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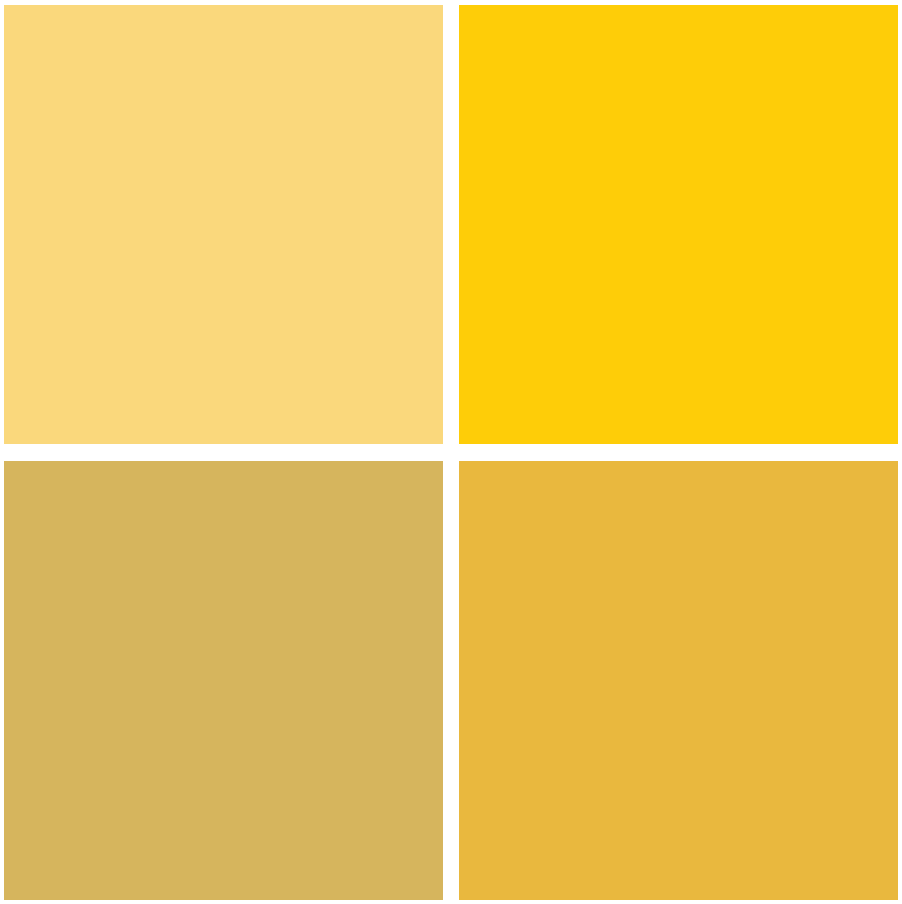

NCAS

THE 2021 NATIONAL COMMUNITY ATTITUDES TOWARDS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN SURVEY (NCAS)

Findings for young Australians

ANROWS acknowledgement

This material was largely produced with funding from the Australian Government. Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) gratefully acknowledges the financial and other support it has received from the Australian Government, without which this work would not have been possible. The findings and views reported in this paper are those of the authors and cannot be attributed to the Australian Government.

ANROWS would also like to acknowledge Respect Victoria for its contribution to the project by funding an additional 1,600 Victorian interviews.

Acknowledgement of Country

ANROWS acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land across Australia on which we live and work. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past and present. We value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and knowledge. We are committed to standing and working with First Nations peoples, honouring the truths set out in the Warawarni-gu Guma Statement.

Peer review process

The quality of ANROWS publications is ensured through a rigorous peer review process that is consistent with the principles of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) Ethical Guidelines for Peer Review. This report has been assessed by at least two peer reviewers with relevant academic expertise.

Published by

Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety Limited (ANROWS)
PO Box Q389, Queen Victoria Building, NSW 1230 | www.anrows.org.au
ABN 67 162 349 171

ISBN: 978-1-922645-80-7 (paperback)

ISBN: 978-1-922645-81-4 (PDF)

Please note that there is the potential for minor revisions of this report.

Please check the online version at www.anrows.org.au for any amendments.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the National Library of Australia

Attitudes matter

The 2021 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS)

Findings for young Australians

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Author acknowledgement

We thank our research partner, the Social Research Centre (SRC), led by Dr Nikki Honey. The researchers and statisticians at the SRC who contributed to the data collection and statistical analysis included Andrew Ward, Laura Rimington, Sandra Ropero and Sebastian Misson.

We also thank the following ANROWS staff: Ella Gorman, Louis Klein, Dr Shireen Bernstein, Jackie McMillan, Amy Watson and Dr Rebecca Goodbourn for their contribution to this report and Kate Minter and Dr Erin Carlisle for their early work on the NCAS survey and the Main report.

We thank the NCAS Panel of experts: Associate Professor Kristin Diemer, Professor Michael Flood, William Milne, Professor Jenny Morgan, Professor Anastasia Powell, Honorary Professor Julie Stubbs and Distinguished Professor Maggie Walter for their guidance and feedback on the NCAS and/or this report.

We also thank our NCAS Advisory group for their guidance on the NCAS and/or comments on this report: the Australian Human Rights Commission Sex Discrimination Commissioner; Domestic Violence NSW; eSafety Commissioner; Harmony Alliance, Migrant and Refugee Women for Change; Healing Foundation; LGBTIQ+ Health Foundation; No to Violence; Our Watch; People with Disability Australia; R4Respect; Respect Victoria; WESNET; and Women NSW; the Department of Social Services, Australian Government; Family Safety Secretariat from the Department of Communities Tasmania, Tasmanian Government; Family Safety Victoria, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, Victoria State Government; Office of Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction, Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities, Northern Territory Government; Office for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence, Department of Communities, Government of Western Australia; Office for Women and Violence Prevention, Women's Safety and Violence Prevention, Department of Justice and Attorney-General, Queensland Government; Office for Women, Department of Human Services, Government of South Australia; Department of Communities and Justice, Government of New South Wales; and the Office of the Coordinator-General for Family Safety (now the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Office), Australian Capital Territory Government.

Finally, we thank the respondents who took the time to participate in the survey and the youth ambassadors from R4Respect, Teach Us Consent and the Black Dog Institute for their comments on the findings for young people included in this report.

Acknowledgement of lived experiences of violence

ANROWS acknowledges the lives and experiences of the women and children affected by domestic, family and sexual violence who are represented in this report. We recognise the individual stories of courage, hope and resilience that form the basis of ANROWS research.

Caution: Some people may find parts of this content confronting or distressing. Recommended support services include 1800RESPECT (1800 737 732), Lifeline (13 11 14) and, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, 13YARN (13 92 76).

This report addresses work covered in ANROWS's National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS) Research Program. Please consult the ANROWS website for more information on this project.

ANROWS research contributes to the shared vision to end gender-based violence in one generation of the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032* (the National Plan 2022–2032) and the six National Outcomes of the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022* (the National Plan 2010–2022). This research provides prevention and early intervention key indicators for the National Plan 2022–2032 and addresses National Outcome 1 – Communities are safe and free from violence, and National Outcome 2 – Relationships are respectful of the National Plan 2010–2022.

Suggested citation

Coumarelos, C., Roberts, N., Weeks, N., & Rasmussen, V. (2023). *Attitudes matter: The 2021 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS), Findings for young Australians* (Research report, 08/2023). ANROWS.

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Figures

Tables

Shortened forms

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AGIS	Attitudes towards Gender Inequality Scale
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
ANROWS	Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety
AVAWS	Attitudes towards Violence against Women Scale
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
DSS	Department of Social Services
DVS	Domestic Violence Scale
GVIS	Gendered Violence and Inequality Scale
LGBTQ+	An evolving acronym that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans gender, queer/ questioning, asexual and other sexuality- or gender-diverse people
Main report	Coumarelos, C., Weeks, N., Bernstein, S., Roberts, N., Honey, N., Minter, K., & Carlisle, E. (2023a). *Attitudes matter: The 2021 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS), Findings for Australia.* ANROWS.
National Plan 2010–2022	*National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022*
National Plan 2022–2032	*National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032*
NCAS	National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey
PSS	Personal Safety Survey
Recognise DV Subscale	Recognise Domestic Violence Subscale
Recognise VAW Subscale	Recognise Violence Against Women Subscale
RRE	respectful relationships education
SAS	Sexual Assault Scale

SHS	Sexual Harassment Scale
SVS	Sexual Violence Scale
Technical report	Coumarelos, C., Honey, N., Ward, A., Weeks, N., & Minter, K. (2023). *Attitudes matter: The 2021 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS), Technical report*. ANROWS.
TFAS	Technology-Facilitated Abuse Scale
Understand Gendered DV Subscale	Understand Gendered Domestic Violence Subscale
UVAWS	Understanding of Violence against Women Scale
WHO	World Health Organization
Young Australians/ people/respondents	In the discussion of the NCAS sample and results, these terms refer to ages 16 to 24 years

Data symbols and table and figure notations

*	Indicates a statistically significant result, meaning we can be confident (with 95% certainty) that the difference observed in the survey sample is meaningful and likely to represent a true difference in the Australian population ($p < 0.05$) that is not negligible in size (Cohen's $d \geq 0.2$ or equivalent)
^	Indicates an item was asked of one half of the sample
~	Indicates an item was asked of one quarter of the sample
B	Bystander response item (used in item codes)
D	Domestic violence item (used in item codes)
G	Gender inequality item (used in item codes)
ns	No statistically significant difference
S	Sexual violence item (used in item codes)
V	Violence against women item (used in item codes)

Key terms

All respondents/ respondents of all ages	The total 2021 NCAS sample of 19,100 respondents (of which 1,669 were young respondents aged 16 to 24 years).
Attitudes	Evaluations of a particular subject (e.g. person, object, concept) that usually exist along a continuum from less to more favourable. The NCAS measures attitudes towards violence against women, including attitudes towards specific types of violence such as domestic violence and sexual violence, as well as attitudes towards gender inequality.
Backlash	The resistance, hostility or aggression with which strategies to redress gender inequality or prevent violence are met by some people in the community (typically a minority).
Bivariate analysis	A statistical analysis that examines the direct or straightforward relationship between two variables only, such as an outcome of interest (e.g. understanding of violence against women) and one other variable (e.g. a demographic factor such as age), without taking into account the effect of any other variables.
Bystander	Somebody who observes, but is not directly involved in, a harmful or potentially harmful event and could assist or intervene (Webster et al., 2018).
Bystander response	How bystanders react to witnessing a scenario such as disrespect or abuse. The NCAS examined whether bystanders would be bothered by various scenarios and whether they would intervene. **Prosocial bystander actions** attempt to improve the situation and can include confronting the perpetrator's unacceptable, gendered and violence-condoning attitudes and behaviour, as well as supporting the victim and survivor. In this report, the two prosocial responses examined were showing disapproval then and there or showing disapproval in private later.
Cissexism	Prejudice or discrimination against trans gender people.
Coercive control	A pattern of behaviours used to manipulate, intimidate, isolate and control a partner and create an uneven power dynamic in the relationship (Attorney-General's Department, 2023; Department of Social Services [DSS], 2022). Coercive control is often a significant part of a person's experience of domestic violence. A focus on coercive control reflects a shift from specific, isolated incidents (of primarily physical violence) to a recognition that individual acts can be used by perpetrators to form a broader pattern of abusive behaviours that reinforce and strengthen the control and dominance of one person over another (DSS, 2022).

Domestic violence	Refers to violence within current or past intimate partner relationships, which causes physical, sexual or psychological harm. Domestic violence can include physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and financial abuse, and often occurs as a pattern of behaviour constituting coercive control. The term "domestic violence" is often used interchangeably with "intimate partner violence". "Domestic violence" is used in this report, as many historical NCAS items use this terminology to describe violence between partners. (Note: some broader definitions of domestic violence in the literature include violence between other family members.)
Economic abuse	See financial abuse.
Emotional and psychological abuse	Forms of abuse that may include verbal, non-verbal or physical acts by the perpetrator that are intended to exercise dominance, control or coercion over the victim; degrade the victim's emotional or cognitive abilities or sense of self-worth; or induce feelings of fear and intimidation in the victim (National Family and Domestic Violence Bench Book, 2022).
Equality	The state of being equal, especially in status, rights or opportunities.
Equity	The state, quality or ideal of being just, impartial and fair. As related to racial and social justice, equity means meeting people and communities where they are, by allocating resources and opportunities as needed to create equal outcomes for all – creating a "level playing field". The concept of equity recognises that different people have different circumstances and needs that must be met in order to achieve equal outcomes.
Family violence	A broader term than "domestic violence". Refers not only to violence between intimate partners but also to violence between family members. For Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, "family violence" encapsulates the broader issue of violence within extended families, kinship networks and community relationships, as well as intergenerational issues. "Family" may also refer to "chosen families", as found, for example, in LGBTQ+ communities.
Financial abuse	Also termed "economic abuse". A type of violence that often occurs alongside other types of domestic violence, such as physical or emotional abuse. It involves using money in ways to cause harm, such as by withholding funds, preventing a person being involved in financial decisions that affect them, preventing them from getting a job, controlling all household spending and many other tactics to restrict a victim and survivor's freedom and independence.
Gender	The socially constructed and learned roles, norms, behaviours, activities and attributes that a society considers appropriate for people, usually based on their biological sex. Gender has historically been constructed as a binary between "man" and "woman" or "masculinity" and "femininity", and as a hierarchy of "men" over "women". These binaries and hierarchies can produce inequalities and discrimination based on gender. As a social construct, gender is not fixed: the acceptable roles and behaviours associated with "man" and "woman" can vary from society to society and can change over time. Gender identities of "man" and "woman" are often associated with the social expectations for members of the biological sex categories "male" and "female". Where people identify their gender as matching their biological sex assigned or presumed for them at birth, this is called "cis gender". However, many people do not subscribe to cis gender norms and describe their gender identity in terms that do not accord with the rigidity of the gender binary. For further information on how gender is used in the NCAS survey and this report, see Section 2.2 in the Main report.

Gendered drivers of violence	The underlying causes that create the necessary conditions in which violence against women occurs. The drivers relate to the particular structures, norms and practices arising from gender inequality in public and private life, as well as from other forms of social discrimination and oppression against certain groups of women, including racism, classism, ableism, ageism, heteronormativity and cissexism etc.
Gender equality	Relates to equal opportunities for all genders to access social, economic and political resources, including legislative protection. Effectively, it describes equality of opportunity.
Gender-ignoring	A perspective that focuses on the importance of being "fair" by treating everyone the same but fails to recognise the gendered norms and gendered differences within structures and systems that drive gender-based inequalities and violence.
Gender norms and stereotypes	Shared standards of acceptable behaviour and overgeneralised concepts that are associated with genders within a community, culture or group (The Good Society, 2022).
Gender-transformative approaches	Approaches that challenge and attempt to change problematic gender stereotypes, scripts, norms, the gender binary and the gender hierarchy, which facilitate and maintain gender inequality (Our Watch, 2019, 2021b).
Heteronormativity	The belief that heterosexuality is the preferred and "natural" sexual orientation, which assumes that gender is binary (i.e. men and women). Heteronormativity functions to legitimise social and legal institutions that devalue, marginalise and discriminate against people who deviate from this normative principle (e.g. gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, trans people; American Psychological Association, 2022). The dominance of heteronormative and cisnormative models of domestic and family violence also makes it harder to recognise this violence in LGBTQ+ communities. This bias can contribute to a culture of silence that leads to LGBTQ+ people staying in abusive relationships and not accessing services and other vital support (LGBTIQ+ Health Australia, 2022).
Intersectionality	The interactions between multiple systems and structures of oppression (such as sexism, racism, classism, ageism, ableism, heteronormativity and cissexism), which can be reflected in policy, practices, services and legal contexts. Intersectionality acknowledges that some people are subject to multiple forms of oppression and the experience of this oppression is not just the sum of its parts. An intersectional approach is a lens for seeing how various forms of inequality can often operate together and exacerbate each other (Kimberlé Crenshaw quoted in Steinmetz, 2020).
Men	A gender identity. In this report, the term is used for respondents who identified as men when asked to state how they describe their gender.
Microaggressions	Everyday, subtle and sometimes overt, intentional or unintentional interactions or behaviours that communicate some type of bias towards historically marginalised groups, including women. People who enact microaggressions may not be aware of their bias.
Misogyny	A strong dislike of or contempt for women.

Multiple linear regression analysis	A statistical analysis that examines the relationship of a (continuous) outcome variable of interest (e.g. understanding of violence against women) to multiple factors (or input variables) considered together (e.g. multiple demographic characteristics). Unlike bivariate analysis, multiple linear regression analysis has the advantage that it can determine which of multiple factors: • are *independently* related to or "predict" the outcome variable, *after* accounting for any relationships between the factors • are *most important* in predicting the outcome variable.
Multivariate analysis	A type of statistical analysis that examines the interrelationships between three or more variables.
Non-binary	A gender identity that sits outside the gender binary of "men" and "women". The term is often used as an umbrella term that encompasses a range of diverse gender identities. In this report, "non-binary" is used as a collective term for respondents who, when asked to state how they describe their gender: • explicitly identified as non-binary • provided another response that was consistent with a gender identity outside the gender binary.
Non-physical violence	Forms of violence and abuse which do not involve inflicting or threatening physical harm, such as financial abuse, psychological or emotional abuse, spiritual abuse or technology-facilitated abuse, among others. These forms of violence and abuse may involve coercive control.
Physical violence	The use or threat of physical force with the intent to cause physical or psychological harm, such as physical injury, intimidation or fear. "Violence against women" is broader than "physical violence" and can include patterns of behaviour constituting coercive control and other forms of abuse.
Prosocial bystander	A bystander who chooses a prosocial action in response to witnessing disrespect or abuse. See "Bystander" and "Bystander response".
Scale	A psychometrically validated group of survey items that measure aspects of the same construct or topic. In the NCAS, scales are used to summarise and demonstrate understanding and attitudes at an overall or broad level. In this report, the scales are used to measure or assess overall change in understanding or attitudes over time, relationships between understanding and attitudes, and relationships between understanding or attitudes and other factors (such as demographic factors). See the Technical report, pp. 102–113.
Sexism	Attitudes, stereotypes, prejudice and other cultural elements that promote discrimination based on gender.
Sexting	Sharing sexually explicit or nude images, texts and videos, online and/or via text and chat apps.
Sexual assault	A form of sexual violence. Sexual activity that happens where consent is not freely given or obtained, is withdrawn or the person is unable to consent due to their age or other factors. Sexual assault occurs any time a person is forced, coerced or manipulated into any sexual activity, including coercing a person to engage in sexualised touching, kissing or rape.

Sexual harassment	A form of sexual violence. An unwelcome sexual advance, sexualised comment, intrusive sexualised question, request for sexual favours or other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that makes a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. Can include, but is not limited to, staring or leering; indecent texts, emails or posts; indecent exposure; inappropriate comments; non-consensual sharing of intimate images; and unwanted touching.
Sexuality	The experience of sexual attraction, behaviour and identity (Carman et al., 2021). In this report, when sexuality is discussed in relation to NCAS results, it refers to responses to the item, "How would you describe your sexuality?", with the stated options of "heterosexual/straight", "lesbian", "gay", "bisexual or pansexual", "queer", "another term (please specify)" and "prefer not to say".
Sexual violence	An umbrella term that encompasses sexual activity without consent being obtained or freely given. It occurs any time a person is forced, coerced or manipulated into any unwanted sexual activity, such as touching, sexual harassment and intimidation, forced marriage, trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, sexual assault and rape.
Significant	Throughout this report, "significant" is used to refer to "statistically significant" results where we can be confident (with 95% certainty) that the difference observed in the survey sample is meaningful and likely to represent a true difference in the Australian population ($p < 0.05$) that is not negligible in size (Cohen's $d \geq 0.2$ or equivalent). Significant findings in this report are denoted by the * symbol.
Social norms	Shared standards of acceptable behaviour that may be an informal understanding within groups or across broader society that govern behaviour, or may take the form of codified rules and conduct expectations.
Socioeconomic status of area	In this report, socioeconomic status of area is based on the Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage (SEIFA) – an ABS measure of the socioeconomic conditions in geographic areas in terms of people's access to material and social resources, and their opportunity to participate in society (ABS, 2018).
Stalking	A form of violence that can occur in person or via the use of technology. It involves a pattern of repeated, unwanted behaviours intended to maintain contact with, or exercise power and control over, another person. These behaviours are typically enacted to intimidate, distress or control the target (H. Campbell, 2019; Victorian Law Reform Commission, 2021). Examples of stalking behaviours include tracking or following someone (in person or online) and loitering.
Subscale	A component of a psychometrically validated scale that taps into a particular aspect of the construct underlying the scale, such as an aspect of understanding or attitudes towards violence against women or gender inequality. Factor analyses were used to subdivide items within a scale into subscales based on which items were answered most similarly to one another by respondents, most likely because they are more conceptually related. Subscales were also validated using Rasch analysis. See Technical report, pp. 102–113.
Technology-facilitated abuse	An umbrella term used to refer to forms of abuse where technology is the conduit or means of enacting or exercising abuse. Examples of technology-facilitated abuse include harassment, stalking, impersonation and threats via technology, as well as image-based abuse and other forms of abuse online (eSafety Commissioner, 2022a; Powell & Henry, 2019).

Trans gender	"Trans gender" is an inclusive umbrella term meaning people whose gender is different from the sex recorded or presumed for them at birth and is not contingent on how they socially, medically or legally affirm their gender (Transhub, 2021).
Univariate analysis	The data analysis of a single variable or item, such as the number or percentage of respondents in each gender category.
Victims and survivors	Refers to those who have experienced violence. We use this term to recognise both the harm experienced and the resilience of those who experience violence. The term recognises the diverse experiences of violence, although we acknowledge that not all people who experience violence will use this term to describe themselves.
Violence against women	Violence that is specifically directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately. It includes any act of violence based on or driven by gender that causes, or could cause, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of harm or coercion, in public or in private life.
Women	A term describing a gender identity. In this report, the term is used for respondents who identified as women when asked to state how they describe their gender.

About this report

This report outlines the results from the 2021 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS) for young Australians aged 16 to 24 years. It presents findings for young Australians with comparison to other age groups. The report will interest stakeholders tasked with responding to, reducing and preventing violence against women, including policymakers, practitioners, practice designers, educators, researchers, community organisations and media. It has particular relevance for respectful relationships and violence prevention education in Australian schools and with young people more broadly, including school leavers, and TAFE and university students.

This report is one among a suite of ANROWS resources produced for the 2021 NCAS. Other reports and documents on NCAS findings include:

- Minter, K., Carlisle, E., & Coumarelos, C. (2021). *"Chuck her on a lie detector": Investigating Australians' mistrust in women's reports of sexual assault* (Research report, 04/2021). ANROWS.
- Carlisle, E., Coumarelos, C., Minter, K., & Lohmeyer, B. (2022). *"It depends on what the definition of domestic violence is": How young Australians conceptualise domestic violence and abuse* (Research report, 09/2022). ANROWS.
- Coumarelos, C., Weeks, N., Bernstein, S., Roberts, N., Honey, N., Minter, K., & Carlisle, E. (2023a). *Attitudes matter: The 2021 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS), Findings for Australia*. ANROWS. (The Main report.)
- Coumarelos, C., Weeks, N., Bernstein, S., Roberts, N., Honey, N., Minter, K., & Carlisle, E. (2023b). *Attitudes matter: The 2021 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS), Summary for Australia*. ANROWS. (The Summary report.)
- Coumarelos, C., Honey, N., Ward, A., Weeks, N., & Minter, K. (2023). *Attitudes matter: The 2021 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS), Technical report*. ANROWS. (The Technical report.)
- Coumarelos, C., Roberts, N., Weeks, N., Bernstein, S., & Honey, N. (2023). *Attitudes matter: The 2021 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS), Findings for Australian states and territories*. ANROWS.
- *Attitudes matter: The 2021 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS), Findings for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander respondents* (forthcoming).
- *Attitudes matter: The 2021 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS), Findings for people from non-English speaking backgrounds* (forthcoming).

About the NCAS

The National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS) is a periodic, representative survey of the Australian population that is conducted every four years. The NCAS measures the Australian community's understanding and attitudes regarding violence against women, their attitudes towards gender inequality and their intentions to intervene when witnessing violence or disrespect against women. It was established as a key means of monitoring progress against the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022* (the National Plan 2010–2022) and will continue to evaluate progress against the current *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032* (the National Plan 2022–2032; Council of Australian Governments [COAG], 2010; Department of Social Services [DSS], 2022). Community understanding and attitudes regarding violence against women are shaped by, and in part reflect, social norms embedded in organisational, community, institutional and societal practices, systems and structures. Thus, the NCAS functions as a gauge for how Australia is progressing in changing the broader climate that facilitates and maintains violence against women. By highlighting problematic areas in the community's understanding and attitudes towards violence against women, the NCAS provides valuable evidence to inform policy and practice in the prevention of this violence.

2021 NCAS

The 2021 NCAS sample consisted of 19,100 Australians aged 16 years or older, who were interviewed via mobile telephone. The NCAS sample included 1,669 young Australians aged 16 to 24 years, consisting of 207 young Australians aged 16 to 17 years and 1,462 young Australians aged 18 to 24 years.

The findings of the 2021 NCAS demonstrate gradual improvements in community understanding and attitudes regarding gender inequality and violence against women, suggesting encouraging progress towards the achievement of a community that offers equal opportunities to women and is safe and free from violence against women. However, further intervention is still necessary where harmful individual and social norms prevail. It is important to continue to challenge biases, myths and misconceptions regarding violence against women and gender inequality because these biases reflect the societal culture, including broad practices, processes, systems and structures, that maintains gender inequality and violence against women. These attitudes are also enacted in the responses to violence by police, the judiciary and community services in ways that may fail to deter perpetrators of violence against women and serve as systemic barriers to victims and survivors seeking justice and support.

Executive summary

The National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS) is a periodic, representative survey of the Australian population that is conducted every four years. Poor understanding and problematic attitudes regarding violence against women at the population level reflect a culture that allows this violence to perpetuate. The NCAS has been a key means of monitoring progress against the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022* (Council of Australian Governments [COAG], 2010) and will continue to examine progress against the current *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032* (DSS, 2022). This NCAS evidence informs policy and programs aimed at prevention of violence against women by highlighting:

- any gaps in the community's understanding of violence against women
- any problematic areas in the community's attitudes towards gender inequality and violence against women
- changes in this understanding and these attitudes over time
- demographic, attitudinal and contextual factors related to understanding and attitudes that may contribute to and perpetuate violence against women.

The present report discusses the 2021 NCAS findings for young people aged 16 to 24 years.

Research design and analysis

The 2021 NCAS was conducted via mobile telephone interviews with 19,100 respondents across Australia. The sample included 1,669 young Australians aged 16 to 24 years, comprising 913 young men (55%), 715 young women (43%) and 36 young non-binary (2%) respondents.[1]

The 2021 instrument included:

- demographic items
- items measuring understanding of the nature of violence against women
- items measuring attitudes towards violence against women and gender inequality
- scenario-based items examining bystander responses when witnessing abuse or disrespect against women.

Understanding and attitude items were grouped into nine psychometric scales, validated via Rasch analysis and factor analysis. The 2021 NCAS included three main scales, namely:

- the Understanding of Violence against Women Scale (UVAWS), which measures recognition of problematic behaviours as violence and understanding of the gendered nature of violence against women
- the Attitudes towards Gender Inequality Scale (AGIS), which measures rejection of problematic attitudes regarding gender inequality
- the Attitudes towards Violence against Women Scale (AVAWS), which measures rejection of problematic attitudes regarding violence against women.

The main scales comprise subscales that measure different thematic aspects of the broad concepts underlying the scales. In addition, the 2021 NCAS included five scales to measure and allow comparisons between attitudes towards each of five types of violence. These five scales are the Domestic Violence Scale (DVS), the Sexual Violence Scale (SVS), the Sexual Assault Scale (SAS), the Sexual Harassment Scale (SHS) and the Technology-Facilitated Abuse Scale (TFAS).

Respondents' scores on each scale were used to calculate the average level of understanding of violence against women and rejection of problematic attitudes, as well as changes in understanding and attitudes over time. Bivariate and regression analyses were also conducted to examine the factors significantly related to understanding and attitudes regarding violence against women and gender inequality, including demographic factors and particular aspects of understanding and attitudes.

Key findings

The NCAS findings for young people provide evidence that young Australians' understanding and attitudes regarding violence against women are generally moving towards positive change, although this change is occurring slowly. Most young Australians, like most Australians of all ages, strongly reject violence against women and gender inequality. However, the NCAS findings also highlight many opportunities to further improve young people's understanding and attitudes and break down the culture that perpetuates violence against women.

Key finding 1: Young people's understanding and attitudes have improved since 2017, with some exceptions

Between 2017 and 2021, young respondents significantly improved in their:

- understanding of violence against women, including their recognition of behaviours that constitute domestic violence and violence against women more broadly
- attitudinal rejection of gender inequality, including rejection of attitudes that deny inequality, normalise sexism and reinforce rigid gender roles
- attitudinal rejection of violence against women, including rejection of attitudes that mistrust women's reports of violence, and those that objectify women and disregard consent
- rejection of sexual violence, including sexual assault and sexual harassment.

However, young respondents did not significantly improve between 2017 and 2021 in their rejection of:

- some attitudes that maintain gender inequality, including attitudes that condone limiting women's autonomy and undermine women's leadership in public life

1 Information on gender was missing or inadequately defined for five young respondents.

- some attitudes that maintain violence against women, specifically attitudes that minimise the seriousness of violence or blame victims and survivors
- attitudes that maintain domestic violence.

Key finding 2: Young people's understanding and attitudes towards violence against women and gender inequality are stronger in some areas than others

Young respondents were more likely to recognise that violence against women is a problem in Australia than in their own local area

Most young respondents agreed that violence against women is a problem in Australia (91%), but fewer agreed that it is a problem in their suburb or town (53%). Although Australians of all ages could substantially improve their understanding that violence against women occurs in their own local area, this understanding was higher for young respondents than those aged 25 years or older.

Young respondents were better at recognising physical than non-physical forms of violence

Most young respondents recognised that a range of violent, abusive and controlling behaviours are "always" forms of domestic violence or violence against women (58–93%). At least 3 in 4 young respondents identified physical harm or threats of physical harm as "always" forms of domestic violence (78–93%). However, there was less recognition that non-physical forms of domestic violence are "always" violence (58–72%), including repeatedly criticising a partner, controlling a partner by denying them money and repeated electronic tracking of a partner.

Almost half of young respondents did not understand the gendered nature of domestic violence

Like respondents of all ages, young respondents were more adept at identifying behaviours that constitute violence than understanding the gendered nature of domestic violence. Substantial proportions of young respondents incorrectly believed that:

- domestic violence is equally committed by men and women (46%)
- men and women are equally likely to experience fear as a result of domestic violence (45%)
- men and women are equally likely to suffer physical harm from domestic violence (26%).

Young respondents demonstrated stronger rejection of some problematic attitudes towards gender inequality than others

Although most young respondents held attitudes that reject gender inequality, some problematic attitudes were more strongly rejected than others. Significantly more young respondents "strongly disagreed" with attitudes that reinforce rigid gender roles than attitudes that limit women's autonomy. In addition, concerningly few young respondents "strongly disagreed" with attitudes that deny women's experiences of gender inequality.

Young respondents demonstrated stronger rejection of some problematic attitudes towards violence against women than others

Although most young respondents held attitudes that reject violence against women, some problematic attitudes were more strongly rejected than others. Significantly more young respondents "strongly disagreed" with attitudes that objectify women and disregard consent than with attitudes that minimise violence against women and attitudes that mistrust women's reports of violence.

Key finding 3: Young people more strongly reject sexual violence than domestic violence, but there is room for improvement across all types of violence

In 2021, young respondents' rejection of sexual violence was stronger than their rejection of domestic violence and their understanding and rejection of technology-facilitated abuse. As outlined below, some myths, misconceptions and harmful stereotypes regarding different types of violence are still evident among a minority of young Australians.

Domestic violence: A sizable minority of young respondents supported some problematic attitudes towards domestic violence

Many young respondents "strongly disagreed" with problematic attitudes towards domestic violence. However, a sizeable minority "somewhat" or "strongly" agreed with some myths or misconceptions about domestic violence, including that:

- women often exaggerate claims of domestic violence to improve their case in custody battles (30%)
- women who stay with their abusive partners are partly responsible for the abuse continuing (26%)
- much domestic violence is a normal reaction to day-to-day stress (18%).

One in three (34%) young respondents indicated that they would not know where to go if they needed outside support for someone experiencing domestic violence.

Sexual assault: Young respondents demonstrated strong rejection of attitudes that excuse sexual assault but weaker rejection if the woman initially consented, and weaker rejection of attitudes that mistrust women

Most young respondents (70–90%) "strongly disagreed" with all the problematic attitudes examined that justify or excuse rape. However, young respondents tended to see rape as more justifiable if the woman initiated intimacy, revealing a lack of understanding that consent is an active and ongoing communication process.

In addition, sizeable proportions of young respondents displayed mistrust of women's reports of sexual assault. For example, only about half of young respondents or fewer "strongly disagreed" that:

- it is common for sexual assault accusations to be used to get back at men (36%)
- a lot of times, women who say they were raped had led the man on and then had regrets (47%)
- many allegations of sexual assault made by women are false (53%).

Sexual assault: Most young respondents did not excuse rape involving alcohol or drugs, but attitudes depended on whether the perpetrator or the victim and survivor used alcohol or drugs

Most young respondents (76–87%) "strongly disagreed" with attitudes that excuse perpetrators or blame victims and survivors for sexual assault where alcohol or drugs are involved. However, there were age differences depending on whether it was the perpetrator or the victim or survivor who used alcohol or drugs. Compared to respondents aged 25 years or older, young respondents were significantly *more likely* to excuse the perpetrator if he was drunk or affected by drugs but *less likely* to excuse the perpetrator if the victim or survivor was drunk.

Sexual harassment: Most young respondents "strongly disagreed" with problematic attitudes regarding sexual harassment, but a concerning minority did not

Most young respondents (65–88%) "strongly disagreed" with all the problematic attitudes regarding sexual harassment measured by the 2021 NCAS. However, a minority of young respondents "somewhat" or "strongly" agreed with myths that sexual harassment is flattering or benign, including that:

- women find it flattering to be persistently pursued even if they are not interested (11%)
- since some women are so sexual in public, it's understandable that some men think they can touch women without permission (7%)
- women should be flattered by wolf-whistles or cat-calls in public (7%).

Technology-facilitated abuse: Most young respondents recognised technology-facilitated abuse and rejected attitudes that condone it, but a concerning minority did not

Most young respondents (60–63%) recognised that different forms of technology-facilitated abuse "always" constitute a form of violence. However, a minority of young respondents did not recognise technology-facilitated abusive behaviours as forms of violence against women, including:

- a man sending an unwanted picture of his genitals to a woman (10%)
- harassment via repeated emails and text messages (8%).

Regarding attitudes, most young respondents "strongly disagreed" that a woman is partly responsible if her partner shares a naked picture without her permission (70%), but a concerning minority agreed with this statement (18%). Most young respondents "strongly disagreed" that a woman is partly responsible if a man she met on a mobile dating app forces sex on her (87%).

Stalking: A minority of young respondents did not recognise stalking as a form of violence against women

Most young respondents (63–73%) recognised technology-facilitated and in-person stalking as "always" constituting violence. However, a minority of young respondents did not recognise stalking as violence against women or domestic violence, including:

- electronic tracking of a partner (8%)
- in-person stalking by repeatedly following or watching someone at home or work (7%).

Key finding 4: Young people's bystander responses depend on the context

Respondents were asked about three bystander scenarios and whether they would be bothered by the scenario, how they would react, reasons for not acting and the responses they anticipated from their peers if they did respond. The three scenarios were:

- a work friend telling a sexist joke
- a boss telling a sexist joke
- a friend verbally abusing a woman he is in a relationship with.

Most young respondents said they would be bothered by each scenario. However, young respondents' intention to intervene varied by context, depending on:

- the type of abusive or disrespectful behaviour, with significantly more young respondents saying they would be bothered by verbal abuse (98%) than sexist jokes (78–89%)
- the presence of a power differential between the bystander and the perpetrator, with significantly fewer young respondents saying they would show disapproval if a boss (63%) rather than a work friend (88%) told a sexist joke
- anticipated peer support or criticism, with most young respondents (79–89%) who reported that they would show disapproval upon witnessing disrespectful behaviour also anticipating that their friends would support them
- barriers to intervention, including fear of negative consequences (65–92%) and discomfort with speaking up (74–79%)
- demographic factors, with young men respondents (63%) being significantly less likely than young women respondents (90%) to report that they would be bothered by sexist jokes.

Key finding 5: Young men's understanding and rejection of violence lags behind that of young women and young non-binary people

Gender differences were observed on most NCAS scales and subscales, and many items, with young men consistently lagging behind young women and young non-binary respondents. Compared to young men, young non-binary respondents had significantly higher rejection of some aspects of gender inequality and violence against women.[2] Also compared to young men, young women respondents had significantly greater:

- understanding of violence against women, including recognition of the behaviours that constitute violence against women and domestic violence (2 of 3 subscales)
- rejection of gender inequality, including rejection of attitudes that deny inequality experiences, condone limiting women's autonomy, normalise sexism, reinforce rigid gender roles and undermine women's leadership (5 of 5 subscales)
- rejection of violence against women, including rejection of attitudes that minimise violence against women, mistrust women's reports of violence, and objectify women and disregard their consent (3 of 3 subscales).

Key finding 6: Young people have similar attitudes to people aged 25 years or older, but weaker understanding of violence against women

Young respondents had weaker understanding of violence against women compared to respondents aged 25 years or older

Compared to respondents aged 25 years or older, young respondents demonstrated weaker understanding of violence against women, including recognition of behaviours as forms of violence against women and domestic violence, and understanding of the gendered nature of violence.

Young respondents had similar attitudes to respondents aged 25 years or older

Young respondents had similar attitudes towards gender inequality and violence against women as respondents aged 25 years or older, with only two exceptions. Compared to respondents aged 25 years or older, young respondents demonstrated weaker rejection of attitudes that condone limiting women's autonomy and attitudes that excuse or minimise violence against women.

2 All results for young non-binary respondents should be treated as indicative rather than definitive, given their relatively small numbers (which can reduce the statistical power to detect significant differences).

Young respondents were more likely than those aged 25 years or older to say they would be bothered but would not intervene if a boss told a sexist joke

Regarding bystander responses, young respondents were significantly more likely than respondents aged 25 years or older to say that they would be bothered but would not intervene upon hearing a boss tell a sexist joke.

Key finding 7: Within the cohort of young people, 16- to 17-year-olds and 18- to 24-year-olds have similar understanding of violence against women and attitudes towards gender inequality, but rejection of violence against women strengthens with age

Young respondents aged 16 to 17 years and 18 to 24 years had similar understanding of violence against women and attitudes towards gender inequality

The two youth age groups had similar levels of understanding of violence against women and attitudes towards gender inequality, with two exceptions. Compared to 16- to 17-year-olds, 18- to 24-year-olds were significantly more likely to:

- correctly identify a range of abusive behaviours as domestic violence
- strongly reject attitudes that condone limiting women's autonomy.

Young respondents aged 18 to 24 years had stronger rejection of violence against women compared to 16- to 17-year-olds

Rejection of violence against women strengthened with age. Compared to 16- to 17-year-olds, 18- to 24-year-olds demonstrated significantly stronger rejection of:

- violence against women, including attitudes that excuse and minimise violence and mistrust and objectify women
- attitudes that condone domestic violence
- attitudes that condone sexual violence, including sexual harassment and sexual assault.

In addition, compared to 16- to 17-year olds, 18- to 24-year-olds had stronger rejection and stronger understanding of technology-facilitated abuse.

Implications

The NCAS findings indicate that careful consideration needs to be given to the timing, setting and focus of effective violence prevention strategies with young people. As attitudes towards relationships, equality and violence begin developing early and continue to mature in adolescence and young adulthood, prevention initiatives with young people should begin in early childhood and continue throughout school and post-school contexts. Given the broad context of influence on young people's attitudes (e.g. peers, families, schools, institutions, communities, online environments), multi-setting and whole-of-school and community approaches are needed to foster cultural change. For example, school-based programs should adopt a whole-of-school approach that brings together young people's main agents of socialisation, including peers, parents and teachers, and supports key stakeholders in the delivery of effective programs.

The 2021 NCAS findings also highlight specific areas where prevention effort is needed to address gaps in young people's understanding and challenge persisting harmful attitudes towards gender inequality and violence against women. For example, key areas for prevention focus include improving young people's identification of technology-facilitated abuse and how to navigate consent in situations involving alcohol and drugs, as well as increasing young people's awareness of the gendered drivers of violence against women.

The following implications arise from the NCAS results that are unique for young people. These implications **supplement** the implications in the Main report that apply to Australians of all ages, including young people.

As detailed in Chapter 10, the implications of the unique NCAS results for young people are as follows:

- **Begin violence prevention early because understanding and attitudes develop early** (Section 10.1).
- **Continue prevention efforts throughout the formative years in an age-appropriate way** (Section 10.1).
- **Work across genders and particularly with boys and men to address gender differences** (Section 10.1).

- **Investigate drivers of continued improvement in young people's rejection of violence against women** (Section 10.2).
- **Investigate and support young people's recognition that violence is a problem in their local area** (Section 10.2).
- **Challenge gender-ignoring biases by highlighting pervasive gendered differences in structures and systems** (Section 10.3).
- **Reframe "care and concern" to support young people to recognise abusive behaviour** (Section 10.3). Highlight what respectful relationships look like (in person and online) and how problematic or abusive behaviours are not acceptable even if ostensibly motivated by care and concern.
- **Adopt gender-transformative approaches to break down rigid gender norms among young people** (Section 10.4).
- **Challenge young people's acceptance of male power in intimate relationships and dating scripts** (Section 10.4).
- **Strengthen co-design with young people and victims and survivors** (Section 10.5). Policymakers and practitioners could consider working directly with young people, including young victims and survivors, to co-design prevention initiatives.
- **Conduct research with perpetrators and develop early intervention** (Section 10.5).
- **Learn from the finding that most young people know where to seek help for domestic violence** (Section 10.6).
- **Implement sexual violence prevention initiatives across the population** (Section 10.6).
- **Increase young people's knowledge, skills and confidence to act as prosocial bystanders** (Section 10.7).
- **Policies in workplaces and other settings should consider power dynamics to facilitate prosocial bystander behaviour** (Section 10.7).
- **Primary prevention with young people is important because gendered differences in understanding and attitudes start early** (Section 10.8).

1 Introduction: Young people, gendered attitudes and violence against women

1.1 Violence against women is a widespread problem

Violence against women is a widespread health, social and economic problem, affecting approximately one third of women globally (KPMG, 2016; Our Watch, 2021a; World Health Organization [WHO], 2021a). Violence against women occurs in many forms and contexts. Major forms of violence against women include physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, social, cultural, spiritual, financial and technology-facilitated violence, abuse or control. Contexts include homes, workplaces, social environments, the public domain, residential care facilities or institutions, and the virtual or online world (Cox, 2015a; Our Watch, 2021a). Violence can take structural or symbolic forms when embedded within the policies and practices of institutions that interact with wider systems of oppression and discrimination against particular groups of women (Hourani et al., 2021). Violence against women thus presents a complex, multidimensional challenge that requires long-term cross-sector collaboration and coordination, including among community, health, education, business and government stakeholders.

Violence against women in Australia

In Australia, population-based prevalence data from the 2021–2022 Personal Safety Survey (PSS) shows that violence against women remains a pervasive problem. For example, after the age of 15 years:

- 1 in 2 women have experienced sexual harassment (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2017)[3]
- 1 in 4 women have experienced violence by an intimate partner (ABS, 2023a)
- 1 in 5 women have experienced sexual violence (ABS, 2023a)
- 1 in 5 women have experienced stalking (ABS, 2023a).

Global population-level data demonstrates that domestic violence and sexual violence are predominantly gendered, with women being the main victims and men being the main perpetrators (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2014; WHO, 2021a).

In Australia, the 2021–2022 PSS confirms that men experience lower rates than women of domestic violence (7% versus 23%) and sexual violence (6% versus 22%; ABS, 2023a). Furthermore, according to the PSS, the perpetrator was a man in the overwhelming majority (97%) of cases of sexual violence experienced by women after the age of 15 years (ABS, 2023c). Women are also more likely than men to suffer adverse impacts from domestic violence victimisation, including fear, anxiety and physical injury (ABS, 2017). A recent population-level analysis of homicide cases involving intimate partners in Australia similarly demonstrated the gendered nature of domestic violence. Approximately three quarters of these cases (77%) involved a male offender murdering a female (current or former) partner (Australian Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Network & Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety [ANROWS], 2022). Only a minority of cases (21%) involved a female offender, and most of these female offenders were known to be the primary victim of domestic violence in the relationship (71%; Australian Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Network & ANROWS, 2022).

Violence against women has a profound and long-term toll on victims and survivors, their families, communities and broader society. Debilitating effects on victims and survivors and their children include acute and chronic mental and physical health issues, and increased risk of experiencing child abuse and neglect, homelessness and homicide (ANROWS, 2018; Lum On et al., 2016; WHO, 2021b). Broader societal impacts include costs related to health, welfare, housing, employment and justice services, as well as costs related to prevention initiatives (ABS, 2023a; ANROWS, 2018; Australian Institute of Health and Welfare [AIHW], 2019; Dembo et al., 2018; KPMG, 2016; Miller-Graff et al., 2016; Serpell et al., 2022). The total economic cost of violence against women and their children in 2015–16 in Australia was estimated to be $22–26 billion, which is likely to be an under-estimate due to factors such as under-reporting and under-representation of at-risk minority groups (KPMG, 2016).

The Australian Government response to the unacceptable prevalence of violence against women is embodied in the *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2010–2022* (hereafter the National Plan 2010–2022; Council of Australian Governments [COAG], 2010) and the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032* (hereafter the National Plan 2022–2032; Department of Social Services [DSS], 2022). The National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS) is a key means of measuring progress against the National Plans. Community understanding and attitudes regarding violence against women are shaped by, and in part reflect, social norms embedded in organisational, community, institutional and societal practices, systems and structures. Thus, the NCAS functions as a gauge for how Australia is progressing in changing the broader climate that facilitates and maintains violence against women.

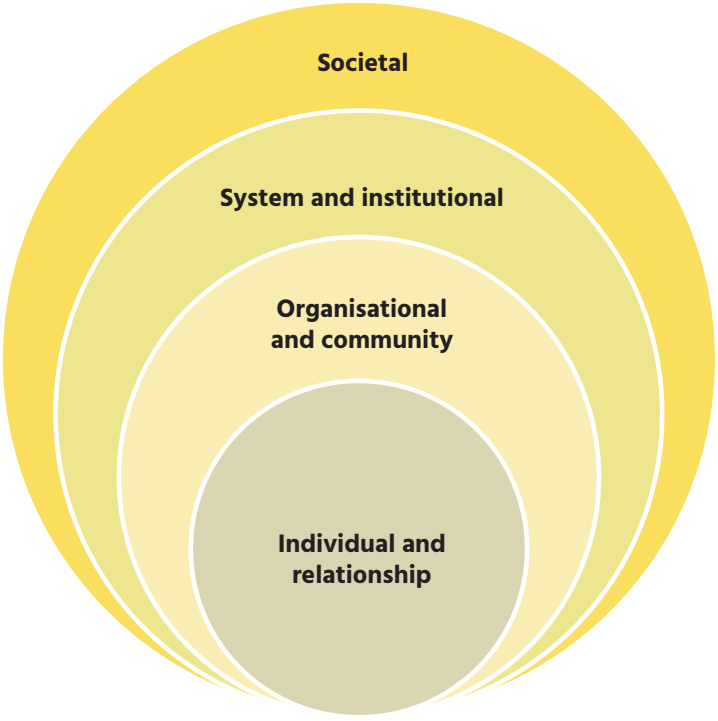
3 We present 2021–2022 PSS data for all violence types other than sexual harassment. The ABS recommends using 2016 rather than 2021–2022 PSS data for sexual harassment due to its greater reliability.

