this box to two, equal level boxes. The text in the first box states: May influence exposure to violence and violence supportive norms. The text in the second box states: May compound the impacts of gender inequality, challenge existing gender hierarchies and undermine norms against violence and gender inequality.

Long text alternative for Figure 5

Women's experience of physical or sexual violence by a man in the previous 12 months by age, 2012

Figure 5 is a column chart showing five columns for different age brackets. Percentages for each age bracket of women's experience of physical or sexual violence by a man in the previous 12 months are shown, those being: 13% for 18 to 24 years, 8% for 25 to 34 years, 6% for 35 to 44 years, 4% for 45 to 54 years and 2% for 55 years or more.