1.2 Drivers of violence against women

Violence against women is a complex phenomenon that is underpinned by multiple factors (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022; Heise, 1998; Our Watch, 2021a). Gender inequality is one key factor that drives violence against women (Flood, 2019b; Webster et al., 2018; WHO, 2022). *Change the Story: A Shared Framework for the Primary Prevention of Violence against Women in Australia* outlines four key gendered drivers of violence against women, namely attitudes that condone violence against women, support rigid gender roles, tolerate disrespect or aggression towards women, and endorse limits to women's decision-making and independence (Our Watch, 2021a). Attitudes that condone violence towards women and gender inequality are intricately linked to other factors within society that contribute to violence against women (García-Moreno et al., 2015; Sardinha & Catalán, 2018).

As Figure 1-1 and Table 1-1 show, the socioecological model of violence against women considers the complex interplay between all these contributory factors that operate at different levels within society: the individual and relationship level; the organisational and community level; the system and institutional level; and the societal level (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022; Heise, 1998). Crucially, this model recognises both gender inequality and other inequalities underpinned by oppression and discrimination, such as racism, ableism, classism, cissexism and heteronormativity, as key *interacting* drivers of violence against women (Carman et al., 2020; Hulley et al., 2023; Our Watch, 2021a; Weldon & Kerr, 2020). The sociological model is thus consistent with an *intersectional approach* to violence, which posits that different types of oppression and discrimination can be experienced by some people *simultaneously* (Crenshaw, 1991). These simultaneous oppressions can interact to produce distinct forms of inequalities and violence for some marginalised groups, as well as differential outcomes from this victimisation (Carman et al., 2020; Hulley et al., 2023; Our Watch, 2021a; Weldon & Kerr, 2020). For example, intersecting inequalities have been argued to increase risk of certain forms of violence or to produce specific barriers to help-seeking or worse outcomes for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander women, migrant and refugee women, women with disability and LGBTQ+ women (Callander et al., 2019; Calton et al., 2015; Cripps, 2021; Edwards et al., 2015; Femi-Ajao et al., 2020; Frawley & Wilson, 2016; Hulley et al., 2023; Koh et al., 2021; Langton et al., 2020; Messinger, 2017; Murray et al., 2019; Nancarrow et al., 2020; Serrato Calero et al., 2020; Stein et al., 2018; Streur et al., 2019; Ussher et al., 2020; Watego et al., 2021).

Figure 1-1: The socioecological model of violence against women



Source: Adapted from Our Watch (2021a, p. 34).

Table 1-1

Socioecological factors that contribute to or facilitate violence against women

Societal

Broad societal factors can facilitate or create a context in which violence is encouraged or inhibited, such as via social and cultural norms that endorse or normalise gender inequality and violence against women

(Flood, 2020; Rizzo et al., 2020; Sabol et al., 2020; Tomsen & Gadd, 2019)

For example, dominant (or hegemonic) patterns of masculinity associated with control, dominance, aggression and hypersexuality have been found to be associated with violence against women

(Collins, 2012; Gallagher & Parrott, 2011; McCarthy et al., 2018; Morrison et al., 2018; Peralta & Tuttle, 2013; Willie et al., 2018)

Societal factors that create the context for the marginalisation and discrimination faced by particular groups of women, including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander women, women from LGBTQ+ communities, migrant women and women with disability, can also perpetuate violence against women from these communities

(Brown et al., 2021; Carman et al., 2020; Dyson et al., 2017; Langton et al., 2020; Mailhot Amborski et al., 2021; Our Watch, 2018; Tomsa et al., 2021)

Broad health, economic, educational and social policies can also serve to maintain or disrupt gender, economic and social inequalities

(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022; Lowe et al., 2022)

System and institutional

Formal and informal arrangements in policies, systems and institutions may support and maintain, or challenge, the conditions that facilitate the perpetration or experience of violence, including gender inequality and other intersecting sources of inequality and oppression

(Hardesty & Ogolsky, 2020; Our Watch, 2021a; Song et al., 2020)

Formal structures include rules and legislation that fail to address violence against women and gender inequality, while informal structures include patriarchal hierarchies that serve to embed and maintain inequalities for women, particularly those who experience intersecting oppressions and discrimination

(Our Watch, 2021a; Pease, 2021)

Examples at this level include policies and practices that hinder active participation and leadership of women based on sexism, racism, classism, ableism etc.

(Burton et al., 2020; Clark et al., 2021; Hideg & Shen, 2019; Liu, 2021; Our Watch, 2021a; Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005)

Similarly, rewarding hegemonic masculinity traits such as hypersexuality, dominance and aggression in systems and institutions creates an environment in which women are targets for objectification, hostility and denigration, increasing the acceptability and likelihood of violence against women

(Dahl et al., 2015; Murnen, 2015; Our Watch, 2019; Pease, 2021; Rizzo et al., 2020)

Organisational and community

Organisational and community norms, structures and practices that endorse or fail to challenge gender inequality, other inequalities and violence can influence large numbers of people. Therefore, the characteristics of schools, workplaces and neighbourhoods can increase the likelihood of becoming either a victim or a perpetrator of violence

(Banyard et al., 2019; Copp et al., 2019; Jackson & Sundaram, 2018; Kidman & Kohler, 2020; Yeo et al., 2021)

Dominant forms of masculinity and heteronormativity which are associated with violence can also be expressed and maintained at this level

(Carman et al., 2020; The Men's Project & Flood, 2018)

Examples include organisational and social responses to workplace sexual harassment that suggest harassment is based on men's inability to control their sexual desires or that women should be flattered by male attention

(Carman et al., 2020; Hlavka, 2014; E. A. Taylor et al., 2018)

Individual and relationship

The individual's unique experiences, attitudes, knowledge, skills and relationships may affect their likelihood of becoming either a perpetrator or a victim of violence

(Bell & Higgins, 2015; Cano-Gonzalez et al., 2020; Hamai et al., 2021; Jouriles et al., 2014; Kimber et al., 2015; Ogilvie et al., 2022; Reyes et al., 2017; White & Geffner, 2022)

Other individual factors that may be associated with both perpetration and victimisation include alcohol use, income, education level, psychopathology (including depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder and personality disorders) and poor self-esteem

(Armenti et al., 2018; Cortés-Treviño et al., 2022; Graham et al., 2018; Mannell et al., 2021; Renner et al., 2015; Spencer et al., 2019)

Similarly, individual attitudes towards gender inequality, rigid gender roles and the use of violence to solve interpersonal disputes may also be associated with the perpetration of violence against women

(Flood, 2019b; Latzman et al., 2018; Our Watch, 2019)

At the relationship level, a person's closest social circle of peers, their partners and their family members influence the person's behaviour and understanding of violence against women. Specifically, membership in social networks characterised by violence- and rape-supportive norms is associated with increased risk for perpetration among men. These peer associations reinforce a shared hostility and aggression towards women that is associated with violence against women and failure to act prosocially when witnessing this violence

(Corboz et al., 2016; DeKeseredy, Hall-Sanchez, et al., 2018; Flood, 2008, 2019a; Ha et al., 2019; Leen et al., 2012)

Note: Informed by the socioecological model of violence against women (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022) and *Change the Story* (Our Watch, 2021a, p. 34).

The drivers of violence against women can be facilitated or disrupted at each level within the social ecology, can increase or lower different people's risk of experiencing or perpetrating violence, and can produce different outcomes of violence for different people (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022; Heise, 1998).

The model acknowledges that individuals' attitudes can both influence and be influenced by factors at higher levels in the social ecology. Problematic attitudes not only directly contribute to the incidence of violence against women but also indirectly influence responses to this violence both from victims' and survivors' informal support networks, including family, friends and work colleagues, and from service providers and law enforcement (Tekkas Kerman & Betrus, 2020). Individual attitudes also reflect the norms of inequality and violence encoded in health, economic, educational and social practices, policies, structures and systems that reinforce the culture of violence against women throughout all levels of society (Nayak et al., 2003).

1.3 Violence against women and young Australians

For young Australians, the problem of violence against women is particularly concerning for a number of reasons. First, young women are a group who are at high risk of victimisation, with many types of violence, including stalking, sexual assault and intimate partner violence, being experienced more commonly by young Australian women under 25 years of age compared to both young Australian men and Australian women 25 years or older (ABS, 2017; AIHW, 2022; Cox, 2015b). For example, the 2021–2022 PSS revealed that young women aged 18 to 24 years had the highest rate of experiencing sexual violence in the previous two years (12.4%) compared to older age groups (4.5% of 25- to 34-year-old women; 2.5% of 35- to 44-year-old women; ABS, 2023c). Sexual harassment followed a similar pattern, with women aged 18 to 24 years being the most likely to have experienced sexual harassment in the previous 12 months (35%), and women aged 65 years and over being the least likely (3.2%; ABS, 2023b). Further, the Australian Child Maltreatment Study (Haslam et al., 2023) provides evidence of the gendered nature of child sexual assault, finding that 1 in 3 young women aged 16 to 24 years had experienced child sexual abuse (35.2%) compared with 1 in 7 young men (14.5%; Haslam et al., 2023). Young women also reported substantially higher rates than young men of lifetime emotional abuse (40.5% versus 26.9%) and neglect (12.5% versus 7.2%; Haslam et al., 2023). This study also found that lifetime exposure to domestic violence was higher for young people than for those aged 25 years or older, with young women and young men having similarly high rates (Haslam et al., 2023).

Second, research spanning four decades demonstrates that the detrimental impact of early experiences of violence on children's physical and mental health continues across the lifespan (Carlson et al., 2019; Haslam et al., 2023). Exposure to violence in childhood, including to sexual violence and family violence, increases the risk of re-exposure or of experiencing other types of concurrent gender-based violence (poly-victimisation) across social contexts (Yount & Carrera, 2006). For example, a large population-based Australian study found that women who had experienced childhood sexual violence were twice as likely as women of the same age without a history of childhood sexual violence to have experienced recent sexual violence, 33 to 59 per cent more likely to have experienced recent domestic violence and 60 to 63 per cent more likely to have experienced recent physical violence (Townsend et al., 2022).

Furthermore, in Australia, exposure to family violence is increasingly recognised as a form of child abuse (Campo, 2015). For certain professions, mandatory reporting of child abuse following exposure to family violence is enforced under the law in New South Wales, Tasmania and the Northern Territory (Child Family Community Australia, 2020). Such legislation is underpinned by research documenting the impacts of family violence on children's brain development and key psychological functioning, including interpersonal and emotional regulation. Children who experience family or domestic violence are susceptible to developing poor self-regulation skills and insecure attachment styles, which can impede their ability to navigate social (e.g. school) and romantic interactions (Carlson et al., 2019; Maughan & Cicchetti, 2002; Puzzo et al., 2016). In addition, these developmental trajectories for children exposed to violence may result in neurological and psychological changes that increase their risk of subsequent victimisation or perpetration (Carlson et al., 2019; Dodge & Pettit, 2003).

However, not all children exposed to violence against women experience long-term harms and some may thrive (Kitzmann et al., 2003). Certain factors (including individual, peer and parental factors) can sometimes protect children exposed to violence from subsequent development of psychological and physical problems (Carlson et al., 2019). Interventions designed to promote childhood protective factors and prevent early experiences of violence are critical for minimising lifelong harm, including re-victimisation, and stopping cyclical violence in the community. Promoting young

people's wellbeing potentially carries immense benefit to the community in facilitating the prevention of violence against women.

1.4 Attitude formation among young people

Young people are at a life stage when their values, attitudes, understanding and expressions of gender are developing. Values of respect, equality and care and a flexible understanding of gender roles, relationships and identities are associated with healthy relationships (Chandra-Mouli et al., 2017). Exposure to attitudes, settings, practices, systems, structures and social norms that support violence against women and gender inequality can undermine the foundations for respectful relationships (Chandra-Mouli et al., 2017). Values and gender identities formed at this developmental stage can persist and influence future experiences into the life-course (Chandra-Mouli et al., 2017; Flood & Fergus, 2008).

Young people have limited personal experience to draw on to navigate gender roles, identities and relationships (Flood & Fergus, 2008). Research indicates that young people's socialisation, including in relation to gender identities and violence, is influenced largely by their family, peers, educational institutions and broader systems and structures, and by popular culture experienced through the media and other online and digital technologies (Dueñas et al., 2020; Heyder et al., 2021; Senekal et al., 2023).

Growing recognition of the diverse contexts influencing young people's attitude formation has led to a wide range of primary prevention strategies aiming to harness the positive influence of families, role models and peer groups in online and offline environments. For example, these primary prevention strategies have included positive parenting programs, respectful relationships education and whole-of-school approaches (Moura et al., 2023; Our Watch, 2021d; Stern et al., 2023).

Influence of peers on young people's attitude formation

Peer relationships play a significant role in shaping young people's understanding, attitudes and behaviours regarding many social and cultural issues, including gender inequality and violence against women (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2013; Powell, 2014). Young individuals tend to gravitate towards friends with similar interests and behaviours, producing homogenous peer groups over time (Dishion & Patterson, 2015). This phenomenon can have positive influence when peer groups hold respectful attitudes towards women and girls, support gender equality and resist ideologies about male entitlement in relation to sex and social status. Conversely, research shows that young men affiliated with peers who harbour problematic views of women and sexual relationships are more likely to commit violence against women (Arriaga & Foshee, 2004; Flood et al., 2022; Foshee et al., 2011, 2013; Schad et al., 2008).

Further, men's "locker room talk", "banter", "fighting for fun" and "lad culture" have been identified as common in interactions between Australian men and have been associated with rape myth acceptance and the normalisation of disrespectful attitudes towards women and gender and sexual minorities (Bolton et al., 2021; Flood, 2008; Jackson & Sundaram, 2018; Jeffries, 2020; Johansson & Odenbring, 2021; Nichols, 2018; Odenbring & Johansson, 2021; Vaynman et al., 2020; Whittle et al., 2019). Also noteworthy is that "backlash" attitudes, which resist progressive movement to address gender inequality and violence against women, are more common among men than women (Carian, 2022; Flood et al., 2020; Kidder et al., 2004).

Youth-focused, peer-led interventions are based on the assumptions that youth is a critical developmental period for gender-related attitudinal and knowledge formation and that peer groups play a prominent role in young people's socialisation (Johnson et al., 2022; Menesini et al., 2012; Morean et al., 2021). Youth-focused, peer-led interventions aim to address detrimental peer influences and promote respectful attitudes and relationships among young people. Such interventions have been shown to assist young people to develop skills for cultivating healthy relationships, to improve confidence and agency for challenging violence against women and to interact safely in online environments (Johnson et al., 2022; Menesini et al., 2012; Morean et al., 2021).

Influence of media and digital technologies on young people's attitude formation

Popular culture is also a key influence on young people's attitudes and values, including through media and other digital technologies. The present generation of young people is immersed in online and digital technologies at unprecedented levels (Ofcom, 2019). In addition, young people's online activities are associated with significant and novel challenges for parental cyber control (Altarturi et al., 2020; Elsaesser et al., 2017). For example, young people today face unparalleled risks related to breaches of privacy and security, encountering misinformation

and exposure to age-inappropriate material (e.g. violent pornography) and experiencing online bullying (Australian Communications and Media Authority, 2021; eSafety Commissioner, 2022b).

> I think social media has a really big impact ... on the way young people view some of this stuff. So a lot of people ... will agree in theory. But when it comes to practice ... the culture around it is still taboo.
>
> – Youth Ambassador

Young people's attitudes towards violence against women are shaped by the objectification and dehumanisation of women that is common in mainstream media, television, movies, music videos, video games, social media, internet pornography and other digital and online platforms (Beck et al., 2012; Bernstein et al., 2022; Fox & Potocki, 2016; Kahlor, 2011; Rhodes et al., 2018; Seabrook et al., 2019). In particular, the accessibility of pornography and the normalisation of pornography use by young people has led to growing concerns about its potential impacts on young men's mental health and young women's risk of experiencing sexual violence (Crabbe & Flood, 2021; Davis et al., 2021). Pornography that is violent or portrays women disrespectfully can create and reinforce a culture in which violence against women is acceptable (Tarzia & Tyler, 2021). Pornography frequently contains objectifying and dehumanising portrayals of women and often includes scenes of women experiencing aggressive and violent acts carried out by one or more men (Tarzia & Tyler, 2021). Pornography that draws on sexist and racist stereotypes can further harm women and minority groups (Benard, 2016). Additionally, some pornography involves harm to women during its production and individuals may use pornography to facilitate violence against women and children (DeKeseredy & Hall-Sanchez, 2017; Sinnamon, 2017; Tarzia & Tyler, 2021; Tyler, 2015; Vera-Gray et al., 2021; Winters et al., 2020).

A recent Australian study found 81 per cent of male respondents aged 15 to 29 years have been exposed to pornography, with the median age of first exposure being 13 years old (Lim et al., 2017). Within this study, 39 per cent of young male respondents reported accessing pornography daily over the past year, compared with 4 per cent of young female respondents (Lim et al., 2017). The exposure of young people to sexist and violence-supportive content before they have developed a healthy gender and sexual identity may encourage misogynistic, violent "scripts" in young people's own sexual behaviour and relationships (Davis et al., 2018; Flood, 2009; Martellozzo et al., 2016; Massey et al., 2021; Peterson et al., 2022). For example, research shows associations between young men's pornography use, greater rape myth acceptance and objectification of women (Seabrook & Ward, 2019). Further, consumption of aggressive or violent internet pornography has been associated with increased likelihood of perpetrating intimate partner violence (Beymer et al., 2021; Brem et al., 2021; DeKeseredy & Hall-Sanchez, 2017; Tarzia, 2020).

> ... it's difficult to have a conversation about, you know, the influences on our attitudes of sex without addressing pornography, given that ... more than half of the population are seeing pornography before they're 13. And given how accessible it is ... do people view pornography as real life? Do they take sex tips from the porn that they see?
>
> – Youth Ambassador

Additionally, less is understood about the complex impacts of emerging forms of online abuse, such as non-consensual sexting and the unsolicited sending and receiving of nude images (Stanley et al., 2018). Sexting has been found to be a key form of sexual harassment of women by men in younger age groups (Mishna et al., 2023; Smith, 2018). For example, one study found that 40 per cent of young women aged 18 to 36 years reported having been sent unsolicited nude images by male peers (Smith, 2018). Furthermore, receiving unwanted sexts or sending nude images under coercion has been linked to increased symptoms of depression, anxiety and stress, and lower self-esteem (Klettke et al., 2019).

The detrimental impact of sexist and abusive digital content on young people highlights the importance of promoting safe and respectful digital environments and providing young people with age-appropriate education on sexual consent and healthy relationships. Such strategies have a role to play in both facilitating young people's wellbeing and changing the culture underlying violence against women.

1.5 The impact of COVID-19 on young Australians

Key events in Australia and globally since the 2017 NCAS have amplified attention to violence against women. Notably, the balance of evidence indicates that the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated violence against women and its adverse impacts (AIHW, 2021; Boxall & Morgan, 2021; Dalton, 2020; Drotning et al., 2023; Gosangi et al., 2020; Kourti et al., 2021).[4]

> I think also, in a weird way, [the pandemic] sort of sense-checked a lot of experiences for people. Like, it allowed them to check in with friends and family. And there was a lot more discussion on actually what you're going through. "Is that OK?" And "that's not normal". I think it gave people an opportunity to realise their experiences were not acceptable because I think pre-pandemic there is just a lot of, like, "oh, he's just being cute" or "he just misses me" or, you know, it's just that sort of attitude that I was seeing. Or even with queer relationships, like, they're just, you know, "they missed me" or "they're just expressing themselves."
>
> – Youth Ambassador

During the pandemic, young Australians' increased use of digital technologies was found to surpass usage by older cohorts (Australian Communications and Media Authority, 2021). Both negative and positive impacts of this increased digital activity were reported. For example, greater use of social media by young people was linked to increased cyberbullying, sexting, sexual comments on pictures shared online by girls and pornography consumption (Islam et al., 2020; Mkhize & Gopal, 2021). At the same time, young Australians' use of digital technologies was also reported to have some positive impacts. An Australian study found that young people used social media during the pandemic for suicide-related help-seeking and offering peers online support (Bailey et al., 2022). Additionally, young Indigenous Australians' use of and access to digital technologies during the pandemic was found to assist with their connection to culture, community and Country, and promoted positive mental health and wellbeing (Walker et al., 2021).

These findings again highlight the impacts digital technologies can have on young people and the potential for using technology to foster healthy relationships and attitudes towards violence against women.

1.6 Prevention of violence against women

The impacts of violence against women can be reduced by taking decisive action to prevent violence before it starts, intervening early, responding appropriately to violence when it occurs, and supporting recovery and healing (DSS, 2022). Ending violence against women requires addressing the range of oppressions that drive and reinforce violence against women, including violence against the most marginalised groups of women who remain overrepresented in victimisation data and who confront unique challenges in accessing support and assistance (Kulkarni, 2019; Morgan et al., 2016; Our Watch, 2021a; Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005; Thiara et al., 2011).

As outlined in the National Plan 2022–2032, initiatives for preventing violence against women can be divided into four types (DSS, 2022; Our Watch, 2021a; VicHealth, 2017):

- *prevention* (also described as primary prevention) – working to change the underlying social drivers of violence by addressing the attitudes and systems that drive violence against women and children to stop it before it starts
- *early intervention* (also described as secondary prevention) – identifying and supporting individuals who are at high risk of experiencing or perpetrating violence and preventing violence from escalating or reoccurring
- *response* (also described as tertiary prevention) – providing services and supports to address existing violence, and support victims and survivors experiencing violence, including via crisis support and police intervention, and fostering a trauma-

4 See the Main report, pp. 34–40, for a discussion of other key events regarding violence against women since 2017.

informed justice system that will hold people who use violence to account
- *recovery and healing* (also described as tertiary prevention) – helping to reduce the risk of victim and survivor re-traumatisation and supporting victims and survivors to be safe and healthy, and to recover from trauma and the physical, mental, emotional and economic impacts of violence (DSS, 2022).[5]

Young Australians as change agents

As noted above, young people are a key demographic group who could play a critical role in shaping a culture that rejects violence against women and fosters gender equality (Hindin, 2014; Landry et al., 2020; S. Taylor et al., 2017). Young people are at a unique life stage encompassing wide-ranging physical and psychosocial development, when they are gaining independence, forming relationships and cementing their values and attitudes regarding important social issues, including violence against women and gender equality (Patton et al., 2016). When empowered, young people can be powerful catalysts as agents of social change in the area of violence against women, as active participants, advocates, peer leaders and educators (Struthers et al., 2019). Examples of young Australian advocates for reducing violence against women include Grace Tame (Australian of the Year in 2021), Brittany Higgins, Chanel Contos, Conor Pall, Dhanya Mani, Saxon Mullins, Tarang Chawla and Yasmin Poole, among others (e.g. Arrow, 2022; Chawla, 2023; Farid, 2022; Fitzsimons, 2021; Pall, 2023; Ross, 2022; Teach Us Consent, 2021; Tuohy, 2022; Turnbull, 2022). The advocacy of young people has been instrumental in ensuring that violence against women does not slip from the broader Australian consciousness, and garners powerful grassroots support for change (Struthers et al., 2019).

1.7 Previous NCAS findings on young Australians' attitudes towards violence against women

The 2017 NCAS found a few differences between young and other respondents in their understanding of the nature of violence against women. Although young respondents' overall understanding of violence had improved, they had lower recognition of non-physical forms of violence than respondents 25 to 64 years of age (Politoff et al., 2019). In addition, young respondents showed a decline over time in their understanding of the gendered nature of domestic violence as a phenomenon mainly perpetrated by men against women. While all age groups showed this decline, it was more marked for young respondents (Politoff et al., 2019). Young respondents were also less likely than others to say they would intervene if they witnessed abuse or disrespect towards women.

A mixed-methods investigation by Carlisle et al., (2022) delved further into the 2017 NCAS findings regarding young Australians' understanding of domestic violence. This study revealed that young people had a nuanced understanding of domestic violence as a "snowballing" or escalating pattern of multiple abusive and violent behaviours. Further, they felt that "domestic violence and abuse" was a better term than "domestic violence" for capturing the range of physical and non-physical behaviours involved. Despite this nuanced understanding of domestic violence, the Carlisle et al., (2022) study also provided insights about the gaps in young people's understanding of the gendered nature of domestic violence. They conceptualised domestic violence through a "gender-ignoring lens" influenced by an idealised notion of gender equality rather than through an understanding of the existing structural inequalities that result in women being the predominant victims of domestic violence and men the main perpetrators.

Findings in the 2021 NCAS Main report on young Australians' attitudes towards violence against women

The Main report on the 2021 NCAS by Coumarelos, Weeks, et al., (2023a) focuses on the results for Australia as a whole, but also provides some age comparisons. As outlined in the Main report, demographic factors such as age and gender were associated with understanding and attitudes regarding violence against women and gender inequality. However, demographic factors only explained a portion of the picture, indicating that other factors are also important in shaping this understanding and these attitudes.

5 For clarity, throughout the reports on the 2021 NCAS, "primary prevention" is used to refer specifically to actions consistent with Domain 1 (Prevention) from the National Plan 2022–2032. In addition, "prevention" is used as a more general term that can include actions consistent with any, some or all of the domains of the National Plan 2022–2032 (DSS, 2022).

Regarding young people's understanding and attitudes, based on multiple regression analyses, the Main report concludes that:

- Young respondents aged 16 to 24 years had similar understanding and rejection of violence against women and similar rejection of gender inequality to respondents aged 25 years or older.
- Young respondents aged 16 to 24 years were less likely than all ages on average to intend to intervene as prosocial bystanders if a boss told a sexist joke, even though they were more likely to be bothered by sexist jokes.

The NCAS findings to date provide valuable insights for primary prevention initiatives with young Australians. For example, they highlight the importance of education initiatives with young Australians to increase understanding of the non-physical forms of violence against women and of the gendered nature of domestic violence and the structural inequalities that underpin it. The findings also emphasise the need for interventions to build young people's confidence in acting as prosocial bystanders when they witness disrespect or abuse of women.

The present report details more granular analysis of the 2021 NCAS findings on young Australians' understanding and attitudes regarding violence against women and gender inequality. The Main report presents key differences between age groups based on overall measures of understanding and attitudes (i.e. scale measures that combine multiple questions to measure an overall concept). The present report builds on this by exploring the heterogeneity within the group of young people and the predictors of their attitudes and understanding. This report also drills down to examine how young people differ from other age groups on specific aspects of understanding and attitudes (e.g. as measured by individual survey questions). These analyses provide additional evidence for further informing education and prevention initiatives with young Australians to promote gender equality and reduce violence against women.

2 Research design

2.1 Aims of the 2021 NCAS

The 2021 NCAS aimed to:

- benchmark the Australian population's understanding and attitudes regarding violence against women, attitudes towards gender equality and intention to intervene prosocially when witnessing abuse or disrespect of women
- determine if understanding and attitudes had improved since the 2017 NCAS
- identify any notable gaps in understanding or more problematic attitudes
- identify demographic, attitudinal and contextual factors that are associated with problematic understanding and attitudes.

Aims of the 2021 NCAS report for young people

This report examines each of the 2021 NCAS aims specifically for young people by analysing the 2021 NCAS data from young respondents aged 16 to 24 years.

Ethics clearance for the project was provided by the University of Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee (ethics project number 2020/650).[6]

Note that this chapter presents a summary of the research aims and methodology. Full details are provided in the Technical report by Coumarelos, Honey, et al. (2023).

2.2 2021 NCAS instrument

The 2021 instrument included demographic items, items measuring understanding or attitudes regarding violence against women and attitudes towards gender inequality, and scenario-based items examining bystander responses when witnessing abuse or disrespect against women (Figure 2-1). Most items were retained from the 2017 NCAS to ensure reliable measurement of changes over time.

Demographic items

Self-reported demographic information about respondents was used to explore how understanding and attitudes may vary based on people's characteristics, backgrounds, contexts and locations. Demographic items included gender, age, sexuality, country of birth, length of time in Australia, language spoken at home, formal education, main labour activity, socioeconomic status of area of residence and gender composition of social network.[7] Demographic information was also used to assess how closely the demographic profile of the sample matched that of the Australian population and to make any necessary adjustments through data weighting (Section 2.3).

Items and scales measuring understanding and attitudes

Understanding and attitude items were grouped into nine psychometric scales, validated via Rasch analysis.[8] The strength of psychometrically validated scales is that they can measure a complex overall construct or concept (such as attitudes towards violence) that would be difficult to measure with a single item. The scales include the Gendered Violence and Inequality Scale (GVIS), which is an overarching "mega scale" that includes all understanding and attitude items that sit in the other eight scales. All scales were "anchored" to the GVIS via Rasch analysis to allow comparisons between scales and between subscales. The other eight scales included three "main" scales, namely:

- the Understanding of Violence against Women Scale (UVAWS)
- the Attitudes towards Gender Inequality Scale (AGIS)
- the Attitudes towards Violence against Women Scale (AVAWS).

Each main scale also includes subscales (identified via factor analysis), which measure key themes within the broader construct measured by the scale. In addition, five "type of violence" scales were developed to measure attitudes towards specific types of violence, namely:

- the Domestic Violence Scale (DVS)
- the Sexual Violence Scale (SVS), which was divided into the Sexual Assault Scale (SAS) and the Sexual Harassment Scale (SHS)
- the Technology-Facilitated Abuse Scale (TFAS).

All type of violence scales measure attitudes, apart from the TFAS, which measures both understanding and attitudes regarding technology-facilitated abuse. Together, the DVS and SVS comprise all but two of the 43 items in the AVAWS.

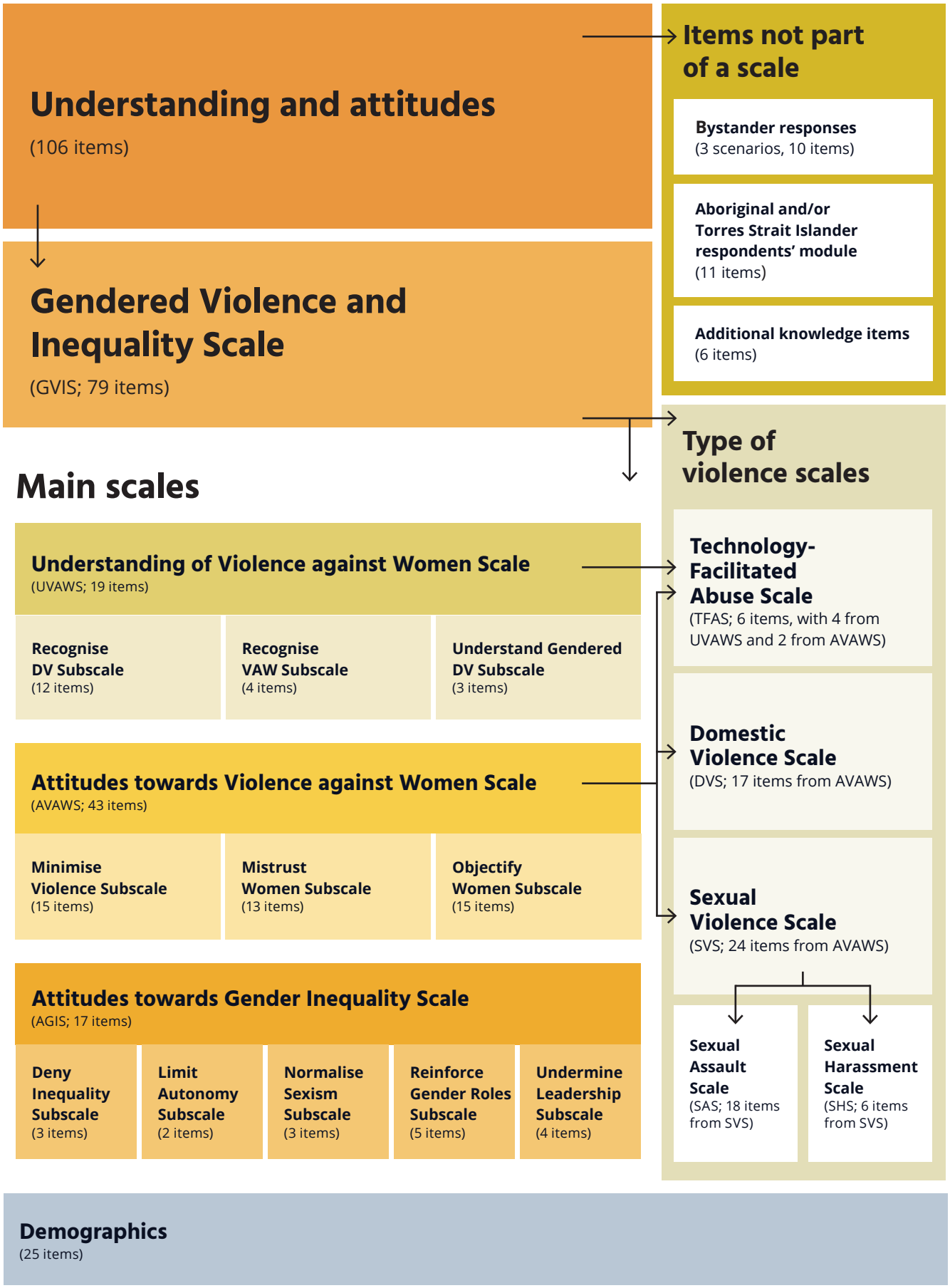
6 See the Technical report (Section T2.4) for further ethics considerations.

7 See the Technical report (Section T4.3) for descriptions of new and revised demographic items.

8 See the Technical report for an explanation of Rasch analysis (Section T20), the 2021 NCAS instrument (Section T15) and item details, including the items in each scale in 2021 and whether each item was retained from 2017 or was new/revised in 2021 (Section T3).

Figure 2-1

Components of the NCAS instrument, 2021



Note: DV = domestic violence; VAW = violence against women.

Changes to NCAS instrument

New or revised demographic items were included in 2021 on gender, sexuality and disability to provide additional and more inclusive demographic information, including capturing gender identity, diversity and experience more accurately and better capturing the range of physical, mental health and intellectual conditions and their impact on core activities. For the first time, the NCAS provides results for non-binary and gender-diverse respondents, where numbers were sufficient to do so.[9]

New items were also added to better measure understanding and attitudes regarding forms of violence that have emerged more recently or have not been a major focus of the NCAS previously. Items were added on forms of violence against women that are related to intersectional forms of oppression, based on a partner's migrant status, disability, gender experience, sexuality or religion. Items were also added on technology-facilitated abuse, sexual harassment and stalking.[10]

2.3 Sampling

The total 2021 NCAS sample consisted of 19,100 Australians aged 16 years or older, who were interviewed via mobile telephone between February 23 and July 18, 2021. The sampling approach largely involved random digit dialling (RDD) of mobile telephones, supplemented or "topped up" with listed mobile telephones. Eighty-one per cent of the interviews were achieved via RDD mobiles. The response rate was 11 per cent.[11]

The sample included 1,669 young respondents aged 16 to 24 years. Of these young respondents, 207 were 16 to 17 years of age and 1,462 were 18 to 24 years of age. Note that, throughout the report, "young respondents" and "young people" refer to ages 16 to 24 years, and "all respondents" refers to the total NCAS sample of 19,100 respondents. With respect to gender, the sample comprised 913 young men (55%), 715 young women (43%) and 36 young non-binary (2%) respondents.[12]

Weighting

To strengthen confidence that the survey results accurately represent the population, responses were weighted based on population benchmarks to align the sample and population demographic profiles within each state and territory.

2.4 Analysis and reporting

Data analysis was conducted both on individual items and on scale and subscale scores.

Item codes: To simplify reporting, each item was assigned an alphanumeric code (e.g. V1). The letter in the code identifies the item's thematic topic (V = violence against women; D = domestic violence; S = sexual violence; G = gender inequality; B = bystander response). The number corresponds to the order in which items within a thematic topic are presented in the NCAS instrument.

Scale scores: Each respondent received a (rescaled Rasch) score on each scale and subscale, based on their responses to the items in the scale or subscale. Scores on each scale or subscale could range from 0 to 100. Higher scores indicate a higher understanding of violence against women (UVAWS, TFAS), higher attitudinal rejection of gender inequality (AGIS) or higher attitudinal rejection of violence against women in its various forms (AVAWS, DVS, SVS, SAS, SHS, TFAS). The respondents' mean score on each scale or subscale was used to examine respondents' average level of understanding of violence or their average level of rejection of problematic attitudes towards violence or gender inequality.

"Advanced" understanding and rejection of problematic attitudes: Mean scores do not intrinsically indicate what might be considered a very "high" level of understanding or very "progressive" attitudes. Consequently, we classified respondents into "advanced" and "developing" categories to provide

9 Following stakeholder advice, for ease of understanding and due to small numbers, "non-binary" is used in reporting as an umbrella term to refer to all respondents who reported they were non-binary or another gender identity outside the gender binary. In total, 81 of the 19,100 NCAS respondents were in the "non-binary" category, with 7 of these non-binary respondents aged 16 to 17 years and 29 aged 18 to 24 years. Comparisons involving young non-binary respondents were not conducted at the item level due to small numbers on some items and were only conducted at the scale and subscale level where there was data for at least 30 young non-binary respondents. All results for young non-binary respondents should be treated as indicative rather than definitive, given their relatively small numbers (which can reduce the statistical power to detect significant differences). For further details about the measurement of gender, sexuality and disability, see the Main report, pp. 58–60.

10 For further details about the new items on different types of violence, see the Main report, p. 60.

11 The cooperation rate was 80.1 per cent and the refusal rate was 15.0 per cent. See the Technical report (Section T8.4) for the calculation of the response, cooperation and refusal rates.

12 Information on gender was missing or inadequately defined for five young respondents.

information on how Australia is tracking against the aspiration that everyone in the community has "advanced" understanding and attitudes. For each scale, each respondent was placed into one of two categories: "advanced" or "developing". For the UVAWS, these categories represented "advanced" or "developing" understanding of violence against women. For the scales measuring attitudes (AGIS, AVAWS, DVS, SVS), these categories represented "advanced" or "developing" rejection of problematic attitudes towards violence or gender inequality. The criteria used to define "advanced" understanding and "advanced" attitudes were as follows:

- Respondents in the "advanced" understanding category answered "yes, always" the behaviour is violence to at least 75 per cent of the UVAWS items and "yes, usually" to the remaining UVAWS items (or the equivalent).
- Respondents in the "advanced" rejection category for each attitude scale "strongly disagreed" with at least 75 per cent of the items in the scale, which described problematic attitudes, and "somewhat disagreed" with the remaining items in the scale (or the equivalent).[13]

Univariate, bivariate and multivariate data analyses were conducted as summarised below.

Univariate analysis involves one variable only and was used to report on young respondents' responses to each understanding, attitude and bystander item and on the percentage of young respondents categorised as having "advanced" understanding or attitudes according to each scale.

Bivariate analysis examines the direct or straightforward relationship between two variables only, such as an outcome of interest (e.g. understanding of violence against women) and one other variable or factor (e.g. a demographic factor such as age), without taking into account the effect of any other variables or factors. The bivariate analyses examined the results for young respondents aged 16 to 24 years on each scale and subscale (based on mean scores) and on each item:

- over time
- split by gender[14]
- split by two youth age groups, namely, 16- to 17-year-olds and 18- to 24-year-olds
- compared to the results for respondents aged 25 years or older.

Multiple regression examines the relationship of an outcome variable of interest (e.g. attitudes towards violence against women) to *multiple* factors (or input variables) considered together (e.g. multiple demographic characteristics). Multiple regression analysis has the advantage that it can determine which of multiple factors are *independently* related to or "predict" the outcome variable, *after* accounting for any relationships between the factors, and which factors are *most important* in predicting the outcome variable.

Multiple linear regression models were conducted to examine the factors that are independent predictors of young people's understanding of violence against women (UVAWS), attitudes towards gender inequality (AGIS) and attitudes towards violence against women (AVAWS).

As shown in Table 2-1, a separate multiple regression model was conducted to examine whether scores on each of the UVAWS, AGIS and AVAWS (the outcome variable) could be predicted by a number of demographic factors (the input variables; Model 1 for each scale). The demographic factors examined as potential predictors in the regressions are listed in the note to Table 2-1. Three additional multiple regression models were conducted using the AVAWS as the outcome variable to examine whether AVAWS scores could be predicted by the following input variables:

- UVAWS and AGIS scores (AVAWS Model 2)
- demographic factors and UVAWS and AGIS scores (AVAWS Model 3)
- scores on each UVAWS and AGIS subscale (AVAWS Model 4).

13 The "advanced" TFAS category means that the respondent answered "yes, always" the behaviour is violence or "strongly disagreed" with problematic attitudes for at least 75 per cent of items, and answered the remaining items "yes, usually" or "somewhat disagree".

14 Given the small number of young non-binary respondents (36), any results for this group should be treated with caution (as being indicative rather than definitive). Comparisons involving young non-binary respondents were not conducted at the item level due to small numbers on some items and were only conducted at the scale and subscale level where there was data for at least 30 young non-binary respondents.

As attitudes towards violence against women (AVAWS) are the key focus of the NCAS, the UVAWS and AGIS were examined as potential predictors of the AVAWS, but not vice versa.

Table 2-1: Youth multiple regression models, 2021

Outcome variable of interest	Model number	Input variables
UVAWS	UVAWS Model 1	Demographics
AGIS	AGIS Model 1	Demographics
AVAWS	AVAWS Model 1	Demographics
	AVAWS Model 2	UVAWS, AGIS
	AVAWS Model 3	Demographics, UVAWS, AGIS
	AVAWS Model 4	UVAWS subscales, AGIS subscales

Note: The demographic factors examined as input variables in the models were age, gender, sexuality, language spoken at home, country of birth, remoteness and socioeconomic status of area.

Statistical Significance: Throughout the report, "significant" refers to *statistically significant* findings where we can be confident (with 95% certainty) that the difference observed in the survey sample is meaningful and likely to represent a true difference in the population ($p < 0.05$) that is not negligible in size (Cohen's $d \geq 0.2$ or equivalent).

2.5 Strengths and limitations

The strengths and limitations of the 2021 NCAS are detailed in the Main report (Section 2.6). Some further strengths and limitations apply to this report:

- Young people (aged 16 to 24 years) were somewhat difficult to reach via the random sampling methodology. As a result, the proportion of young respondents in the NCAS sample (8.7%) was smaller than the proportion of young people in the Australian population aged 16 years or older (14.1%).[15] However, the weighting adjusted for the under-representation of young respondents in the sample and ensured that the results are representative of the population of young Australians.
- Survey questions underwent cognitive testing to check that respondents interpreted, processed and responded to questions as intended. Cognitive testing was conducted with young adult respondents 18 to 24 years of age, but not with 16- to 17-year-old respondents.

Results for young respondents are not presented where numbers were insufficient (less than 30 cases) for reliable reporting.[16]

15 See the Technical report (Sections T8.2 and T18) for further details about the number and breakdown of young respondents.

16 For further detail on the methodology, see the Technical report.

3 Findings: Benchmarking young people's understanding and attitudes based on NCAS scales

Benchmarking the population's understanding and attitudes regarding gender equality and violence against women over time allows us to track Australia's progress towards key indicators for "ending gender-based violence in one generation" (DSS, 2022, p. 28). Scores on the NCAS scales were used to report on young Australians' understanding and attitudes in 2021 and over time.

Benchmarking results summary

For young Australians, consistent with all Australians more generally (Main report), positive shifts in understanding of violence against women and attitudes towards gender inequality and violence against women are occurring slowly.

Between 2017 and 2021, there were significant improvements in understanding of violence against women and attitudinal rejection of gender inequality among young Australians and Australians more generally. Rejection of violence against women also significantly improved among young Australians over this period, whereas there was no change for Australians in general.

As seen for all Australians, young Australians' attitudinal rejection of sexual violence also improved significantly between 2017 and 2021. However, attitudinal rejection of domestic violence plateaued during this period for young Australians and all Australians more generally. Nonetheless, young respondents' level of understanding of violence and their levels of rejection of both gender inequality and violence against women were at a comparable level in 2021.

Similar to all Australians, young Australians have high awareness that violence against women is a problem in Australia. However, while all age groups could substantially improve their understanding that this violence occurs in their local area, this understanding was somewhat higher for young respondents than for respondents aged 25 years or older.

In 2021, similar to all NCAS respondents (Main report), young respondents had high awareness that violence against women is a national problem, but less awareness that violence against women is present in their own local community. As Figure 3-1 shows, most young respondents agreed, either "somewhat" or "strongly", that violence against women is a problem in Australia (91%; V1). However, far fewer young respondents agreed, either "somewhat" or "strongly", that violence against women is a problem in the suburb or town where they live (53%; V2). This finding suggests a misconception among Australians of all ages that violence tends to occur generally outside their own networks, rather than everywhere, which may impede recognition that violence is a community-wide social problem requiring action at all levels of society.

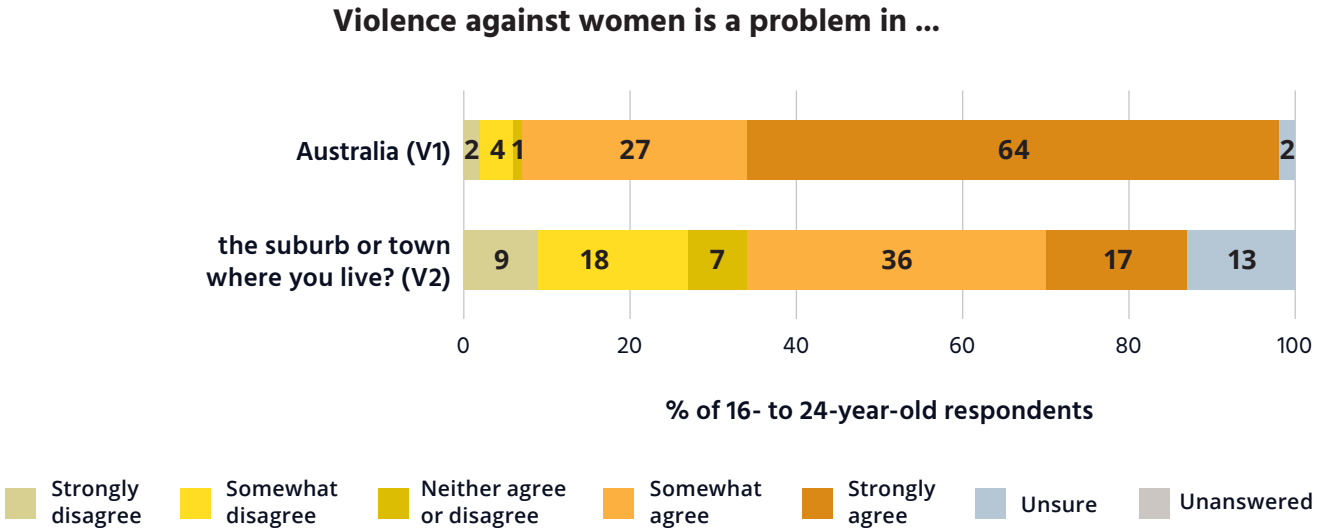
Although both young Australians and Australians aged 25 years or older could substantially improve their understanding that violence against women occurs in their own local area, this understanding was somewhat higher for young respondents in 2021. Specifically, when asked if violence is a problem in their suburb or town, young respondents were both significantly more likely to "somewhat agree" and significantly less likely to say they were "unsure" than respondents aged 25 years or older. However, similar proportions of young respondents and respondents aged 25 years or older "strongly agreed" with this statement (Appendix B, Table 14-5).

> Yeah, there's kind of that disconnect between, like, knowing it's happening, but then just not wanting to acknowledge, like, that it's around you as well.
>
> – Youth Ambassador

> I think that we have a lack of understanding about what a rapist looks like ... it's the classic trope of the rapist lurking in a dark alley in a "dodgy suburb" – that wouldn't occur in your, like, middle upper-class area that you live in. When that's not the reality.
>
> – Youth Ambassador

> It's a really difficult thing to come to terms with. That not only could your, you know, daughter, mother, sister, be a victim of sexual assault, but your brother, father, son could be a perpetrator of sexual assault.
>
> So I think we probably have a tendency to shield ourselves from that reality as well.
>
> – Youth Ambassador

Figure 3-1: Perception of violence against women as a problem, 16- to 24-year-olds, 2021



Note: *N* = 487.

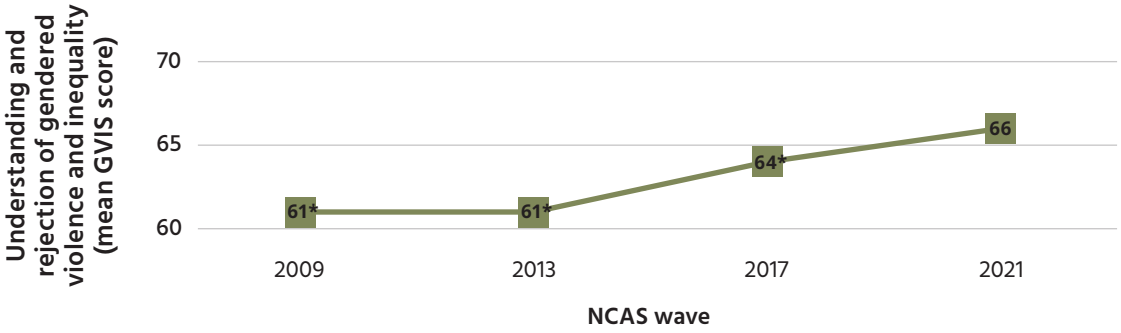
3.1 Benchmarking over time: Young people's understanding and attitudes

Similar to all respondents (Main report), young respondents showed significant improvements over time in their understanding of violence against women and their attitudes towards both gender inequality and violence against women.

Figures 3-2 to 3-4 show changes in mean scale scores over time for young respondents. As was the case for all respondents (Main report), young respondents' overall understanding and attitudinal rejection of gendered violence and gender inequality improved significantly over time according to mean GVIS scores (Figure 3-2).

> Our understanding of sexual violence and what constitutes it is improving because it's been more prevalent in the media. Like ... 2021 ... was the year that Brittany Higgins came forward with her allegation, that Grace Tame was the Australian of the Year and that Chanel [Contos] kicked off Teach Us Consent ... And with that came a better understanding that sexual violence is not just men lurking in alleyways, that there's a whole umbrella and spectrum of behaviour that will be considered sexual violence and that has real life consequences for people.
>
> – Youth Ambassador

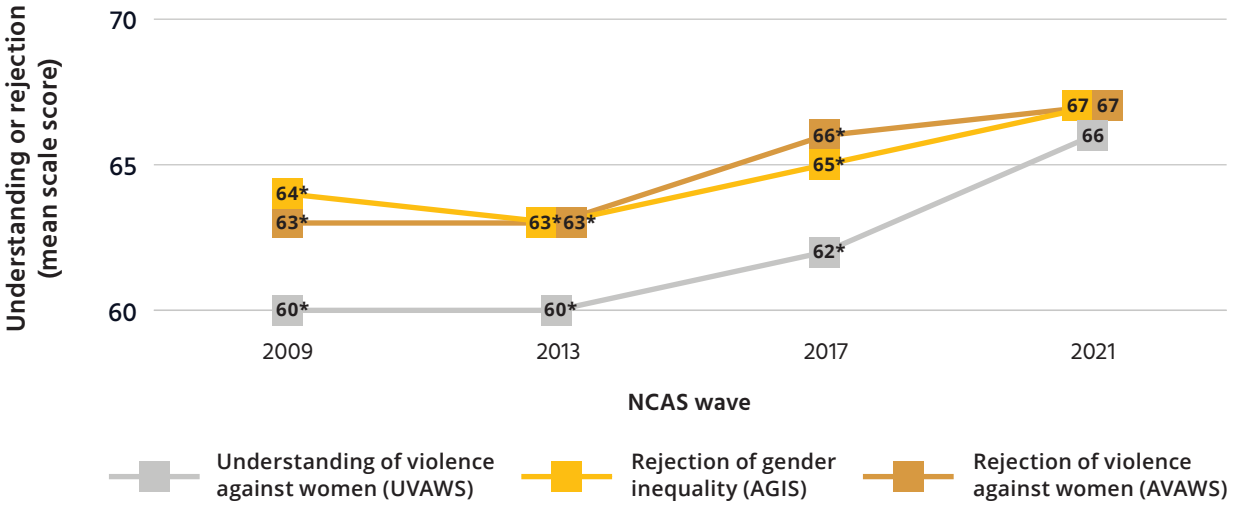
Figure 3-2: Understanding and rejection of gendered violence and inequality over time (GVIS scores), 16- to 24-year-olds, 2009 to 2021



Note: *N*s in 2009, 2013, 2017 and 2021 were as follows: 882; 1,923; 1,561; 1,669.
***** Statistically significant difference on this scale between the year indicated and 2021.

Young respondents' mean scores on the UVAWS, AGIS and AVAWS also demonstrated significantly higher understanding of violence against women and higher rejection of gender inequality and violence against women in 2021 compared to all previous years (2009, 2013 and 2017; Figure 3-3). These findings were similar to those for all respondents (Main report), with one exception for the AVAWS. Specifically, young respondents significantly improved in their rejection of violence against women in 2021 compared to all previous years, whereas there was a plateau for all Australian respondents between 2017 and 2021 despite an improvement over the longer term.

Figure 3-3: Understanding (UVAWS) and attitudes (AGIS, AVAWS) over time, 16- to 24-year-olds, 2009 to 2021



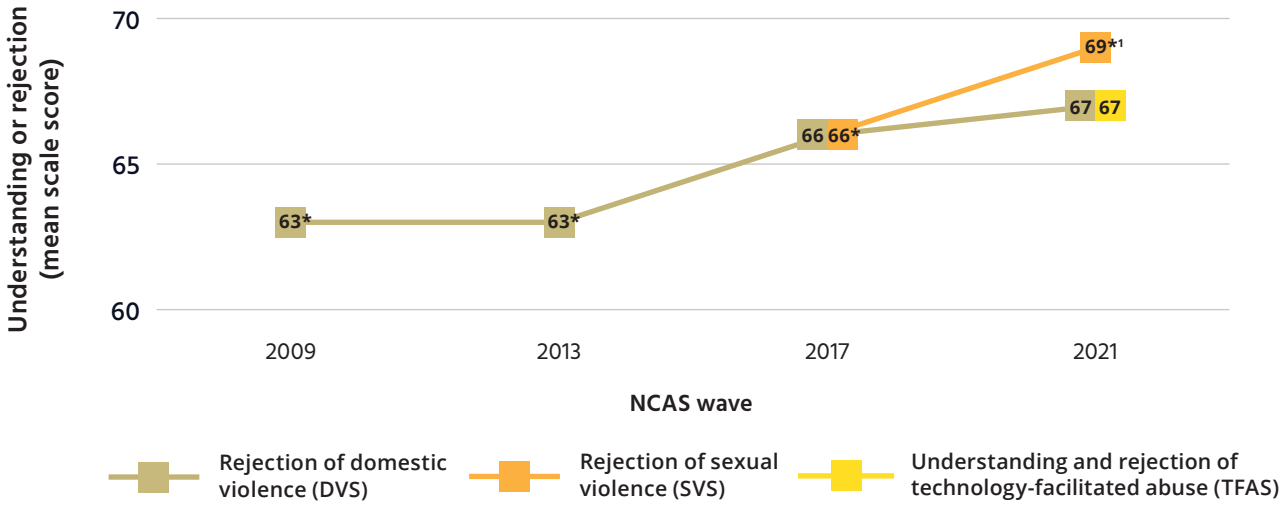
Note: *N*s in 2009, 2013, 2017 and 2021 were as follows:

- UVAWS – 881; 1,913; 763; 1,669
- AGIS – 823; 1,733; 1,561; 1,663
- AVAWS – 369; 675; 1,561; 1,669.

There were no significant differences between scales in 2021. Comparison of scales in 2021 is discussed in Section 3.2.
***** Statistically significant difference on this scale between the year indicated and 2021.

As Figure 3-4 shows, between 2017 and 2021, young respondents' rejection of sexual violence (SVS) significantly improved but their attitudes towards domestic violence (DVS) plateaued. Changes in sexual violence attitudes (SVS) included a significant increase in rejection of sexual harassment (SHS) and sexual assault (SAS; Figure 3-5). These findings for young respondents on the SVS and DVS were similar to those for all NCAS respondents (Main report).

Figure 3-4: Understanding (TFAS) and attitudes (DVS, SVS, TFAS) regarding types of violence over time, 16- to 24-year-olds, 2009 to 2021



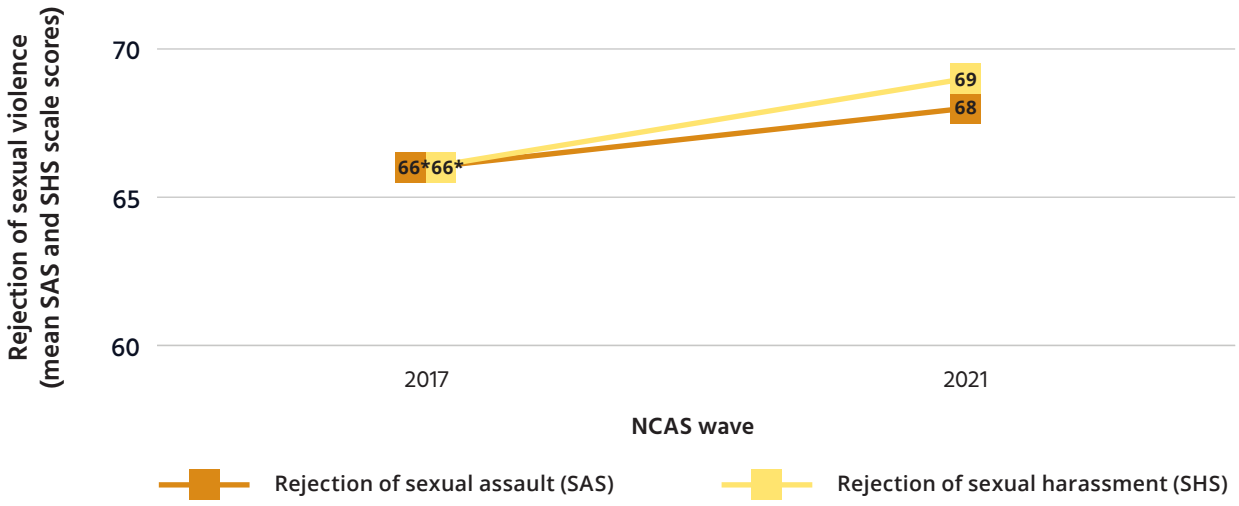
Note: "na" (below) means reliable data was not available. *N*s in 2009, 2013, 2017 and 2021 were:

- DVS – 439; 834; 1,561; 1,668
- SVS – na; na; 1,557; 1,665
- TFAS – na; na; na; 1,668.

***** Statistically significant difference on this scale between the year indicated and 2021.

***1** Rejection of sexual violence (SVS) was significantly higher than rejection of domestic violence (DVS) and higher than understanding and rejection of technology-facilitated abuse (TFAS) in 2021. Differences in 2021 between type of violence scales are discussed in Section 3.2.

Figure 3-5: Rejection of sexual assault (SAS) and sexual harassment (SHS) over time, 16- to 24-year-olds, 2017 to 2021



Note: *N*s in 2017 and 2021 were:

- SAS: 1,558; 1,662
- SHS: 400; 1,654.

***** Statistically significant difference on this scale between 2017 and 2021.

3.2 Benchmarking in 2021: Young people's understanding and attitudes

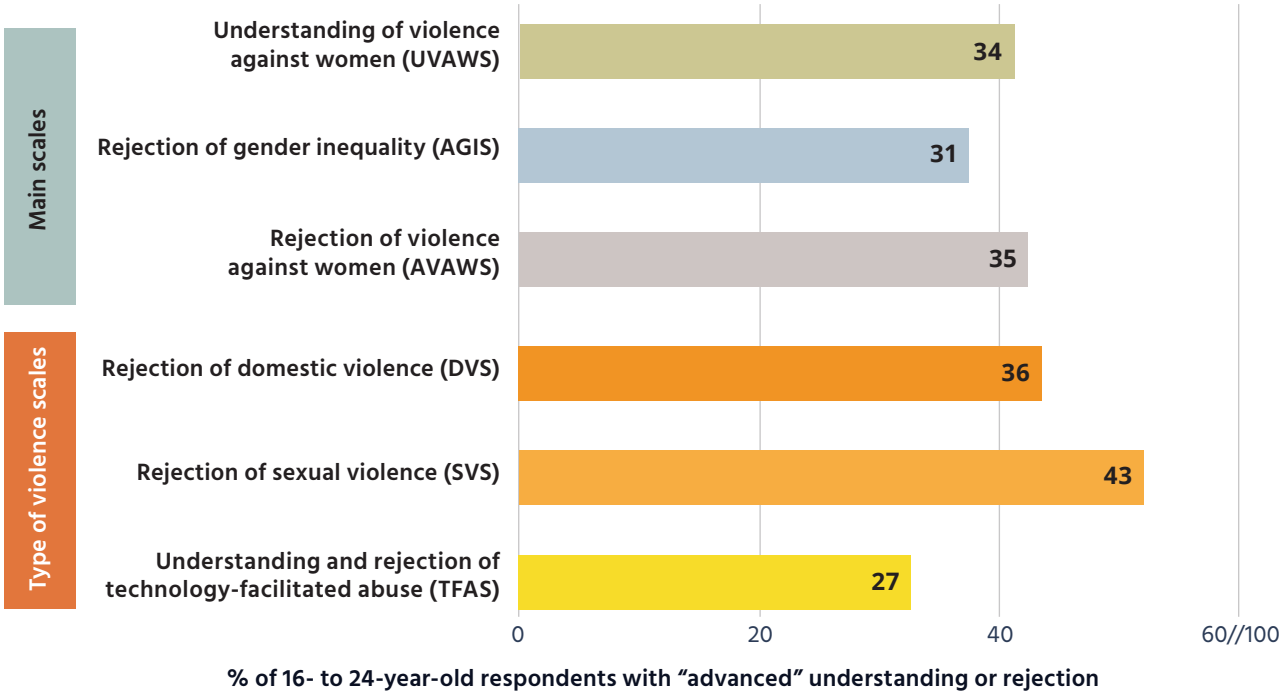
Young respondents' mean scores on the three main scales (UVAWS, AGIS, AVAWS) in 2021 were not significantly different to one another, indicating that young Australians' understanding of violence and their attitudes towards both gender inequality and violence against women were at a comparable level in 2021 (Figure 3-3). This was also observed for all Australians (Main report).

In 2021, young respondents had significantly higher rejection of sexual violence (SVS) than domestic violence (DVS) and technology-facilitated abuse (TFAS), according to mean scores on these type of violence scales (Figure 3-4). In contrast, there were no significant differences between these type of violence scales in 2021 based on the analyses for all respondents (Main report).

There is still substantial work to be done to improve young people's understanding and attitudes regarding violence against women and gender inequality in Australia. As Figure 3-6 shows, in 2021, a minority of young respondents (27–43%) demonstrated "advanced":

- understanding of violence against women (UVAWS)
- rejection of gender inequality (AGIS)
- rejection of violence against women (AVAWS), including rejection of sexual violence (SVS) and domestic violence (DVS)
- understanding and rejection of technology-facilitated abuse (TFAS).

Figure 3-6: "Advanced" understanding of violence against women and rejection of problematic attitudes, 16- to 24-year-olds, 2021



Note: *N* = 1,669. "Advanced" understanding refers to answering "yes, always" the behaviour is violence to at least 75% of items and "yes, usually" to the remaining items (UVAWS). "Advanced" attitudes refer to answering "strongly disagree" to at least 75% of the items in the scale and "somewhat disagree" to the remaining items that condoned gender inequality (AGIS), condoned violence (AVAWS) or condoned a type of violence (DVS, SVS). The "advanced" TFAS category means that the respondent answered "yes, always" the behaviour is violence or "strongly disagreed" with problematic attitudes for at least 75% of items, and answered the remaining items "yes, usually" or "somewhat disagree". See the Technical report (Section T13) for further details.

3.3 Benchmarking understanding and attitudes by gender and age

Comparing young people by gender

Significant gender differences in the proportion of young respondents with "advanced" understanding and attitudes were seen for all three main scales and two of the three type of violence scales. For the scales with significant gender differences, the effects were in the direction of young women being more likely to have "advanced" understanding and attitudes than young men. For instance, young women (42%) were significantly more likely than young men (27%) to have "advanced" understanding of violence against women. Similarly, young women were significantly more likely than young men to have "advanced" attitudes towards gender inequality (43% versus 20%) and violence against women (48% versus 24%). Regarding different types of violence, young women were significantly more likely than young men to have "advanced" attitudes towards domestic violence (48% versus 26%) and sexual violence (56% versus 32%). However, no significant gender differences were seen for attitudes towards and understanding of technology-facilitated abuse.

Compared to young men, young non-binary respondents also had higher rejection of problematic attitudes in some areas of gender inequality and violence against women as detailed in Chapters 5 to 7.

Comparing 16- to 17-year-olds and 18- to 24-year-olds

Among young respondents there was no significant difference between 16- to 17-year-olds and 18- to 24-year-olds in the proportion with "advanced" understanding of violence against women. With respect to attitudes, 16- to 17-year-olds were significantly less likely than 18- to 24-year-olds to demonstrate "advanced" rejection of problematic attitudes towards domestic violence (26% versus 38%) and sexual violence (34% versus 45%). There were no significant differences between the percentage

of 16- to 17-year-olds and 18- to 24-year-olds with "advanced" attitudes towards violence against women or gender inequality.

Comparing 16- to 24-year-olds and people aged 25 years or older

The percentage of respondents with "advanced" understanding of violence against women was significantly lower for young respondents aged 16 to 24 years (34%) than respondents aged 25 years or older (46%). With respect to attitudes, there were no significant differences between young respondents and those aged 25 years or older in the percentage demonstrating "advanced" attitudes towards violence against women overall, domestic violence, sexual violence and gender inequality. There was also no difference between young respondents and those aged 25 years or older in understanding and rejection of technology-facilitated abuse.

Item-level data broken down by gender and age is presented in Appendices A to C and discussed in Chapters 4 to 7.

4 Findings: Young people's understanding of violence against women – UVAWS in focus

Understanding of violence against women can influence both attitudes towards violence against women and prosocial behaviours to intervene when witnessing abuse or violence (Webster et al., 2018). A strong understanding of violence against women, together with knowledge of the support and legal services available to victims and survivors, also facilitates reporting, help-seeking and recovery for victims and survivors (Gadd et al., 2003; Gracia et al., 2020; Harmer & Lewis, 2022; Paul et al., 2014). The 2021 NCAS measured young Australians' understanding of violence against women, including domestic violence between partners, sexual violence and technology-facilitated abuse, via the **Understanding of Violence against Women Scale (UVAWS)**.

The **UVAWS** comprises three psychometrically validated subscales, each measuring a different conceptual aspect of understanding of violence against women:

- The **Recognise DV Subscale** comprises 12 items that ask whether problematic behaviours are a form of domestic violence on a four-point scale: "yes, always", "yes, usually", "yes, sometimes" and "no".
- The **Recognise VAW Subscale** comprises four items that ask whether problematic behaviours are a form of violence against women on a four-point scale: "yes, always", "yes, usually", "yes, sometimes" and "no".
- The **Understand Gendered DV Subscale** comprises three items that examine understanding of the gendered nature of domestic violence by asking about who is more likely to perpetrate and experience fear and harm from domestic violence: "men", "women" or "both equally".

This chapter details young respondents' results on the UVAWS overall, and on its subscales and individual items, to:

- examine changes in young people's understanding of violence against women over time (Section 4.1)
- examine young people's understanding of violence against women in 2021 (Section 4.2)
- compare young people's understanding of violence against women in 2021 by gender (Section 4.3)
- compare young people's understanding of violence against women in 2021 by age (Section 4.4).

UVAWS results summary

Young Australians' understanding of violence against women has significantly improved over time (Sections 3.1 and 4.1).

Most young respondents recognised that domestic violence and violence against women can manifest as a range of violent, abusive and controlling behaviours. However, like all respondents, young respondents were more adept at identifying these behaviours than they were at understanding the gendered nature of domestic violence (Sections 4.1 and 4.2).

Young women respondents had significantly greater understanding of violence against women than young men respondents and were significantly more likely to have "advanced" understanding. This included greater recognition of the behaviours that constitute domestic violence and violence against women more broadly, according to UVAWS and two of the three UVAWS subscale scores: Recognise DV and Recognise VAW Subscales. Young non-binary respondents were not significantly different from young women or young men respondents on the UVAWS or its subscales.

In 2021, 16- to 17- year-olds and 18- to 24-year-olds had very similar understanding of violence against women. However, there were a few significant differences between young respondents and those aged 25 years or older regarding understanding of violence against women. These differences were all in the direction of the older age group having significantly better understanding, although there is substantial room for improvement across all age groups.

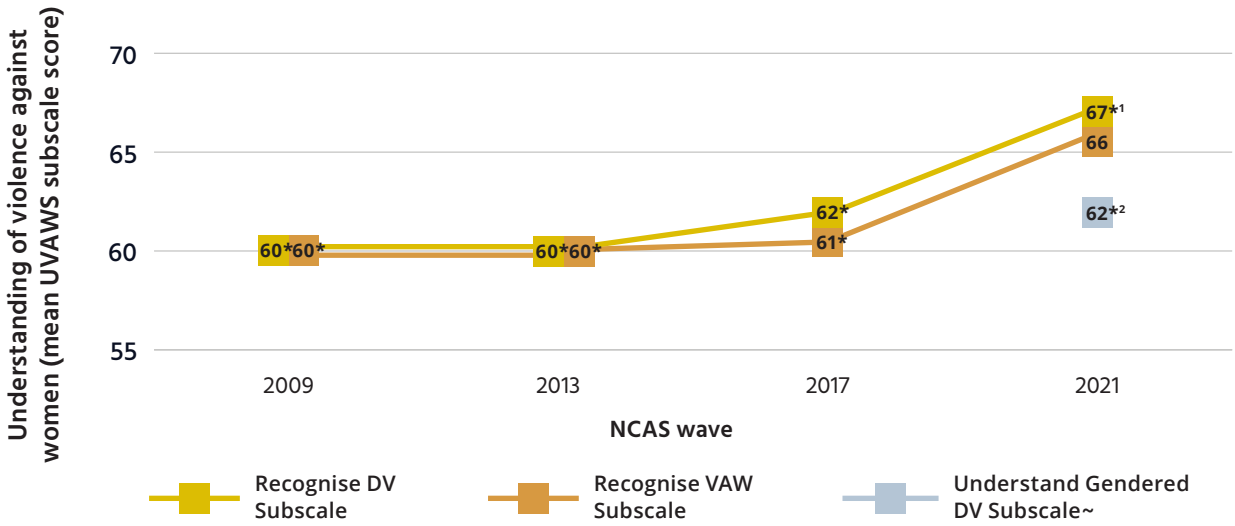
4.1 Understanding over time: Young people's understanding of violence against women

This section examines young respondents' understanding of violence against women over time based on the UVAWS scale, subscales and items.

As Chapter 3 shows, young respondents' overall understanding of violence against women, as measured by mean UVAWS scores, was significantly higher in 2021 than in all prior NCAS waves.

Similarly, there has been significant improvement in young people's understanding of violence against women over time according to two of the three UVAWS subscales (Figure 4-1). Young respondents' recognition of the behaviours that constitute domestic violence and violence against women more broadly was significantly higher in 2021 compared to all previous years, according to mean scores on the Recognise DV and Recognise VAW Subscales. Change over time for the remaining UVAWS subscale, which measures understanding of the gendered nature of domestic violence as a phenomenon perpetrated mainly by men against women, could not be reliably reported because one of the three items in this subscale was substantially revised in 2021.[17]

Figure 4-1: Understanding of different aspects of violence against women (UVAWS subscales) over time, 16- to 24-year-olds, 2009 to 2021



Note: "na" (below) means reliable data was not available. *N*s in 2009, 2013, 2017 and 2021 were:

- Recognise DV Subscale – 882; 1,919; 1,523; 1,669
- Recognise VAW Subscale – 866; 1,887; 758; 1,667
- Understand Gendered DV Subscale – na; na; na; 396.

***** Statistically significant difference on this subscale between the year indicated and 2021.

***1** The Recognise DV Subscale had a significantly higher mean score compared to the Recognise VAW in 2021. Differences in 2021 between UVAWS subscales are discussed in Section 4.2.

***2** The Understand Gendered DV Subscale had a significantly lower mean score compared to the Recognise DV and Recognise VAW Subscales in 2021. Differences in 2021 between UVAWS subscales are discussed in Section 4.2.

17 See the Main report, p. 88, footnote 49, for details.

Consistent with the results for the Recognise DV Subscale overall (Figure 4-1), some of the subscale's items also showed improvement in young respondents' understanding over time. Of the six Recognise DV Subscale items that were included in both 2017 and 2021, two showed significant improvement in young respondents' recognition of domestic violence behaviours over this period (Figure 4-2). These items examined repeatedly tracking a partner on electronic devices (D6) and restricting a partner's access to money (D5; Figure 4-3). Of the remaining four Recognise DV Subscale items included in 2021 and previous waves, three demonstrated significant improvement in 2021 compared to 2009 and 2013, indicating a significant increase in the recognition that physical violence such as slapping or pushing to cause harm or fear (D1), emotional abuse (D3) and limiting a partner's social life (D4) are forms of domestic violence.

Like the results for the Recognise VAW Subscale overall (Figure 4-1), two of the subscale's four items also indicated significant improvement in young respondents' understanding over time. That is, there was significant improvement between 2017 and 2021 in young respondents' recognition that in-person stalking (V4) and harassment via repeated messages (V5) are forms of domestic violence (Figure 4-3).

As noted above, it was not possible to reliably report on change over time for the UVAWS Understand Gendered DV Subscale because one of its three items was substantially revised in 2021. However, based on the other two items in this subscale, young respondents' understanding of the gendered nature of domestic violence showed a significant decline over time. Their understanding that domestic violence is mainly committed by men (D13) and that women are more likely to suffer physical harm from domestic violence (D14) was significantly lower in 2021 compared to both 2009 and 2013. Between 2017 and 2021, while there was no further significant decline in young respondents' understanding that men are the main perpetrators of domestic violence (D13; Figure 4-4), their understanding that women are more likely to suffer harm as victims did show a further significant decline (D14; Figure 4-5).

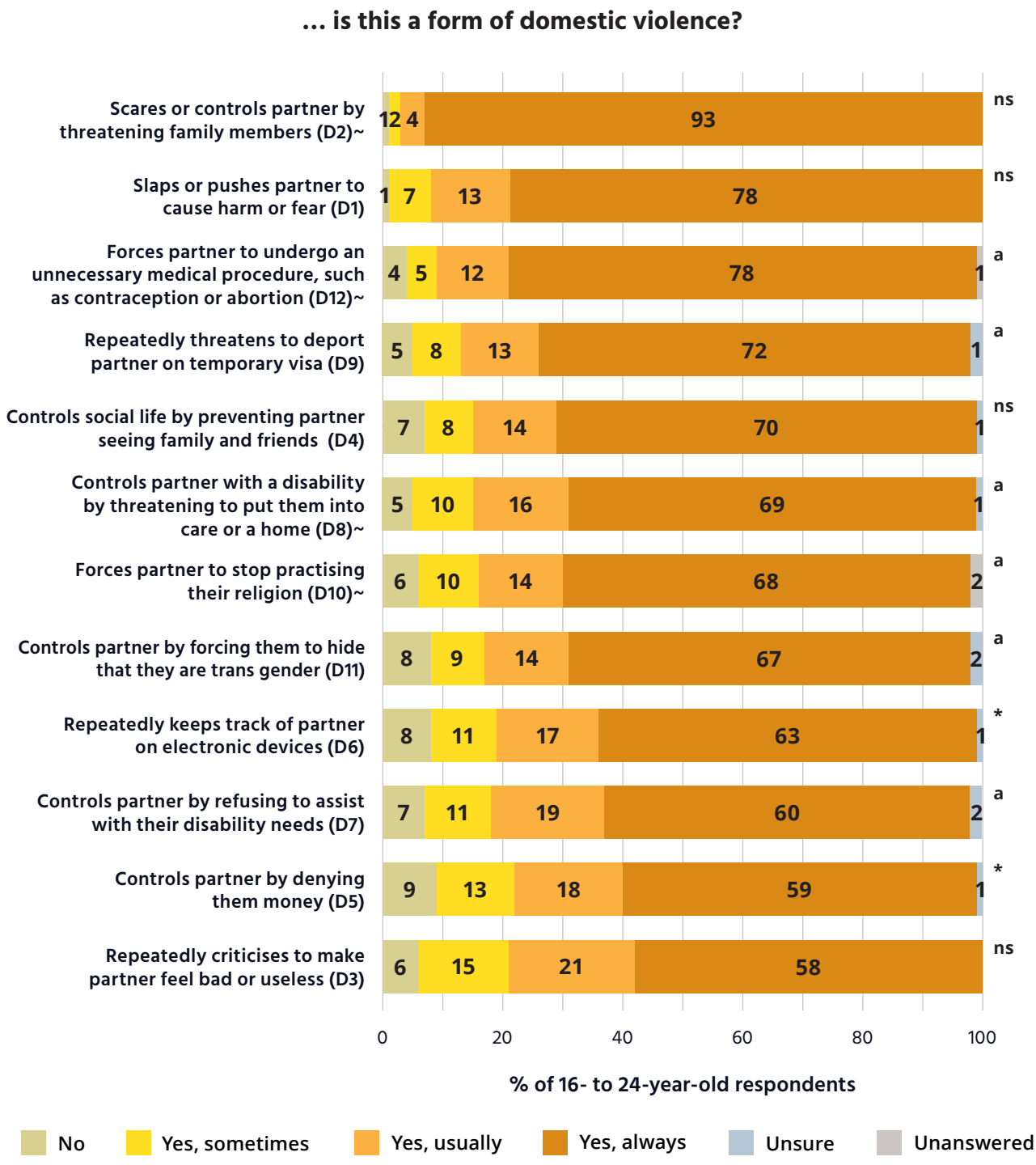
4.2 Understanding in 2021: Young people's understanding of violence against women

This section examines young respondents' understanding of violence against women in 2021 based on the UVAWS subscales and the items within them.

In 2021, according to mean scores on the UVAWS subscales, young respondents had better understanding of some aspects of violence against women than other aspects. Specifically, young respondents were significantly better at recognising the behaviours that constitute domestic violence and violence against women (Recognise DV and Recognise VAW Subscales; Figures 4-2 and 4-3) than they were at understanding the gendered nature of domestic violence (Understand Gendered DV Subscale; Figures 4-4 and 4-5). In addition, young respondents' recognition of domestic violence behaviours (Recognise DV Subscale; Figure 4-2) was significantly better than their recognition of other behaviours constituting violence against women (Recognise VAW Subscale; Figure 4-3).

Figures 4-2 to 4-5 present the 2021 results for the items in each UVAWS subscale. Figure 4-2 presents young respondents' understanding in 2021 of the different behaviours that constitute domestic violence, based on the 12 items in the Recognise DV Subscale of the UVAWS. In 2021, at least 3 in 4 young respondents identified physical harm or threats of physical harm as "always" forms of domestic violence (78–93%; D2, D1, D12; Figure 4-2). However, there was less recognition of non-physical forms of domestic violence, including controlling behaviours and behaviours targeting a partner's identity, as "always" forms of domestic violence. For example, fewer young respondents recognised the following behaviours as "always" domestic violence (58–72%): emotional abuse (D3); coercive controlling behaviours, including those that target an aspect of the partner's identity, beliefs or experience (D9, D4, D8, D10, D11, D6, D7); and financial abuse (D5).

Figure 4-2: Recognising domestic violence (UVAWS subscale items), 16- to 24-year-olds, 2021



Note: *N* = 1,669 unless otherwise noted. Percentages in the figure do not always add to 100 or exactly correspond to percentages in the text due to rounding. Significant differences over time are based on the percentage of young respondents who answered "yes" the behaviour is violence against women either "always" or "usually".

***** Significantly higher understanding in 2021 than 2017. Change over time results are discussed in Section 4.1.

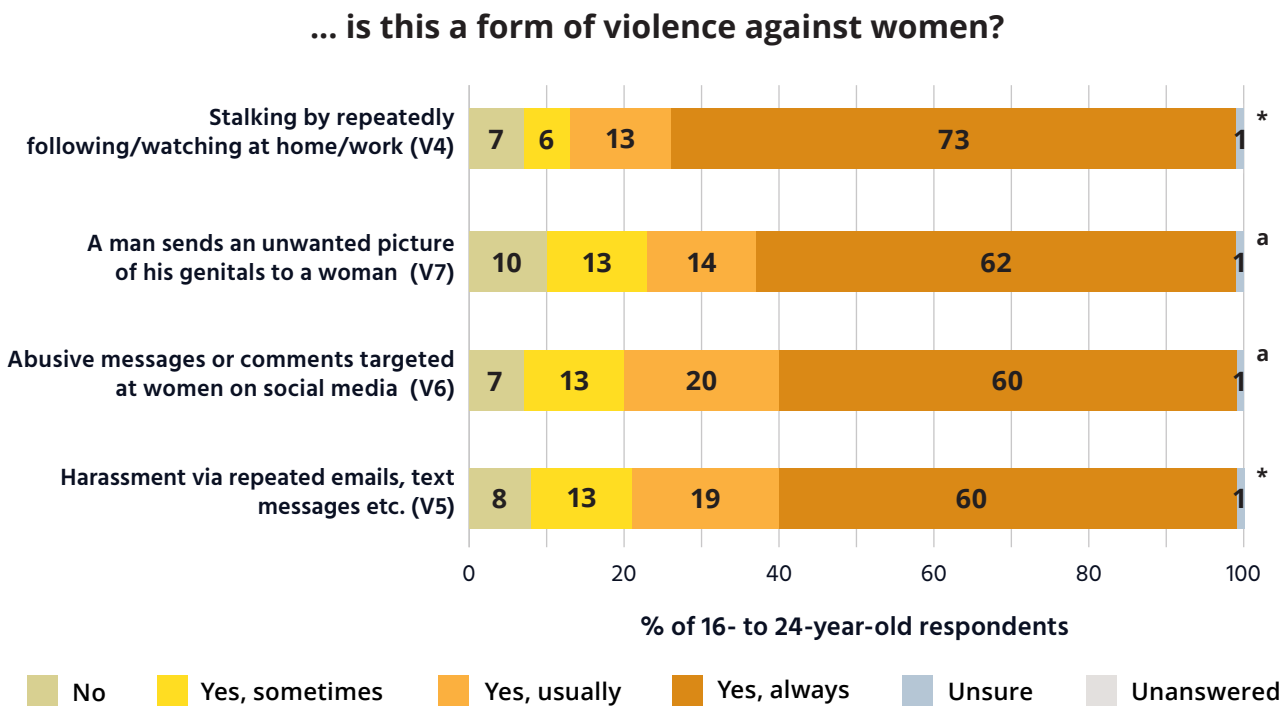
ns No significant difference between 2021 and 2017.

a New item in 2021. Thus, change over time could not be examined.

~ Asked of one quarter of the sample in 2021.

Figure 4-3 shows young respondents' understanding in 2021 of the different behaviours that constitute violence against women, according to the four items in the Recognise VAW Subscale. Three of the four items in this subscale describe technology-facilitated abuse (V7, V6, V5), while the remaining item describes in-person stalking (V4). Most young respondents recognised all these behaviours as "always" constituting forms of violence against women (60–73%). Although there is room to improve the recognition of all these behaviours as violence against women, recognition of the technology-facilitated abuse behaviours was lower than that of the in-person stalking behaviour. In-person stalking was more often recognised as "always" a form of violence against women (73%; V4) than were the three forms of technology-facilitated abuse (60–62%; V7, V6, V5). In addition, a sizeable minority of young respondents thought that technology-facilitated abuse behaviours are not, or are only "sometimes", violence against women (19–23%; V7, V6, V5).

Figure 4-3: Recognising violence against women (UVAWS subscale items), 16- to 24-year-olds, 2021



Note: *N* = 1,667. Percentages in the figure do not always add to 100 or exactly correspond to percentages in the text due to rounding. Significant differences over time are based on the percentage of young respondents who answered "yes" the behaviour is violence against women either "always" or "usually".

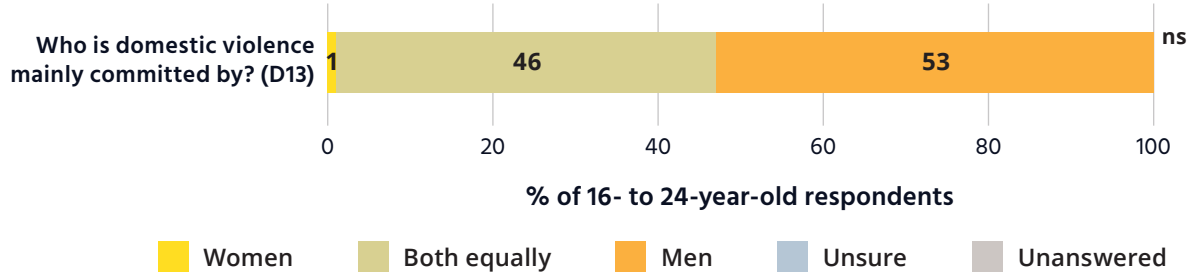
***** Significantly higher understanding in 2021 than 2017. Change over time results are discussed in Section 4.1.

a New item in 2021. Thus, change over time could not be examined.

Figures 4-4 and 4-5 show young respondents' level of understanding that domestic violence is predominantly perpetrated by men against women, according to the three items in the Understand Gendered DV Subscale of the UVAWS. In 2021, almost half of young respondents incorrectly believed that domestic violence is equally committed by men and women (46%; D13; Figure 4-4). Similarly, in 2021, sizeable proportions of young respondents believed that men and women are equally likely to suffer physical harm as a result of domestic violence (26%; D14; Figure 4-5) and that men and women are equally likely to experience fear as a result of domestic violence (45%; D15; Figure 4-5). These findings are contrary to the evidence that women are more likely to suffer harm and other adverse consequences from domestic violence, including fear, anxiety, physical injury and homicide (ABS, 2017; Australian Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Network & ANROWS, 2022).

> Often a lot of people think it is equal that both women and men experience domestic violence at the same rate and debunking that's really interesting. Because actually saying, OK, you know, like, 97 per cent of people committing violence are actually men, so it ends up being gendered and we have to, like, tell young people, this stat is pretty bad, right? But we don't wanna bash young men or say that doesn't happen, but this is what's going on in the community.
>
> – Youth Ambassador

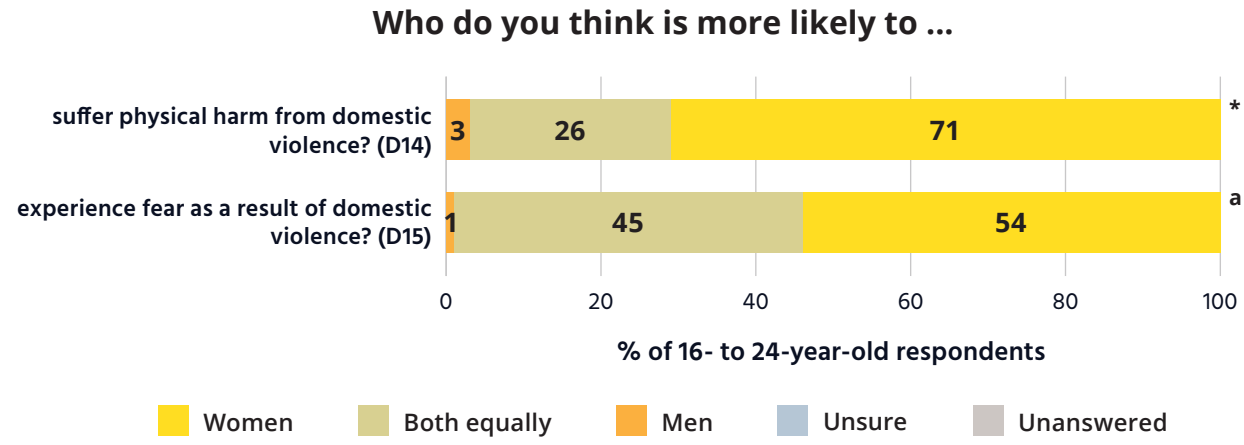
Figure 4-4: Understanding the gendered nature of domestic violence perpetration (UVAWS subscale items), 16- to 24-year-olds, 2021



Note: *N* = 397. "Men" is the correct answer according to empirical evidence from police and court data (Hulme et al., 2019). Asked of one quarter of the sample in 2021.

ns No significant difference between 2021 and 2017. However, there was significantly lower understanding in 2021 compared to both 2009 and 2013. Change over time results are discussed in Section 4.1.

Figure 4-5: Understanding the gendered nature of domestic violence impacts (UVAWS subscale items), 16- to 24-year-olds, 2021



Note: *N* = 396. "Women" is the correct answer according to empirical evidence, including from the PSS (ABS, 2017; Australian Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Network & ANROWS, 2022). Asked of one quarter of the sample in 2021.

***** Significantly lower understanding in 2021 than 2017. Change over time results are discussed in Section 4.1.

a Revised item in 2021. Thus, change over time could not be examined.

> That 45 per cent [of young people think both men and women equally experience fear as a result of domestic violence] is really big, and it kind of says to me that people are being, like, "oh no, men can experience fear too". And that, you know, the full spectrum of human emotions can be accessed by men and can be articulated. So I think that might go a way to explain that.
>
> – Youth Ambassador

young men respondents, based on mean UVAWS scores. This finding for the overall scale was reflected in two of the three UVAWS subscales (Figure 4-6). Specifically, compared to young men, young women had significantly greater recognition of the behaviours that constitute domestic violence and violence against women more broadly, according to the Recognise DV and Recognise VAW Subscales.

We also compared young non-binary respondents with both young women and young men respondents on the UVAWS as a whole and on two of the three UVAWS subscales – the Recognise DV Subscale and Recognise VAW Subscale. Young non-binary respondents were not significantly different from young women or young men respondents on the UVAWS or its subscales.[18]

4.3 Comparing by gender: Young people's understanding of violence against women

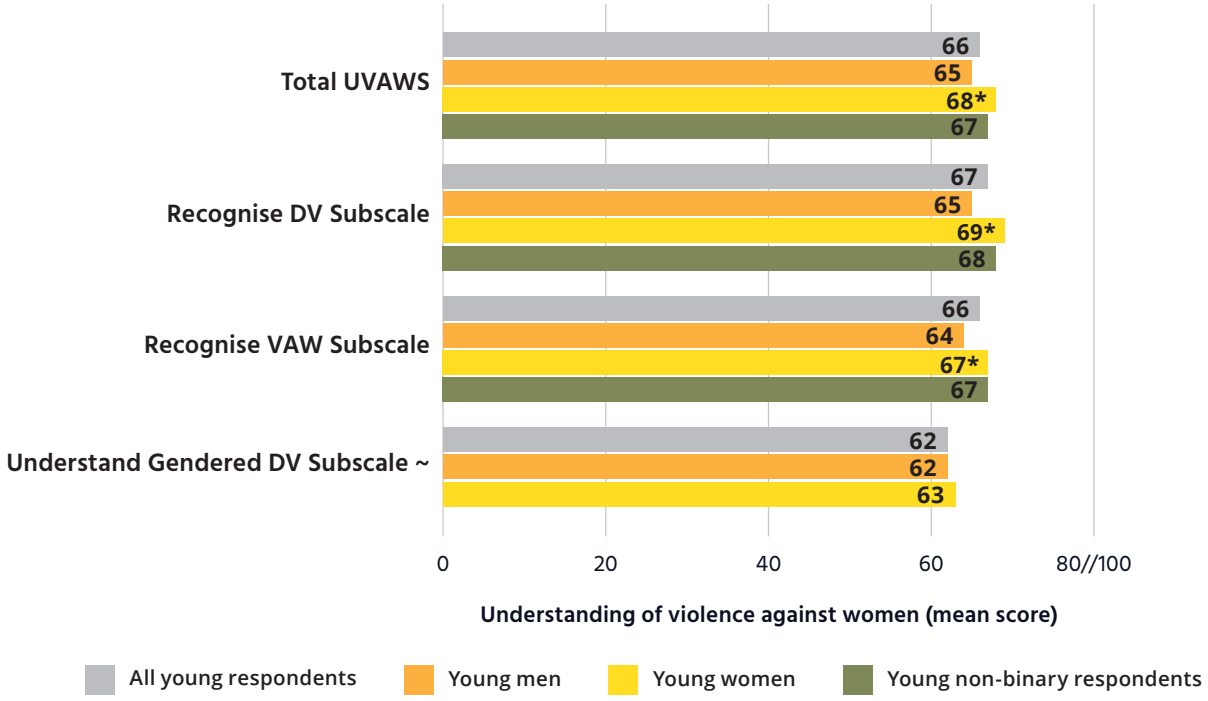
There were some similarities between young women and young men respondents' understanding of violence against women. The decline in young respondents' understanding of the gendered nature of domestic violence since 2013 was evident for both young men and young women, based on the two items that were asked over this period (D13, D14). In addition, in 2021, young women and young men demonstrated similar levels of understanding of the gendered nature of domestic violence, based on the Understand Gendered DV Subscale.

However, there were also gender differences in the understanding of violence against women, which were all in the direction of young women demonstrating better understanding than young men. In 2021, young women respondents had significantly higher understanding of violence against women overall than

> A lot of the men that I have supported through work and things have said things like the first comment they've received is, like, "oh, I wouldn't expect someone like you to go through this". Or ... an outgoing, extroverted, non-binary person ... said to me, "when I called victim services or, like, [tried] to tell my friends that I was actually going through something, I needed help and I needed them to get me out of there [the response] was, 'oh, we didn't expect someone like you to go through this' or 'you seem fine'."
>
> – Youth Ambassador

18 Mean scores for young non-binary respondents are not reported for subscales where there was data for fewer than 30 young non-binary respondents.

Figure 4-6: Understanding of different aspects of violence against women (UVAWS and subscales) by gender, 16- to 24-year-olds, 2021



Note: *N* = 1,664 unless otherwise noted.

***** Statistically significant difference compared to young men on the UVAWS or the subscale indicated.

~ Asked of one quarter of the sample. Results for young non-binary respondents are not reported for this subscale due to insufficient numbers.

Table 15-1 in Appendix C presents item-level differences between young women and young men respondents regarding understanding of violence.[19] The gender difference for the Recognise DV Subscale as a whole was reflected at the item level, with young women respondents being significantly more likely than young men respondents to identify six of the 12 behaviours as domestic violence. For example, young women were significantly more likely to recognise the following behaviours as "always" forms of domestic violence: emotional abuse (65% versus 53%; D3), financial abuse (68% versus 52%; D5), social isolation (77% versus 64%; D4), controlling behaviours that target an aspect of their partner's identity such as their disability (66% versus 55%; D7) or their gender experience (74% versus 62%; D11), and technology-facilitated abuse (72% versus 57%; D6).[20]

Similarly, the gender difference seen for the Recognise VAW Subscale was also evident at the item level. Young women were significantly more likely than young men to recognise two of the four behaviours described in the subscale as "always" forms of violence against women: harassment via repeated emails or text messages (67% versus 54%; V5) and abusive messages targeted at women on social media (68% versus 54%; V6). Young men were also significantly more likely than young women to believe that these behaviours, as well as stalking (V4), are not forms of violence against women.[21]

Similarly, young women (83%) were significantly more likely than young men (66%) to correctly agree ("strongly" or "somewhat") that women are more likely to be raped by someone they know than by a stranger (S16).[22]

19 Due to small numbers on some items, comparisons involving young non-binary respondents were not conducted at the item level.

20 Although young women did not demonstrate significantly higher understanding on the other six items in the Recognise DV Subscale, the raw percentages for five of these items trended in this direction.

21 Although young women did not demonstrate significantly higher understanding on the other item in the Recognise VAW Subscale, the raw percentages for this item trended in this direction.

22 This is a knowledge item that was not part of any NCAS scale in 2021.

4.4 Comparing by age: Understanding of violence against women

Comparing understanding of 16- to 17-year-olds and 18- to 24-year-olds

In 2021, 16- to 17-year-olds and 18- to 24-year-olds had very similar levels of understanding of violence against women. For example, there were no significant differences between these youth age groups on the UVAWS or on two of the three UVAWS subscales: the Recognise VAW Subscale or Understand Gendered DV Subscale.

However, 18- to 24-year-old respondents were significantly more likely than 16- to 17-year-olds to correctly identify a range of abusive behaviours as domestic violence in 2021, according to mean scores on the Recognise DV Subscale. This finding was reflected at the item level by a higher proportion of "yes, always" responses from 18- to 24-year-old than 16- to 17-year-old respondents for 10 of the 12 items, although the difference on each individual item was not large enough to reach statistical significance (Appendix A, Table 13-1).

Comparing understanding of 16- to 24-year-olds and people aged 25 years or older

Many of the findings regarding young respondents' understanding of violence against women were similar to those for all NCAS respondents (Main report), including:

- an increase over time in overall understanding (UVAWS) and recognition of the behaviours constituting domestic violence and violence against women (2 of 3 UVAWS subscales)
- a decrease between 2013 and 2021 in understanding that domestic violence is gendered in that it is mainly committed by men against women (Understand Gendered DV Subscale)
- a better understanding of the behaviours constituting domestic violence than of the gendered nature of domestic violence
- higher recognition of physical forms of domestic violence than non-physical forms and forms that target a partner's identity or experience.

However, there were also a few differences between young respondents and those aged 25 years or older regarding understanding of violence against women (see Appendix B, Tables 14-1 and 14-2 for differences on the UVAWS items). These differences were all in the direction of the older age group having better understanding, although there is substantial room for improvement across all age groups. Specifically, in 2021, young respondents had significantly lower understanding than respondents aged 25 years or older according to the UVAWS and all three of its subscales. Accordingly, young respondents were significantly less likely (34%) than other respondents (46%) to demonstrate "advanced" understanding of violence against women. In addition, while concerning proportions of all age groups demonstrated poor understanding of the gendered nature of domestic violence, a greater proportion of young respondents (45%) than respondents aged 25 years or older (25%) believed that women and men are equally likely to experience fear as a result of domestic violence (D15, Understand Gendered DV Subscale). Similarly, significantly fewer young respondents (60%) than respondents aged 25 years or older (70%) identified that technology-facilitated abuse involving harassment via repeated emails and text messages is "always" a form of violence (V5, Recognise VAW Subscale).

5 Findings: Young people's attitudes towards gender inequality – AGIS in focus

Gender inequality remains a pervasive issue in Australia and addressing gender inequality is critical if we are to end violence against women (AIHW, 2016; COAG, 2010; DSS, 2022; Riach et al., 2018; Workplace Gender Equality Agency, 2022). "Reduction of attitudes that are associated with gender inequality" is a key indicator for preventing violence according to the National Plan 2022–2032 (DSS, 2022, p. 30). These attitudes include the denial of gender inequality, the limitation of women's personal autonomy, the normalisation of sexism, the reinforcing of rigid gender roles and norms, and the undermining of women's leadership in both the public and private spheres. The 2021 NCAS measured young Australians' attitudes towards gender inequality via the **Attitudes towards Gender Inequality Scale (AGIS)**.

The **AGIS** comprises five psychometrically validated subscales, each measuring a different conceptual aspect of attitudes towards gender inequality:

- The **Deny Inequality Subscale** comprises three statements that deny that gender inequality is experienced by women, suggesting backlash or resistance to gender equality.
- The **Limit Autonomy Subscale** comprises two statements that condone men being in charge in intimate relationships and limiting women's personal autonomy.
- The **Normalise Sexism Subscale** comprises three statements that downplay or normalise sexism.
- The **Reinforce Gender Roles Subscale** comprises five statements that reinforce traditional, rigid gender roles and expectations.
- The **Undermine Leadership Subscale** comprises four statements that undermine women's leadership in work and public life.

This chapter details young respondents' results on the AGIS overall, and on its subscales and individual items, to:

- examine changes in young people's attitudes towards gender inequality over time (Section 5.1)
- examine young people's attitudes towards gender inequality in 2021 (Section 5.2)
- compare young people's attitudes towards gender inequality in 2021 by gender (Section 5.3)
- compare attitudes towards gender inequality in 2021 by age (Section 5.4).

AGIS results summary

As seen with all Australians, young Australians' attitudinal rejection of gender inequality continues to improve significantly but slowly over time (Sections 3.1 and 5.1).

While most young respondents held attitudes that reject gender inequality, a minority condoned certain attitudes that deny that gender inequality is a problem, limit women's personal autonomy, normalise sexism, reinforce gender roles and undermine women's leadership (Section 5.2).

In 2021, young women respondents had significantly higher rejection of gender inequality than young men respondents, according to mean scores on the AGIS and all five of its subscales. Young women were also significantly more likely than young men to have "advanced" attitudinal rejection of gender inequality in 2021. When compared to young men, young non-binary respondents had significantly higher rejection of gender inequality on the AGIS and on the Undermine Leadership Subscale in 2021.

Most findings indicated similar attitudes towards gender inequality in 2021 between age groups. There was no significant difference on the AGIS and four of the five AGIS subscales between:

- the two youth groups (16- to 17-year-olds and 18- to 24-year-olds)
- young respondents (16 to 24 years) and respondents aged 25 years or older.

However, the results for the remaining AGIS subscale showed significantly weaker rejection by younger respondents of attitudes that condone limiting women's autonomy, including weaker rejection by:

- 16- to 17-year-olds than 18- to 24-year-olds
- young respondents (16 to 24 years) than respondents aged 25 years or older.

There is room to improve attitudes towards gender inequality across the Australian community (Section 5.4).

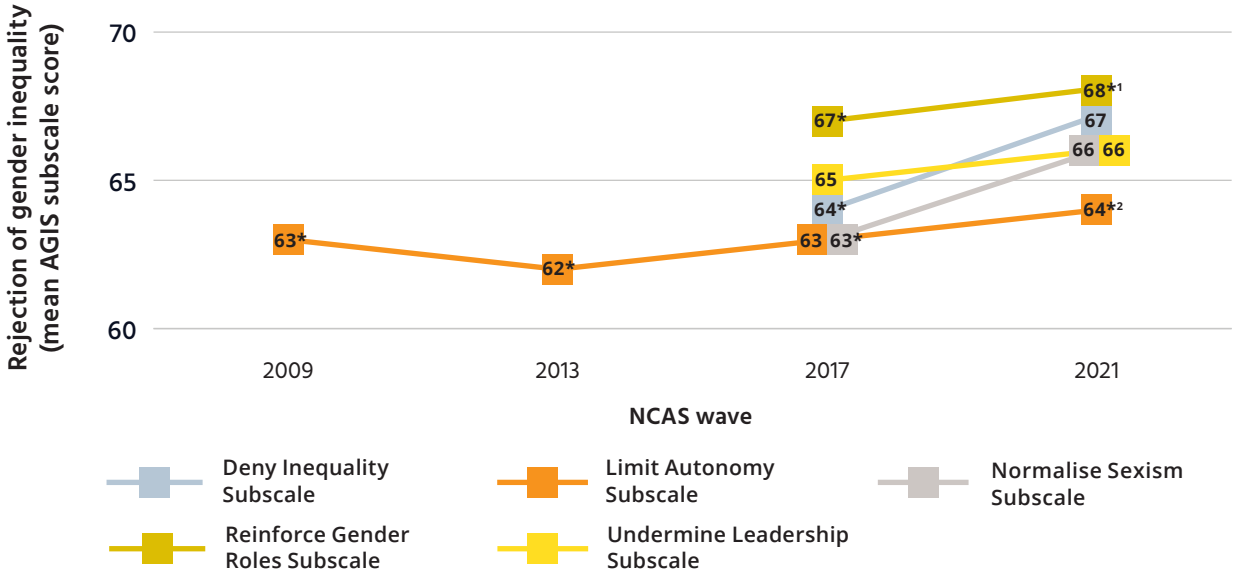
5.1 Attitudes over time: Young people's attitudes towards gender inequality

This section examines young respondents' rejection of gender inequality over time based on the AGIS scale, subscales and items.

As Chapter 3 shows, young respondents' overall rejection of gender inequality, as measured by mean AGIS scores, was significantly higher in 2021 than in all prior NCAS waves.

Similarly, four of the five AGIS subscales also indicated significant improvement in young people's rejection of gender inequality over time (Figure 5-1). Specifically, there was a significant improvement between 2017 and 2021 in young respondents' rejection of attitudes that deny women's experiences of inequality (Deny Inequality Subscale), normalise sexism (Normalise Sexism Subscale) and reinforce rigid gender roles and stereotypes (Reinforce Gender Roles Subscale). According to the Limit Autonomy Subscale, there was also a significant improvement in 2021 in young respondents' rejection of attitudes that condone men being in charge in intimate relationships and limiting women's personal autonomy compared to both 2009 and 2013, but no further significant improvement between 2017 and 2021. There was no significant improvement between 2017 and 2021 in young respondents' attitudes that undermine women's leadership (Undermine Leadership Subscale).

Figure 5-1: Rejection of different aspects of gender inequality (AGIS subscales) over time, 16- to 24-year-olds, 2009 to 2021



Note: "na" (below) means reliable data was not available. *N*s in 2009, 2013, 2017 and 2021 were:

- Deny Inequality Subscale – na; na; 1,496; 831
- Limit Autonomy Subscale – 854; 1,828; 1,504; 1,616
- Normalise Sexism Subscale – na; na; 1,539; 550
- Reinforce Gender Roles Subscale – na; na; 1,548; 839
- Undermine Leadership Subscale – na; na; 1,550; 1,647.

***** Statistically significant difference on this subscale between the year indicated and 2021.

***1** The Reinforce Gender Roles Subscale had a significantly higher mean score compared to the Normalise Sexism and Limit Autonomy Subscales in 2021. Differences in 2021 between AGIS subscales are discussed in Section 5.2.

***2** The Limit Autonomy Subscale had a significantly lower mean score compared to the Normalise Sexism and Deny Inequality Subscales in 2021. Differences in 2021 between AGIS subscales are discussed in Section 5.2.

Consistent with the results for the Deny Inequality Subscale as a whole (Figure 5-1), one of its three items also indicated significant improvement in young respondents' rejection of attitudes that deny women's experiences of gender inequality in 2021 compared to 2017. Specifically, in 2021, almost three fifths of young respondents "strongly" or "somewhat" disagreed that many women mistakenly interpret innocent remarks or acts as being sexist (G2; Figure 5-2) compared to less than half of young respondents in 2017. The other two subscale items did not show a significant increase in rejection of problematic attitudes, despite a trend in this direction in the raw percentages (G1, G3).

Between 2017 and 2021, consistent with the results for the Limit Autonomy Subscale as a whole (Figure 5-1), there was no significant improvement according to either of its two items in young respondents' rejection of attitudes that condone men being in charge in intimate relationships and limit women's personal autonomy. However, the significant improvement between 2013 and 2021 in rejection according to this subscale was reflected in one of its two items. Specifically, there was a significant increase between 2013 and 2021 in young respondents' rejection of the belief that men should be the head of the household (G12; Figure 5-3).

Like the results for the Normalise Sexism Subscale as a whole (Figure 5-1), two of its three items also indicated significant improvement in young respondents' attitudes over time. There was significant improvement between 2017 and 2021 in young respondents' rejection of the attitude that it is harmless for men to make sexist jokes about women (G16) and significant improvement between 2013 and 2021 in their rejection of attitudes that discrimination against women is no longer a problem in the workplace in Australia (G10; Figure 5-4). The other subscale item already showed a high level of rejection of normalising attitudes in 2017, with at least 96 per cent of young respondents disagreeing, "strongly" or "somewhat", that it is okay for men to joke about being violent towards women (G17).

As noted above, the Reinforce Gender Roles Subscale as a whole showed a significant increase in young respondents' rejection of attitudes that support rigid gender roles between 2017 and 2021 (Figure 5-1). However, this result was not found at the item level. None of the five items in this subscale showed a significant change in this rejection between 2017 and 2021, although the raw percentages for three of the items trended in this direction (Figure 5-5). It is worth mentioning that, for three of the items (G8, G7, G14), the lack of significant improvement since 2017 may partly reflect the already high level of rejection of these problematic attitudes in 2017, with at least 9 in 10 young respondents disagreeing ("strongly" or "somewhat") with these attitudes in 2017.

Like the results for the Undermine Leadership Subscale as a whole (Figure 5-1), there were no significant improvements between 2017 and 2021 in attitudes that undermine women's leadership at work and in public life according to any of its four items (Figure 5-6). However, rejection of one of the four Undermine Leadership Subscale items significantly improved between 2009, 2013 and 2021, indicating an increased rejection of the attitude that men make better political leaders than women (G4).

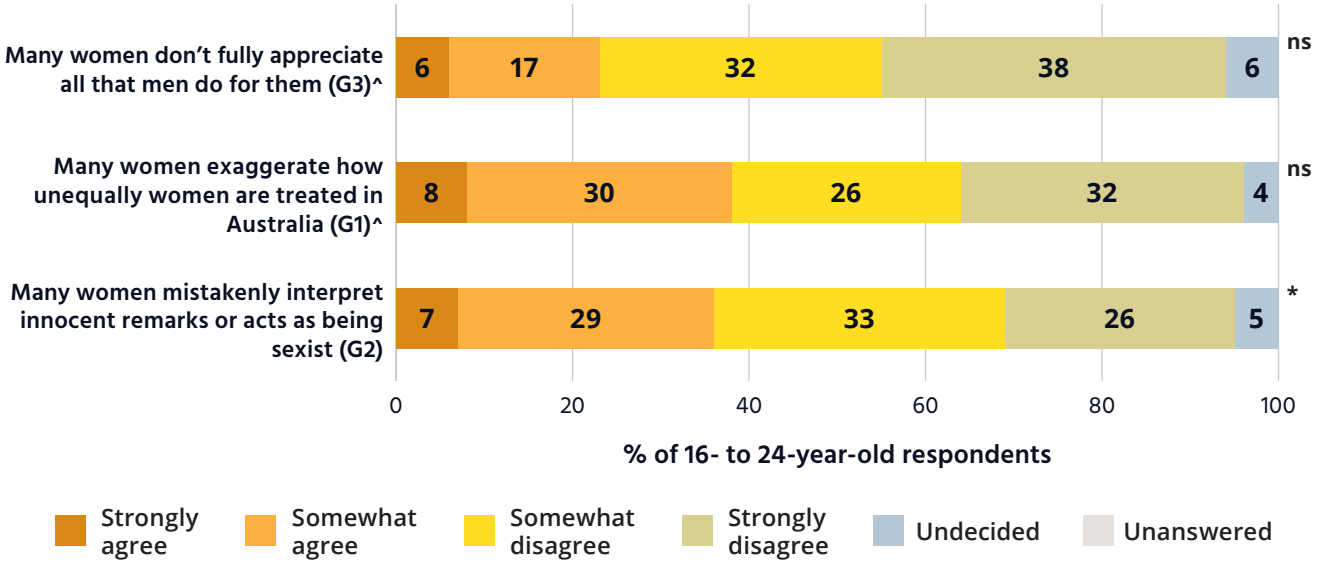
5.2 Attitudes in 2021: Young people's attitudes towards gender inequality

This section examines young respondents' attitudes towards gender inequality in 2021 based on the AGIS subscales and the items within them.

In 2021, according to mean scores on the AGIS subscales, young respondents had greater rejection of some attitudes towards gender inequality than other attitudes. They were significantly more likely to reject attitudes that reinforce rigid gender roles (Reinforce Gender Roles Subscale) than those that limit women's autonomy (Limit Autonomy Subscale) and normalise sexism (Normalise Sexism; Figure 5-1). In addition, young respondents in 2021 were significantly less likely to reject attitudes that limit women's autonomy (Limit Autonomy Subscale) than they were to reject those that deny women's experiences of inequality (Deny Inequality Subscale) and normalise sexism (Normalise Sexism Subscale; Figure 5-1).

Figures 5-2 to 5-6 present young respondents' 2021 results for the items in each AGIS subscale. Figure 5-2 shows the results for young respondents on the three items in the Deny Inequality Subscale, which describe attitudes that deny gender inequality experiences through backlash or resistance against progressive change towards gender equality. In 2021, less than two fifths of young respondents "strongly disagreed" that many women mistakenly interpret innocent remarks as sexist (26%; G2), that many women exaggerate the unequal treatment of women in Australia (32%; G1) and that many women do not fully appreciate what men do for them (38%; G3; Figure 5-2). These results indicate considerable support for backlash attitudes among young Australians and highlight the need for continued efforts to address backlash attitudes.

Figure 5-2: Denying gender inequality experiences (AGIS subscale items), 16- to 24-year-olds, 2021



Note: *N* = 831 unless otherwise noted. Percentages in the figure do not always add to 100 due to rounding. Significant differences over time are based on the percentage of respondents who answered "strongly disagree" or "somewhat disagree".

***** Significantly higher rejection in 2021 than 2017. Change over time results are discussed in Section 5.1.

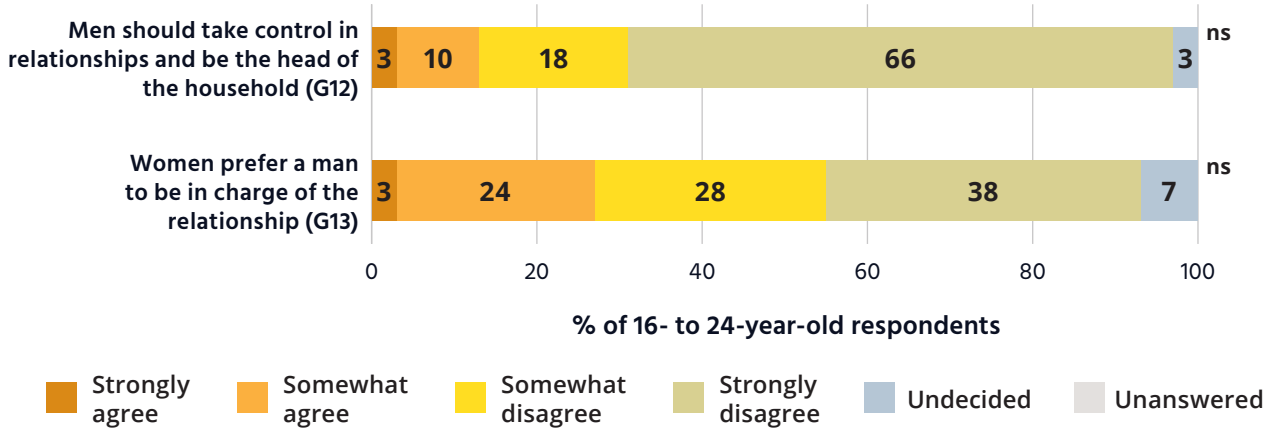
ns No significant difference between 2021 and 2017.

^ Asked of half the sample in 2021.

Figure 5-3 shows young respondents' rejection in 2021 of attitudes that limit women's personal autonomy according to the two items in the Limit Autonomy Subscale. In 2021, most young respondents "strongly disagreed" with the normative statement that men *should* be in charge of relationships (66%; G12). However, fewer young respondents "strongly disagreed" that women prefer men to take charge in relationships (38%; G13).

> I think there would be a lot of women out there whose lifelong conditioning leads them to want to be a more submissive partner. And although I don't think it does much to, like, advance gender equality, I think that [agreement that women prefer a man to be in charge of the relationship] sort of speaks to that portion of people who still have internalised that and might enjoy doing so, or might be challenging it, but it still remains.
>
> – Youth Ambassador

Figure 5-3: Limiting women's personal autonomy in relationships (AGIS subscale items), 16- to 24-year-olds, 2021

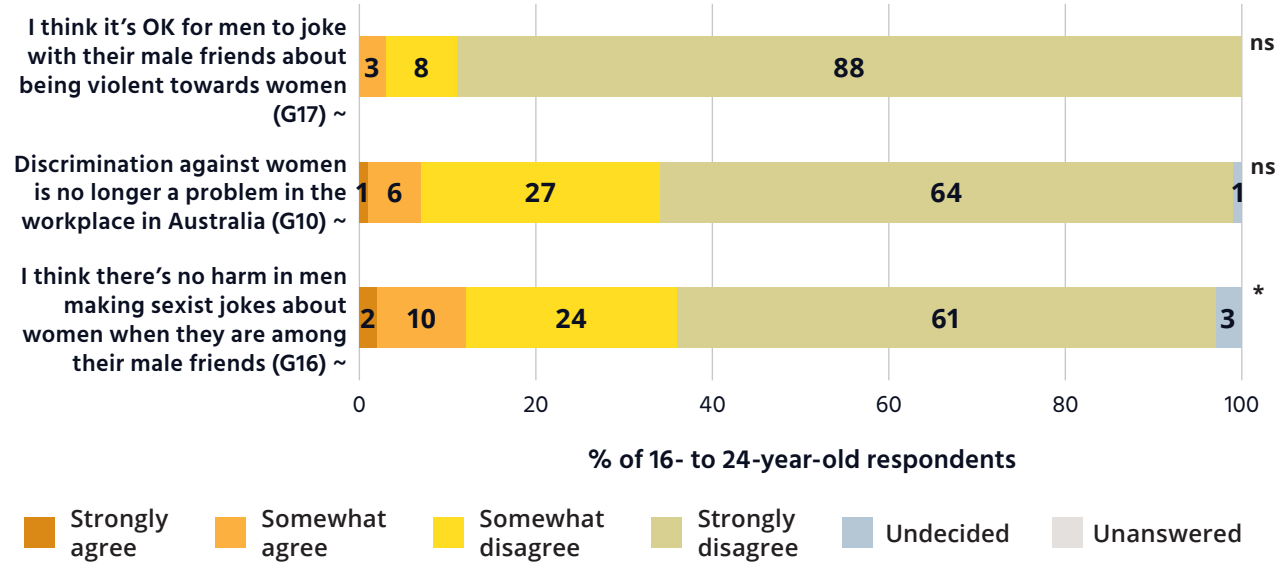


Note: *N* = 1,616 unless otherwise noted. Significant differences over time are based on the percentage of respondents who answered "strongly disagree" or "somewhat disagree".

ns No significant difference between 2021 and 2017. Change over time results are discussed in Section 5.1.

Figure 5-4 shows the 2021 results for young respondents on the three items in the Normalise Sexism Subscale. In 2021, most young respondents "strongly disagreed" that jokes about violence against women are acceptable (88%; G17). However, fewer young respondents "strongly disagreed" that sexist jokes are acceptable (61%; G16) and that workplace discrimination against women is not a problem (64%; G10).

Figure 5-4: Normalising sexism (AGIS subscale items), 16- to 24-year-olds, 2021



Note: *N* = 550 unless otherwise noted. Percentages in the figure do not always add to 100 due to rounding. Significant differences over time are based on the percentage of respondents who answered "strongly disagree" or "somewhat disagree".

***** Significantly higher rejection in 2021 than 2017. Change over time results are discussed in Section 5.1.

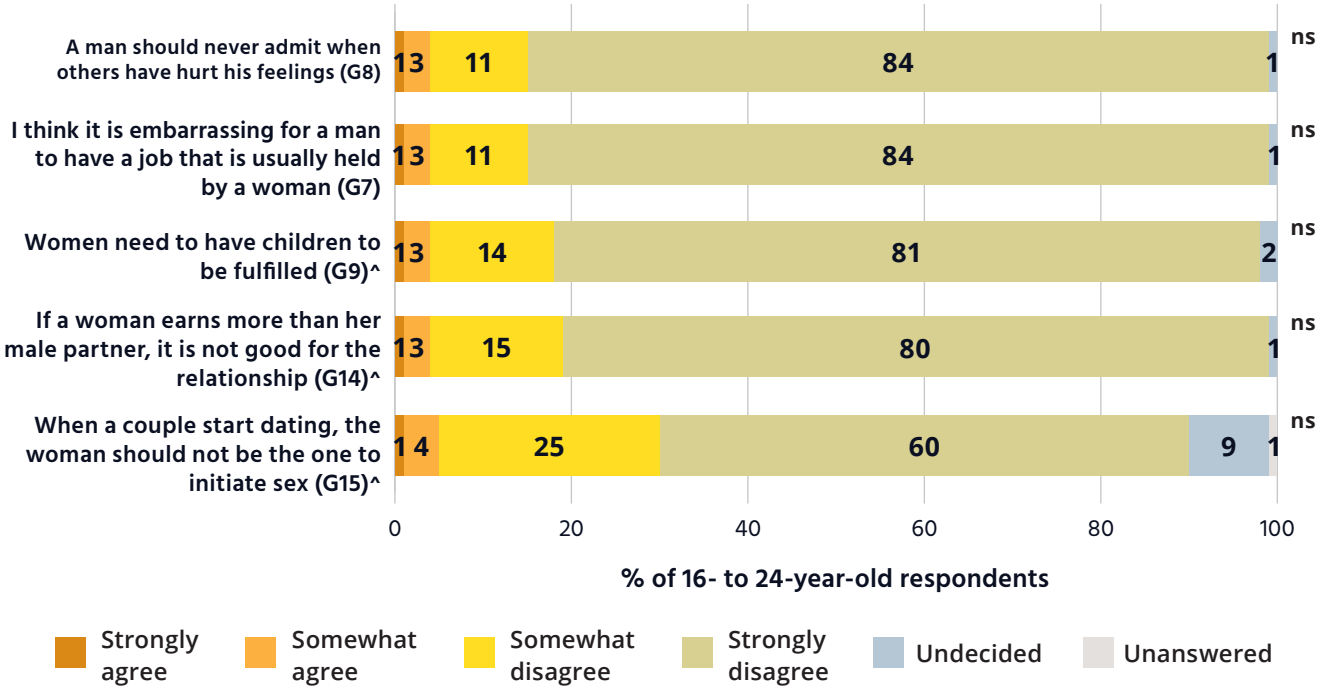
ns No significant difference between 2021 and 2017.

~ Asked of one quarter of the sample in 2021.

Figure 5-5 shows young respondents' rejection in 2021 of the different attitudes that reinforce rigid gender roles, according to the five items in the Reinforce Gender Roles Subscale. In 2021, most young respondents "strongly disagreed" with attitudes that chastise men for working in stereotypically "feminine" industries (84%; G7) and for expressing emotion (84%; G8). However, fewer young respondents "strongly disagreed" with expectations that women should not initiate sex when a couple starts dating (60%; G15).

> A lot of my friends like these social concepts when it's applied to other people and not their relationships. Like a lot of them say things like, "I love a woman who works hard, who's busy and earns more than me and is independent and does all of this jazzy stuff. But I don't want my partner to be like that because I want my partner to have time for me. I want my partner to sacrifice things for me. I want my partner to put family first and have kids with me."
>
> – Youth Ambassador

Figure 5-5: Reinforcing rigid gender roles (AGIS subscale items), 16- to 24-year-olds, 2021



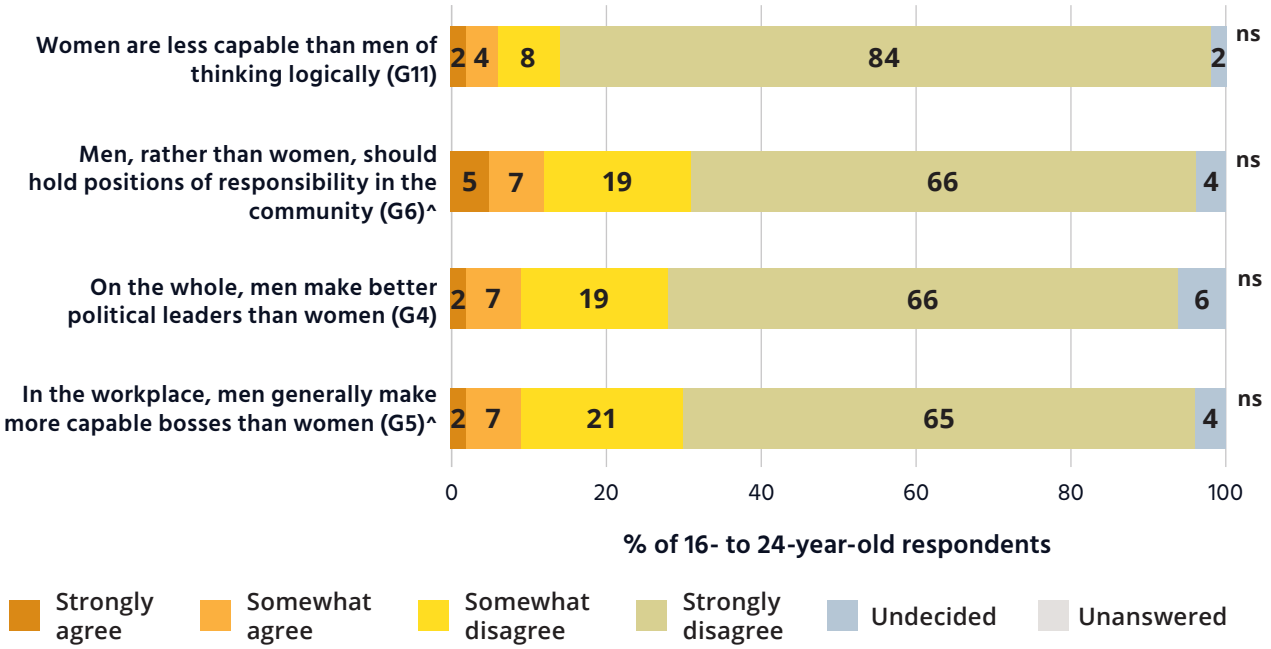
Note: *N* = 839 unless otherwise noted. Percentages in the figure do not always add to 100 due to rounding. Significant differences over time are based on the percentage of respondents who answered "strongly disagree" or "somewhat disagree".

ns No significant difference between 2021 and 2017. Change over time results are discussed in Section 5.1.

^ Asked of half the sample in 2021.

Figure 5-6 presents the young respondents' 2021 results for the four items in the Undermine Leadership Subscale. In 2021, most young respondents "strongly disagreed" with attitudes that undermine women's leadership and decision-making abilities, including attitudes that women are less capable of thinking logically than men (84%; G11). However, fewer young respondents "strongly disagreed" that men generally make better bosses (65%; G5) and political leaders (66%; G4) and should hold more positions of responsibility in the community (66%; G6) than women.

Figure 5-6: Undermining women's leadership in public life (AGIS subscale items), 16- to 24-year-olds, 2021



Note: *N* = 1,647 unless otherwise noted. Percentages in the figure do not always add to 100 due to rounding. Significant differences over time are based on the percentage of respondents who answered "strongly disagree" or "somewhat disagree".

ns No significant difference between 2021 and 2017. Change over time results are discussed in Section 5.1.

^ Asked of half the sample in 2021.

5.3 Comparing by gender: Young people's attitudes towards gender inequality

Like the results for all NCAS respondents (Main report), the results for young respondents demonstrate a consistent gender difference indicating that young women are more likely than young men to reject gender inequality. In 2021, young women respondents had significantly higher rejection of gender inequality than young men respondents according to mean scores on the AGIS and all five of its subscales, indicating higher rejection of attitudes that deny women's experiences of inequality, condone limiting women's autonomy, normalise sexism, reinforce rigid gender roles and undermine women's leadership in public life (Figure 5-7).

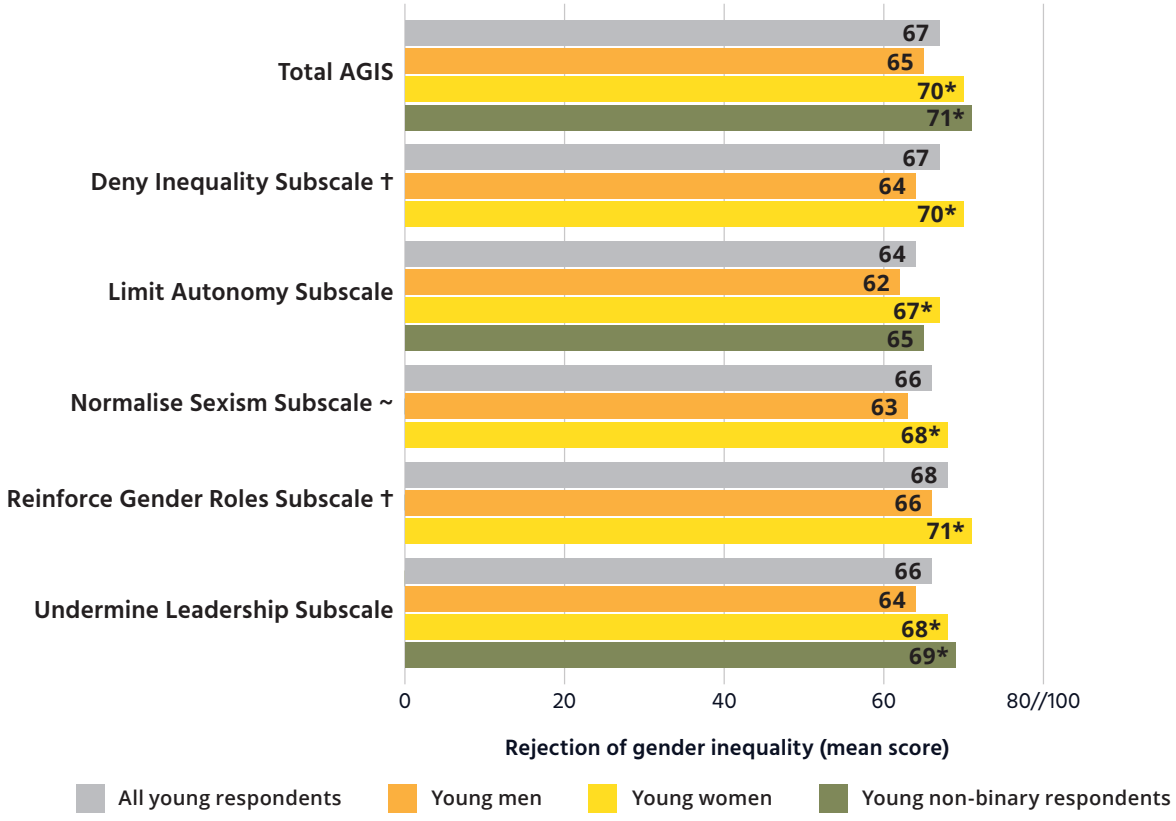
We also compared young non-binary respondents with both young women and young men respondents on the AGIS as a whole and on two of the five AGIS subscales – the Limit Autonomy Subscale and the Undermine Leadership Subscale (Figure 5-7).[23] There was no significant difference between young non-binary respondents and young women respondents on the AGIS and these two subscales in 2021. However, young non-binary respondents had significantly higher rejection of gender inequality than young men respondents on the AGIS and on the Undermine Leadership Subscale in 2021.

23 Mean scores for young non-binary respondents are not reported for subscales where there was data for fewer than 30 young non-binary respondents.

Table 15-6 in Appendix C presents differences between young women and young men respondents on the AGIS items.[24] The gender difference between young women and young men in attitudes towards gender inequality at the scale and subscale level was also consistently evident at the item level. In fact, in 2021, young women respondents (39–95%) were significantly more likely than young men respondents (15–83%) to "strongly disagree" with all 17 AGIS items (G1 to G17). By way of example, below we provide the item from each AGIS subscale with the largest gender difference in the percentage of respondents who "strongly disagreed" with the attitude condoning gender inequality. The following percentages of young women and young men respondents "strongly disagreed" with attitudes that:

- many women exaggerate how unequally women are treated in Australia (47% of young women versus 19% of young men; G1, Deny Gender Inequality Subscale)
- men should take control in relationships and be the head of the household (81% versus 54%; G12, Limit Autonomy Subscale)
- there's no harm in men making sexist jokes about women among their male friends (81% versus 43%; G16, Normalise Sexism Subscale)
- women need to have children to be fulfilled (92% versus 72%; G9, Reinforce Gender Roles Subscale)
- men generally make more capable bosses than women (79% versus 54%; G5, Undermine Leadership Subscale).

Figure 5-7: Rejection of different aspects of gender inequality (AGIS and subscales) by gender, 16- to 24-year-olds, 2021



Note: *N* = 1,663 unless otherwise noted.
***** Statistically significant difference compared to young men on the AGIS or subscale indicated in 2021.
~ Asked of one quarter of the sample. Results for young non-binary respondents are not reported for this subscale due to insufficient numbers.
† Results for young non-binary respondents are not reported for this subscale due to insufficient numbers.

24 Due to small numbers, comparisons involving young non-binary respondents were not conducted at the item level.

5.4 Comparing by age: Attitudes towards gender inequality

Comparing attitudes towards gender inequality of 16- to 17-year-olds and 18- to 24-year-olds

In 2021, 16- to 17-year-olds and 18- to 24-year-olds demonstrated more similarities than differences in their attitudes towards gender inequality. Where differences occurred, they were in the direction of stronger rejection of gender inequality by 18- to 24-year-olds. Specifically, there were no significant differences between 16- to 17-year-olds and 18- to 24-year-olds in their rejection of gender inequality according to mean scores on the AGIS and four of the five AGIS subscales: the Deny Inequality, Normalise Sexism, Reinforce Gender Roles and Undermine Leadership Subscales. However, 18- to 24-year-old respondents demonstrated significantly stronger rejection of attitudes that limit autonomy than 16- to 17-year-olds according to mean subscale scores.

At the item level (Appendix A, Table 13-6), there were only two AGIS items for which there were significant differences between the youth age groups. Significantly more 16- to 17-year-olds (15%) than 18- to 24-year-olds (4%) "strongly agreed" that many women underappreciate men (G3, Deny Gender Inequality Subscale). Similarly, significantly more 16- to 17-year-olds (11%) than 18- to 24-year-olds (4%) "strongly" or "somewhat" agreed that the woman should not be the one to initiate sex when a couple starts dating (G15, Reinforce Gender Roles Subscale).[25]

Comparing attitudes towards gender inequality of 16- to 24-year-olds and people aged 25 years or older

Many findings regarding attitudes towards gender inequality suggested that young Australians' attitudes are similar to those of other Australians. In 2021, like most respondents of all ages (Main report), most young respondents rejected many attitudes that condone or reinforce gender inequality. There was no significant difference between young respondents and those aged 25 years or older on the AGIS and four of its five subscales. Accordingly, there was no significant difference in 2021 between the proportion of young respondents (31%) and the proportion of respondents aged 25 years or older (28%) who had "advanced" rejection of gender inequality (AGIS). Although rejection of gender inequality is steadily but slowly improving over time for all age groups (Main report), there is room for improvement across the Australian population.

There were, however, a few differences between young respondents and those aged 25 years or older in their rejection of gender inequality in 2021. Compared to respondents aged 25 years or older, young respondents had significantly lower rejection of attitudes that condone limiting women's personal autonomy (Limit Autonomy Subscale). In addition, while both young respondents and those aged 25 years or older had stronger rejection of some problematic attitudes towards gender inequality than others, the pattern of rejection was different for these age groups. As Section 5.2 details, in 2021, young respondents' rejection of attitudes that condone limiting women's autonomy was lower than their rejection of attitudes that deny gender inequality, normalise sexism and reinforce gender roles. In addition, young respondents' rejection of attitudes that reinforce gender roles was stronger than their rejection of attitudes that condone limiting autonomy and normalising sexism (Figure 5-1). In contrast, the pattern for respondents of all ages revealed lower rejection of attitudes that normalise sexism than attitudes that undermine women's leadership (Main report, Figure 5-2).

Further, while there were no significant differences between young respondents and those aged 25 years or older on most AGIS items, significant differences were found for three (of the 17) items (Appendix B, Table 14-6). Two items, one from the Limit Autonomy Subscale and one from the Normalise Sexism Subscale, indicated stronger rejection of gender inequality by respondents aged 25 years or older. Specifically, in 2021, significantly fewer young respondents than those aged 25 years or older "strongly disagreed" that women prefer men to take charge in relationships (38% versus 49%; G13, Limit Autonomy Subscale) and that it is acceptable for men to make violent jokes about women when among their male friends (88% versus 94%; G17, Normalise Sexism Subscale). However, the results of one item from the Reinforce Gender Roles Subscale were in the direction of stronger rejection of gender inequality by young respondents. Significantly more young respondents (81%) "strongly disagreed" that women need children to be fulfilled compared to respondents aged 25 years or older (72%; G9).

25 For each of these items, there was no significant difference in the percentage of 16- to 17-year-olds and 18- to 24-year-olds who "strongly disagreed".

There were no significant differences between young respondents and those aged 25 years or older on any of the items in the Deny Inequality and the Undermine Leadership Subscales. The results of the Deny Inequality Subscale indicated considerable support for backlash attitudes among both young Australians and Australians aged 25 years or older, and the need for continued effort to address these attitudes across the Australian population.

6 Findings: Young people's attitudes towards violence against women – AVAWS in focus

The **Attitudes towards Violence against Women Scale (AVAWS)** measures Australians' attitudes towards violence against women and provides a means of monitoring changes over time in community attitudes that reject violence. "Reduction of attitudes that are associated with violence against women" is cited in the National Plan 2022–2032 as a key (primary) prevention indicator (DSS, 2022, p. 30). These attitudes include minimising the extent and seriousness of violence against women and victim-blaming, mistrusting women's disclosures of violence, and objectifying women and disregarding the need to gain consent.

The **AVAWS** comprises three psychometrically validated subscales, each measuring a different conceptual aspect of attitudes towards violence against women:

- The **Minimise Violence Subscale** comprises 15 statements that minimise the seriousness of violence against women and shift blame from perpetrators to victims and survivors.
- The **Mistrust Women Subscale** comprises 13 statements that mistrust women's reports of violence.
- The **Objectify Women Subscale** comprises 15 items – 11 standalone items presenting statements that objectify women or disregard the need to gain women's consent and four items presenting scenarios about sexual consent.

This chapter details young respondents' results on the AVAWS overall, and on its subscales and individual items, to:

- examine changes in young people's attitudes towards violence against women over time (Section 6.1)
- examine young people's attitudes towards violence against women in 2021 (Section 6.2)
- compare young people's attitudes towards violence against women in 2021 by gender (Section 6.3)
- compare attitudes towards violence against women in 2021 by age (Section 6.4).

Note that the findings for the four items in the Objectify Women Subscale that present sexual consent scenarios are discussed in Chapter 7.

AVAWS results summary

In 2021, most young Australians held attitudes that reject violence against women and this rejection had significantly improved since 2017, whereas there was no significant improvement during this period for all respondents (Sections 3.1 and 6.1).

However, a minority of young respondents in 2021 endorsed attitudes that condone violence against women, including attitudes that minimise the seriousness of violence and shift blame to victims and survivors, attitudes that mistrust women's reports of violence and attitudes that objectify women and disregard consent (Section 6.2).

In 2021, compared to young men, young women had significantly higher rejection of violence against women, including greater rejection of attitudes that minimise violence against women, mistrust women's reports of violence, and objectify women and disregard consent. Young non-binary respondents were also significantly more likely than young men to reject attitudes that mistrust women's reports of violence. Young women were also significantly more likely than young men to have "advanced" attitudes towards violence against women.

In 2021, young respondents (aged 16 to 24 years) were similar to those aged 25 years or older in their rejection of attitudes towards violence against women according to the AVAWS overall and two of its three subscales. However, based on the Minimise Violence Subscale, young respondents had significantly lower rejection than those aged 25 years or older of attitudes that minimise violence against women and shift blame.

In 2021, within the group of young respondents, 18- to 24-year-olds had significantly stronger rejection of violence against women than 16- to 17-year-olds according to the AVAWS and all its subscales. That is, 18- to 24-year-olds were more likely than 16- to 17-year-olds to reject attitudes that minimise violence against women and shift blame, attitudes that mistrust women's reports of violence and attitudes that objectify women and disregard consent.

There is room to further improve attitudes towards violence against women across the Australian community.

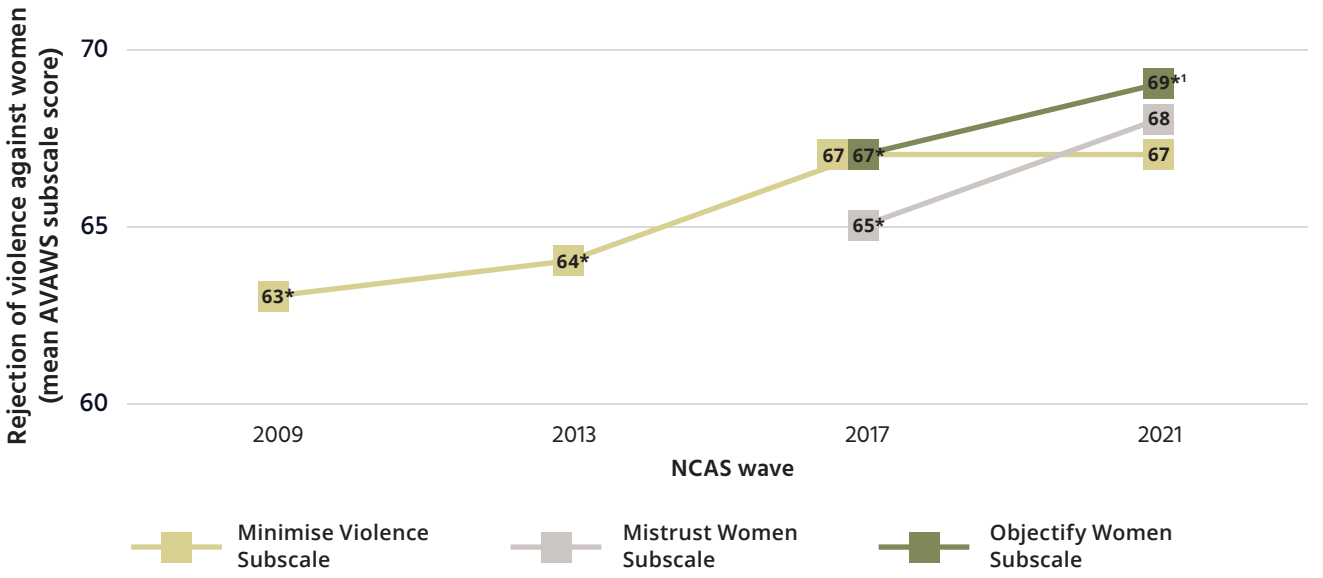
6.1 Attitudes over time: Young people's attitudes towards violence against women

This section examines young respondents' rejection of violence against women over time based on the AVAWS scale, subscales and items.

As Chapter 3 shows, young respondents' overall rejection of violence against women, as measured by mean AVAWS scores, was significantly higher in 2021 than in all prior NCAS waves.

Similarly, as Figure 6-1 shows, all three of the AVAWS subscales also indicated significant improvement in young people's rejection of violence against women over time. Between 2017 and 2021, there was a significant improvement in young respondents' rejection of attitudes that mistrust women's reports of violence victimisation, as well as those that objectify women and disregard consent based on the Mistrust Women and the Objectify Women Subscales. However, while mean scores on the Minimise Violence Subscale showed significant improvement in young respondents' rejection of minimising attitudes in 2021 compared to both 2009 and 2013, this rejection plateaued between 2017 and 2021 (Figure 6-1).

Figure 6-1: Rejection of different aspects of violence against women (AVAWS subscales) over time, 16- to 24-year-olds, 2009 to 2021



Note: "na" (below) means reliable data was not available. *Ns* in 2009, 2013, 2017 and 2021 were:

- Minimise Violence Subscale – 452; 1,879; 1,561; 1,669
- Mistrust Women Subscale – na; na; 1,554; 1,665
- Objectify Women Subscale – na; na; 1,559; 1,654

***** Statistically significant difference on this subscale between the year indicated and 2021.

***1** The Objectify Women Subscale had a significantly higher mean score compared to the Minimise Violence and Mistrust Women Subscales in 2021. Differences in 2021 between AVAWS subscales are discussed in Section 6.2.

Consistent with the plateau on the Minimise Violence Subscale between 2017 and 2021 (Figure 6-1), only one of its items showed a significant increase over this period in the percentage of young respondents who disagreed ("strongly" or "somewhat") with attitudes that minimise violence against women and blame victims and survivors (Figure 6-2).[26] This item showed an increase in young respondents' rejection of the attitude that women deserve less help from counselling and support services if they stay in an abusive relationship (D31). Another three items indicated significantly stronger rejection by young respondents of attitudes that minimise violence in 2021 compared to 2009 or 2013, in keeping with the result at the subscale level. These items described attitudes that

26 Thirteen Minimise Violence Subscale items were present in both the 2017 and 2021 NCAS. Change over time could not be reliably examined for the other two items in the 2021 Minimise Violence Subscale as these items were new or revised in 2021.

women who are sexually harassed should deal with it themselves (S9) and attitudes that domestic violence can be excused if the violent person temporarily lost control (D18) or genuinely regretted their actions (D19). It is also worth noting that the lack of improvement since 2017 on some Minimise Violence Subscale items (S9, D24, D20, S19, D21, D22) may partly reflect the already high level of rejection of these minimising attitudes in 2017, with at least 9 in 10 young respondents disagreeing ("strongly" or "somewhat") with these problematic attitudes in 2017.

As noted above, the Mistrust Women Subscale showed significant improvement in young respondents' rejection of mistrusting attitudes between 2017 and 2021 (Figure 6-1). However, none of the individual items in this subscale (Figure 6-3) showed increased rejection of mistrusting attitudes between 2017 and 2021, despite a trend in this direction in the raw percentages for the 10 subscale items present in both years.[27] Two Mistrust Women Subscale items showed significantly higher rejection of mistrusting attitudes in 2021 compared to 2009 or 2013. Specifically, in 2021 compared to 2009 and 2013, significantly more young respondents rejected the attitude that women going through custody battles often make up or exaggerate claims of domestic violence in order to improve their case (D23). In addition, in 2021 compared to 2013, more young respondents rejected the attitude that women often say that they were raped in order to cover up regretful consensual sex (S24).

Consistent with the Objectify Women Subscale (Figure 6-1), young respondents showed a significant increase between 2017 and 2021 in their rejection of attitudes that objectify women and shift blame to victims and survivors, according to three of the nine standalone subscale items that were present in both these years (Figure 6-4).[28] Specifically, significantly more young respondents rejected attitudes that normalise non-consensual physical touching (S7) and persistent unwanted attention (S11), and attitudes that shift blame to the woman if a partner shares a naked picture of her without permission (S6). The six other standalone items present in both 2017 and 2021 did not show a significant improvement over this time period, despite a trend in this direction in the raw percentages. In addition, two items showed a significant increase in young respondents' rejection of problematic attitudes in 2021 compared to either 2009 or 2013. Specifically, significantly more young respondents in 2021 disagreed that women often say "no" when they mean "yes" (S5) when compared to 2013, and that if a woman is raped while drunk or affected by drugs she is at least partly responsible (S20) when compared to 2009 and 2013.

6.2 Attitudes in 2021: Young people's attitudes towards violence against women

This section examines young respondents' attitudes towards violence against women in 2021 based on the AVAWS subscales and the items within them.

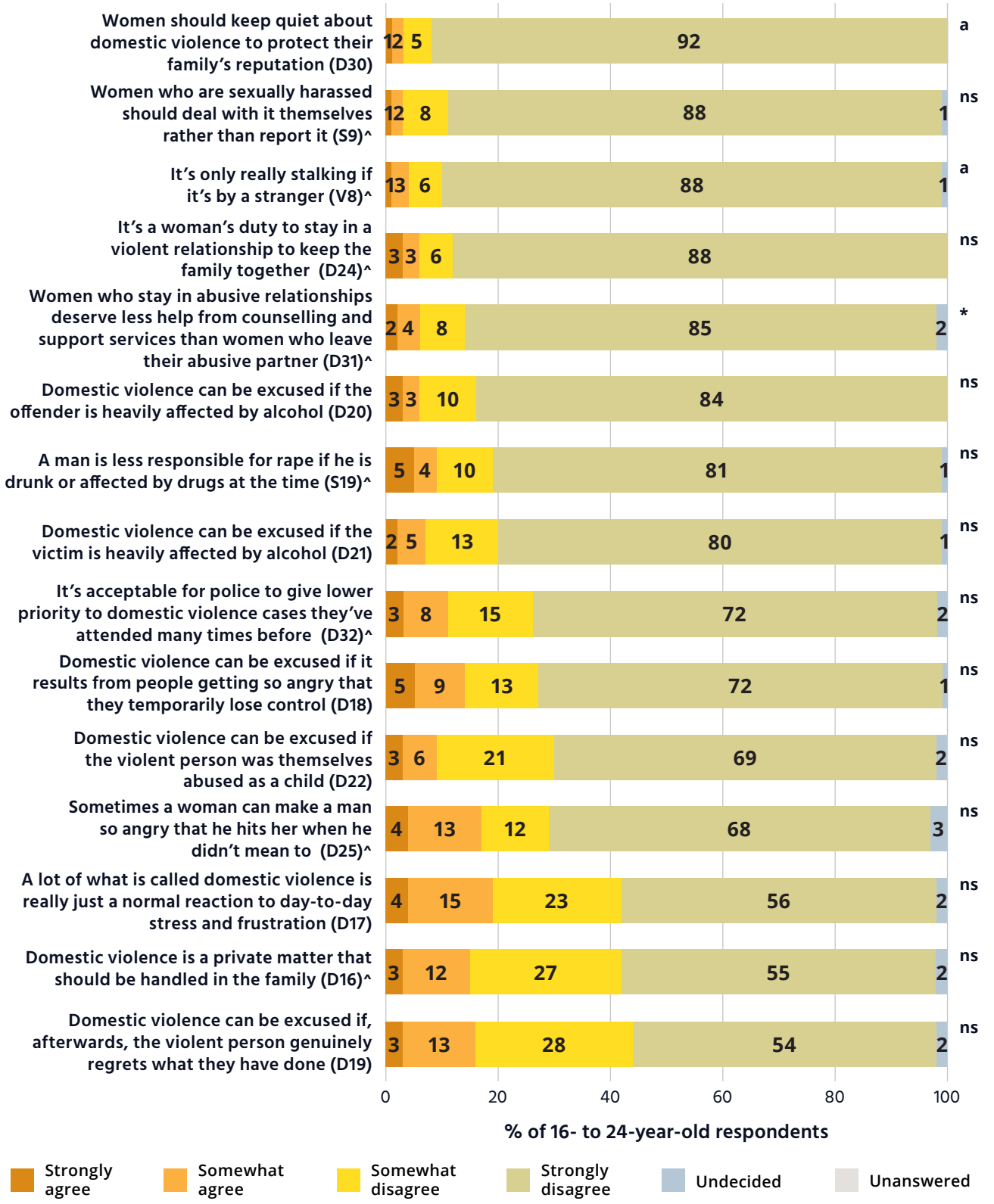
In 2021, according to mean scores on the AVAWS subscales, young respondents had greater rejection of some attitudes towards violence against women than other attitudes. Specifically, young respondents were significantly more likely to reject attitudes that objectify women and disregard consent (Objectify Women Subscale) than attitudes that minimise the extent of violence against women (Minimise Violence Subscale) and attitudes that mistrust women's reports of violence (Mistrust Women Subscale; Figure 6-1).

Figures 6-2 to 6-4 present young respondents' 2021 results for the items in each AVAWS subscale. Figure 6-2 shows young respondents' rejection in 2021 of the different attitudes that minimise violence against women and shift blame, according to the 15 items in the Minimise Violence Subscale. In 2021, most young respondents "strongly disagreed" with attitudes that minimise violence and shift blame from perpetrators to victims and survivors (54–92%; Figure 6-2). Nonetheless, the results suggest that further positive shifts could be made in some of these attitudes that minimise violence. For example, only 54 to 56 per cent of young respondents "strongly disagreed" with attitudes that excuse domestic violence if the offender regrets what they have done (D19) or attitudes that minimise domestic violence as a private matter that should be handled in the family (D16) or as a normal reaction to day-to-day stress (D17).

27 The remaining three items in the Mistrust Women Subscale were new in 2021.

28 Change over time could not be examined for the other two standalone items in the 2021 Mistrust Women Subscale as these items were new in 2021.

Figure 6-2: Minimising violence against women and shifting blame (AVAWS subscale items), 16- to 24-year-olds, 2021



Note: *N* = 1,669 unless otherwise noted. Percentages in the figure do not always add to 100 due to rounding.

***** Significantly higher understanding in 2021 than 2017. Change over time results are discussed in Section 6.1.

ns No significant difference between 2021 and 2017.

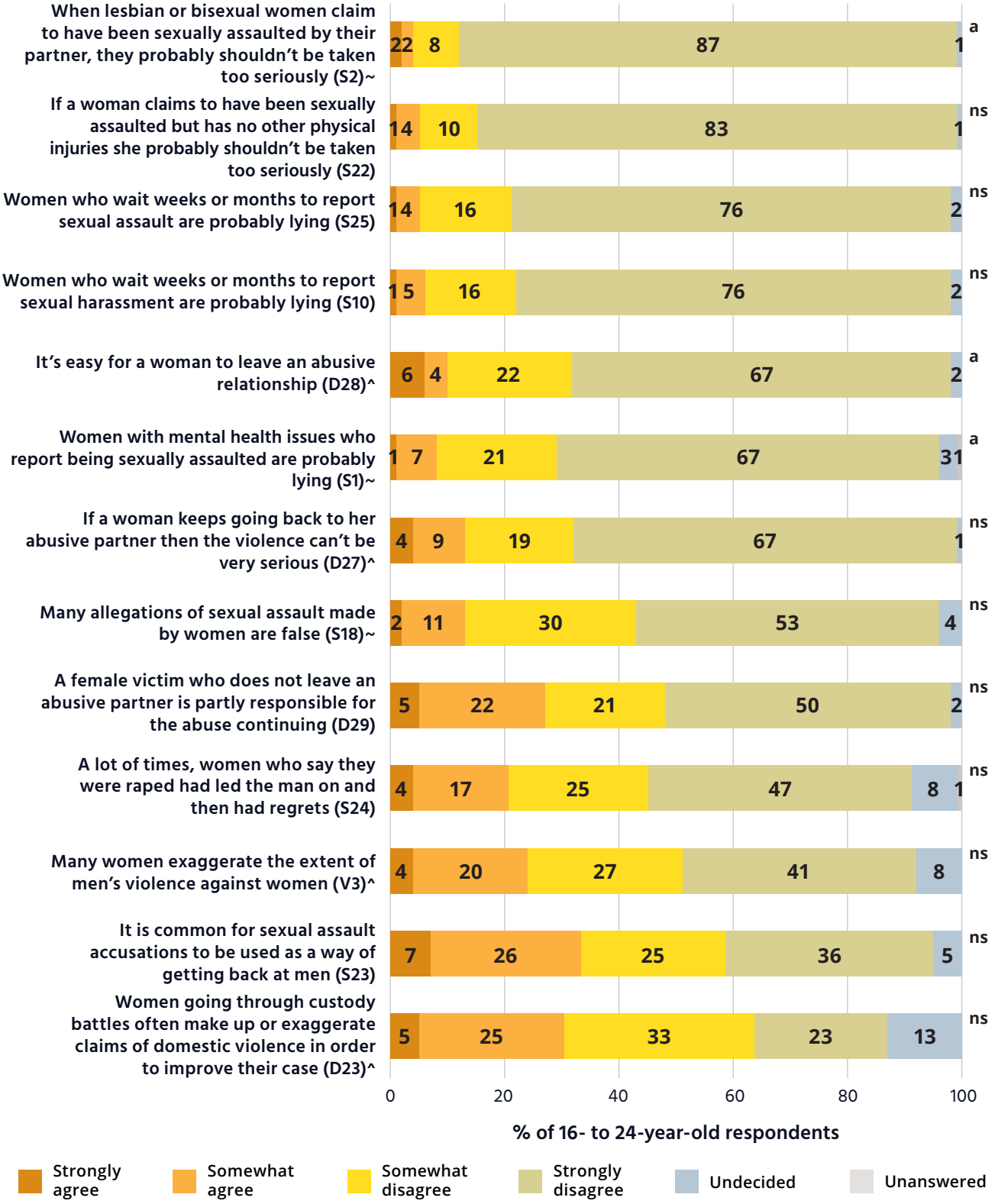
a New or revised item in 2021. Thus, change over time could not be examined.

^ Asked of half the sample in 20211.

Figure 6-3 shows young respondents' rejection in 2021 of different attitudes that mistrust women's reports of violence victimisation according to the 13 items in the Mistrust Women Subscale. In 2021, while a majority of respondents "strongly disagreed" with the mistrusting attitudes described by eight of these 13 items, only half or fewer "strongly disagreed" with the other mistrusting attitudes. Specifically, strong disagreement was highest for attitudes that women's claims of violence should not be taken seriously (83–87%; S2, S22) and attitudes that women who delay reporting are lying (76%; S25, S10). Considerably fewer young respondents "strongly disagreed" that women often lie about domestic violence to gain an advantage in a custody battle (23%; D23), that women often lie about sexual assault to "get back at men" (36%; S23) or due to regretting consensual sex (47%; S24), and that many women exaggerate the extent of men's violence (41%; V3). These findings indicate that much work is still needed to challenge deep-seated mistrusting attitudes that women have malicious agendas and ulterior motives when disclosing experiences of violence.

> **I think there's definitely still, I mean, like, undeniably still a portion of young people who think that sex is something that's owed. Like, even removing gender out of the equation, I think, especially in relationships, we unfortunately still think that, if you're dating someone, you're sort of beholden to giving them sex whenever they want.**
>
> – Youth Ambassador

Figure 6-3: Mistrusting women's reports of violence (AVAWS subscale items), 16- to 24-year-olds, 2021



Note: *N* = 1,665 unless otherwise noted. Percentages in the figure do not always add to 100 due to rounding. Significant differences over time are based on the percentage of respondents who answered "strongly disagree" or "somewhat disagree".

ns No significant difference between 2021 and 2017. Change over time results are discussed in Section 6.1.

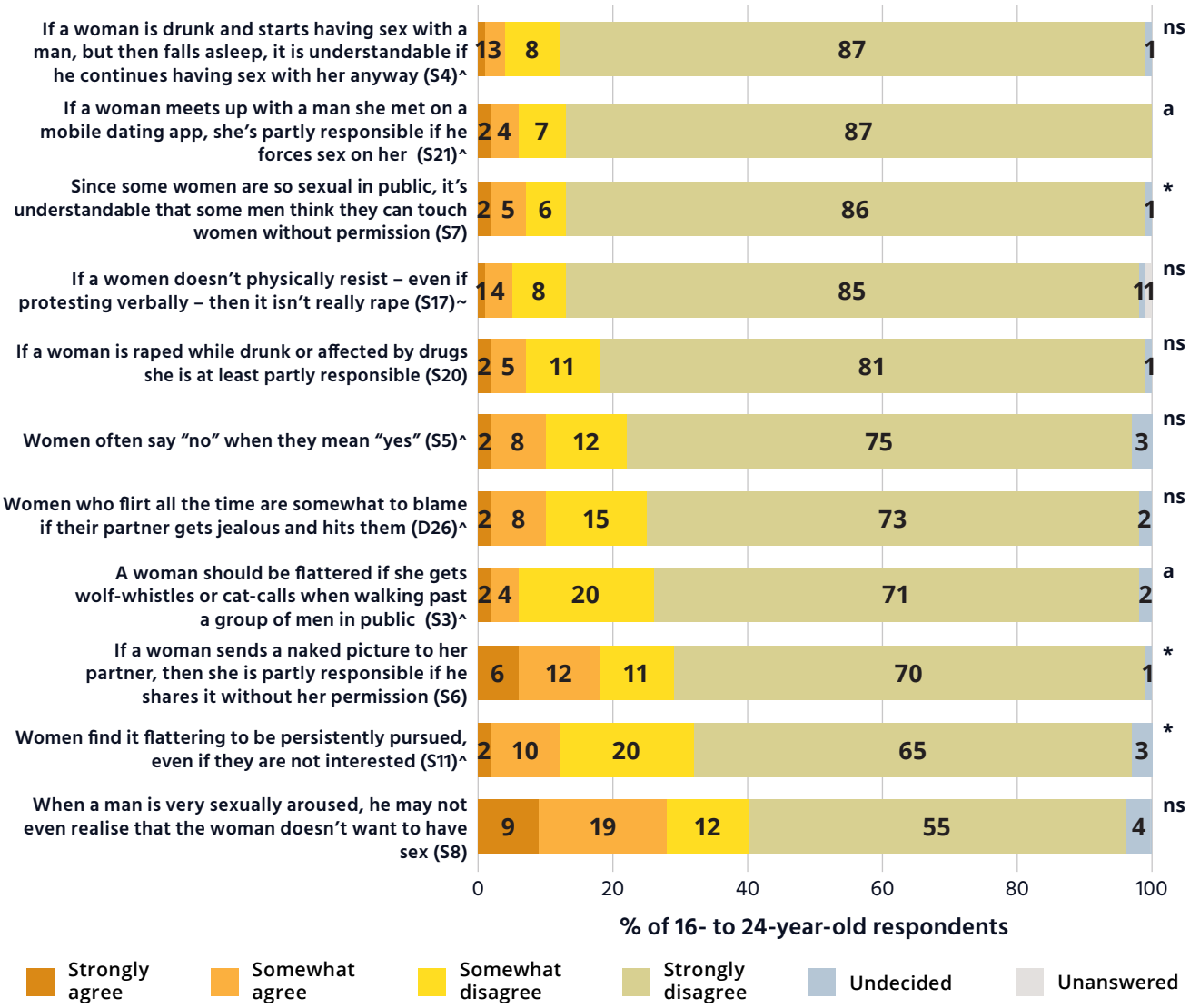
a New item in 2021. Thus, change over time could not be examined.

~ Asked of one quarter of the sample in 2021.

^ Asked of half the sample in 2021.

Figure 6-4 presents young respondents' rejection in 2021 of different attitudes that objectify women and disregard the need to gain women's consent, according to the 11 standalone items in the Objectify Women Subscale.[29] In 2021, most young respondents "strongly disagreed" (55–87%) with the attitudes described by each of the standalone items. In particular, the highest level of rejection was for attitudes that rape or forced sexual touching are understandable or partly due to the victim's behaviour, with more than 8 in 10 young respondents (81–87%) "strongly" disagreeing with these attitudes (S4, S21, S7, S17, S20). However, 7 in 10 or fewer young respondents (55–70%) "strongly disagreed" with three items that describe disregarding the need for consent. These three items describe sharing a naked picture (S6) or persistently pursuing a woman (S11) without consent, and an aroused man not realising that the woman does not consent (S8). In fact, a sizeable minority of young respondents agreed ("somewhat" or "strongly") with these three items (11–29%).

Figure 6-4: Objectifying women and disregarding consent (AVAWS subscale items), 16- to 24-year-olds, 2021



Note: *N* = 1,654 unless otherwise noted. Percentages in the figure do not always add to 100 or exactly correspond to percentages in the text due to rounding. Significant differences over time are based on the percentage of respondents who answered "strongly disagree" or "somewhat disagree".

***** Significantly higher understanding in 2021 than 2017. Change over time results are discussed in Section 6.1.

ns No significant difference between 2021 and 2017.

a New item in 2021. Thus, change over time could not be examined.

~ Asked of one quarter of the sample in 2021.

^ Asked of half the sample in 2021.

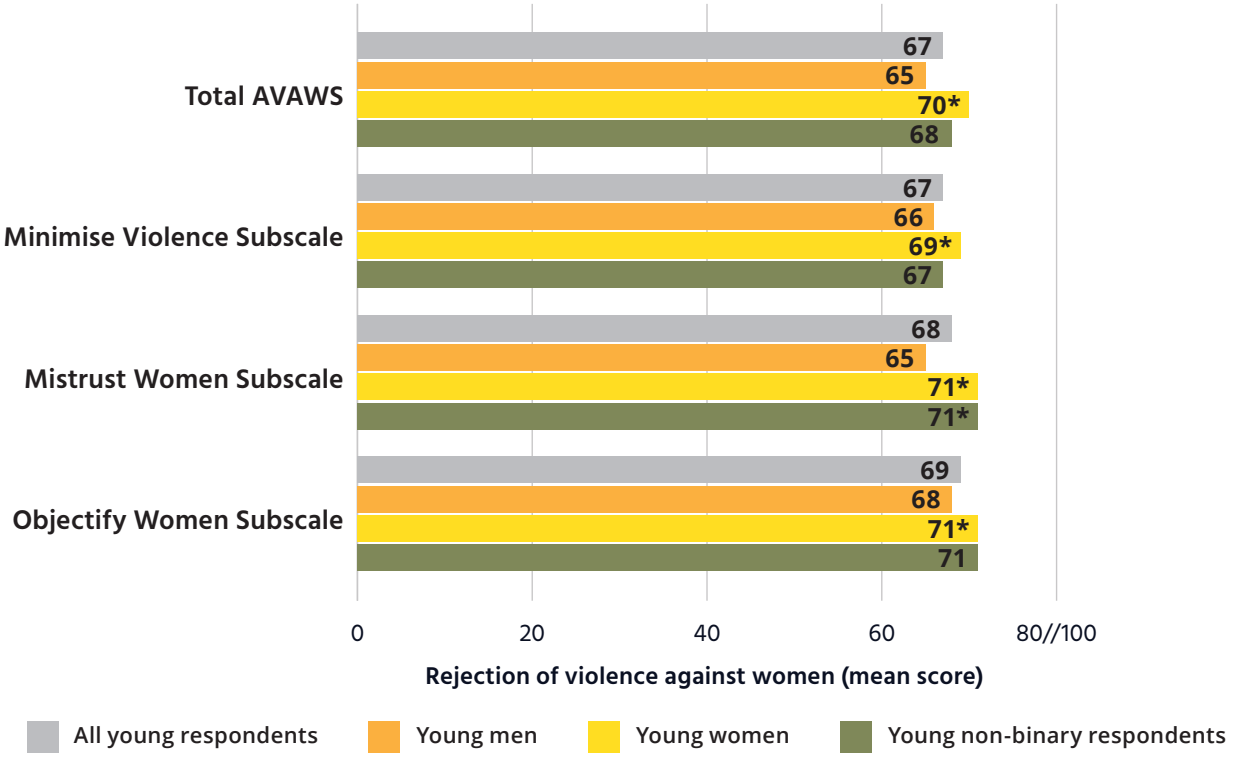
29 There are another four items in the Objectify Women Subscale that present scenarios about sexual consent. These four scenario items are discussed in Section 7.2.

6.3 Comparing by gender: Young people's attitudes towards violence against women

Like the results for all NCAS respondents (Main report), the results for young respondents demonstrate a gender difference indicating that young women are more likely than young men to reject violence against women. In 2021, young women respondents had significantly higher rejection of violence against women than young men respondents, according to mean scores on the AVAWS and all three of its subscales. These differences indicate that compared to young men, young women demonstrated significantly higher rejection of attitudes that minimise violence, mistrust women's reports of violence, and objectify women and disregard consent (Figure 6-5).

Young non-binary respondents were also compared with both young men and young women on the AVAWS and its three subscales. Only one significant difference was found, showing that young non-binary respondents were significantly more likely than young men to reject attitudes that mistrust women's reports of violence, according to mean scores on the Mistrust Women Subscale.[30]

Figure 6-5: Rejection of different aspects of violence against women (AVAWS and subscales) by gender, 16- to 24-year-olds, 2021



Note: *N* = 1,664.

***** Statistically significant difference compared to young men on the AVAWS or subscale indicated in 2021.

30 Even though young non-binary and young women respondents had virtually identical mean scores on the Objectify Women Subscale, young men respondents were found to have significantly lower rejection of objectifying attitudes compared to young women respondents but not compared to young non-binary respondents. The small number of young non-binary respondents in the sample may have reduced the ability to detect significant differences.

Table 15-7 in Appendix C presents differences between young women and young men respondents on the AVAWS items.[31] The gender difference between young women and young men in attitudes towards violence against women at the scale and subscale level was also evident at the item level. In 2021, young women respondents (62–92%) were significantly more likely than young men respondents (49–85%) to "strongly disagree" with six of the 15 items in the Minimise Violence Subscale that play down the seriousness of violence and shift blame from perpetrators to victims and survivors. These items describe attitudes that minimise the seriousness of domestic violence as a normal reaction to day-to-day stress (D17) or excuse violence if the perpetrator was angry (D25) or remorseful (D19). These items also describe attitudes that minimise the seriousness of violence based on the victim's circumstances, including attitudes that some victims and survivors are less deserving of assistance because they stay in the abusive relationship (D31), because the police have attended the case many times previously (D32) or because they were sexually harassed (S9).[32]

Consistent with the result for the Mistrust Women Subscale as a whole, young women respondents (32–91%) were also significantly more likely than young men respondents (15–77%) to "strongly disagree" with 11 of the 13 problematic attitudes measured by this subscale (Appendix C, Table 15-7). These items describe attitudes that women lie or exaggerate experiences of violence, including for reasons such as vindictiveness and personal gain (S18, S24, V3, S23, D23), and attitudes that mistrust women's reports of violence if they delay reporting or stay in the abusive relationship (S25, S10, D28, D29), do not present with physical injuries (S22) or have mental health issues (S1).[33]

Consistent with the gender difference on the Objectify Women Subscale, young women respondents (64–92%) were significantly more likely than young men respondents (48–83%) to "strongly disagree" with eight of the 15 items in the subscale which describe problematic attitudes (Appendix C, Table 15-7). These items present attitudes that women should be flattered by persistent or unwanted attention (S3, S11), attitudes that women are at least partially responsible for violence directed at them if they are flirtatious or sexual in public (S7, D26) or under the influence of alcohol or drugs (S4, S20), and attitudes that disregard the need to actively gain consent (S5, S8).[34]

6.4 Comparing by age: Attitudes towards violence against women

Comparing attitudes towards violence against women of 16- to 17-year-olds and 18- to 24-year-olds

The NCAS results generally indicate that 18- to 24-year-olds are more likely than 16- to 17-year-olds to reject violence against women. In 2021, 18- to 24-year-olds had significantly higher rejection of violence against women according to the mean scores on AVAWS and each of the three AVAWS subscales. These findings indicate that, compared to 16- to 17-year-olds, 18- to 24-year-olds are more likely to reject attitudes that minimise violence against women and shift blame to victims and survivors, attitudes that mistrust women's reports of violence and attitudes that objectify women or disregard consent.

The greater rejection of violence against women at the scale and subscale level was also evident for a number of individual AVAWS items. Respondents aged 18 to 24 years were significantly more likely than those aged 16 to 17 years to "strongly disagree" with the problematic attitudes described by five of the 13 items in the Minimise Violence Subscale. These five items describe attitudes that excuse or tolerate domestic or sexual violence if the offender or victim was affected by alcohol or drugs (D20, S19, D21), if the perpetrator had been abused as child (D22) or if the perpetrator later genuinely regretted their violent behaviour (D19). Thus, 16- to 17-year-olds are less likely than 18- to 24-year-olds to attribute culpability to the perpetrator in instances of violence where factors such as alcohol, drugs and historical child abuse are involved.

There were no significant differences between the two youth age groups on any of the individual items in the Mistrust Women and Objectify Women Subscales,

31 Due to small numbers, comparisons involving young non-binary respondents were not conducted at the item level.

32 Although higher percentages of young women than young men "strongly disagreed" with the other nine items in the Minimise Violence Subscale, these differences were not large enough to reach statistical significance.

33 Although higher percentages of young women than young men "strongly disagreed" with the other two items in the Mistrust Women Subscale, these differences were not large enough to reach statistical significance.

34 Although higher percentages of young women than young men "strongly disagreed" with four of the other seven items in the Objectify Women Subscale, these differences were not large enough to reach statistical significance.

despite the significantly higher rejection of violence against women by 18- to 24-year-olds than 16- to 17-year-olds according to mean subscale scores. Although the differences on these individual items were not large enough to reach statistical significance, in keeping with the subscale-level finding, they were usually in the direction of a higher percentage of 18- to 24-year-olds than 16- to 17-year-olds "strongly" disagreeing with the problematic attitudes (Appendix A, Table 13-7).[35]

Comparing attitudes towards violence against women of 16- to 24-year-olds and people aged 25 years or older

The NCAS findings indicate that young people's attitudes towards violence against women are similar in many ways to those of Australians aged 25 years or older. There was no significant difference between young respondents and those aged 25 years or older on the AVAWS and two of its three subscales. Accordingly, similar proportions of young respondents (35%) and respondents aged 25 years or older (34%) demonstrated "advanced" rejection of violence against women (AVAWS). These findings indicate that there is room to improve attitudes towards violence against women across all age groups in the Australian population. The findings for young respondents were also similar to those for all respondents (Main report) in showing:

- a significant increase in rejection of attitudes that minimise violence in 2021 compared to 2009 and 2013, but not between 2017 and 2021, according to scores on this subscale
- a significant increase in rejection of attitudes that mistrust women's reports of violence and attitudes that objectify women and disregard consent in 2021 compared to 2017, according to subscale scores.

There were also some differences in attitudes towards violence between young and other respondents. Compared to respondents aged 25 years or older, young respondents were significantly less likely to reject attitudes that minimise the seriousness of violence and shift blame to victim and survivors (Minimise Violence Subscale). In addition, while some of the problematic attitudes measured by the AVAWS were more strongly rejected than other such attitudes by both young respondents and those aged 25 years or older, the pattern of rejection was different for these age groups. Young respondents' scores on the three AVAWS subscales in 2021 revealed that they had significantly higher rejection of attitudes that objectify women and disregard consent than of attitudes that minimise violence and attitudes that mistrust women's reports of violence. In contrast, all NCAS respondents (Main report) had similar levels of rejection of the problematic attitudes measured by the three AVAWS subscales in 2021.

This different pattern of results at the subscale level for young respondents compared to other respondents was also reflected at the item level (Appendix B, Table 14-7). Specifically, young respondents were significantly *more likely* than those aged 25 years or older to "strongly disagree" with two items in the Objectify Women Subscale describing attitudes that women should be flattered by wolf-whistles and cat-calls in public (S3) and that it is understandable for a man to continue having sex with a drunk woman who falls asleep (S4). Young respondents were also significantly more likely than those aged 25 years or older to disagree ("strongly" or "somewhat") with one of the items in the Mistrust Women Subscale, which states that women often exaggerate claims of domestic violence to gain an advantage in custody battles (D23). However, young respondents were also significantly *less likely* than those aged 25 years or older to "strongly disagree" with three items in the Minimise Violence Subscale, which describe attitudes that domestic violence should be handled in the family (D16) or should be excused if the violent person regrets their behaviour (D19), and attitudes that excuse rape if the perpetrator is affected by alcohol or drugs (S19).

35 This non-significant trend was evident for 11 of the 13 Mistrust Women items and nine of the 11 standalone Objectify Women items.

7 Findings: Young people's understanding and attitudes towards specific types of violence against women

The results for the AVAWS (Chapter 6) revealed some attitudes that normalise and reinforce violence against women. The AVAWS comprises items describing attitudes towards different types of violence, including domestic violence, sexual violence and technology-facilitated abuse. Although these different types of violence can overlap,[36] policymakers and practitioners may nonetheless be interested in the more specific attitudes that may relate to each type of violence against women. Thus, the AVAWS items were subdivided according to the type of violence they describe to create five "type of violence" scales:

- the Domestic Violence Scale (DVS; Section 7.1)
- the Sexual Violence Scale (SVS), which is a composite of two scales – the Sexual Assault Scale (SAS) and the Sexual Harassment Scale (SHS; Section 7.2)
- the Technology-Facilitated Abuse Scale (TFAS; Section 7.3).

36 For example, sexual violence can occur within or outside domestic relationships, and technology-facilitated abuse can include domestic abuse, sexual abuse or abuse that is neither of a domestic nor sexual nature.

Apart from the TFAS, all the type of violence scales consist of items drawn entirely from the AVAWS and thus examine *attitudes* towards these types of violence. The TFAS comprises two attitude items from the AVAWS and four understanding items from the Understanding of Violence against Women Scale (UVAWS).

The present chapter draws on the type of violence scales to report on young people's attitudes to each type of violence. It also reports on young people's attitudes to stalking (Section 7.4).[37]

Type of violence results summary

Despite some improvements over time, myths, misconceptions and harmful stereotypes regarding different types of violence are still evident among a minority of young Australians. For example, some young Australians continue to endorse:

- *domestic violence:* misconceptions that minimise violence and position women as partly responsible for their abuse if they do not leave their abuser and attitudes that mistrust women's reports of violence (Section 7.1)
- *sexual assault:* hostile stereotypes of women as vengeful and untrustworthy, attitudes that perpetrators are less culpable if they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol, and rape myths that sexual assault is primarily committed by strangers (Section 7.2)
- *sexual harassment:* misconceptions that sexual harassment is "flattering" and not serious (Section 7.2)
- *technology-facilitated abuse:* misconceptions that technology-facilitated abuse is not serious (Section 7.3)
- *stalking:* misconceptions that persistent unwanted attention or actions by a person that intend to maintain contact with, or exercise power or control over, another person are not a form of domestic violence or violence against women (Section 7.4).

Regarding domestic violence, about one third of young respondents indicated they would not know how to access outside advice or support for someone experiencing domestic violence. However, young respondents were significantly more likely than those aged 25 years or older to indicate that they would know how to access these services.

7.1 Domestic violence

In this report, domestic violence refers to violence within current or past intimate partner relationships, which can cause physical, sexual or psychological harm.[38] Domestic violence can include physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and financial abuse, and often occurs as a pattern of behaviour constituting coercive control.

As Chapter 3 outlines, young respondents' rejection of domestic violence plateaued between 2017 and 2021 despite an improvement over the longer term (mean DVS score; Figure 3-4). Young respondents' rejection of domestic violence in 2021 was at a lower level than their rejection of sexual violence (Figure 3-4). In 2021, 36 per cent of young respondents demonstrated "advanced" rejection of domestic violence (Figure 3-6).

The Domestic Violence Scale (DVS) consists of 17 AVAWS items – 12 from the Minimise Violence Subscale, four from the Mistrust Women Subscale and one from the Objectify Violence Subscale.

Many young respondents (23–92%) "strongly disagreed" with the problematic attitudes associated with domestic violence measured by the NCAS. For example, the vast majority of young respondents "strongly disagreed" with the following attitudes that minimise domestic violence:

37 There were insufficient items on stalking to develop a stalking scale.

38 "Domestic violence" in this report refers to intimate partner violence to reflect the definition historically used in the NCAS instrument, which states that domestic violence means "violence in a married or de-facto relationship or amongst couples who are dating".

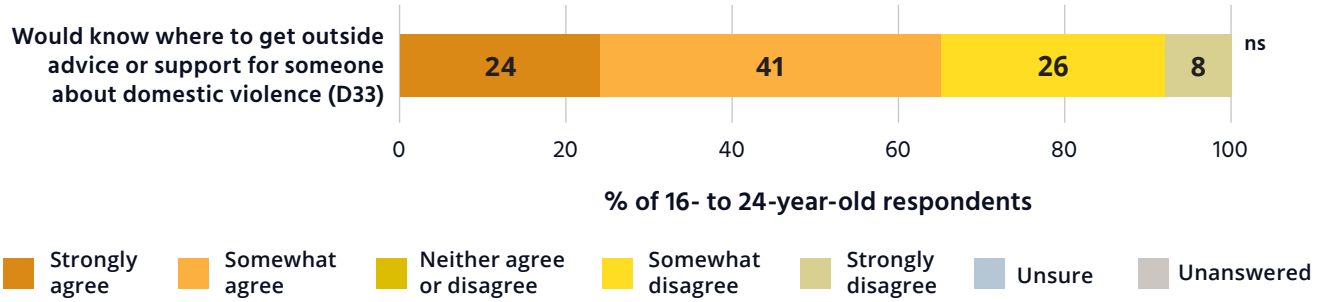
- women should keep quiet about domestic violence to protect their family's reputation (92%; D30; AVAWS Minimise Violence Subscale)
- women should stay in abusive relationships to keep the family together (88%; D24; AVAWS Minimise Violence Subscale)
- domestic violence can be excused if the offender is heavily affected by alcohol (84%; D20; AVAWS Minimise Violence Subscale).

However, a sizeable minority of young respondents endorsed myths or misconceptions about domestic violence that mistrust women's reports of domestic violence or that minimise this violence or shift blame to the victim or survivor. For example, the following percentages of young respondents agreed, "strongly" or "somewhat", that:

- women going through custody battles often make up or exaggerate claims of domestic violence to improve their case (30%; D23; AVAWS Mistrust Women Subscale)
- a victim who does not leave her abusive partner is partly responsible for the abuse continuing (26%; D29; AVAWS Minimise Violence Subscale)
- a lot of what is called domestic violence is really just a normal reaction to day-to-day stress and frustration (18%; D17; AVAWS Minimise Violence Subscale).

While most young respondents agreed that they would know where to go if they needed outside support for someone experiencing domestic violence, about one third (34%) "strongly" or "somewhat" disagreed with this statement (D33; Figure 7-1).

Figure 7-1: Knowledge of domestic violence services, 16- to 24-year-olds, 2021



Note: *N* = 447. Percentages in the figure do not always add to 100 due to rounding. Asked of one quarter of the sample in 2021.
ns No significant difference between 2021 and 2017.

Comparing by gender: Young people's attitudes towards domestic violence

There were consistent gender differences in young respondents' attitudes towards domestic violence (Appendix C and Section 6.3). Young women were significantly more likely than young men to reject domestic violence according to mean DVS score[39] and scores on all three AVAWS subscales, including on the Minimise Violence Subscale, which includes many domestic violence items. Many of these gender differences were also evident at the item level.

Comparing by age: Attitudes towards domestic violence

Comparing the two youth age groups, 18- to 24-year-olds demonstrated significantly higher rejection of domestic violence than 16- to 17-year-olds, according to mean DVS scores. This finding was reflected in the results for several items where 16- to 17-year-olds were less certain or less emphatic in their rejection of problematic attitudes regarding domestic violence. That is, compared to 18- to 24-year-olds, 16- to 17-year-olds were significantly less likely to "strongly disagree" and/or more likely to "somewhat disagree" with some attitudes that minimise domestic violence (D20, D21, D22, D19; Section 6.4 and Appendix A).

39 There were no significant differences on the DVS for young non-binary respondents compared to young women or young men.

Comparing young respondents (aged 16 to 24 years) with respondents aged 25 years or older, there was no significant difference in overall rejection of domestic violence according to mean DVS scores. In addition, there were significant differences on only a few DVS items, which showed weaker rejection by young respondents of problematic attitudes towards domestic violence. That is, compared to those aged 25 years or older, young respondents were significantly less likely to "strongly disagree" and/or significantly more likely to "somewhat disagree" with attitudes that minimise domestic violence or mistrust reports of domestic violence (D20, D22, D16, D19, D23; Section 6.4 and Appendix B, Table 14-7). However, young respondents (64%) were significantly *more likely* than respondents aged 25 years or older to indicate that they would know where to go if they needed help or support for someone experiencing domestic violence (55%; D33; Appendix B, Table 14-3).

7.2 Sexual violence

The Sexual Violence Scale (SVS) comprises 24 AVAWS items and breaks down into the Sexual Assault Scale (SAS; 18 items) and the Sexual Harassment Scale (SHS; 6 items). The 18 items in the SAS comprise one item from the Minimise Violence Subscale, seven items from the Mistrust Women Subscale and 10 items from the Objectify Women Subscale. The six items in the SHS consist of four items from the Objectify Women Subscale and one item each from the Minimise Violence and Mistrust Women Subscales.

As detailed in Chapter 3, rejection of problematic attitudes towards sexual violence, including towards both sexual assault and sexual harassment, improved between 2017 and 2021 (Figure 3-4). Young respondents' rejection of sexual violence in 2021 was at a higher level than their rejection of domestic violence and their understanding and rejection of technology-facilitated abuse (Figure 3-4). In 2021, 43 per cent of young respondents demonstrated "advanced" rejection of sexual violence (Figure 3-6).

Sexual assault

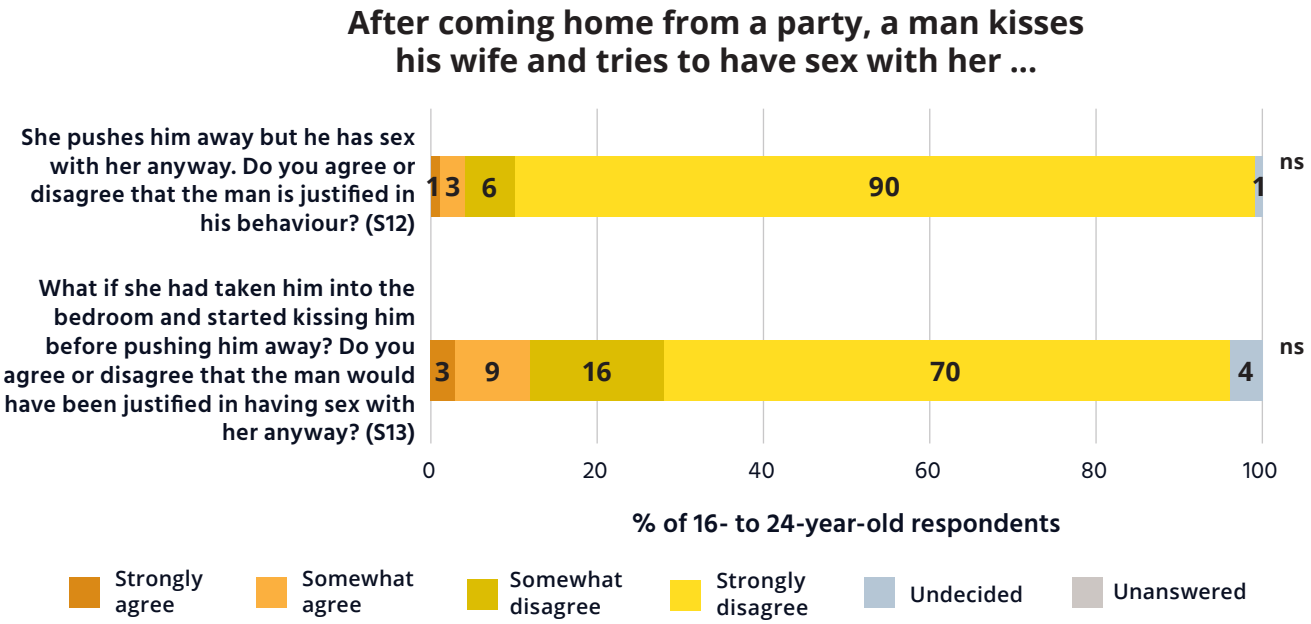
Sexual assault is a form of sexual violence, where sexual activity occurs without consent, including where consent is not freely given or obtained or is withdrawn, or a person is unable to consent due to their age or other factors (Attorney-General's Department, 2022). Sexual assault occurs any time a person is forced, coerced or manipulated into any sexual activity, including coercing a person to engage in sexualised touching, kissing or rape.

Most young respondents (70–90%) "strongly disagreed" with all the problematic attitudes examined by the (SAS) that justify or excuse rape. For example, the majority of young respondents "strongly disagreed" that a man was justified in forcing sex on a woman if she had chosen to meet him after connecting on a dating app (87%; S21; AVAWS Objectify Women Subscale).

However, the findings indicate that young respondents, like respondents aged 25 years or older, tend to think that rape is more justifiable if a woman initially shows interest in having sex, revealing a lack of understanding that consent is an active and ongoing communication process. For example, the 2021 NCAS included two scenarios about sexual consent, one about a married couple (Figure 7-2) and the other about a couple who had just met at a party (Figure 7-3). The majority of young respondents "strongly disagreed" that the man in each scenario was justified in forcing sex when he had initiated intimacy (90% for the married scenario, S12; 89% for the acquaintance scenario, S14). However, for both scenarios, fewer young respondents "strongly disagreed" that forced sex was justified when the woman had initiated intimacy but then pushed the man away (70% for the married scenario, S13; 72% for the acquaintance scenario, S15). Further, based on these consent scenarios, there was no significant improvement in young respondents' attitudes towards sexual consent in 2021 compared to previous survey waves.

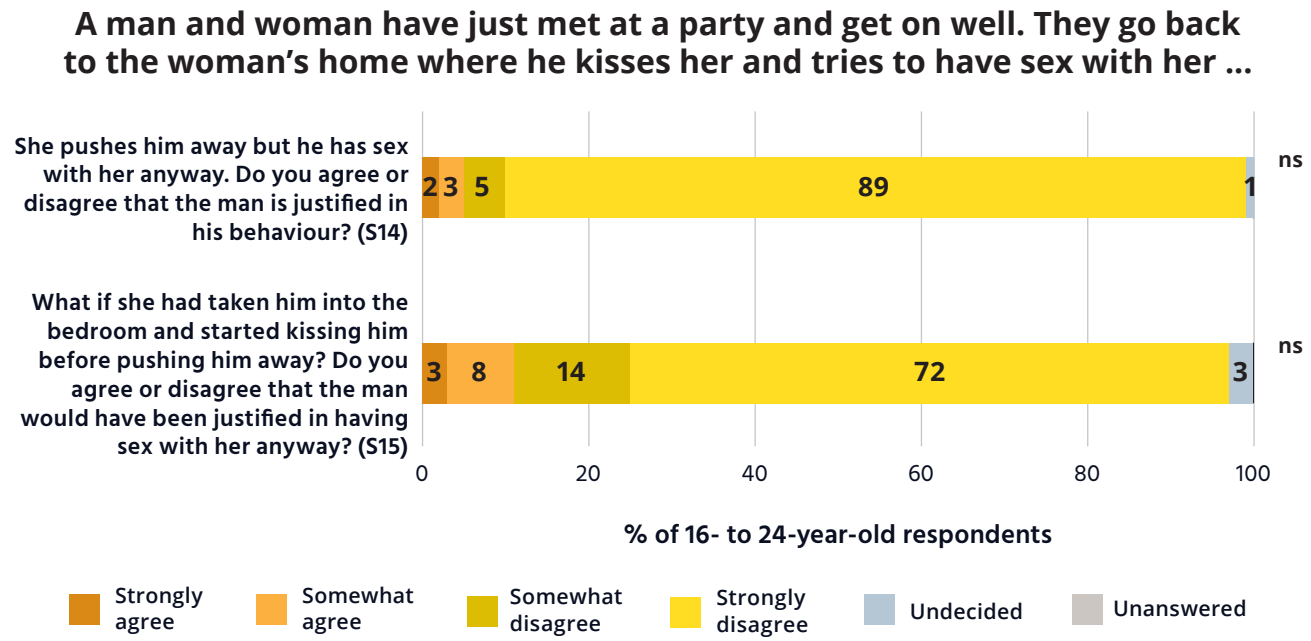
In addition to demonstrating a misconception about the ongoing nature of consent, the findings for these consent scenarios may also reflect some acceptance of rigid gender roles that position women as the gatekeepers responsible for refusing sex and men as the biologically driven pursuers in sexual encounters. For example, only 60 per cent of young respondents "strongly disagreed" that the woman should not be the one to initiate sex when a couple start dating and 5 per cent "somewhat" or "strongly agreed" with this statement (G15). Similarly, only 55 per cent of young respondents "strongly disagreed" that a man may not realise that the woman doesn't want to have sex if he is very sexually aroused and 29 per cent "somewhat" or "strongly" agreed with this misconception (S8). It is also concerning that only 75 per cent of young respondents "strongly disagreed" that women often say "no" when they mean "yes" and 1 in 10 (10%) agreed (S5).

Figure 7-2: Sexual consent scenario (AVAWS Objectify Women Subscale items), married couple variation, 16- to 24-year-olds, 2021



Note: *N* = 400. Asked of one quarter of the sample in 2021. Percentages in the figure do not always add to 100 due to rounding.
ns No significant difference between 2021 and 2017.

Figure 7-3: Sexual consent scenario (AVAWS Objectify Women Subscale items), acquaintance variation, 16- to 24-year-olds, 2021

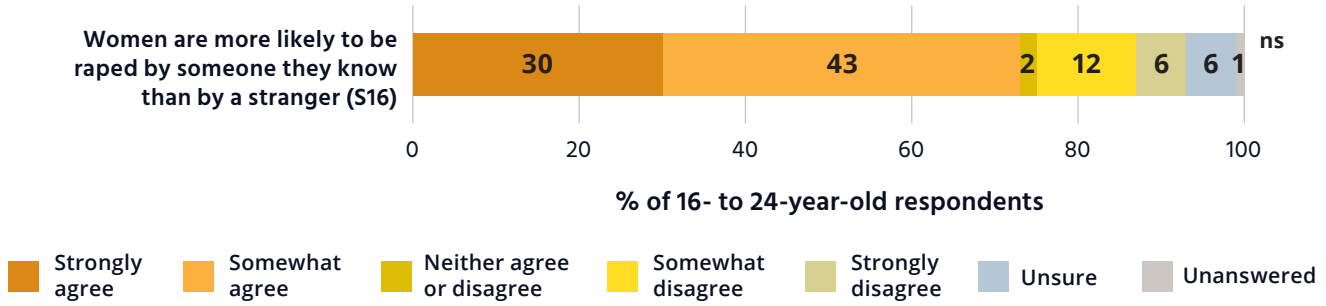


Note: *N* = 390. Asked of one quarter of the sample in 2021.
ns No significant difference between 2021 and 2017.

Most young respondents (73%) "somewhat" or "strongly" agreed that women are more likely to be raped by someone they know than by a stranger (S16; Figure 7-4). Similarly, most young respondents (84%) knew that it is a criminal offence for a man to have sex with his wife without her consent (S26; Figure 7-5). However, there is room to improve young Australians' understanding of these aspects of sexual assault, and there was no significant improvement on these between 2017 and 2021.

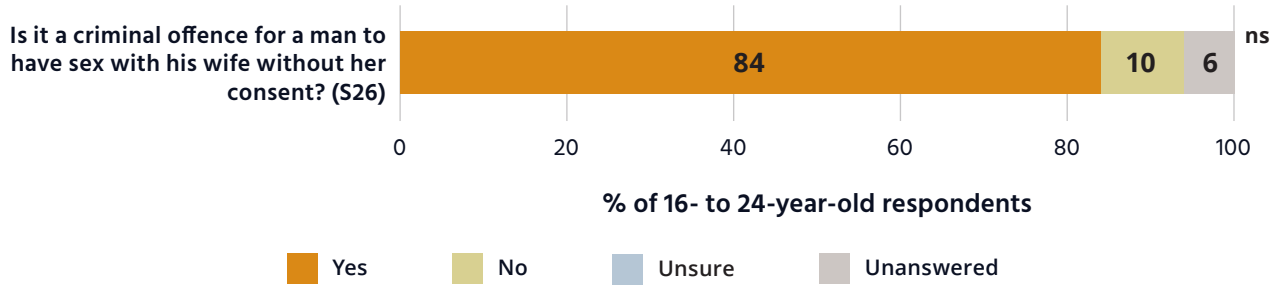
> ... what does a perpetrator look like? He is, you know, he's like this stereotype or he's this stereotype, but he wouldn't be, like, the mayor or the politician or the worker or the neighbour down the road. Like, a lot of young people I think are a bit stumped when they figure out ... real people are committing violence, like, these are real people, not just this stereotype.
>
> – Youth Ambassador

Figure 7-4: Stranger rape myth, 16- to 24-year-olds, 2021



Note: *N* = 397. Asked of one quarter of the sample in 2021. Percentages in the text do not always exactly correspond to percentages in the figure due to rounding.
ns No significant difference between 2021 and 2017.

Figure 7-5: Understanding of sexual consent in marriage, 16- to 24-year-olds, 2021



Note: *N* = 443. Asked of one quarter of the sample in 2021.
ns No significant difference between 2021 and 2017.

> A lot of people just run on the presumption that if you are in a relationship and you've said "yes", a lot of these things are OK. Because of gender and religious and cultural dynamics and how things are expected, like, there's an expectation that if you've said "yes", you just have to go with it and even if you haven't said anything or haven't said "yes" or have said "no", you have to go with that because that's your role as the less superior to submissive person in the relationship.
>
> – Youth Ambassador

Regarding the relationship of drugs and alcohol to sexual assault, most young respondents "strongly disagreed" with problematic attitudes such as:

- if a woman is raped while drunk or affected by drugs she is at least partly responsible (81% "strongly disagreed"; S20; AVAWS Objectify Women Subscale)
- a man is less responsible for rape if he is drunk or affected by drugs at the time (81%; S19; AVAWS Minimise Violence Subscale)
- it is understandable if a man continues to have sex with a woman who is drunk and falls asleep (87%; S4; AVAWS Objectify Women Subscale).

There were concerning findings, however, regarding young Australians' mistrust of women's reports of sexual assault (See also Chapter 6). For example:

- only about 1 in 3 young respondents "strongly disagreed" that it is common for sexual assault accusations to be used to get back at men (36%; S23) and 33 per cent "somewhat" or "strongly" agreed (AVAWS Mistrust Women Subscale)
- only about 1 in 2 young respondents "strongly disagreed" that a lot of times women who say they were raped had led the man on and then had regrets (47%; S24) and 20 per cent "somewhat" or "strongly" agreed (AVAWS Mistrust Women Subscale)
- only about 1 in 2 young respondents "strongly disagreed" that many allegations of sexual assault made by women are false (53%; S18) and 13 per cent "somewhat" or "strongly" agreed (AVAWS Mistrust Women Subscale).

Comparing by gender: Young people's attitudes towards sexual assault

As detailed in Appendix C and Chapter 6, there were consistent gender differences in young respondents' attitudes towards sexual assault, with young men lagging behind young women and young non-binary respondents on the SAS. Young men also had lower scores than young women on the AVAWS and all three AVAWS subscales, including the Objectify Women and Mistrust Women Subscales, which include many sexual violence items.

The item-level results reflected this gender difference between young women and young men in attitudes towards sexual assault.[40] There was a gender difference on six of the seven items from the Mistrust Women Subscale that describe mistrust of women's reports of sexual assault. Young women were significantly more likely than young men to "strongly disagree" with these attitudes mistrusting women's reports of sexual assault (Appendix C, Table 15-7). For example, young women were significantly more likely than young men to "strongly disagree" that women often lie about sexual assault (S18), including to get back at men (S23), because they regretted having consensual sex (S24), because of mental health issues (S1) or as indicated by delayed reporting (S25) or by lack of physical injury (S22).

There was also a gender difference on four of the six items from the Objectify Women Subscale describing attitudes that disregard the need to gain consent. Specifically, young women were significantly more likely than young men to "strongly disagree" that it is acceptable to disregard consent because women often say "no" when they mean "yes" (S5) and if the man is very sexually aroused (S8) or the woman is drunk or falls asleep (S4, S20; Appendix C, Table 15-7). However, there was no significant gender difference on the sexual consent scenarios (S12, S13, S14, S15; Objectify Women Subscale; Appendix C, Table 15-7).

Young women (83%) were also significantly more likely than young men (66%) to understand that women are more likely to be raped by somebody they know than by a stranger (S16).

40 Comparisons involving young non-binary respondents were not conducted at the item level due to small numbers on some items.

> Young people don't have as much experience with alcohol and drugs as older people do. When I was young, like 16, I thought that drinking alcohol would mean that I'm a completely different person, completely incapable of controlling impulses. But, you know, you soon learn that ... you can remain well in control and not do terrible things to people.
>
> – Youth Ambassador

Comparing by age: Attitudes towards sexual assault

There were some age differences in attitudes towards sexual assault. Comparing the two youth age groups, 18- to 24-year-olds were significantly more likely than 16- to 17-year-olds to reject problematic attitudes regarding sexual assault, according to mean SAS scores. This age difference on the SAS was reflected in a significant difference on two of its 18 items, although the trend for most items was in the same direction of stronger rejection by 18- to 24- than 16- to 17-year-olds. Specifically, compared to 16- to 17-year-olds, 18- to 24-year-olds were more likely to "strongly disagree" that a perpetrator is less responsible for sexual assault if he was affected by alcohol or drugs (S19) and more likely to "somewhat" or "strongly" disagree that forced sex among married partners is justified if the woman initiates intimacy (S13; Appendix A, Table 13-7).

Young respondents did not significantly differ from respondents aged 25 years or older in their overall rejection of attitudes towards sexual assault based on SAS scores. However, there were age differences on two SAS items. Strong disagreement increased with age for the attitude that a man is less responsible for rape if he was affected by drugs or alcohol, with 64 per cent of 16- to 17-year-olds, 85 per cent of 18- to 24-year-olds and 90 per cent of respondents aged 25 years or older "strongly" disagreeing with this attitude (S19; Appendix A, Table 13-7, and Appendix B, Table 14-7). The problematic attitude that men can be excused for continuing to have sex with a drunk woman who falls asleep was more likely to receive strong disagreement from young respondents aged 16 to 24 years (87%) and 25- to 34-year-olds (89%) than from respondents aged 35 years or older (76%; S4; Appendix B, Table 14-7).

> I think that young people compared to older people have a better understanding of the fact that consent is an ongoing experience thing, in that it, like, needs to be continually addressed and updated given people's varying states and what you're doing.
>
> – Youth Ambassador

Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is a form of sexual violence characterised by unwelcome sexual advances, sexualised comments, intrusive sexualised questions, requests for sexual favours or other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature which makes a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated (*Sex Discrimination Act 1984* [Cth]). Sexual harassment can include, but is not limited to, staring or leering; indecent texts, emails or posts; indecent exposure; inappropriate comments; non-consensual sharing of intimate images; and unwanted touching.

Of the six AVAWS items in the Sexual Harassment Scale (SHS), one is from the Minimise Violence Subscale, one is from the Mistrust Women Subscale and four are from the Objectify Women Subscale.

Most young respondents (65–88%) "strongly disagreed" with all the problematic attitudes regarding sexual harassment measured by the 2021 NCAS. For example, the vast majority "strongly disagreed" that women who are sexually harassed should deal with it themselves rather than report it (88%; S9), that it's understandable that some men think they can touch women without permission because some women behave sexually in public (86%; S7) and that women who wait weeks or months to report sexual harassment are probably lying (76%; S10).

However, a minority of young respondents supported myths that sexual harassment is flattering or benign. For example:

- Just over 1 in 10 young respondents "somewhat" or "strongly" agreed that women find it flattering to be persistently pursued even if they are not interested (11%; S11; AVAWS Objectify Women Subscale).
- About 1 in 15 young respondents "somewhat" or "strongly" agreed that since some women are so sexual in public, it's understandable that some men

think they can touch women without permission (7%; S7; AVAWS Objectify Women Subscale).
- About 1 in 15 young respondents "somewhat" or "strongly" agreed that women should be flattered by wolf-whistles or cat-calls in public (7%; S3; AVAWS Objectify Women Subscale).

Comparing by gender: Young people's attitudes towards sexual harassment

As detailed in Appendix C and Chapter 6, there were consistent gender differences in attitudes towards violence against women, with young men lagging behind young women. Compared to young men, young women had higher rejection of violence against women according to scores on the AVAWS and all three AVAWS subscales, including the Objectify Women Subscale, which includes four of the six sexual harassment items.

Young women demonstrated stronger rejection of sexual harassment than young men based on SHS scores and five of its six items (S9, S7, S10, S3, S11). Young women (73–91%) were significantly more likely than young men (58–83%) to "strongly disagree" with attitudes that normalise harassment and disregard consent, including attitudes that unwelcome touching of women in public is understandable (S7) and that women should be flattered by unwelcome persistent pursuit (S11) or by wolf-whistles and cat-calls in public (S3). Similarly, young women (89–92%) were significantly more likely than young men (65–85%) to "strongly disagree" with attitudes that mistrust women's reports of sexual harassment (S10) and those that minimise sexual harassment by encouraging women to deal with it on their own (S9).

Comparing by age: Attitudes towards sexual harassment

There were some age differences in attitudes towards sexual harassment. Comparing the two youth age groups, 18- to 24-year-olds were significantly more likely than 16- to 17-year-olds to reject problematic attitudes regarding sexual harassment according to SHS scores. However, at the item level, none of the differences between the two youth age groups on any of the six SHS items was large enough to reach statistical significance.

Comparing young respondents (aged 16 to 24 years) to those aged 25 years or older, there was no significant difference in their overall rejection of attitudes towards sexual harassment based on SHS scores. However, there was an age difference between young respondents and some other age groups on one SHS item. Young respondents aged 16 to 24 years (71%) and respondents aged 25 to 34 years (69%) were significantly more likely than respondents aged 35 years or older (50%) to "strongly disagree" that a woman should be flattered by wolf-whistles or cat-calls in public (S3).

7.3 Technology-facilitated abuse

"Technology-facilitated abuse" is an umbrella term used to refer to forms of abuse where technology is the conduit or means of enacting or exercising abuse. Examples of technology-facilitated abuse include harassment, stalking, impersonation and threats via technology, as well as image-based abuse and other forms of abuse online (eSafety Commissioner, 2022a; Powell & Henry, 2019). Recent studies have confirmed that technology-facilitated abuse is common and is often part of an ongoing pattern of domestic violence (Powell et al., 2022; Woodlock et al., 2020). For example, a recent ANROWS study reported that 1 in 2 Australian adults experience at least one form of technology-facilitated abuse in their lifetime (Powell et al., 2022). An Australian survey of domestic and family violence frontline workers found that 99 per cent of these workers reported having clients who had experienced technology-facilitated stalking and abuse (Woodlock et al., 2020). While anonymity is not a necessary feature of technology-facilitated abuse, the online context of this violence can sometimes provide perpetrators a degree of anonymity and perceived insulation from the consequences of their behaviours, a perception that may allow the abuse to intensify and escalate (Cuenca-Piqueras et al., 2020).

As detailed in Chapter 3, 27 per cent of young respondents in 2021 demonstrated "advanced" rejection of technology-facilitated abuse (Figure 3-6). In 2021, young respondents' understanding and rejection of technology-facilitated abuse was at a lower level than their rejection of sexual violence (Figure 3-4).

The Technology-Facilitated Abuse Scale (TFAS) consists of two AVAWS items and four UVAWS items. Specifically, it includes two items examining attitudes towards technology-facilitated sexual harassment from the AVAWS Objectify Women Subscale, one item examining understanding of technology-facilitated domestic violence from the UVAWS Recognise DV Subscale and three items examining understanding of technology-facilitated violence against women from the UVAWS Recognise VAW Subscale.

Most young respondents (60–63%) recognised that the forms of technology-facilitated abuse described by the four UVAWS items "always" constitute violence. Specifically, most young respondents identified that repeated electronic tracking of a partner (63%; D6), sending women unwanted pictures of genitalia (62%;

V7), sending women abusive messages or comments on social media (60%; V6) and harassment via repeated emails and texts (60%; V5) are "always" forms of violence. In addition, the majority (70–87%) of young respondents "strongly disagreed" with the two problematic attitudes examined about technology-facilitated abuse. That is, most young respondents "strongly disagreed" that a woman is partly responsible if her partner shares a naked picture she had sent him without her permission (70%; S6) and that a woman is partly responsible if a man she met on a mobile dating app forces sex on her (87%; S21).

Similarly, most young respondents (93%) were aware that it is a criminal offence to post or share a sexual picture of an ex-partner on social media without their consent (S27; Figure 7-6).[41]

However, a minority of young respondents did not identify some technology-facilitated abusive behaviours as forms of violence against women and some young respondents supported problematic attitudes towards technology-facilitated abuse. For example:

- 1 in 10 young respondents did not think that a man sending an unwanted picture of his genitals to a woman was a form of violence (10%; V7; UVAWS Recognise VAW Subscale).
- About 1 in 13 young respondents did not consider harassment via repeated emails and text messages a form of violence (8%; V5; UVAWS Recognise VAW Subscale).
- Almost 1 in 5 young respondents "somewhat" or "strongly" agreed that a woman is partly responsible if her partner shares a naked picture she had sent him without her permission (18%; S6; AVAWS Objectify Women Subscale).

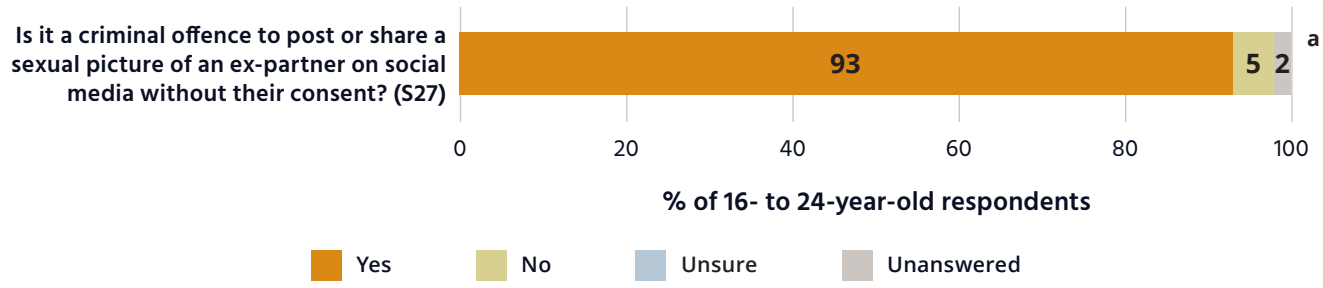
Comparing by gender: Understanding and attitudes regarding technology-facilitated abuse

Young women demonstrated stronger understanding and rejection of technology-facilitated abuse than young men, based on TFAS scores.

There were significant gender differences on three of the four TFAS items measuring understanding of technology-facilitated domestic violence or violence against women (D6, V5, V6), with young women having stronger understanding (Appendix C and Chapter 4). That is, only 54 to 57 per cent of young men, compared to 67 to 72 per cent of young women, identified that repeatedly tracking a partner's location (D6), harassment via repeated emails and messages (V5), and abusive messages or comments targeted at women on social media (V6) are "always" forms of domestic violence or violence against women. In addition, young men (10–12%) were significantly more likely than young women (3–4%) to indicate that these behaviours are not forms of violence (D6, V5, V6).

However, there were no significant gender differences for young respondents on the two items examining attitudes towards technology-facilitated sexual abuse (S6, S21; Appendix C and Chapter 6).

Figure 7-6: Sharing sexual images online, 16- to 24-year-olds, 2021



Note: *N* = 443. Asked of one quarter of the sample in 2021.
a New item in 2021. Thus, change over time could not be examined.

41 This item was a knowledge item that was not part of any 2021 NCAS scale.

Comparing by age: Understanding and attitudes regarding technology-facilitated abuse

Some age differences emerged for the TFAS and its items. Comparing the two youth age groups, 18- to 24-year-olds scored significantly higher than 16- to 17-year-olds on the TFAS, indicating a greater understanding and rejection of technology-facilitated abuse. However, the differences between the two youth age groups on individual TFAS items were not large enough to reach statistical significance.

Young respondents (16- to 24-year-olds) were generally similar to respondents aged 25 years or older in their understanding and rejection of technology-facilitated abuse. There was no significant difference between these age groups on their overall TFAS scores nor on five of the six TFAS items. However, 16- to 24-year-olds (60%) were significantly less likely than respondents aged 25 years or older (70%) to identify harassment via repeated emails and text messages as "always" a form of violence against women (V5; Appendix B, Table 14-1).

7.4 Stalking

Stalking is a form of violence that can occur in person or via the use of technology. It involves a pattern of repeated, unwanted behaviours intended to maintain contact with, or exercise power or control over, another person. These behaviours are typically enacted to intimidate, distress or control the target (H. Campbell, 2019; Victorian Law Reform Commission, 2021). Examples of stalking behaviours include tracking or following someone (in person or online) and loitering. Recent ANROWS research found that young people, and particularly young men, may view non-physical forms of abuse, such as stalking, as acceptable in some circumstances (Carlisle et al., 2022). For instance, young people may rationalise these behaviours as indicative of care or concern, or as helping behaviours in service of a greater good. Note that the three items on stalking included in the 2021 NCAS (D6, V4, V8) were insufficient to develop a scale on attitudes towards stalking.

Most young respondents (63–73%) recognised technology-facilitated and in-person stalking as violence "always", and most (88%) "strongly disagreed" with attitudes condoning stalking. Specifically, most young respondents identified that repeated electronic tracking of a partner without consent (63%; D6) and in-person stalking by repeatedly following or watching someone at home or work (73%; V4) are "always" violence; and most young respondents "strongly disagreed" that it's only really stalking if it's by a stranger (88%; V8).

However, a minority of young respondents did not recognise stalking as violence against women or domestic violence. For example:

- About 1 in 13 young respondents did not recognise electronic tracking of a partner as a form of domestic violence (8%; D6; UVAWS Recognise DV Subscale)
- About 1 in 15 young respondents did not consider in-person stalking by repeatedly following or watching someone at home or work to be a form of violence against women (7%; V4; UVAWS Recognise VAW Subscale).

Comparing by gender: Understanding and attitudes towards stalking

There were consistent gender differences for young respondents on the two items measuring understanding that stalking is a form of violence (D6, V4; Appendix C and Chapter 4). Young men (57%) were significantly less likely than young women (72%) to recognise that repeated electronic tracking of a partner is "always" a form of domestic violence and were significantly more likely (12%) than young women (4%) to indicate that it was not a form of violence (D6). Similarly, young men (9%) were significantly more likely than young women (4%) to indicate that in-person stalking is not a form of violence against women (V4). There was no significant difference between young men and young women on the item measuring attitudes towards stalking (V8).

Comparing by age: Understanding and attitudes towards stalking

There were no significant age differences on the three stalking items – neither between 16- to 17-year-olds and 18- to 24-year-olds nor between young respondents (16 to 24 years) and respondents aged 25 years or older.

8 Findings: Young people's bystander responses

A bystander is somebody who observes, but is not directly involved in, a harmful or potentially harmful event and could assist or intervene (Webster et al., 2018). Prosocial bystander actions can include confronting the perpetrator's unacceptable, gender-inequitable and violence-condoning attitudes and behaviour, as well as supporting the victim and survivor. The bystander role is important in the prevention of violence against women. Prosocial bystanders can call out unacceptable behaviour, place social sanctions on perpetrators that discourage future perpetration, help victims and survivors to feel supported and heard, and, in some situations, prevent violence from escalating or even occurring (Bell & Flood, 2020; Orchowski et al., 2018; Palmer et al., 2020). The way communities respond to everyday microaggressions are also important because, while not all disrespect results in violence, all violence against women begins with disrespect (Australian Government, 2022). However, it is worth noting that it is not always safe to act as a prosocial bystander. Sometimes intervention can put the bystander or victim at further risk of harm, or, especially in cases of power imbalance, intervention can be ineffective or have other serious consequences, such as loss of employment. Therefore, bystanders must also assess whether it is safe to intervene and the best method to do so.

There is mixed evidence for the impact of age on prosocial behaviours (Ahmed et al., 2020; M. Campbell et al., 2020; Foulkes et al., 2018). Young people, and particularly adolescents, navigate a critical window of development frequently characterised by hypersensitivity to social and peer approval (Ahmed et al., 2020; Ciranka & van den Bos, 2021). This sensitivity to social and peer approval can influence young people's behaviour and, depending on the circumstances, can work in the direction of increasing prosocial behaviour or increasing antisocial behaviour (Foulkes et al., 2018; Molleman et al., 2022). Interpersonal and personality factors can also influence prosocial behaviour. For example, in the case of online hate speech and bullying, personality and interpersonal factors were found to be better predictors than social influence of prosocial bystander intervention, including perceived personal responsibility, social support and affective empathy (Aliberti et al., 2023; Machackova et al., 2018; Obermaier, 2022).

Additional age-related factors may impact young people's willingness to intervene upon witnessing abuse or disrespect. For instance, recent statistics indicate that only 3 per cent of young people (15 to 24 years old) occupy management positions in Australia, while more than half of all managers are aged 45 years or older (National Skills Commission, 2021). As a result, young people may be particularly impacted by career-based power differentials in the workplace that preclude bystander intervention, including job insecurity and a greater reliance on superiors for job advancement (Kleinman & Thomas, 2023).

Bystander responses results summary

Young respondents' prosocial bystander responses were related to:

- *the type of abusive or disrespectful behaviour*, with young respondents being more likely to be bothered by verbal abuse than by sexist jokes (Section 8.2)
- *the presence of a power differential between the bystander and the perpetrator*, with young respondents being more likely to be bothered, but less likely to intervene prosocially, when a boss rather than a friend told a sexist joke (Section 8.2)
- *anticipated peer support or criticism*, with most young respondents anticipating that, if they showed their disapproval of the disrespectful behaviour, their peers would support them (Section 8.3)
- *barriers to intervention*, with the most commonly cited barriers being fear of negative consequences, feeling uncomfortable and not knowing what to say (Section 8.4)
- *gender*, with young women being more likely than young men to be bothered by sexist jokes in the workplace (Section 8.5)
- *age,* with young respondents compared to those aged 25 years or older being more likely to say they would be bothered if a friend told a sexist joke and more likely to say they would be bothered but would not intervene if their boss told a sexist joke (Section 8.6).

8.1 2021 NCAS bystander scenarios

Respondents were asked about three bystander scenarios and whether they would be bothered by the scenario, how they think they would react, reasons for not acting and the responses they anticipated from their peers if they did respond:

- *Friend sexist joke (B1):* Imagine you are talking with some close friends at work, and a male work friend tells a sexist joke about women.
- *Boss sexist joke (B2):* Now, instead, imagine it was your male boss rather than a work friend who told the sexist joke.
- *Friend verbal abuse (B3):* Imagine you are out with some friends and a male friend is insulting or verbally abusing a woman he is in a relationship with.

8.2 Bystander responses to each scenario

Most young respondents said they would be bothered by each scenario. However, there were significant differences by scenario type:

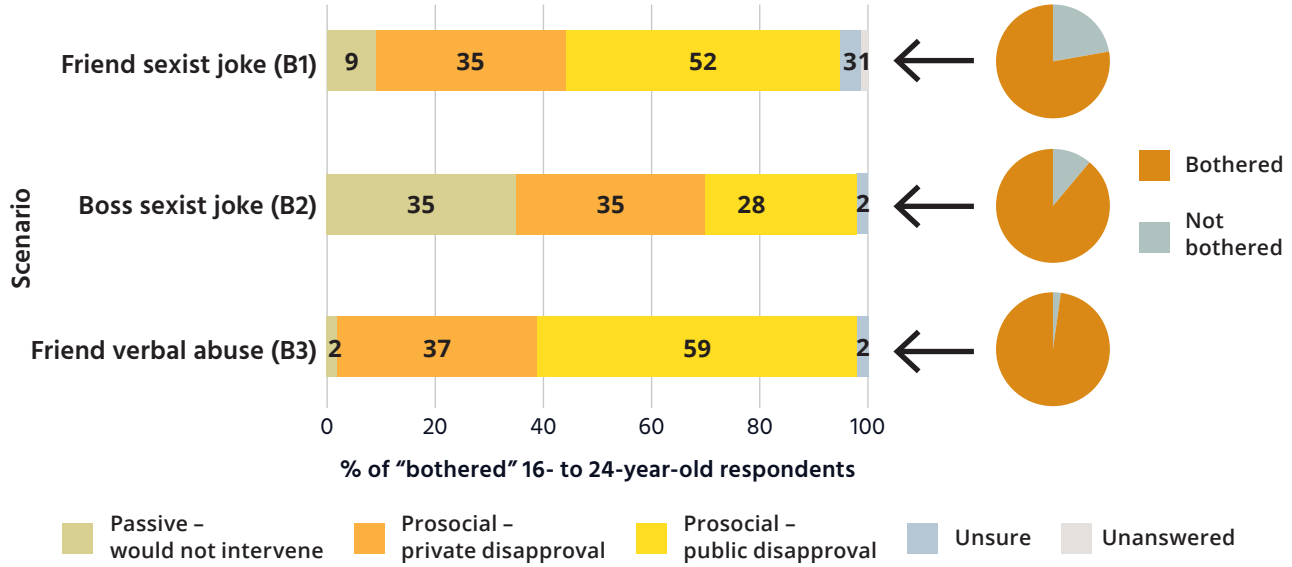
- Virtually all young respondents said they would be bothered by the verbal abuse scenario (98%; B3).
- Significantly fewer young respondents said they would be bothered by the two sexist joke scenarios (78–89%; B1, B2). It is particularly notable that one fifth (22%) of young respondents said they would *not* be bothered by a close work friend telling a sexist joke (B1), whereas only one tenth (11%) said they would not be bothered by a boss telling a sexist joke (B2).

The respondents who said they would be bothered by the scenarios were asked whether they would intervene by showing their disapproval (immediately in public or later in private) or would not intervene. Most young respondents who reported that they would be bothered said that they would show their disapproval either immediately in public or later in private (63–96%; Figure 8-1).[42]

The intention to show their disapproval among those who said they would be bothered varied by the context, depending on:

- *the type of abusive behaviour*, with significantly more young respondents reporting that they would not say anything in response to the sexist joke scenarios (9–35%) than in response to the verbal abuse scenario (2%)
- *the presence of a power differential* between the bystander and the perpetrator, with significantly more young respondents reporting that they would not say anything if a boss (35%) rather than a friend (9%) told a sexist joke.

Figure 8-1: Bystander intention to intervene if bothered by scenario, 16- to 24-year-olds, 2021



Note: *N* = 322 (B1); 385 (B2); 385 (B3). The bar figure includes only young respondents bothered by the sexist joke (B1, B2) or verbal abuse (B3). The pie figures are based on all young respondents. Only young respondents who indicated they would be bothered were asked how they would react.

> I've heard stories of people reporting things at work and stuff, but it just goes nowhere and so it's, like, it's just gonna take a lot of energy. And where is it gonna go? And it's scary, you have to stand up to an authority figure and then if it doesn't go anywhere, then it's just you had to do all of that and, jeopardise yourself, and then achieve nothing.
>
> – Youth Ambassador

42 These figures assume that only those who said they would be bothered would intervene. If, instead, these percentages were expressed as a proportion of *all young* respondents, rather than as a proportion of those who would be bothered, then the estimated percentage of young respondents who would show disapproval is 66 per cent for the friend sexist joke scenario, 56 per cent for the boss sexist joke scenario and 94 per cent for the friend verbal abuse scenario.

8.3 Anticipated peer support or criticism

For the two scenarios of witnessing a friend's sexist joke (B1) and a friend's verbal abuse (B3), young respondents who said they would show their disapproval (either immediately in public or later in private) were asked to imagine how their friends would react if the respondent showed disapproval immediately in public. Most of these young respondents expected that if they showed their disapproval publicly in these two scenarios, their peers would support them, either then and there in public or later in private (79% for B1; 89% for B3). Only a minority of young respondents expected that showing their disapproval publicly would result in peer criticism or peer silence (17% for B1; 9% for B3).

> I think for people to be comfortable to speak out ... is ... [about] other people recognising that that was wrong. You know, having a bit of, almost like a backup. Just of people being able to say, OK, you know that was wrong, and this isn't necessarily on.
>
> – Youth Ambassador

8.4 Barriers to bystander intention to intervene

In 2021, items were added to the NCAS to investigate why some people do not intervene when witnessing abuse or disrespect. Respondents who said they would be bothered by a scenario but that they would not intervene (passive bystanders) were asked about their reasons for not speaking up. The most common reasons provided by young respondents who said they would not speak up in response to the sexist joke scenarios were:[43]

- "It might have negative consequences" (65% for B1; 92% for B2).
- "You wouldn't feel comfortable speaking up" (74%; 79%).
- "You wouldn't know what to say" (69%; 65%).
- "It wouldn't make any difference" (33%; 43%).
- "It's not your business" (22%; 21%).

> It's definitely that power dynamic, right? If you have, like, a boss or someone in charge, even sometimes, like, if it's a parent, it may be harder to call it out because of the consequences that may have, especially if it's unsafe. If you could lose your job, or if you could experience some kind of emotional abuse from a parent or a loved one.
>
> – Youth Ambassador

8.5 Comparing by gender: Young people's bystander responses

Many of the findings on gender differences in young respondents' bystander responses were similar to those in the Main report, which is based on all respondents. An exception was that, among young respondents, there were no significant gender differences in the reactions they anticipated from peers or reasons for not intervening.

Examining, first, the friend sexist joke scenario (B1), young men (63%) were significantly less likely than young women (90%) to say they would be bothered by this scenario. Of those who said they would be bothered by this scenario, young men were significantly less likely than young women to report that they would express their disapproval immediately in public (41% versus 62%) and significantly more likely to express disapproval later in private (45% versus 27%).

For the boss sexist joke scenario (B2), young men (80%) were significantly less likely than young women (97%) to say they would be bothered by this scenario. There was no gender difference for young respondents in their reported likelihood of intervening in this scenario.

For the friend verbal abuse scenario (B3), there were no significant gender differences for young respondents in their intention to intervene if bothered, their reasons for not intervening and the reaction they anticipated from peers if they were to intervene publicly.

43 Percentages are not reported for the barriers to intervening in the friend verbal abuse scenario (B3) as there were fewer than 30 respondents.

8.6 Comparing bystander responses by age

There were no significant differences between 16- to 17-year-olds and 18- to 24-year-olds in their bystander responses for any of the three scenarios.

However, some differences in bystander responses were found between young respondents aged 16 to 24 years and respondents aged 25 years or older:

- For the friend sexist joke scenario (B1), young respondents (75%) were significantly more likely than respondents aged 25 years or older (64%) to say they would be bothered.
- For the boss sexist joke scenario (B2), young respondents aged 16 to 24 years (31%) were significantly more likely than respondents aged 25 years or older (17%) to say that they would be bothered but would not intervene.[44]

44 There were no significant differences across age groups in responses to the verbal abuse scenario (B3).

9 Findings: Young people's demographic characteristics and contexts

The demographic group, population or culture surrounding an individual may shape or influence their attitudes, beliefs and behaviour, including their attitudes towards social issues (Brennan et al., 2015; Broćić & Miles, 2021; Olson, 2019; Pavlíček et al., 2021; Roberts, 2019). This chapter presents results from multiple regression analyses on the relationships between young people's demographic characteristics and their understanding and attitudes regarding violence against women and gender equality. The demographic factors examined as predictors of understanding and attitudes are outlined in Chapter 2.

Young people's demographic characteristics and contexts results summary

Demographic differences in young people's understanding and attitudes can inform the barriers and facilitators of violence prevention initiatives with different groups of young people. Importantly, however, demographic factors explained only a fraction of the picture, suggesting there is room for improvement across the population of young Australians. The strongest predictor of young respondents' attitudes towards violence against women was their attitudes towards gender inequality, explaining 36 per cent of the variance in AVAWS scores.

There were some differences in young respondents' understanding and attitudes that were related to their gender, sexuality, country of birth and language spoken at home. Gender was the most important demographic predictor of young respondents' understanding and attitudes towards violence against women (UVAWS and AVAWS) and attitudes towards gender inequality (AGIS), explaining between 3 to 10 per cent of the variance in scale scores.

9.1 Young people's understanding of violence against women: Assessing the importance of demographics

Based on multiple regression analysis (UVAWS Model 1, Table 2-1), demographics explained 11 per cent of the difference in young people's understanding of violence against women. Thus, most of the difference in respondents' understanding of violence against women (89%) cannot be explained by demographics alone, suggesting other factors are also important in predicting or shaping understanding.

Gender and language spoken at home were the most important demographic predictors of young respondents' understanding of violence against women, each explaining 3 per cent of the variance in understanding, followed by country of birth (2%). Based on the regression, the demographic characteristics of young respondents associated with *significantly higher understanding of violence against women* were:

- gender: young women compared to young men[45]
- language spoken at home: young respondents who spoke English at home compared to those who spoke a language other than English at home.[46]

The UVAWS regression on all respondents (Main report) showed similar results for gender and language spoken at home.

9.2 Young people's attitudes towards gender inequality: Assessing the importance of demographics

Based on multiple regression analysis (AGIS Model 1, Table 2-1), demographic factors explained almost one fifth (19%) of the difference in young people's attitudes towards gender inequality. However, most of the difference in respondents' attitudes towards gender inequality cannot be explained based only on their demographic characteristics, suggesting that other factors are also important in predicting or shaping these attitudes.

Gender was the most important demographic predictor of young respondents' attitudes towards gender inequality and explained 10 per cent of the variance, followed by sexuality (4%) and language spoken at home (4%). Based on the regression, the demographic characteristics of young respondents associated with *significantly stronger rejection of gender inequality* were:

- gender: young women and non-binary respondents compared to young men
- sexuality: young respondents who were lesbian, gay, bisexual or pansexual, or asexual, queer or sexuality-diverse compared to heterosexual young respondents

45 This result is consistent with the bivariate results on gender (Chapter 4).

46 Age, country of birth and sexuality were retained in the final model (for UVAWS Model 1) because they improved model fit. However, they were not "significant predictors" in that there were no significant differences of non-negligible size between the groups examined for these variables (e.g. 18- to 24-year-olds versus 16- to 17-year-olds; $p < 0.05$ and standardised regression coefficient > 0.2).

- language spoken at home: young respondents who spoke English at home compared to those who spoke a language other than English at home.[47]

The AGIS regression on all respondents (Main report) revealed similar results for gender, sexuality and English proficiency. However, gender explained somewhat less of the variance in attitudes towards gender inequality for all respondents (5%) than it did for young respondents (10%).

9.3 Young people's attitudes towards violence against women: Assessing the importance of demographics, understanding and attitudes

Based on the AVAWS regression models (Table 2-1), attitudes towards gender inequality explained the largest portion (31%) of the difference in young respondents' attitudes towards violence against women, understanding of violence against women explained 13 per cent and demographic factors explained 10 per cent (AVAWS Model 3). These findings confirm the important relationship between young people's attitudes towards gender inequality and their attitudes towards violence against women, and suggest that these attitudes need to be tackled together.

Of the UVAWS and AGIS subscales, the Deny Inequality Subscale of the AGIS was the most important predictor of attitudes towards violence against women. Thus, shifting attitudes that deny women's experiences of gender inequality may be an important component of initiatives that aim to improve rejection of violence against women by increasing rejection of gender inequality.

Of the demographic factors, gender was the most important predictor (6%) of attitudes towards violence against women, followed by sexuality (4%), language spoken at home (4%) and country of birth (3%). Based on the regression, the demographic characteristics of young respondents associated with *significantly stronger rejection of violence against women* were:

- gender: young women compared to young men
- sexuality: young respondents who were lesbian, gay, bisexual or pansexual, asexual, queer or sexuality-diverse compared to heterosexual young respondents
- language spoken at home: young respondents who spoke English at home compared to those who spoke a language other than English at home
- country of birth: young respondents born in Australia compared to young respondents born in a non-main English–speaking country.[48]

Regression analysis of the data for all respondents (Main report) revealed that attitudes towards gender inequality were the strongest predictor of attitudes to violence against women, with the AGIS Deny Inequality Subscale being the strongest of the subscale predictors. These models based on all respondents also revealed similar results for gender, sexuality, language spoken at home and country of birth.

47 Age and remoteness were retained in the final model (for AGIS Model 1) because they improved model fit. However, they were not "significant predictors" in that there were no significant differences of non-negligible size between the groups examined for these variables (e.g. 18- to 24-year-olds versus 16- to 17-year-olds; $p < 0.05$ and standardised regression coefficient > 0.2).

48 Age, remoteness and socioeconomic status of area were retained in the final model (for AVAWS Model 1) because they improved model fit. However, they were not "significant predictors" in that there were no significant differences of non-negligible size between the groups examined for these variables (e.g. 18- to 24-year-olds versus 16- to 17-year-olds; $p < 0.05$ and standardised regression coefficient > 0.2).

10 Implications for policy, practice and future research regarding young Australians

As this chapter details, the NCAS findings indicate that careful consideration needs to be given to the timing, setting and focus of effective violence prevention strategies with young people. We suggest that violence prevention initiatives with young people should begin in early childhood and continue into adulthood and should be conducted across multiple settings. The findings also highlight specific areas where prevention efforts should focus to address gaps in young people's understanding and challenge persisting harmful attitudes towards gender inequality and violence against women.

It is well established that young people's attitudes and beliefs are shaped by their experiences in the world around them, including by their peers and families, in communities and in institutional settings such as educational and vocational settings, as well as via media, digital and online technologies (Chandra-Mouli et al., 2017; Fox & Potocki, 2016; Heyder et al., 2021; Kahlor, 2011). Given this broad context of influence, prevention strategies aiming to facilitate positive attitudes and understandings among young people regarding gender equality and violence against women need to be conducted across multiple settings to address any adverse influence of social norms, practices, structures and systems (Our Watch, 2021a). Further, in light of research demonstrating the early development of gender stereotypes and attitudes, primary prevention efforts focusing on children's development from the age of three years have been recommended to mitigate gender inequity within educational and familial settings (Moura et al., 2023; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2021).

In addition, it is important that efforts to prevent violence against women among young Australians are framed with their particular social experiences and ways of engaging with the world in mind. For example, the young Australians (aged 16 to 24 years) represented in this report are from the Gen Z cohort (ABS, 2021). This cohort grew up as digital natives, which, while not implying they are a homogenous group, means they often seamlessly integrate virtual and offline experiences and knowledge sources (Gentina & Parry, 2021). Thus, prevention initiatives that include online and other digital components may be particularly useful for young Australians.

Prevention efforts with young Australians should also consider any recent shifts in the environments and contexts influencing this cohort. For example, according to the Australian Institute of Family Studies (2023), the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent cost of living crisis has resulted in young people remaining living with their parents for longer. Approximately 63 per cent of 19-year-olds were living with their parents in 2006, which increased to 72 per cent in 2021 (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2023). Young people living with parents were more likely to be engaged in secondary, tertiary or vocational study than those who were not (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2023). These findings suggest that technical colleges and universities will be an important site for prevention initiatives aimed at young Australians while the cost of living remains high. It is critical that such initiatives with tertiary students are preceded by and build on intervention at earlier ages, given that recent research shows that children have clearly defined gender stereotypes by the age of five years (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2021). Therefore, intervention in early childhood and school-aged settings are timely for beginning to address stereotyped ideas, attitudes and practices about gender roles and relationships that underpin gender inequalities and violence against women (Moura et al., 2023).

Many of the 2021 NCAS findings regarding young respondents' understanding and attitudes regarding violence against women and gender inequality were similar to those for respondents of all ages outlined in the Main report. This pattern suggests that many of the factors influencing understanding and attitudes in the community as a whole also influence young Australians. Thus, it is important to emphasise that most of the implications about ending violence against women detailed in Chapter 10 of the Main report for Australians of all ages are also relevant for young Australians. To avoid repetition, the present chapter refers the reader to the Main report for the detailed discussion of the implications that are relevant to both young Australians (16- to 24-year-olds) and Australians aged 25 years or older and focuses on *the **additional** implications relevant to young people* arising from the unique results for young people. *Thus, the implications in the present report about young people's understanding and attitudes regarding violence against women should be read as a **supplement** to the relevant implications in the Main report.*

The 2021 NCAS data is correlational. Thus, while the NCAS data can provide us with insights into young people's understandings and attitudes, it cannot tell us *why* young people have these understandings and attitudes. Effective prevention efforts with young people would be bolstered by qualitative research to gain further insight into the findings contained in this report. For example, concerning results from the 2017 NCAS about young Australians' understanding of the gendered nature of domestic violence were unpacked in a qualitative study by Carlisle et al., (2022). This study found that young people's rejection of the gendered nature of domestic violence was based on notions of "fairness" and treating all individuals the same (Carlisle et al., 2022). The participants conceptualised domestic violence through a "gender-ignoring lens" influenced by an idealised notion of gender equality rather than through an understanding of the existing structural inequalities that result in women being the predominant victims of domestic violence. The qualitative findings of the study elucidate the need for education initiatives targeting young people's understanding of the gendered nature of domestic violence, the structural inequalities underlying violence against women and the difference between equity versus equality. Thus, the implications from the 2021 NCAS about young Australians'

understanding and attitudes regarding violence against women could be complemented by further qualitative research that delves more deeply into the NCAS findings to provide additional insights about specific areas for prevention initiatives.

10.1 High-level implications for young people

Begin violence prevention early because understanding and attitudes develop early

The finding that young Australians and Australians aged 25 years or older have many similar understandings and attitudes regarding violence against women and gender inequality supports research demonstrating that gender socialisation begins in early childhood and continues to be constructed in adolescence (Moura et al., 2023). Evidence of the early development of gender-stereotyped beliefs, attitudes and gender roles supports parenting- and schools-based primary prevention initiatives with children from the age of three (Moura et al., 2023; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2021). For example, gender-transformative parenting models aim to shift inequitable gender norms and power dynamics in the family and increase caregiving among fathers (Henry et al., 2020; van der Gaag et al., 2019). There is strong global evidence that such programs can improve parent–child interactions, reduce child maltreatment and abusive punishment, and prevent violence in adolescence (Coore Desai et al., 2017; Heise, 2011; Kerr-Wilson et al., 2020; Saran et al., 2021; Stern et al., 2023). There is also emerging evidence that such programs can reduce the experience and perpetration of intimate partner violence (Digolo et al., 2019).

This high-level implication is consistent with the prevention initiative already commenced by the Australian Government regarding consent and respectful relationships education (RRE). This initiative includes:

- the Australia-wide mandate to teach consent and respectful relationships explicitly in an age-appropriate way throughout primary and secondary school via an updated Australian Foundation to Year 10 Curriculum (Version 9.0) (Visentin & Chrysanthos, 2022)
- the commitment in the 2022–2023 Budget of $83.5 million over four years for the Respectful Relationships Education Program (Department of Education, 2023)
- the appointment of a National Respectful Relationships Education Expert Working Group to support the delivery of RRE in schools through national collaboration (Ministers of the Education Portfolio, 2023).

Other ANROWS research in this area supports further measures regarding RRE, including ensuring adequate time, space and support are provided for RRE in the curriculum and school timetables, and taking a school-wide or "whole-of-school" approach that ensures all members of the school community, including parents and carers, feel respected and included (Cahill et al., 2023). The available evidence suggests that RRE is a promising intervention for reducing violence against women if it addresses the drivers of this violence via an age-appropriate curriculum, takes a whole-of-school approach, includes professional learning support for teachers and involves cross-sectoral collaboration and coordination (Jaime et al., 2018; Meyer & Leonardi, 2020; Our Watch, 2021d, 2023a; Weingarten et al., 2018; Williams & Rueda, 2018). Ongoing evaluation of RRE is also important to inform its continuous improvement (for evaluations to date, see ANROWS, 2023; Our Watch, 2023a).

Continue prevention efforts throughout the formative years in an age-appropriate way

The NCAS findings indicate that understanding and attitudes are not uniform among young Australians, with 16- to 17-year-olds lagging behind 18- to 24-year-olds in a number of respects. Compared to 18- to 24-year-olds, 16- to 17-year-olds demonstrated:

- significantly weaker rejection of violence against women (based on the AVAWS overall, all three AVAWS subscales and all type of violence scales)
- areas of significantly weaker understanding of violence against women (1 of 3 UVAWS subscales)
- areas of significantly weaker rejection of gender inequality (2 of 5 AGIS subscales).

Accordingly, 16- to 17-year-olds' responses on some individual items indicated that their rejection of violence was less certain or weaker than that of 18- to 24-year-old respondents.

These NCAS findings that 16- to 17-year-olds lagged behind 18- to 24-year-olds in some areas indicate that understanding and attitudes regarding gender inequality and violence continue to change and mature throughout adolescence and young adulthood. Thus,

primary prevention initiatives with young people should be conducted throughout the formative years and into adulthood and should be tailored appropriately by age. For example, the present findings cohere with other ANROWS research that makes a strong case for extending the RRE curriculum beyond Years 3 to 10 to address the changing additional complexities and opportunities young people face in their intimate relationships (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2023; Cahill et al., 2023). RRE in schools presents a unique opportunity to reach all young people. Nonetheless, a more wholistic approach to violence prevention with young people would involve supplementing RRE with other types of violence prevention initiatives, such as positive parenting, online social marketing and communications, and community mobilisation (Abramsky et al., 2016; D'Ambrosi et al., 2018; Minckas et al., 2020; Saran et al., 2021; Stern et al., 2023).

The importance of violence prevention efforts with young people throughout their formative years is consistent with the National Plan 2022–2032 focus on the prevention of first use of violence through the strengthening of positive, equal and respectful relationships for young Australians (DSS, 2022).

Work across genders and particularly with boys and men to address gender differences

Consistent gender differences on many of the 2021 NCAS scales, subscales and items were found for both young respondents and the full NCAS sample (Main report). These gender differences saw young women consistently demonstrating significantly more "advanced" attitudes and understandings than young men. Young non-binary respondents also occasionally demonstrated significantly better attitudes than young men. These findings suggest that prevention efforts must consider the driving factors that may be influencing these gendered differences, as well as the tailored approaches that may be required to meaningfully engage young men, women and non-binary people. The Main report (Section 10.2, pp. 261–263) presents implications relevant to gender differences.

Other ANROWS research in this area suggests delivering RRE with collaborative learning tasks designed to mix students across friendship groups and gender divides (Cahill et al., 2023). Collaborative learning activities engage students actively and can shift understanding and attitudes towards positive peer norms by leveraging the diversity of attitudes across genders and friendship groups, rather than reinforcing problematic attitudes that may be shared within gender and friendship groups. The research demonstrated that teachers need professional learning support in both content delivery and program methods to use collaborative learning activities rather than teacher-centric approaches (Cahill et al., 2023). A gap analysis of Australian RRE approaches identified the importance of professional development that equips teachers with the knowledge and skills to confidently deliver this content (Pfitzner et al., 2022).

Recognition of teachers' learning and support needs falls under a whole-of-school approach that views schools as workplaces, communities and places of learning (Our Watch, 2021c). Adopting this approach involves engagement with the overlapping domains underlying the social climate (e.g. school culture, environment, policies and practices, and modelling of relationships and gender role expectations to students by parents, staff and community groups; Our Watch, 2021c). Evaluations of primary prevention programs with school students consistently link program effectiveness and sustainability with stakeholder involvement, suggesting that a whole-of-school approach is critical for program success (Lester et al., 2017; Savasuk-Luxton et al., 2018; Tancred et al., 2018).

Young people are also influenced by activities, social groups and communities outside of school. Therefore, community organisations that young people access should also be encouraged to examine how they model gender equality, call out disrespect and discourage violence. Some learnings from school interventions could be applicable to community organisations, especially those that provide further education, mentorship or training.

10.2 Benchmarking young people's understanding and attitudes

Key findings

Similarities in benchmarking findings for young and other respondents

For young Australians, consistent with all Australians more generally (Main report), positive shifts in understanding of violence against women and attitudes towards this violence and gender inequality are occurring slowly. For both young respondents and respondents of all ages:

- All NCAS attitude and understanding scales showed significant improvement in 2021 compared to one or more previous years (2017, 2013 or 2009).
- Between 2017 and 2021, understanding of violence against women, rejection of gender inequality and rejection of sexual violence significantly improved, but attitudes towards domestic violence plateaued.
- In 2021, levels of understanding of violence against women were comparable with levels of rejection of gender inequality and violence against women.
- In 2021, understanding that violence against women is a problem in Australia was higher than understanding that this violence also occurs in one's local area.
- Further positive change is needed to achieve more progressive understanding and attitudes across the Australian population.

Differences in benchmarking findings between young and other respondents

There were also a couple of differences between young respondents and other respondents in the benchmarking results:

- Although rejection of violence against women significantly improved over the longer term for all NCAS respondents, this rejection continued to significantly improve between 2017 and 2021 for young respondents but plateaued for all NCAS respondents.
- Although Australians of all ages could substantially improve their understanding that violence against women occurs in their own suburb or town, this understanding was significantly higher for young respondents than respondents aged 25 years or older in 2021.

Implications

Implications relevant to the benchmarking findings that were similar for young respondents and respondents aged 25 years or older are discussed in the Main report (pp. 238–239). Unique implications for young Australians are as follows.

Investigate drivers of continued improvement in young people's rejection of violence against women

Further investigation could help to identify the drivers behind the continued improvement in young people's rejection of violence against women between 2017 and 2021. Identifying these drivers could help facilitate further improvement in young people's rejection of violence. In addition, these drivers may be able to be leveraged to also improve rejection of violence by all Australians.

Investigate and support young people's recognition that violence is a problem in their local area

Young people's higher recognition that violence against women happens in their own suburb or town compared to Australians aged 25 years or older suggests greater awareness of violence against women as a concern that is close to home for young people. Further research could investigate the factors underlying this higher recognition and whether certain contexts, settings and relationships have an impact. Understanding the reasons why some people better recognise that violence occurs locally and in their networks could inform the framing and focus of initiatives to increase awareness and action to address violence against women.

As outlined in the Main report, lower recognition that violence against women happens everywhere, including in one's own networks, could deter responsiveness and prosocial bystander interaction. The Main report (p. 239) suggests that more work is needed to "personalise" violence against women by emphasising that it can occur in any family, social group, workplace, institution or other setting, and sometimes occurs

without wide recognition and visibility. Violence against women is therefore everyone's problem and everyone's responsibility. Raising awareness across settings that violence against women is a shared social problem, such as via discussions of the dynamics of abuse and victimisation and use of local prevalence data, may facilitate a sense of responsibility to act both individually and collectively.[49]

10.3 Young people's understanding of violence against women (UVAWS)

Key findings

Similarities in understanding between young and other respondents

There are many similarities between young Australians and Australians of all ages in terms of their understanding of violence against women. Specifically, young respondents, like all NCAS respondents:

- showed significant improvements in 2021 compared to previous years in understanding of violence against women
- recognised that domestic violence and violence against women more broadly can manifest as a diverse range of physical and non-physical behaviours
- had higher recognition of physical forms of domestic violence than:
    - non-physical forms of domestic violence such as emotional abuse, financial abuse, technology-facilitated abuse and controlling behaviours
    - forms of domestic violence involving exploitation of aspects of a partner's identity or experience, such as disability, sexual diversity, religion and migrant status
- had lower understanding of the gendered nature of domestic violence in 2021 than in 2009 and 2013, with considerable room for improvement.[50]

Differences in understanding between young and other respondents

Although there is substantial room for improvement in the understanding of violence against women across all age groups, a few key findings indicated lower understanding for young respondents than others. Compared to respondents aged 25 years or older, young respondents were:

- significantly less likely to demonstrate "advanced" understanding, displaying significantly lower understanding based on the UVAWS and all its subscales. For example, young respondents were:
    - significantly more likely to think that men and women are equally likely to experience fear as a result of domestic violence (Understand Gendered DV Subscale)
    - significantly less likely to recognise technology-facilitated abuse involving harassment via repeated emails, text messages and so on as a form of violence against women (Recognise VAW Subscale).

Implications

Implications for the findings regarding understanding of violence against women that were similar for young respondents and respondents aged 25 years or older are discussed in the Main report (pp. 239–242). Unique implications for young Australians are discussed below.

The finding that fewer young respondents had an "advanced" understanding of violence against women compared to Australians aged 25 years or older highlights a need to support the development of young

49 For example, for local prevalence statistics of offences in New South Wales, see the NSW Crime Tool on the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research website (http://crimetool.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/bocsar/).

50 This conclusion is based on the results for two of the three items in the Understand Gendered DV Subscale. Because the other item in this subscale was revised in 2021, it was not possible to examine if mean subscale scores similarly decreased over time.

people's understanding. The NCAS findings identified particular areas to target in young people's understanding of the gendered nature of domestic violence and their recognition of harassment via repeated electronic messages as violence against women.

Qualitative ANROWS research into young people's understanding of violence against women suggests that young people may be prone to a gender-ignoring bias and to rationalising violence as "care and concern" (Carlisle et al., 2022). Implications regarding these two possibilities are outlined below.

Challenge gender-ignoring biases by highlighting pervasive gendered differences in structures and systems

The UVAWS findings suggest that young people may have a gender-ignoring bias. Although this gender-ignoring bias was suggested to explain population-level results in the Main report, it may also be uniquely expressed and experienced by young people.

A gender-ignoring bias overlooks the gender norms and gendered differences within structures and systems that drive gender-based violence and inequality (Main report, pp. 241–242). The 2017 NCAS identified that young people's understanding of the greater impact of domestic violence on women than men had declined over time and suggested that advancements in gender equality may have led to a perception among young people that gender equality has been attained (Politoff et al., 2019). In turn, Politoff et al., (2019) suggested that greater acceptance of gender equality may lead to the mistaken belief that women and men are equally likely to experience domestic violence with comparable impacts. As discussed in the introduction to this chapter, a subsequent qualitative study found that young people's rejection of the gendered nature of domestic violence was grounded in notions of "fairness" (Carlisle et al., 2022). This qualitative study found that the gender-ignoring bias appeared in four key forms for young people:

- discussing violence as occurring between individuals rather than genders
- highlighting violence as being wrong regardless of gender
- arguing that men are unfairly represented as perpetrators, given that they are also victims
- arguing that victims and survivors are treated unequally based on gender, with men being taken less seriously and receiving less support (Carlisle et al., 2022).

Using the language of progressive frameworks and goals like "equality" to defend and maintain unequal structures and practices is a form of resistance called "co-option" (Our Watch, 2022). Our Watch recommends using evidence, best practice and policy reform to address co-option and integrate gender equality into organisations and institutions (Our Watch, 2022). For example, organisations that employ or work with youth can use tools such as the Workplace Gender Equality Agency Gender Strategy Toolkit to diagnose and address barriers to gender equality (Workplace Gender Equality Agency, 2019). Implementation should occur alongside explanation to team members of the value and long-term potential of achieving gender equality (e.g. promoting wellbeing, social status and safety of all staff, and increasing organisational/institutional performance). It is critical that these discussions illuminate how co-option can maintain unequal gender structures that preserve men's privilege (Behre, 2015; Pease, 2008). Additionally, gender-transformative approaches that seek to reshape young people's understanding of gender roles and promote gender-equitable relationships are also well supported in the literature (see, for example, the summary in Pfitzner et al., 2022, p. 20).

Reframe "care and concern" to support young people to recognise abusive behaviour

The UVAWS findings also highlight that young people may not always recognise harassment via repeated technology-facilitated contact (e.g. emails or text messages) as a form of abusive behaviour. Similarly, the Carlisle et al., (2022) qualitative study found that young people rationalised problematic or abusive behaviours as acceptable in circumstances where they were perceived as being motivated by care and concern.

Rationalising non-consensual technological tracking and harassment as care and concern may reflect the ubiquity of technology in young people's lives. For example, social norms revolving around chat-based and informal repeated daily contact may feed into perceptions that such behaviour is expected and acceptable in intimate relationships even when not consensual (Carlisle et al., 2022). This misperception that certain forms of technology-facilitated abuse are a normal part of a healthy relationship, or are rationalised based on other factors, should be addressed. Technology-facilitated abuse is a common problem in Australia, especially for young people, with approximately three in four young people (71%) having experienced technology-facilitated abuse (Powell et al., 2022).

For young people, increasing understanding of technology-facilitated abuse could take the form of interventions that highlight what respectful relationships look like online, provide education and resources on suspicious online activity, inform young people of their right to privacy and provide tools to navigate interactions online (Body Safety Australia, 2023; eSafety Commissioner, 2023a, 2023b).

10.4 Young people's attitudes towards gender inequality (AGIS)

Key findings

Similarities in attitudes towards gender inequality between young and other respondents

Young Australians have similar attitudes towards gender inequality as other Australians. Specifically, young respondents and respondents of all ages:

- rejected many attitudes that condone or reinforce gender inequality, and this rejection continued to steadily improve, albeit slowly, over time
- had similar levels of rejection of gender inequality
- showed significantly improved rejection of attitudes that reinforce gender roles, deny inequality and normalise sexism since 2017, but no change in attitudes that undermine women's leadership.

Differences in attitudes towards gender inequality between young and other respondents

There were a few key differences between young and other respondents in attitudes towards gender inequality:

- Between 2017 and 2021, young respondents did not show any significant improvement in the rejection of attitudes that limit women's autonomy in relationships (Limit Autonomy Subscale of the AGIS). In comparison, a significant improvement was observed for respondents of all ages.
- In 2021, young respondents had significantly weaker rejection of problematic attitudes that limit women's autonomy than respondents aged 25 years or older.
- In 2021, young respondents had significantly stronger rejection of rigid gender role stereotypes (Reinforce Gender Roles Subscale) and weaker rejection of attitudes that limit women's autonomy (Limit Autonomy Subscale) than they did of other gender inequality attitudes. This pattern of results was not observed for respondents of all ages (Main report).

Young respondents, compared to respondents aged 25 years or older, were significantly:

- *less* likely to "strongly disagree" that women prefer a man to be in charge of the relationship (Limit Autonomy Subscale)
- *less* likely to "strongly disagree" that jokes about being violent towards women are okay (Normalise Sexism Subscale)
- *more* likely to "strongly disagree" with the outdated notion that women need to have children to be fulfilled (Reinforce Gender Roles Subscale).

Implications

Implications for the findings regarding attitudes towards gender inequality that were similar for young respondents and respondents aged 25 years or older are discussed in the Main report (pp. 242–244). Unique implications for young Australians are as follows.

Adopt gender-transformative approaches to break down rigid gender norms among young people

While it is promising that young people show stronger rejection of rigid gender role stereotypes (Reinforce Gender Roles Subscale), a pattern of greater progress on items that allow men to transgress traditional gender norms (e.g. showing emotion) than on women's traditional gender norms (e.g. initiating sex) was observed. A recent qualitative study found that 90 per cent of young women believed that young men should talk about their feelings, even if others laugh (Davies, 2023). Conversely, young women's attitudes towards their sexual identity and desire were more complex and

shaped by contradictory discourses that penalise both promiscuous and abstinent sexual behaviours (Davies, 2023). The study reported that young men's expression of their sexual desire is normalised by traditional masculine norms, whereas young women "experience the ingrained fear of transgressing gender norms and challenging this sexual emphasis, thus placing them within the quandary of 'sexual double standards'" (Davies, 2023, p. 65). Greater support for men's expression of emotion than for women's initiation of sex may be further explained by differences in social sanctioning. That is, social sanctions may be less intense or less enduring in response to men's transgressions of traditional gender norms than women's transgressions. Stigmatisation and shaming of women based on their sexual choices (perceived or real) by peers and family members can be harmful and target their identity (Davies, 2023).

Initiatives that highlight the pervasive nature of traditional, rigid gender norms and the need to be vigilant about not inadvertently reinforcing such rigid gender norms as we strive for gender equality remain important. For example, initiatives with young people, as with all ages, should adopt gender-transformative approaches rather than gender-neutral or gender-sensitive approaches (Our Watch, 2021a; Pfitzner et al., 2022). Gender-transformative approaches challenge and attempt to change problematic gender stereotypes, scripts, norms, the gender binary and the gender hierarchy, which facilitate and maintain gender inequality (Our Watch, 2019, 2021a). Parenting and education are key settings for implementing gender-transformative approaches in children and young people (Moura et al., 2023). In early childhood, parents are the main agents of socialisation for their children and model behaviours, speech and gender-based practices (Trikic & Alaylı, 2023). As children grow older, they are impacted by wider agents of socialisation, including peers, teachers, other adults and the school environment. Education settings offer ready access to young people and bring together the main agents of their socialisation. Thus, schools are recognised for their unique potential to transform harmful gender norms and discriminatory practices to achieve gender equality (Nugroho et al., 2022). Gender-transformative approaches can be applied throughout education policy and practice, as well as in the classroom, such as through whole-of-school approaches like respectful relationships education (Our Watch, 2021c).

Challenge young people's acceptance of male power in intimate relationships and dating scripts

Compared to respondents aged 25 years or older, young respondents were significantly less likely to reject beliefs that women want men to be in charge in intimate relationships (Limit Autonomy Subscale) but significantly more likely to reject beliefs that women need children to be fulfilled (Reinforce Gender Roles Subscale). Qualitative research with young people has revealed similar inconsistencies in beliefs about gender equality and gender roles. Such inconsistencies may partly reflect endorsement of traditional dating scripts and viewing relationships through a "male dominance model" (Davies, 2023; Lamont, 2021; McCarry, 2009). For example, a recent qualitative study found strong support among young women for the belief that women could be equal leaders with men, despite almost 40 per cent believing that men should pay on a date (Davies, 2023). This form of financial expectation reflects gender norms whereby men play the role of instigating and progressing intimate relationships (Davies, 2023). Adherence to this gendered script reflects young people's acceptance and reinforcement of power imbalances at the initial stage of dating.

Lamont (2021) argued that traditional heterosexual dating scripts have persisted despite an increased commitment to egalitarian relationships among young people. Conventional dating scripts adopt a proactive–reactive framework in which men take the lead and women respond (Lamont, 2021). The belief that men should take the lead in relationships reinforces the active–passive gender binary ascribed to men and women (Lamont, 2021). This belief pattern is associated with other forms of gender inequality, including the division of domestic and care labour, the exclusion of women from leadership roles and violence against women (Lamont, 2021; Manne, 2020).

A qualitative study exploring the link between gender role beliefs and violence revealed that young people justified and accepted male violence within heterosexual relationships by connecting it with male power (McCarry, 2009). Young people endorsed a "male dominance model" in relationships, attributing men's power over women to their physical strength and "entitlement" to hold powerful positions (McCarry, 2009). Thus, a male dominance model construes domestic violence and violence against women as a means for men to achieve and exert their dominance over women and as normative gender-role behaviour (McCarry, 2009).

Prevention initiatives with young people, including RRE, need to challenge acceptance of rigid gender roles in intimate relationships and male power and entitlement (McCarry, 2009). Raising young people's awareness of the persistence of gendered dating roles and the link between gendered dating scripts and violence against women may assist them to recognise this "blind spot" regarding gender inequality, rewrite conventional dating scripts and foster cultural change.

10.5 Young people's attitudes towards violence against women (AVAWS)

Key findings

Similarities in attitudes towards violence against women between young and other respondents

Young Australians have largely similar attitudes towards violence against women as other Australians. Specifically, young respondents and respondents of all ages:

- between 2017 and 2021, significantly increased their rejection of attitudes that mistrust women's reports of violence and that objectify women and disregard consent
- between 2017 and 2021, stalled in their rejection of attitudes that minimise violence, despite significant improvement over the longer term
- had similar levels of rejection of violence against women overall in 2021.

Differences in attitudes towards violence against women between young and other respondents

Some key findings for young respondents were different to those for respondents 25 years or older and to respondents of all ages (Main report), including the following:

- Between 2017 and 2021, young respondents' rejection of attitudes that condone violence against women significantly increased, while those for all respondents plateaued despite an increase over the longer term. Nonetheless, similar proportions of young respondents and respondents aged 25 years or older had "advanced" rejection of violence against women in 2021.
- In 2021, young respondents had significantly higher rejection of attitudes that objectify women and disregard consent than attitudes that mistrust women's reports of violence and excuse and minimise violence. This difference was not observed for respondents of all ages.
- In 2021, young respondents had significantly weaker rejection of problematic attitudes that excuse and minimise violence than respondents aged 25 years or older.
- Compared to respondents aged 25 years or older, young respondents were significantly:
    - *less* likely to "strongly disagree" with some items in the Minimise Violence Subscale, including attitudes that domestic violence can be excused if the perpetrator was drunk or regretted their behaviour and attitudes that domestic violence is a private matter that should be handled in the family
    - *more* likely to "strongly disagree" with some items in the Objectify Women Subscale, including attitudes that women should be flattered by wolf-whistles or cat-calls and that it is understandable if a man continues having sex with a drunk woman who falls asleep.

Implications

Implications for the findings regarding attitudes towards violence against women that were similar for young respondents and respondents aged 25 years or older are discussed in the Main report (pp. 244–249). Unique implications for young Australians are as follows.

Strengthen co-design with young people and victims and survivors

To address young people's mistrust of women's reports of violence and attitudes that excuse and minimise violence, policymakers and practitioners could consider working directly with young people, including young victims and survivors, to co-design prevention initiatives. Engaging young people in co-design can help ensure that prevention initiatives for young people are developed with their unique insights, perspectives and experiences at the forefront, are appropriate to their stage of life and are tailored to meet their specific needs (Lamb et al., 2020, 2023; Lloyd et al., 2023). Therefore, co-design could be used to strengthen a range of prevention initiatives for young people, including those discussed in other sections of this chapter, throughout childhood, adolescence and into young adulthood.

While the burden of prevention should not be unduly placed on victims and survivors, they can be powerful advocates for change, including via co-design. The improvements between 2017 and 2021 in young people's overall attitudes towards violence against women highlighted by the NCAS occurred alongside heightened community demand for action and advocacy, including advocacy by many young Australians with lived experience of violence (Section 1.6).

Wheildon et al., (2022) examined the ways that people with lived experience of violence can drive significant social and policy reforms. Wheildon et al., (2022) argued that victims' and survivors' status as "outsiders" to the regular policymaking context is generally their greatest strength as advocates because they can challenge institutional complacency. However, there can be challenges to including victims and survivors in the policy process. The characteristics of the crime, the victim and survivor, the perpetrator and their relationship have been argued to affect the likelihood of victims and survivors being invited into policymaking circles and having a positive influence (Christie, 1986; Wheildon et al., 2022). It has been argued that victims and survivors are more likely to be accepted and invited into policymaking circles if they fit the stereotype of an "ideal victim" who is unlikely to be perceived in any way as blameworthy for the assault (e.g. they are considered not blameworthy because they are elderly or young, have impaired health status, were behaving respectably and did not know the perpetrator; Christie, 1986; Wheildon et al., 2022). Furthermore, participation in the policymaking context may also be hindered by the same structural and systemic forms of oppression and discrimination that intersect to produce particular forms of violence, increase prevalence and severity of violence, and impose barriers on seeking and receiving support (DSS, 2022).

It is important that future collaborations and co-designed policy and prevention initiatives with young people transcend the aforementioned biases to include young people with diverse backgrounds and victim experiences and are conducted sensitively and ethically (see also the *Australian National Research Agenda to End Violence against Women and Children (ANRA) 2023–2028* (Lloyd et al., 2023) and co-design frameworks; Lamb et al., 2020, 2023).

Conduct research with perpetrators and develop early intervention

Australia does not currently collect data on the nature of the perpetration of violence against women. This lack of targeted research underlies prevailing gaps in understanding young men's and boys' use of violence and the justifications and motivations underlying this violence. The collection of data on male perpetration of violence and perpetrator characteristics is critical to informing the development of effective education models and early intervention strategies. Such research may illuminate opportunities to challenge problematic attitudes and behaviours among young men, including violence-supportive beliefs and the use of coercive control and coercive sexual behaviours (Abbott et al., 2020; Baldwin-White, 2019; Carlisle et al., 2022; Øverlien et al., 2020).

10.6 Young people's understanding and attitudes regarding different types of violence against women

Key findings

Similarities in understanding and attitudes regarding different types of violence between young and other respondents

Young Australians and other Australians have many similar attitudes towards specific types of violence against women, including sexual and domestic violence. Specifically:

- Between 2017 and 2021, young respondents, like respondents of all ages, significantly increased their rejection of sexual violence (including sexual harassment and sexual assault) but showed minimal change in attitudes towards domestic violence.
- In 2021, there were no significant differences between young respondents and those aged 25 years or older in the percentage demonstrating "advanced" attitudes towards violence against women overall, sexual violence and domestic violence.

Regarding domestic violence findings for young respondents and respondents of all ages:

- Most respondents "strongly disagreed" with problematic attitudes towards domestic violence.
- A minority of respondents endorsed attitudes that mistrust women's reports of domestic violence and attitudes that minimise or shift blame for violent acts from the perpetrator to the victim or survivor.

Regarding sexual violence findings for young respondents and respondents of all ages:

- Most respondents "strongly disagreed" with problematic attitudes towards sexual violence, especially those that excuse rape, but disagreement was weaker if the woman initially showed interest in sex.
- A minority of respondents endorsed hostile stereotypes of women as vengeful and untrustworthy, attitudes that perpetrators are less culpable if they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol, and rape myths that sexual assault is primarily committed by strangers.
- A minority of respondents supported myths that sexual harassment is flattering or benign.

Regarding technology-facilitated abuse, most respondents across age groups recognised technology-facilitated abuse as violence against women and "strongly disagreed" with problematic attitudes towards this abuse. However, a minority of respondents held misconceptions that technology-facilitated abuse is not serious.

Regarding stalking, the majority of respondents across age groups recognised both technology-facilitated and in-person stalking as a form of violence, although a concerning minority failed to recognise this.

Differences in understanding and attitudes regarding different types of violence between young and other respondents

Young respondents were different to respondents aged 25 years or older or respondents of all ages (Main report) in some key areas:

- In 2021, young respondents had significantly higher rejection of sexual violence than rejection of domestic violence and technology-facilitated abuse, whereas there were no significant differences between levels of rejection of these types of violence for respondents of all ages.
- Young respondents were significantly more likely than respondents aged 25 years or older to "somewhat" or "strongly" agree that they would know where to go to get support for someone experiencing domestic violence, although there is room for improvement across the population.
- Age differences regarding attitudes to sexual violence involving alcohol or drugs depended on whether it was the perpetrator or victim who had used alcohol or drugs. Compared to respondents aged 25 years or older, young respondents were significantly:
    - *more likely* to excuse the perpetrator if he was drunk or affected by drugs[51]
    - *less likely* to excuse the perpetrator if the victim was drunk and fell asleep.

51 In addition, 16- to 17-year-olds were significantly more likely than 18- to 24-year-olds to excuse the perpetrator if he was drunk or affected by drugs.

Implications

Implications for the findings regarding attitudes towards types of violence against women that were similar for young respondents and respondents of all ages are discussed in the Main report (pp. 249–258). Unique implications for young Australians are as follows.

Learn from the finding that most young people know where to seek help for domestic violence

The finding that most young people understand where to seek help for someone experiencing domestic violence is positive. A study by Hegarty et al., (2022) on the experiences of victims of intimate partner or sexual violence found that young women under 25 years of age were less likely to seek support from health and specialist services and more likely to seek support from family and friends. To ensure that help-seeking from family and friends is connected to appropriate supports, the study recommended that family and friends receive "allies training" using the CARE model – Choice and control, Action and advocacy, Recognition and understanding, Emotional connection – to increase their understanding of the available services (Tarzia et al., 2020 cited in Hegarty et al., 2022).

Although there is room for improvement across all ages, young respondents were more likely than those aged 25 years or older to state that they know where to seek help for someone experiencing domestic violence. There is an opportunity to investigate this finding further to understand how knowledge of services could be bolstered further for young people and what barriers to reporting and accessing services remain for young people, as well as to leverage these learnings where applicable for Australians aged 25 years or older. Further investigation of knowledge of help-seeking for domestic violence among young people, their parents and support networks may identify unmet support needs in these groups. Recent research suggests that families experiencing adolescent violence in the home have limited access to service support (E. Campbell et al., 2020). All Australians should be aware of the resources and support systems available to those using violence and those directly or indirectly affected by violence (E. Campbell et al., 2023).

Implement sexual violence prevention initiatives with young people and across the population

Alcohol can weaken prosocial behaviour and inhibition, and when combined with sexist attitudes and stereotypical masculine aggression, can increase the likelihood of perpetrating violence against women (DSS, 2022; Laslett et al., 2015; Laslett et al., 2021; Our Watch, 2021a). The NCAS results highlight the complexity of attitudes towards sexual violence that involve alcohol or other drug use. Compared to those aged 25 years or older, young respondents were more likely to excuse the perpetrator if he was under the influence of alcohol or drugs but less likely to do so if the victim was drunk and fell asleep. The results support the need for awareness-raising initiatives across all age cohorts to improve understanding that consent must be active and ongoing and cannot be disregarded when the victim or offender is under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

According to AIHW (2020), the average (mean) age in 2019 that young people first tried alcohol was 16.2 years. As a result, high school is a key time for primary prevention of sexual violence, before attitudes towards alcohol, drugs and sexual intimacy are solidified. Violence prevention initiatives during high school could be used to raise awareness of how alcohol can affect consent and to enhance young people's skills and confidence for handling situations involving alcohol and social pressure. Thus, it is important that consent education and respectful relationships education should encompass scenarios involving alcohol (Cooper, 2002).

Research suggests that universities are also important settings for sexual violence prevention initiatives. For example, a recent study revealed that since starting university, 16 per cent of students had experienced sexual harassment and 5 per cent had experienced sexual assault in an Australian university context (Heywood et al., 2022). Participating students were asked what universities could do to reduce incidents of sexual harassment and sexual assault (Heywood et al., 2022). They most frequently reported awareness-raising initiatives (41%) and improvements to policy (31%), followed by increased and improved support (16%) and security (14%) and cultural change (9%; Heywood et al., 2022).

Implications regarding technology-facilitated abuse

See the "*Reframe 'care and concern' to support young people to recognise abusive behaviour*" implication in Section 10.3 of the present report for implications regarding technology-facilitated abuse as a type of violence.

10.7 Young people's bystander responses

Key findings

Similarities in bystander responses between young and other respondents

Most Australians of all ages intend to intervene prosocially in response to witnessing abuse and disrespect against women. However, prosocial bystander intervention is context-dependent and can vary according to the type of disrespectful or abusive behaviour and power differentials. Specifically, young respondents and respondents of all ages:

- were significantly more likely to say they would be bothered by and would intervene if they witnessed verbal abuse rather than a sexist joke
- were significantly more likely to say they would be bothered by a boss rather than a close work friend telling a sexist joke
- were significantly less likely to say they would intervene if a boss rather than a close work friend told a sexist joke
- thought their peers would support them either publicly or privately, and only a minority thought their peers would criticise them or say nothing if they were to show their disapproval of a friend's sexist joke or verbal abuse.

For young Australians and Australians of all ages, multiple barriers can impede prosocial bystander intervention, including personal, context-specific and structural barriers. The most common reasons provided by both young respondents and respondents of all ages (Main report) for not intervening were that it might have negative consequences, they would not feel comfortable speaking up and they would not know what to say. Fewer but still sizeable proportions of respondents were concerned that speaking up would not make any difference, or that it was not their business to intervene.

Differences in bystander responses between young and other respondents

Young respondents were significantly more likely than respondents aged 25 years or older to say they would be bothered by sexist jokes in the workplace. However, significantly fewer young respondents than respondents aged 25 years or older said they would intervene if they were bothered by a boss's sexist joke.

Implications

Implications regarding bystander responses that were similar for young respondents and respondents aged 25 years or older are discussed in the Main report (pp. 258–260) and implications regarding bystander responses that differed between young respondents and respondents aged 25 years or older are also discussed in the Main report (pp. 264–265). Unique implications for young Australians are as follows.

Increase young people's knowledge, skills and confidence to act as prosocial bystanders

The findings show that most young Australians intend to intervene in a positive way in response to witnessing abuse and disrespect. To bolster bystander support, the National Plan 2022–2032 acknowledges the need to give people tools and confidence to act as prosocial bystanders and to expand bystander training and resources (DSS, 2022). Given that the NCAS findings show that bystander responses are situation-dependent, initiatives to bolster prosocial bystander behaviour among all Australians should be conducted across settings and tailored to the specific context (e.g. power dynamics, social pressures and safety considerations; see also Main report).

In particular, further efforts are needed to address the most common concerns young people have about intervening as prosocial bystanders: fear of negative consequences, not feeling comfortable speaking up and not knowing what to say. While it is positive that young respondents were less concerned that intervening is "not their business" or that "it wouldn't make any difference", addressing these concerns is nonetheless important. The results indicate the need for initiatives to

boost young people's knowledge, skills and confidence to identify violence and disrespect and to respond as prosocial bystanders (see also Main report, pp. 258–260).

The NCAS also revealed the positive finding that most young respondents who intended to respond as prosocial bystanders felt their peers would support them. Peer relationships have been shown to play a significant role in shaping young people's understandings, attitudes and behaviours, including in relation to gender inequality and violence against women (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2013; Powell, 2014). Thus, violence prevention initiatives to increase young people's prosocial behaviour could also consider leveraging peer influence and strengthening positive social norms among their peer groups and networks (see also Main report, pp. 258–260).

Policies in workplaces and other settings should consider power dynamics to facilitate prosocial bystander behaviour

The NCAS findings also indicate that, compared to other Australians, young people appear to face more barriers to responding prosocially if their boss demonstrates disrespect in the workplace. This NCAS scenario involves a power differential where the perpetrator is in a position of power over the bystander. As young people will generally be new to the workforce, hold junior positions or be in precarious employment, it is important to give consideration to their specific positioning and experiences in the workplace, including the power differential that they often experience in the workplace.

Clear workplace policies that empower all staff to voice any concerns will be a cornerstone for addressing young people's fear of negative consequences, discomfort speaking up and concern that speaking up will not make any difference. Our Watch has produced a host of tools and resources for workplaces to embed workplace equality and respect (see Our Watch, 2023b). Consideration could be given to how these tools and resources can give particular attention to the experience of young employees within all workplace settings. For example, forthcoming ANROWS research on addressing sexual harassment in the retail sector (a sector with high numbers of young employees) could help guide refinement of these tools and resources to specifically support young employees to intervene when witnessing abuse and disrespect (see Cooper et al., forthcoming).

It is also important that prevention policies and initiatives consider how power differentials may affect young people's prosocial bystander responses in a variety of settings outside the workplace, including in school, university, vocational, sport and recreational settings. The *Australian National Research Agenda to End Violence against Women and Children (ANRA) 2023–2028* provides questions for keeping power considerations at the forefront when conducting research and evaluation (Lloyd et al., 2023).

10.8 People and contexts

As for respondents of all ages (Main report), demographic factors explained only about one fifth or less of the differences in young respondents' understanding of violence against women and attitudes towards gender inequality and violence against women, based on multiple regression analyses. Therefore, other factors are needed to predict understanding and attitudes more comprehensively. For young respondents, gender was the strongest demographic predictor of understanding and attitudes, but still only explained 10 per cent or less of the variability.

Young respondents' demographic characteristics and understanding of violence against women helped to predict their attitudes towards violence against women, but these attitudes were most strongly predicted by their attitudes towards gender equality.

Gender differences

Key findings

There is a persistent gap between genders in understanding of violence against women, rejection of gender inequality, rejection of violence against women and prosocial bystander responses, with young men lagging behind young women. Young men also lagged behind young non-binary respondents in their rejection of some problematic attitudes.[52] Specifically, young men respondents demonstrated significantly:

52 There were 36 young non-binary respondents in the total NCAS sample of 19,100. Comparisons involving young non-binary respondents were only conducted for scales and subscales where there was data for at least 30 young non-binary respondents. Due to small numbers on some items, no item-level analyses were conducted for young non-binary respondents.

- weaker understanding of violence against women compared to young women, including significantly:
    - weaker recognition of the different forms of domestic violence
    - weaker recognition of violence against women more generally
- weaker rejection of all problematic attitudes towards gender inequality measured by the NCAS compared to young women and, in some cases, young non-binary respondents
- weaker rejection of violence against women, including significantly:
    - weaker rejection of attitudes that minimise violence compared to young women
    - weaker rejection of attitudes that mistrust women compared to young women and young non-binary respondents
    - weaker rejection of attitudes that objectify women compared to young women
- less frequent prosocial bystander responses than young women, including being:
    - less likely to be bothered by sexist jokes
    - less likely to intend to show disapproval then and there, but more likely to intend to show disapproval in private later if a friend told a sexist joke.

Despite young women having significantly stronger recognition than young men of the behaviours that constitute domestic violence and violence against women more generally, young men and young women had similar levels of understanding of the gendered nature of domestic violence as a phenomenon perpetrated mainly by men against women.

Implications

Implications relevant to findings for gender are discussed in the Main report (pp. 261–263). Unique implications for young Australians are as follows.

Primary prevention with young people is important because gendered differences in understanding and attitudes start early

These findings highlight that the gender gap between men's understandings and attitudes and those of women and non-binary people develop while they are still young. See "Work across genders and particularly with boys and men to address gender differences" in Section 10.1 of this present report for further discussion of the implications of these findings.

Age similarities and differences

Key findings

Within the cohort of young respondents, understanding of violence against women and rejection of problematic attitudes were often stronger for 18- to 24-year-old respondents than for 16- to 17-year-old respondents. Specifically:

- Understanding of violence against women overall was similar for the two youth age groups, but 18- to 24-year-old respondents had significantly better recognition of domestic violence than 16- to 17-year-old respondents.
- Attitudes towards gender inequality overall were similar for the two youth age groups, but 18- to 24-year-old respondents showed significantly higher rejection than 16- to 17-year-old respondents of attitudes that reinforce rigid gender roles and limit women's autonomy.
- Compared to 16- to 17-year-old respondents, 18- to 24-year-old respondents showed significantly higher rejection of violence against women, including higher rejection of attitudes that minimise violence, objectify women and mistrust women, higher rejection of domestic violence and sexual violence, and higher understanding and rejection of technology-facilitated abuse.

Compared to respondents aged 25 years or older, young respondents aged 16 to 24 years had similar rejection of problematic attitudes towards gender inequality (AGIS) and violence against women (AVAWS), but significantly less "advanced" understanding of violence against women (UVAWS).

Implications

Continued intervention is needed

Respondents aged 16 to 17 years often demonstrated lower understanding of violence against women and rejection of problematic attitudes compared to respondents aged 18 to 24 years. See the section "Continue prevention efforts throughout the formative years in an age-appropriate way" in Section 10.1 of the present report for more information on the implications of this finding.

11 Conclusion

The NCAS findings for young people provide evidence that young Australians' understanding and attitudes regarding violence against women are generally moving towards positive change, although this change is occurring slowly. Most young Australians, like most Australians of all ages, strongly reject violence against women, and particularly strongly reject sexual violence. However, there is room to improve young peoples' recognition of non-physical forms of violence and the gendered nature of domestic violence, as well as attitudes that minimise violence against women and limit women's autonomy.

The NCAS results identify areas where it would be particularly beneficial to focus prevention efforts to address gaps in young peoples' understanding of violence against women and to transform more entrenched problematic attitudes towards this violence and gender inequality. For instance, the findings point to many opportunities across the primary prevention, early intervention, response, and recovery and healing continuum that may assist in ending violence against women and building a culture that supports safety, respect and equality for all Australians (DSS, 2022). These initiatives must be implemented early and across the lifespan, including through parenting and school-based programs, as well as interventions that support young people within universities and workplaces. There is also an opportunity to co-design prevention initiatives with young people to ensure these initiatives are informed by their unique insights and experiences and to facilitate meeting their specific needs.

In addition, the NCAS highlights areas where further research, evaluation and monitoring could be beneficial. For example, future research provides the opportunity to evaluate the factors underlying perpetration, and the role of attitudes and understanding in predicting violence against women. Similarly, further investigation into the factors underlying problematic attitudes towards violence against women may provide insight into the barriers and facilitators to improving these attitudes and to breaking down the culture that perpetuates violence against women.

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13 Appendix A: Item-level differences by age (between the two youth groups)

Table 13-1: Recognising domestic violence and violence against women by age, youth groups (UVAWS subscale items), 2021

Subscale	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Age	*N*	% Yes, always	% Yes, usually	% Yes, sometimes	% No	% Unsure	% Strong yes[a]
	Is this a form of domestic violence?									
Recognise Domestic Violence	D1	Slaps or pushes partner to cause harm or fear	16–17	207	73.72	15.56	8.57	1.62 [b]	0.00	89.28
			18–24	1,462	79.11	12.75	6.34	1.39 [b]	0.36 [b]	91.86
	D2	Scares or controls partner by threatening family members~	16–17	52	92.74	7.26 [b]	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
			18–24	345	93.44	2.76 [b]	1.97 [b]	1.30 [b]	0.53 [b]	96.20
	D3	Repeatedly criticises to make partner feel bad or useless	16–17	207	52.22	20.06	19.35	8.36	0.00	72.28
			18–24	1,462	59.98	21.09	13.34	5.23	0.38 [b]	81.06
	D4	Controls social life by preventing partner seeing family and friends	16–17	207	66.75	16.12	10.74	6.40 [b]	0.00	82.87
			18–24	1,462	70.80	14.01	7.94	6.53	0.73 [b]	84.81
	D5	Controls partner by denying them money	16–17	207	58.04	19.33	11.41	10.82	0.40 [b]	77.37
			18–24	1,462	59.51	17.31	13.76	8.13	1.17 [b]	76.82
	D6	Repeatedly keeps track of partner on electronic devices	16–17	207	56.96	20.33	13.20	9.12	0.39 [b]	77.29
			18–24	1,462	64.93	15.85	10.24	7.99	0.99 [b]	80.79
	D7	Controls partner by refusing to assist with their disability needs	16–17	207	58.75	**27.17 ***	7.63 [b]	6.03 [b]	0.00	85.91
			18–24	1,462	60.54	17.14 *	12.28	7.13	2.79	77.68
	D8	Controls partner with a disability by threatening to put them into care or a home~	16–17	51	69.09	12.38 [b]	10.54 [b]	7.99 [b]	0.00	81.48
			18–24	370	68.83	16.26	9.84	4.02 [b]	1.05 [b]	85.09
	D9	Repeatedly threatens to deport partner on temporary visa	16–17	207	69.63	17.14	5.23 [b]	6.81 [b]	1.20 [b]	86.77
			18–24	1,462	72.87	12.58	8.23	5.12	1.14 [b]	85.45

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Subscale	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Age	*N*	% Yes, always	% Yes, usually	% Yes, sometimes	% No	% Unsure	% Strong yes[a]
	Is this a form of domestic violence?									
Recognise Domestic Violence	D11	Controls partner by forcing them to hide that they are trans gender	16–17	207	60.18	14.98	10.77	11.15	2.91 [b]	75.17
			18–24	1,462	68.86	13.38	8.90	6.90	1.89	82.24
	D10	Forces partner to stop practising their religion~	16–17	51	70.08	9.41 [b]	14.92 [b]	5.59 [b]	0.00	79.49
			18–24	370	67.71	15.19	8.99	5.72	2.39 [b]	82.90
	D12	Forces partner to undergo an unnecessary medical procedure, such as contraception or abortion~	16–17	51	77.56	11.49 [b]	8.25 [b]	2.70 [b]	0.00	89.05
			18–24	370	78.59	11.88	4.66 [b]	4.01 [b]	0.86 [b]	90.47
	Is this a form of violence against women?									
Recognise Violence against Women	V4	Stalking by repeatedly following/watching at home/work	16–17	207	72.76	17.53	2.48 [b]	7.23 [b]	0.00	90.29
			18–24	1,462	72.75	12.45	6.86	6.71	1.13 [b]	85.20
	V5	Harassment via repeated emails, text messages etc.	16–17	207	56.89	18.86	13.63	10.38	0.25 [b]	75.75
			18–24	1,462	60.45	18.88	12.58	7.46	0.63 [b]	79.32
	V6	Abusive messages or comments targeted at women on social media	16–17	207	61.90	16.43	13.16	8.12 [b]	0.39 [b]	78.33
			18–24	1,462	59.93	20.70	12.47	6.27	0.59 [b]	80.63
	V7	A man sends an unwanted picture of his genitals to a woman	16–17	207	60.07	14.56	13.07	12.30	0.00	74.63
			18–24	1,462	61.94	14.17	13.11	9.48	1.30 [b]	76.11

Note: Numbers in bold reflect the significantly higher value in the comparison.
Percentages may not add to 100 as the "unanswered" category is not shown in the table.
a "Strong yes" refers to answering "yes" either "always" or "usually".
b This result should be interpreted with caution because it has a relative standard error >25%.
***** Statistically significant difference between 16- to 17-year-olds and 18- to 24-year-olds.
~ Asked of one quarter of the sample.

Table 13-2: Understanding of gendered nature of domestic violence by age, youth groups (UVAWS subscale items), 2021

Subscale	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Age	*N*	% Women	% Both equally	% Men (correct)	% Unsure
Understand Gendered Nature of Domestic Violence	D13	Who is domestic violence mainly committed by?~	16–17	52	0.00	41.09	58.91	0.00
			18–24	345	0.76 [a]	47.51	51.10	0.41 [a]
					% Men	**% Both equally**	**% Women (correct)**	**% Unsure**
	D14	Who is more likely to suffer physical harm from domestic violence?~	16–17	52	2.37 [a]	27.33	70.30	0.00
			18–24	345	3.16 [a]	25.41	70.94	0.28 [a]
	D15	Who is more likely to experience fear as a result of domestic violence?~	16–17	52	0.00	48.14	51.86	0.00
			18–24	345	1.53 [a]	43.82	54.43	0.00

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 as the "unanswered" category is not shown in the table. There were no statistically significant differences between 16- to 17-year-olds and 18- to 24-year-olds on the items in this subscale.

a This result should be interpreted with caution because it has a relative standard error >25%.

~ Asked of one quarter of the sample.

Table 13-3: Additional knowledge items by age, youth groups (not part of any scale), 2021

Area of knowledge	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Age	*N*	% Strongly agree	% Somewhat agree	% Neither agree nor disagree	% Somewhat disagree	% Strongly disagree	% Unsure	% Net agree[a]	% Net disagree[b]
Knowledge of domestic violence support	D33	Would know where to get outside advice or support for someone about domestic violence~	16–17	52	19.60 [c]	52.23	0.00	22.82 [c]	5.36 [c]	0.00	71.82	28.18
			18–24	395	24.78	38.10	0.59 [c]	26.88	8.90	0.56 [c]	62.88	35.78
Stranger vs. acquaintance rape	S16	Women are more likely to be raped by someone they know than by a stranger~	16–17	52	36.09	28.43	1.62 [c]	**25.81 *[c]**	4.40 [c]	2.05 [c]	64.51	30.21
			18–24	345	28.51	46.60	1.99 [c]	8.67 *	6.63	7.38	75.11	15.29

Note: Numbers in bold reflect the significantly higher value in the comparison.
Percentages may not add to 100 as the "unanswered" category is not shown in the table.
a "Net agree" refers to answering "agree" either "strongly" or "somewhat".
b "Net disagree" refers to answering "disagree" either "strongly" or "somewhat".
c This result should be interpreted with caution because it has a relative standard error >25%.
* Statistically significant difference between 16- to 17-year-olds and 18- to 24-year-olds.
~ Asked of one quarter of the sample.

Table 13-4: Criminal offence understanding items by age, youth groups (not part of any scale), 2021

Area of knowledge	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Age	*N*	% Yes	% No	% Unsure
	To the best of your knowledge, are the following behaviours criminal offences in Australia NOW?						
Knowledge of criminal offences	S26	Is it a criminal offence for a man to have sex with his wife without her consent?~	16–17	60	85.19	10.42 [a]	4.39 [a]
			18–24	383	83.31	10.06	6.63
	S27	Is it a criminal offence to post or share a sexual picture of an ex-partner on social media without their consent?~	16–17	60	96.11	3.89 [a]	0.00
			18–24	383	92.35	5.44 [a]	2.21 [a]

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 as the "unanswered" category is not shown in the table. There were no statistically significant differences between 16- to 17-year-olds and 18- to 24-year-olds on these items.

a This result should be interpreted with caution because it has a relative standard error >25%.

~ Asked of one quarter of the sample.

Table 13-5: Awareness of violence against women as a problem in Australia and locally by age, youth groups (not part of any scale), 2021

Area of knowledge	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Age	*N*	% Strongly agree	% Somewhat agree	% Neither agree nor disagree	% Somewhat disagree	% Strongly disagree	% Unsure	% Net agree[a]	% Net disagree[b]
Violence against women is a problem	V1	Violence against women is a problem in Australia~	16–17	69	66.85	29.78	0.41 [c]	2.96 [c]	0.00	0.00	96.63	2.96 [c]
			18–24	418	62.69	26.19	1.25 [c]	4.63 [c]	2.47 [c]	2.77 [c]	88.88	7.10
	V2	Violence against women is a problem in the suburb or town where you live~	16–17	69	19.59 [c]	41.49	7.64 [c]	18.37 [c]	6.86 [c]	6.05 [c]	61.08	25.22
			18–24	418	15.84	34.90	6.45	18.52	8.99	15.30	50.74	27-51

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 as the "unanswered" category is not shown in the table. There were no statistically significant differences between 16- to 17-year-olds and 18- to 24-year-olds on these items.

a "Net agree" refers to answering "agree" either "strongly" or "somewhat".

b "Net disagree" refers to answering "disagree" either "strongly" or "somewhat".

c This result should be interpreted with caution because it has a relative standard error >25%.

~ Asked of one quarter of the sample.

Table 13-6: Attitudes towards Gender Inequality Scale (AGIS) items by age, youth groups, 2021

Subscale	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Age	*N*	% Strongly agree	% Somewhat agree	% Somewhat disagree	% Strongly disagree	% Undecided	% Net agree[a]	% Net disagree[b]
Deny Gender Inequality	G1	Many women exaggerate how unequally women are treated in Australia	16–17	112	9.84 [c]	33.61	18.42	34.80	3.33 [c]	43.45	53.21
			18–24	728	6.90	29.45	27.80	31.00	4.41	36.35	58.80
	G2	Many women mistakenly interpret innocent remarks or acts as being sexist~	16–17	207	7.80	30.89	38.30	19.36	3.64 [c]	38.69	57.66
			18–24	1,462	7.03	29.04	31.10	27.45	5.11	36.07	58.55
	G3	Many women don't fully appreciate all that men do for them	16–17	112	**14.64 ***	14.49	27.37	40.65	2.85 [c]	29.13	68.02
			18–24	728	4.20 *	17.69	33.31	37.67	6.90	21.89	70.98
Limit Autonomy	G12	Men should take control in relationships and be the head of the household	16–17	207	4.55 [c]	11.64	16.63	64.61	2.19 [c]	16.19	81.24
			18–24	1,462	2.47	9.44	18.76	65.95	3.31	11.91	84.72
	G13	Women prefer a man to be in charge of the relationship	16–17	207	4.56 [c]	26.32	33.20	30.05	5.08 [c]	30.88	63.25
			18–24	1,462	2.48	23.25	26.78	40.29	7.15	25.73	67.07
Normalise Sexism	G10	Discrimination against women is no longer a problem in the workplace in Australia~	16–17	74	2.38 [c]	2.84 [c]	33.37	61.42	0.00	5.21 [c]	94.79
			18–24	477	0.81 [c]	7.53	25.68	64.24	1.74 [c]	8.34	89.92
	G16	I think there's no harm in men making sexist jokes about women when they are among their male friends~	16–17	74	2.79 [c]	8.62 [c]	25.77	60.42	1.04 [c]	11.41 [c]	86.20
			18–24	477	1.56 [c]	10.40	23.10	61.50	3.44 [c]	11.96	84.60
	G17	I think it's OK for men to joke with their male friends about being violent towards women~	16–17	108	1.94 [c]	3.34 [c]	6.12 [c]	87.92	0.00	5.28 [c]	94.03
			18–24	717	0.00	2.58 [c]	8.43	88.44	0.55 [c]	2.58 [c]	96.87

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Subscale	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Age	*N*	% Strongly agree	% Somewhat agree	% Somewhat disagree	% Strongly disagree	% Undecided	% Net agree[a]	% Net disagree[b]
Reinforce Gender Roles	G7	I think it is embarrassing for a man to have a job that is usually held by a woman	16–17	207	0.89 [c]	2.88 [c]	14.21	80.27	1.38 [c]	3.77 [c]	94.48
			18–24	1,462	1.09 [c]	2.49	10.31	84.91	1.14 [c]	3.58	95.22
	G8	A man should never admit when others have hurt his feelings	16–17	207	0.95 [c]	2.01 [c]	14.58	80.30	1.36 [c]	2.96 [c]	94.89
			18–24	1,462	0.93 [c]	3.51	9.76	84.97	0.77 [c]	4.43	94.73
	G9	Women need to have children to be fulfilled^	16–17	112	1.34 [c]	1.63 [c]	16.58	78.77	1.67 [c]	2.98 [c]	95.35
			18–24	728	0.98 [c]	2.91	12.94	81.32	1.72 [c]	3.89	94.26
	G14	If a woman earns more than her male partner, it is not good for the relationship^	16–17	112	0.67 [c]	4.21 [c]	15.72	78.65	0.75 [c]	4.88 [c]	94.37
			18–24	728	1.35 [c]	2.36 [c]	14.90	80.35	0.92 [c]	3.71	95.26
	G15	When a couple start dating, the woman should not be the one to initiate sex^	16–17	112	4.84 [c]	5.88 [c]	22.78	57.38	7.43 [c]	**10.72 * [c]**	80.16
			18–24	728	0.51 [c]	3.39	25.37	60.85	9.37	3.90 *	86.22
Undermine Leadership	G4	On the whole, men make better political leaders than women	16–17	207	2.29 [c]	8.32	20.94	63.42	5.03 [c]	10.61	84.36
			18–24	1,462	2.16	6.55	18.36	66.22	6.35	8.71	84.58
	G5	In the workplace, men generally make more capable bosses than women^	16–17	112	2.37 [c]	9.09 [c]	26.35	61.43	0.75 [c]	11.46 [c]	87.79
			18–24	728	2.33 [c]	5.99	19.38	66.56	5.36	8.33	85.94
	G6	Men, rather than women, should hold positions of responsibility in the community^	16–17	112	5.83 [c]	8.65 [c]	23.28	60.10	1.38 [c]	14.48	83.38
			18–24	728	4.23	5.97	17.34	68.14	4.08	10.20	85.48
	G11	Women are less capable than men of thinking logically	16–17	207	2.74 [c]	5.34 [c]	9.81	79.53	2.21 [c]	8.08 [c]	89.34
			18–24	1,462	1.22 [c]	4.11	7.56	85.38	1.54	5.34	92.94

Note: Numbers in bold reflect the significantly higher value in the comparison.
Percentages may not add to 100 as the "unanswered" category is not shown in the table.
a "Net agree" refers to answering "agree" either "strongly" or "somewhat".
b "Net disagree" refers to answering "disagree" either "strongly" or "somewhat".
c This result should be interpreted with caution because it has a relative standard error >25%.
* Statistically significant difference between 16- to 17-year-olds and 18- to 24-year-olds.
^ Asked of half the sample.
~ Asked of one quarter of the sample.

Table 13-7: Attitudes towards Violence against Women (AVAWS) items by age, youth groups, 2021

Subscale	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Age	*N*	% Strongly agree	% Somewhat agree	% Somewhat disagree	% Strongly disagree	% Undecided	% Net agree[a]	% Net disagree[b]
Minimise Violence	D16	Domestic violence is a private matter that should be handled in the family^	16–17	95	3.67 [c]	8.14 [c]	30.47	53.97	3.75 [c]	11.82 [c]	84.44
			18–24	734	3.37	12.88	26.47	55.22	2.06 [c]	16.25	81.69
	D17	A lot of what is called domestic violence is really just a normal reaction to day-to-day stress and frustration	16–17	207	3.95 [c]	15.97	23.88	52.39	3.82 [c]	19.92	76.27
			18–24	1,462	3.79	14.30	22.45	57.38	2.03	18.09	79.84
	D18	Domestic violence can be excused if it results from people getting so angry that they temporarily lose control	16–17	207	5.34 [c]	13.01	16.90	64.39	0.36 [c]	18.35	81.29
			18–24	1,462	4.47	7.81	12.54	73.91	1.20	12.28	86.45
	D19	Domestic violence can be excused if, afterwards, the violent person genuinely regrets what they have done	16–17	207	3.37 [c]	16.89	32.58	44.25 *	2.90 [c]	20.27	76.84
			18–24	1,462	3.48	11.51	26.30	**56.64 ***	2.06	14.99	82.95
	D20	Domestic violence can be excused if the offender is heavily affected by alcohol	16–17	207	4.16 [c]	4.41 [c]	**16.28 ***	74.02 *	1.13 [c]	8.57 [c]	90.30
			18–24	1,462	2.35	3.03	8.48 *	**86.01 ***	0.13 [c]	5.38	94.49
	D21	Domestic violence can be excused if the victim is heavily affected by alcohol	16–17	207	1.71 [c]	5.44 [c]	**20.38 ***	70.53 *	1.95 [c]	7.14 [c]	90.91
			18–24	1,462	2.03	4.65	10.59 *	**81.78 ***	0.95 [c]	6.68	92.37
	D22	Domestic violence can be excused if the violent person was themselves abused as a child	16–17	207	4.20 [c]	4.52 [c]	**28.64 ***	59.34 *	3.31 [c]	8.71 [c]	87.98
			18–24	1,462	2.56	5.95	19.25 *	**70.94 ***	1.25 [c]	8.52	90.18
	D24	It's a woman's duty to stay in a violent relationship to keep the family together^	16–17	95	1.40 [c]	5.71 [c]	4.46 [c]	88.43	0.00	7.11 [c]	92.89
			18–24	734	3.05	1.82 [c]	6.72	87.94	0.47 [c]	4.87	94.66
	D25	Sometimes a woman can make a man so angry that he hits her when he didn't mean to^	16–17	95	4.34 [c]	15.70 [c]	12.52 [c]	65.66	1.78 [c]	20.04	78.18
			18–24	734	3.36	12.02	12.23	68.30	3.67	15.37	80.53
	D30	Women should keep quiet about domestic violence to protect their family's reputation	16–17	207	0.81 [c]	1.75 [c]	4.57 [c]	92.87	0.00	2.56 [c]	97.44
			18–24	1,462	1.13 [c]	1.51 [c]	4.99	92.12	0.25 [c]	2.64	97.11

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Subscale	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Age	*N*	% Strongly agree	% Somewhat agree	% Somewhat disagree	% Strongly disagree	% Undecided	% Net agree[a]	% Net disagree[b]
Minimise Violence	D31	Women who stay in abusive relationships deserve less help from counselling and support services than women who leave their abusive partner^	16–17	95	1.40 [c]	4.16 [c]	4.04 [c]	86.90	3.50 [c]	5.56 [c]	90.94
			18–24	734	2.25 [c]	3.61	8.57	84.23	1.24 [c]	5.86	92.80
	D32	It's acceptable for police to give lower priority to domestic violence cases they've attended many times before^	16–17	95	2.27 [c]	10.11 [c]	12.89 [c]	73.45	1.28 [c]	12.39 [c]	86.34
			18–24	734	3.59	7.05	15.33	71.48	2.40 [c]	10.65	86.81
	S9	Women who are sexually harassed should deal with it themselves rather than report it^	16–17	134	0.58 [c]	1.14 [c]	7.62 [c]	88.41	2.26 [c]	1.72 [c]	96.03
			18–24	977	0.71 [c]	1.70 [c]	8.42	88.10	1.08 [c]	2.41	96.51
	S19	A man is less responsible for rape if he is drunk or affected by drugs at the time^	16–17	95	12.96 [c]	4.17 [c]	**19.32 ***	63.56 *	0.00	**17.13 ***	82.87 *
			18–24	734	3.53	3.40	7.48 *	**84.65 ***	0.65 [c]	6.93 *	**92.13 ***
	V8	It's only really stalking if it's by a stranger^	16–17	134	0.62 [c]	2.96 [c]	4.57 [c]	91.20	0.00	3.59 [c]	95.77
			18–24	977	1.65 [c]	3.13	6.95	87.33	0.93 [c]	4.78	94.29
Mistrust Women	D23	Women going through custody battles often make up or exaggerate claims of domestic violence in order to improve their case^	16–17	95	3.17 [c]	22.41	43.25	18.51	12.35 [c]	25.58	61.76
			18–24	734	5.99	25.55	31.22	23.59	13.42	31.54	54.81
	D27	If a woman keeps going back to her abusive partner, then the violence can't be very serious^	16–17	95	2.69 [c]	12.85 [c]	25.77	57.53	1.17 [c]	15.54 [c]	83.29
			18–24	734	3.87	8.11	17.02	69.63	1.38 [c]	11.98	86.64
	D28	It's easy for a woman to leave an abusive relationship^	16–17	95	5.65 [c]	3.46 [c]	15.43 [c]	74.29	1.17 [c]	9.12 [c]	89.72
			18–24	734	5.76	3.89	22.93	65.64	1.78 [c]	9.65	88.58
	D29	A female victim who does not leave an abusive partner is partly responsible for the abuse continuing	16–17	207	3.48 [c]	24.43	22.75	48.07	1.28 [c]	27.90	70.82
			18–24	1,462	5.02	21.05	20.64	50.88	2.41	26.07	71.52

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Subscale	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Age	*N*	% Strongly agree	% Somewhat agree	% Somewhat disagree	% Strongly disagree	% Undecided	% Net agree[a]	% Net disagree[b]
Mistrust Women	S1	Women with mental health issues who report being sexually assaulted are probably lying~	16–17	44	0.00	7.57 [c]	24.71 [c]	65.06	0.00	7.57 [c]	89.77
			18–24	364	1.66 [c]	6.86	20.64	67.25	3.35 [c]	8.51	87.88
	S2	When lesbian or bisexual women claim to have been sexually assaulted by their partner, they probably shouldn't be taken too seriously~	16–17	44	2.49 [c]	0.00	11.30 [c]	86.21	0.00	2.49 [c]	97.51
			18–24	364	1.55 [c]	2.55 [c]	7.86	87.37	0.68 [c]	4.10 [c]	95.23
	S10	Women who wait weeks or months to report sexual harassment are probably lying	16–17	207	2.62 [c]	7.36 [c]	12.82	76.28	0.91 [c]	9.99	89.10
			18–24	1,462	0.98 [c]	4.34	16.37	75.66	2.60	5.32	92.04
	S18	Many allegations of sexual assault made by women are false~	16–17	60	4.65 [c]	14.65 [c]	23.69	57.01	0.00	19.30 [c]	80.70
			18–24	383	0.74 [c]	10.03	31.64	51.29	5.71	10.77	82.93
	S22	If a woman claims to have been sexually assaulted but has no other physical injuries, she probably shouldn't be taken too seriously	16–17	207	1.28 [c]	5.71 [c]	14.24	78.25	0.00	6.99 [c]	92.50
			18–24	1,462	0.99 [c]	3.49	9.58	84.33	1.41	4.48	93.91
	S23	It is common for sexual assault accusations to be used as a way of getting back at men	16–17	207	8.35	25.96	28.34	34.69	2.14 [c]	34.31	63.02
			18–24	1,462	7.06	25.86	24.38	36.75	5.72	32.92	61.13
	S24	A lot of times, women who say they were raped had led the man on and then had regrets	16–17	207	5.78 [c]	20.11	25.72	43.75	3.28 [c]	25.89	69.47
			18–24	1,462	3.37	15.74	24.25	47.60	8.62	19.11	71.86
	S25	Women who wait weeks or months to report sexual assault are probably lying	16–17	207	1.91 [c]	6.27 [c]	15.61	74.38	1.31 [c]	8.18	89.99
			18–24	1,462	1.04 [c]	4.06	16.42	76.18	2.04	5.09	92.60
	V3	Many women exaggerate the extent of men's violence against women^	16–17	134	5.22 [c]	23.92	30.98	35.89	3.99 [c]	29.14	66.87
			18–24	977	3.67	18.49	26.47	42.36	8.89	22.16	68.84

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Subscale	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Age	*N*	% Strongly agree	% Somewhat agree	% Somewhat disagree	% Strongly disagree	% Undecided	% Net agree[a]	% Net disagree[b]
Objectify Women	D26	Women who flirt all the time are somewhat to blame if their partner gets jealous and hits them^	16–17	95	2.68 [c]	13.43 [c]	19.23	62.99	1.67	16.11 [c]	82.22
			18–24	734	1.59 [c]	6.51	13.62	75.61	2.58	8.10	89.23
	S3	A woman should be flattered if she gets wolf-whistles or catcalls when walking past a group of men in public^	16–17	134	1.64 [c]	6.63 [c]	27.75	62.95	0.21	8.27 [c]	90.71
			18–24	977	2.60	3.59	18.28	72.38	2.91	6.20	90.66
	S4	If a woman is drunk and starts having sex with a man, but then falls asleep, it is understandable if he continues having sex with her anyway^	16–17	95	1.20 [c]	3.13 [c]	9.51 [c]	86.17	0.00	4.33 [c]	95.67
			18–24	734	0.71 [c]	3.07 [c]	7.30	87.25	1.67	3.78	94.55
	S5	Women often say “no” when they mean “yes”^	16–17	134	2.02 [c]	8.23 [c]	14.02	73.35	2.37	10.25 [c]	87.37
			18–24	977	1.91 [c]	7.52	12.10	75.51	2.89	9.43	87.61
	S6	If a woman sends a naked picture to her partner, then she is partly responsible if he shares it without her permission	16–17	207	8.02	14.20	10.45	67.33	0.00	22.22	77.78
			18–24	1,462	5.53	11.31	10.92	70.99	1.20	16.84	81.91
	S7	Since some women are so sexual in public, it’s understandable that some men think they can touch women without permission	16–17	207	2.34 [c]	8.20	6.41 [c]	81.09	1.54	10.54	87.50
			18–24	1,462	2.05	4.15	5.32	87.63	0.74	6.20	92.95
	S8	When a man is very sexually aroused, he may not even realise that the woman doesn’t want to have sex	16–17	207	11.18	25.07	11.46	46.89	4.49	36.25	58.35
			18–24	1,462	8.59	18.09	11.77	57.13	4.15	26.69	68.90

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Subscale	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Age	*N*	% Strongly agree	% Somewhat agree	% Somewhat disagree	% Strongly disagree	% Undecided	% Net agree[a]	% Net disagree[b]
Objectify Women	S11	Women find it flattering to be persistently pursued, even if they are not interested^	16–17	95	1.07 [c]	9.25 [c]	19.30	64.62	5.77	10.32 [c]	83.92
			18–24	734	1.73 [c]	9.75	19.86	65.11	2.95	11.49	84.97
	S17	If a woman doesn't physically resist – even if protesting verbally – then it isn't really rape~	16–17	60	4.73 [c]	1.79 [c]	4.35 [c]	86.51	2.62	6.52 [c]	90.86
			18–24	383	0.45 [c]	4.21 [c]	8.49	85.01	1.06	4.66 [c]	93.50
	S20	If a woman is raped while drunk or affected by drugs, she is at least partly responsible	16–17	207	1.74 [c]	6.51 [c]	12.86	77.97	0.93 [c]	8.24	90.83
			18–24	1,462	2.26	4.84	10.29	81.60	0.85 [c]	7.11	91.89
	S21	If a woman meets up with a man she met on a mobile dating app, she's partly responsible if he forces sex on her^	16–17	134	2.74 [c]	6.79 [c]	6.62 [c]	82.18	0.87 [c]	9.53 [c]	88.80
			18–24	977	1.48 [c]	3.01	6.68	88.53	0.22 [c]	4.49	95.21
	After coming home from a party, a man kisses his wife and tries to have sex with her.										
	S12	She pushes him away, but he has sex with her anyway. Do you agree or disagree that the man is justified in his behaviour? (*Married – He initiates*)~	16–17	48	3.03 [c]	1.71 [c]	0.42 [c]	94.84	0.00	4.74 [c]	95.26
			18–24	352	0.40 [c]	3.21 [c]	6.71	88.41	1.26 [c]	3.62 [c]	95.12
	S13	What if she had taken him into the bedroom and started kissing him before pushing him away? Do you agree or disagree that the man is justified in having sex with her anyway? (*Married – She initiates*)~	16–17	48	2.83 [c]	17.58 [c]	14.43 [c]	57.13	8.03 [c]	20.40 [c]	71.56 *
			18–24	352	2.52 [c]	6.51	15.98	72.39	2.60 [c]	9.03	**88.37 ***

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Subscale	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Age	*N*	% Strongly agree	% Somewhat agree	% Somewhat disagree	% Strongly disagree	% Undecided	% Net agree[a]	% Net disagree[b]
	A man and woman have just met at a party and get on well. They go back to the woman's home where he kisses her and tries to have sex with her.										
Objectify Women	S14	She pushes him away, but he has sex with her anyway. Do you agree or disagree that the man is justified in his behaviour? (*Acquaintance – He initiates*)~	16–17	39	4.81 [c]	0.00	4.50 [c]	90.68	0.00	4.81 [c]	95.19
			18–24	351	1.67 [c]	3.34 [c]	5.28 [c]	88.66	0.68 [c]	5.01 [c]	93.94
	S15	What if she had taken him into the bedroom and started kissing him before pushing him away? Do you agree or disagree that the man would have been justified in having sex with her anyway? (*Acquaintance – She initiates*)~	16–17	39	2.88 [c]	5.32 [c]	14.73 [c]	72.26	4.81 [c]	8.19 [c]	86.99
			18–24	351	3.52 [c]	8.72	13.31	72.07	2.37 [c]	12.24	85.39

Note: Numbers in bold reflect the significantly higher value in the comparison.
Percentages may not add to 100 as the "unanswered" category is not shown in the table.
a "Net agree" refers to answering "agree" either "strongly" or "somewhat".
b "Net disagree" refers to answering "disagree" either "strongly" or "somewhat".
c This result should be interpreted with caution because it has a relative standard error >25%.
* Statistically significant difference between 16- to 17-year-olds and 18- to 24-year-olds.
^ Asked of half the sample.
~ Asked of one quarter of the sample.

14 Appendix B: Item-level differences by age (between young respondents and those aged 25 years or older)

Table 14-1: Recognising domestic violence and violence against women by age, all ages (UVAWS subscale items), 2021

Subscale	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Age	*N*	% Yes, always	% Yes, usually	% Yes, sometimes	% No	% Unsure	% Strong yes[a]
	Is this a form of domestic violence?									
Recognise Domestic Violence	D1	Slaps or pushes partner to cause harm or fear	16–24	1,669	78.06	13.30	6.77	1.44	0.29 [b]	91.36
			25+	17,431	82.43	9.50	6.08	1.59	0.37	91.94
	D2	Scares or controls partner by threatening family members~	16–24	397	93.29	3.72 [b]	1.55 [b]	1.03 [b]	0.41 [b]	97.01
			25+	4,380	91.66	4.67	2.53	0.93	0.21	96.33
	D3	Repeatedly criticises to make partner feel bad or useless	16–24	1,669	58.46	20.88	14.52	5.84	0.30 [b]	79.34
			25+	17,431	67.73	16.02	10.41	4.96	0.82	83.75
	D4	Controls social life by preventing partner seeing family and friends	16–24	1,669	70.01	14.42	8.48	6.50	0.58 [b]	84.43
			25+	17,431	76.33	11.43	6.49	5.00	0.69	87.76
	D5	Controls partner by denying them money	16–24	1,669	59.22	17.71	13.30	8.65	1.02	76.93
			25+	17,431	68.15	13.99	9.92	6.75	1.13	82.14
	D6	Repeatedly keeps track of partner on electronic devices	16–24	1,669	63.37	16.73	10.82	8.21	0.87 [b]	80.10
			25+	17,431	71.92	11.64	8.07	7.16	1.10	83.57
	D7	Controls partner by refusing to assist with their disability needs	16–24	1,669	60.19	19.10	11.37	6.92	2.25	79.29
			25+	17,431	67.71	13.78	9.21	6.78	2.40	81.49
	D8	Controls partner with a disability by threatening to put them into care or a home~	16–24	421	68.87	15.56	9.97	4.74 [b]	0.86 [b]	84.43
			25+	4,335	69.33	13.32	9.29	5.72	2.18	82.65
	D9	Repeatedly threatens to deport partner on temporary visa	16–24	1,669	72.23	13.48	7.64	5.45	1.15 [b]	85.71
			25+	17,431	73.26	11.38	6.75	5.77	2.67	84.64
	D10	Forces partner to stop practising their religion~	16–24	421	68.14	14.14	10.07	5.69	1.96 [b]	82.28
			25+	4,335	66.69	13.53	9.03	7.99	2.44	80.22

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Subscale	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Age	*N*	% Yes, always	% Yes, usually	% Yes, sometimes	% No	% Unsure	% Strong yes[a]
	Is this a form of domestic violence?									
Recognise Domestic Violence	D11	Controls partner by forcing them to hide that they are trans gender	16–24	1,669	67.16	13.69	9.26	7.73	2.09	80.85
			25+	17,431	66.08	11.79	7.91	7.57	5.93	77.86
	D12	Forces partner to undergo an unnecessary medical procedure, such as contraception or abortion~	16–24	421	78.41	11.81	5.31	3.77 [b]	0.70 [b]	90.21
			25+	4,335	80.92	8.92	5.83	2.75	1.34	89.84
	Is this a form of violence against women?									
Recognise Violence against Women	V4	Stalking by repeatedly following/ watching at home/work	16–24	1,669	72.75	13.45	6.00	6.81	0.91 [b]	86.20
			25+	17,431	78.32	10.99	5.63	3.97	0.94	89.31
	V5	Harassment via repeated emails, text messages etc.	16–24	1,669	59.75 *	18.87	12.79	8.03	0.56 [b]	78.62
			25+	17,431	**69.53 ***	15.56	8.51	5.23	1.06	85.09
	V7	A man sends an unwanted picture of his genitals to a woman	16–24	1,669	61.57	14.25	13.10	10.03	1.04 [b]	75.82
			25+	17,431	69.26	11.15	8.51	8.65	2.29	80.41
	V6	Abusive messages or comments targeted at women on social media	16–24	1,669	60.31	19.86	12.60	6.63	0.55 [b]	80.18
			25+	17,431	68.76	14.79	9.50	5.65	1.14	83.55

Note: Numbers in bold reflect the significantly higher value in the comparison.
Percentages may not add to 100 as "unanswered" category is not shown in the table.
a "Strong yes" refers to answering "yes" either "always" or "usually".
b This result should be interpreted with caution because it has a relative standard error >25%.
* Statistically significant difference between 16- to 24-year olds and 25+ year-olds.
~ Asked of one quarter of the sample.

Table 14-2: Understanding of gendered nature of domestic violence by age, all ages (UVAWS subscale items), 2021

Subscale	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Age	*N*	% Women	% Both equally	% Men (correct)	% Unsure
Understand Gendered Nature of Domestic Violence	D13	Who is domestic violence mainly committed by?~	16–24	397	0.60 [a]	46.15	52.75	0.33 [a]
			25+	4,380	0.30	39.93	57.62	1.84
					% Men	**% Both equally**	**% Women (correct)**	**% Unsure**
	D14	Who is more likely to suffer physical harm from domestic violence?~	16–24	397	2.99 [a]	25.81	70.80	0.22 [a]
			25+	4,380	2.18	20.36	76.85	0.56
	D15	Who is more likely to experience fear as a result of domestic violence?~	16–24	397	1.20 [a]	**44.74 ***	53.89 *	0.00
			25+	4,380	1.23	25.39 *	**72.88 ***	0.40

Note: Numbers in bold reflect the significantly higher value in the comparison.
Percentages may not add to 100 as "unanswered" category is not shown in the table.
a This result should be interpreted with caution because it has a relative standard error >25%.
* Statistically significant difference between 16- to 24-year-olds and 25+ year-olds.
~ Asked of one quarter of the sample.

Table 14-3: Additional knowledge items by age, all ages (not part of any scale), 2021

Area of knowledge	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Age	*N*	% Strongly agree	% Somewhat agree	% Neither agree nor disagree	% Somewhat disagree	% Strongly disagree	% Unsure	% Net agree[a]	% Net disagree[b]
Knowledge of domestic violence support	D33	Would know where to get outside advice or support for someone about domestic violence~	16–24	447	23.87	**40.57 ***	0.49 [c]	26.17	8.27 *	0.46 [c]	**64.45 ***	34.44
			25+	4,656	28.35	26.16 *	0.77	25.24	**16.69 ***	2.57	54.51 *	41.93
Stranger vs. acquaintance rape	S16	Women are more likely to be raped by someone they know than by a stranger~	16–24	397	30.11	**42.74 ***	1.91 [c]	12.31	6.15	6.25	72.86	18.46
			25+	4,380	35.09	32.76 *	1.62	10.38	7.41	12.50	67.84	17.79

Note: Numbers in bold reflect the significantly higher value in the comparison.
Percentages may not add to 100 as "unanswered" category is not shown in the table.
a "Net agree" refers to answering "agree" either "strongly" or "somewhat".
b "Net disagree" refers to answering "disagree" either "strongly" or "somewhat".
c This result should be interpreted with caution because it has a relative standard error >25%.
* Statistically significant difference between 16- to 24-year-olds and 25+ year-olds.
~ Asked of one quarter of the sample.

Table 14-4: Criminal offence understanding items by age, all ages (not part of any scale), 2021

Area of knowledge	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Age	*N*	% Yes	% No	% Unsure
	To the best of your knowledge, are the following behaviours criminal offences in Australia NOW?						
Knowledge of criminal offences	S26	Is it a criminal offence for a man to have sex with his wife without her consent?~	16–24	443	83.71	10.14	6.15
			25+	4,346	78.97	11.55	9.15
	S27	Is it a criminal offence to post or share a sexual picture of an ex-partner on social media without their consent?~	16–24	443	93.16	5.11	1.73 [a]
			25+	4,346	88.37	5.86	5.66

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 as "unanswered" category is not shown in the table. There were no statistically significant differences between 16- to 24-year-olds and respondents aged 25 years or older on these items.

a This result should be interpreted with caution because it has a relative standard error >25%.

~ Asked of one quarter of the sample.

Table 14-5: Awareness of violence against women as a problem in Australia and locally by age, all ages (not part of any scale), 2021

Area of knowledge	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Age	*N*	% Strongly agree	% Somewhat agree	% Neither agree nor disagree	% Somewhat disagree	% Strongly disagree	% Unsure	% Net agree[a]	% Net disagree[b]
Violence against women is a problem	V1	Violence against women is a problem in Australia~	16–24	487	63.57	26.95	1.07 [c]	4.27	1.95 [c]	2.18 [c]	90.53	6.22
			25+	4,633	66.35	24.69	1.13	2.86	2.58	2.35	91.05	5.44
	V2	Violence against women is a problem in the suburb or town where you live~	16–24	487	16.64	**36.29 ***	6.70	18.49	8.54	13.34 *	52.93	27.03
			25+	4,633	19.33	26.91 *	5.07	16.66	8.88	**23.10 ***	46.25	25.54

Note: Numbers in bold reflect the significantly higher value in the comparison.
Percentages may not add to 100 as "unanswered" category is not shown in the table.
a "Net agree" refers to answering "agree" either "strongly" or "somewhat".
b "Net disagree" refers to answering "disagree" either "strongly" or "somewhat".
c This result should be interpreted with caution because it has a relative standard error >25%.
* Statistically significant difference between 16- to 24-year-olds and 25+ year-olds.
~ Asked of one quarter of the sample.

Table 14-6: Attitudes towards Gender Inequality Scale (AGIS) items by age, all ages, 2021

Subscale	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Age	*N*	% Strongly agree	% Somewhat agree	% Somewhat disagree	% Strongly disagree	% Undecided	% Net agree[a]	% Net disagree[b]
Deny Inequality	G1	Many women exaggerate how unequally women are treated in Australia^	16–24	840	7.53	30.34	25.79	31.81	4.18	37.87	57.60
			25+	8,726	9.79	25.23	27.06	31.44	6.14	35.02	58.50
	G2	Many women mistakenly interpret innocent remarks or acts as being sexist	16–24	1,669	7.18	29.41	32.51	25.87	4.82	36.58	58.38
			25+	17,431	7.98	33.67	28.66	21.80	7.57	41.65	50.46
	G3	Many women don't fully appreciate all that men do for them^	16–24	840	6.44	17.00	32.04	38.31	6.03	23.44	70.35
			25+	8,726	7.72	23.22	26.20	35.81	6.65	30.95	62.01
Limit Autonomy	G12	Men should take control in relationships and be the head of the household	16–24	1,669	2.88	9.87	18.35	65.69	3.09	12.75	84.04
			25+	17,431	3.14	7.43	16.41	70.56	2.30	10.57	86.98
	G13	Women prefer a man to be in charge of the relationship	16–24	1,669	2.89	**23.85 ***	28.04	38.29 *	6.74	**26.74 ***	66.32
			25+	17,431	2.61	15.61 *	25.76	**49.22 ***	6.52	18.22 *	74.99
Normalise Sexism	G10	Discrimination against women is no longer a problem in the workplace in Australia~	16–24	551	1.16 [c]	6.48	27.40	63.61	1.35 [c]	7.64	91.01
			25+	5,941	2.51	4.77	23.27	66.39	2.94	7.28	89.66
	G16	I think there's no harm in men making sexist jokes about women when they are among their male friends~	16–24	551	1.83 [c]	10.00	23.70	61.26	2.91 [c]	11.84	84.96
			25+	5,941	3.29	12.10	24.63	56.39	3.39	15.40	81.02
	G17	I think it's OK for men to joke with their male friends about being violent towards women~	16–24	825	0.41 [c]	2.74 [c]	7.93	88.33 *	0.44 [c]	3.16	96.26
			25+	9,090	0.49	1.09	3.87	**93.84 ***	0.63	1.58	97.71

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Subscale	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Age	*N*	% Strongly agree	% Somewhat agree	% Somewhat disagree	% Strongly disagree	% Undecided	% Net agree[a]	% Net disagree[b]
Reinforce Gender Roles	G7	I think it is embarrassing for a man to have a job that is usually held by a woman	16–24	1,669	1.05 [c]	2.57	11.08	84.00	1.19	3.62	95.08
			25+	17,431	1.16	3.25	14.71	79.19	1.56	4.41	93.89
	G8	A man should never admit when others have hurt his feelings	16–24	1,669	0.93 [c]	3.21	10.70	84.05	0.89 [c]	4.14	94.76
			25+	17,431	1.48	3.45	15.90	77.35	1.68	4.93	93.25
	G9	Women need to have children to be fulfilled^	16–24	840	1.06 [c]	2.64	13.72	**80.78 ***	1.71 [c]	3.69	**94.50 ***
			25+	8,726	2.91	5.00	16.15	71.91 *	3.72	7.91	88.06 *
	G14	If a woman earns more than her male partner, it is not good for the relationship^	16–24	840	1.20 [c]	2.76	15.08	79.99	0.89 [c]	3.96	95.07
			25+	8,726	1.71	5.47	18.50	71.17	2.97	7.17	89.67
	G15	When a couple start dating, the woman should not be the one to initiate sex^	16–24	840	1.43 [c]	3.93	24.82	60.11	8.96	5.36	84.92
			25+	8,726	2.49	4.04	25.45	58.72	8.35	6.53	84.18
Undermine Leadership	G4	On the whole, men make better political leaders than women	16–24	1,669	2.18	6.90	18.87	65.67	6.09	9.08	84.53
			25+	17,431	3.04	5.97	17.72	67.94	4.87	9.01	85.66
	G5	In the workplace, men generally make more capable bosses than women^	16–24	840	2.34 [c]	6.66	20.87	65.47	4.37	9.00	86.34
			25+	8,726	3.28	7.28	19.20	65.43	4.39	10.56	84.63
	G6	Men, rather than women, should hold positions of responsibility in the community^	16–24	840	4.57	6.54	18.61	66.42	3.50	11.11	85.03
			25+	8,726	3.45	4.02	16.38	72.66	3.24	7.47	89.04
	G11	Women are less capable than men of thinking logically	16–24	1,669	1.52	4.35	8.00	84.24	1.67	5.87	92.24
			25+	17,431	1.47	3.77	9.84	83.30	1.43	5.24	93.14

Note: Numbers in bold reflect the significantly higher value in the comparison.
Percentages may not add to 100 as "unanswered" category is not shown in the table.
a "Net agree" refers to answering "agree" either "strongly" or "somewhat".
b "Net disagree" refers to answering "disagree" either "strongly" or "somewhat".
c This result should be interpreted with caution because it has a relative standard error >25%.
* Statistically significant difference between 16- to 24-year-olds and 25+ year-olds.
~ Asked of one quarter of the sample.
^ Asked of half the sample.

Table 14-7: Attitudes towards Violence against Women Scale (AVAWS) items by age, all ages, 2021

Subscale	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Age	*N*	% Strongly agree	% Somewhat agree	% Somewhat disagree	% Strongly disagree	% Undecided	% Net agree[a]	% Net disagree[b]
Minimise Violence	D16	Domestic violence is a private matter that should be handled in the family^	16–24	829	3.42	12.04	**27.18 ***	55.00 *	2.36 [c]	15.46	82.17
			25+	8,705	3.86	7.39	16.19 *	71.11 *	1.40	11.26	87.29
	D17	A lot of what is called domestic violence is really just a normal reaction to day-to-day stress and frustration	16–24	1,669	3.82	14.63	22.73	56.40	2.38	18.45	79.14
			25+	17,431	6.31	17.86	18.80	54.04	2.93	24.17	72.83
	D18	Domestic violence can be excused if it results from people getting so angry that they temporarily lose control	16–24	1,669	4.64	8.83	13.39	72.05	1.03	13.47	85.44
			25+	17,431	6.98	7.84	7.98	76.07	1.01	14.82	84.05
	D19	Domestic violence can be excused if, afterwards, the violent person genuinely regrets what they have done	16–24	1,669	3.46	12.56	**27.53 ***	54.22 *	2.22	16.02	81.75
			25+	17,431	4.06	8.72	12.77 *	**72.72 ***	1.63	12.78	85.49
	D20	Domestic violence can be excused if the offender is heavily affected by alcohol	16–24	1,669	2.71	3.30	**10.01 ***	83.66	0.33 [c]	6.00	93.67
			25+	17,431	3.68	2.08	5.06 *	88.65	0.50	5.76	93.71
	D21	Domestic violence can be excused if the victim is heavily affected by alcohol	16–24	1,669	1.97	4.80	12.51	79.57	1.15 [c]	6.77	92.08
			25+	17,431	3.21	2.78	8.90	83.71	1.35	5.99	92.60
	D22	Domestic violence can be excused if the violent person was themselves abused as a child	16–24	1,669	2.88	5.67	**21.09 ***	68.67	1.65	8.56	89.75
			25+	17,431	2.96	4.70	13.72 *	76.71	1.82	7.66	90.43
	D24	It's a woman's duty to stay in a violent relationship to keep the family together^	16–24	829	2.76	2.51 [c]	6.32	88.03	0.39 [c]	5.27	94.35
			25+	8,705	1.87	2.63	4.46	90.42	0.60	4.50	94.87

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Subscale	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Age	*N*	% Strongly agree	% Somewhat agree	% Somewhat disagree	% Strongly disagree	% Undecided	% Net agree[a]	% Net disagree[b]
Minimise Violence	D25	Sometimes a woman can make a man so angry that he hits her when he didn't mean to^	16–24	829	3.53	12.67	12.28	67.83	3.33	16.20	80.12
			25+	8,705	4.50	14.77	8.16	69.45	2.77	19.27	77.61
	D30	Women should keep quiet about domestic violence to protect their family's reputation	16–24	1,669	1.07 [c]	1.55	4.91	92.26	0.20 [c]	2.62	97.17
			25+	17,431	0.83	1.23	4.74	92.69	0.46	2.06	97.44
	D31	Women who stay in abusive relationships deserve less help from counselling and support services than women who leave their abusive partner^	16–24	829	2.10 [c]	3.71	7.77	84.70	1.64 [c]	5.81	92.47
			25+	8,705	2.90	3.39	7.22	84.01	2.34	6.28	91.23
	D32	It's acceptable for police to give lower priority to domestic violence cases they've attended many times before^	16–24	829	3.36	7.60	14.89	71.83	2.20 [c]	10.95	86.73
			25+	8,705	4.12	4.83	10.63	78.20	2.09	8.95	88.83
	S9	Women who are sexually harassed should deal with it themselves rather than report it^	16–24	1,111	0.69 [c]	1.59 [c]	8.26	88.15	1.30 [c]	2.28	96.42
			25+	11,856	2.24	3.23	8.72	84.11	1.55	5.47	92.83
	S19	A man is less responsible for rape if he is drunk or affected by drugs at the time^	16–24	829	5.20	3.54	**9.58 ***	80.91 *	0.54 [c]	8.74	90.49
			25+	8,705	3.05	2.13	4.24 *	**89.72 ***	0.56	5.18	93.96
	V8	It's only really stalking if it's by a stranger^	16–24	1,111	1.45 [c]	3.10	6.49	88.08	0.75 [c]	4.55	94.57
			25+	11,856	1.71	1.92	6.77	87.98	1.50	3.63	94.75
Mistrust Women	D23	Women going through custody battles often make up or exaggerate claims of domestic violence in order to improve their case^	16–24	829	5.49	25.00	**33.35 ***	22.69	13.23	30.49	**56.04 ***
			25+	8,705	10.03	28.32	24.06 *	21.68	15.43	38.35	45.73 *
	D27	If a woman keeps going back to her abusive partner then the violence can't be very serious^	16–24	829	3.66	8.95	18.57	67.48	1.34 [c]	12.61	86.05
			25+	8,705	3.92	4.82	15.18	73.22	2.66	8.75	88.40

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Subscale	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Age	*N*	% Strongly agree	% Somewhat agree	% Somewhat disagree	% Strongly disagree	% Undecided	% Net agree[a]	% Net disagree[b]
Mistrust Women	D28	It's easy for a woman to leave an abusive relationship^	16–24	829	5.74	3.82	21.60	67.17	1.67 [c]	9.55	88.78
			25+	8,705	5.03	4.49	19.88	68.24	2.29	9.52	88.12
	D29	A female victim who does not leave an abusive partner is partly responsible for the abuse continuing	16–24	1,669	4.72	21.71	21.05	50.33	2.19	26.43	71.38
			25+	17,431	7.90	17.06	14.94	57.21	2.71	24.96	72.16
	S1	Women with mental health issues who report being sexually assaulted are probably lying~	16–24	408	1.37 [c]	6.98	21.34	66.87	2.77 [c]	8.35	88.21
			25+	4,370	1.81	3.91	21.64	64.52	7.62	5.72	86.16
	S2	When lesbian or bisexual women claim to have been sexually assaulted by their partner, they probably shouldn't be taken too seriously~	16–24	408	1.71 [c]	2.11 [c]	8.46	87.17	0.56 [c]	3.82 [c]	95.62
			25+	4,370	1.33	1.51	8.84	83.64	3.97	2.84	92.48
	S10	Women who wait weeks or months to report sexual harassment are probably lying	16–24	1,669	1.30 [c]	4.93	15.68	75.78	2.27	6.23	91.46
			25+	17,431	2.22	4.50	15.62	74.17	3.27	6.72	89.79
	S18	Many allegations of sexual assault made by women are false~	16–24	443	1.58 [c]	11.02	29.93	52.52	4.48	12.60	82.45
			25+	4,346	3.14	10.63	24.31	52.59	8.54	13.77	76.90
	S22	If a woman claims to have been sexually assaulted but has no other physical injuries she probably shouldn't be taken too seriously	16–24	1,669	1.05 [c]	3.92	10.49	83.14	1.13	4.97	93.63
			25+	17,431	1.54	2.95	10.51	82.77	1.94	4.49	93.28
	S23	It is common for sexual assault accusations to be used as a way of getting back at men	16–24	1,669	7.31	25.88	25.16	36.34	5.02	33.19	61.50
			25+	17,431	7.73	26.82	22.18	33.95	8.80	34.55	56.13
	S24	A lot of times, women who say they were raped had led the man on and then had regrets	16–24	1,669	3.85	16.59	24.54	46.85	7.57	20.44	71.39
			25+	17,431	5.03	19.10	21.59	43.87	9.69	24.13	65.46

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Subscale	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Age	*N*	% Strongly agree	% Somewhat agree	% Somewhat disagree	% Strongly disagree	% Undecided	% Net agree[a]	% Net disagree[b]
Mistrust Women	S25	Women who wait weeks or months to report sexual assault are probably lying	16–24	1,669	1.21 [c]	4.49	16.26	75.83	1.89	5.70	92.09
			25+	17,431	2.52	4.85	17.06	72.33	2.83	7.37	89.39
	V3	Many women exaggerate the extent of men's violence against women^	16–24	1,111	3.97	19.53	27.34	41.12	7.95	23.51	68.46
			25+	11,856	5.58	17.57	24.29	42.31	10.01	23.15	66.60
Objectify Women	D26	Women who flirt all the time are somewhat to blame if their partner gets jealous and hits them^	16–24	829	1.78 [c]	7.74	14.62	73.37	2.42 [c]	9.52	87.99
			25+	8,705	3.59	7.40	11.81	74.80	2.23	10.99	86.60
	S3	A woman should be flattered if she gets wolf-whistles or cat-calls when walking past a group of men in public^	16–24	1,111	2.42	4.18 *	20.10	**70.57 ***	2.39	6.60 *	**90.67 ***
			25+	11,856	2.88	**10.99 ***	26.29	53.99 *	5.57	**13.87 ***	80.29 *
	S4	If a woman is drunk and starts having sex with a man, but then falls asleep, it is understandable if he continues having sex with her anyway^	16–24	829	0.80 [c]	3.08	7.69	**87.06 ***	1.37 [c]	3.88	**94.75 ***
			25+	8,705	1.55	5.21	9.16	78.66 *	4.82	6.77	87.82 *
	S5	Women often say "no" when they mean "yes"^	16–24	1,111	1.93	7.66	12.47	75.09	2.79	9.59	87.56
			25+	11,856	2.55	7.86	10.37	75.00	3.88	10.41	85.38
	S6	If a woman sends a naked picture to her partner, then she is partly responsible if he shares it without her permission	16–24	1,669	6.02	11.88	10.83	70.28	0.97 [c]	17.89	81.10
			25+	17,431	9.76	11.76	9.34	66.84	2.05	21.52	76.18
	S7	Since some women are so sexual in public, it's understandable that some men think they can touch women without permission	16–24	1,669	2.11	4.94	5.54	86.35	0.90 [c]	7.05	91.88
			25+	17,431	3.87	6.56	6.43	81.59	1.38	10.43	88.02

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Subscale	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Age	*N*	% Strongly agree	% Somewhat agree	% Somewhat disagree	% Strongly disagree	% Undecided	% Net agree[a]	% Net disagree[b]
Objectify Women	S8	When a man is very sexually aroused, he may not even realise that the woman doesn't want to have sex	16–24	1,669	9.10	19.46	11.71	55.12	4.22	28.56	66.83
			25+	17,431	10.22	14.05	8.59	60.96	5.77	24.28	69.55
	S11	Women find it flattering to be persistently pursued, even if they are not interested^	16–24	829	1.62 [c]	9.67	19.76	65.02	3.45	11.28	84.78
			25+	8,705	2.67	10.88	21.29	59.09	5.79	13.55	80.38
	S17	If a woman doesn't physically resist – even if protesting verbally – then it isn't really rape~	16–24	443	1.37 [c]	3.69 [c]	7.60	85.33	1.40 [c]	5.06	92.93
			25+	4,346	3.81	2.81	7.72	82.59	2.51	6.63	90.31
	S20	If a woman is raped while drunk or affected by drugs she is at least partly responsible	16–24	1,669	2.16	5.17	10.80	80.89	0.86 [c]	7.33	91.68
			25+	17,431	3.36	7.51	7.95	79.69	1.18	10.86	87.64
	S21	If a woman meets up with a man she met on a mobile dating app, she's partly responsible if he forces sex on her^	16–24	1,111	1.72 [c]	3.74	6.67	87.31	0.35 [c]	5.46	93.98
			25+	11,856	2.73	4.33	5.88	85.55	1.26	7.06	91.42
	After coming home from a party, a man kisses his wife and tries to have sex with her. She pushes him away, but he has sex with her anyway.										
	S12	Do you agree or disagree that the man is justified? (*Married – He initiates*)~	16–24	400	0.89 [c]	2.94 [c]	5.55	89.60	1.03 [c]	3.82 [c]	95.15
			25+	4,240	1.14	2.15	9.54	84.24	2.60	3.29	93.78
	S13	What if she had taken him into the bedroom and started kissing him before pushing him away? Do you agree or disagree that the man justified in having sex with her anyway? (*Married – She initiates*)~	16–24	400	2.58 [c]	8.55	15.69	69.58	3.60 [c]	11.13	85.27
			25+	4,240	2.29	8.46	19.05	64.09	5.52	10.75	83.15

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Subscale	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Age	*N*	% Strongly agree	% Somewhat agree	% Somewhat disagree	% Strongly disagree	% Undecided	% Net agree[a]	% Net disagree[b]
	A man and woman have just met at a party and get on well. They go back to the woman's home where he kisses her and tries to have sex with her.										
Objectify Women	S14	She pushes him away, but he has sex with her anyway. Do you agree or disagree that the man is justified in his behaviour? (*Acquaintance – He initiates*)~	16–24	390	2.20 [c]	2.78 [c]	5.15	89.00	0.57 [c]	4.98 [c]	94.15
			25+	4,271	1.05	1.46	4.84	91.36	1.18	2.51	96.20
	S15	What if she had taken him into the bedroom and started kissing him before pushing him away? Do you agree or disagree that the man would have been justified in having sex with her anyway? (*Acquaintance – She initiates*)~	16–24	390	3.41 [c]	8.15	13.55	72.10	2.78 [c]	11.56	85.66
			25+	4,271	2.51	4.91	14.76	74.10	3.37	7.41	88.86

Note: Numbers in bold reflect the significantly higher value in the comparison.
Percentages may not add to 100 as "unanswered" category is not shown in the table.
a "Net agree" refers to answering "agree" either "strongly" or "somewhat".
b "Net disagree" refers to answering "disagree" either "strongly" or "somewhat".
c This result should be interpreted with caution because it has a relative standard error >25%.
* Statistically significant difference between 16- to 24-year-olds and 25+ year-olds.
~ Asked of one quarter of the sample.
^ Asked of half the sample.

15 Appendix C: Item-level differences by gender

The following tables present data for young men and young women. Comparisons involving young non-binary respondents were not conducted at the item level due to small numbers on some items.

Table 15-1: Recognising domestic violence and violence against women by gender, young men and women (UVAWS subscale items), 2021

Subscale	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Gender	*N*	% Yes, always	% Yes, usually	% Yes, sometimes	% No	% Unsure	% Strong yes[a]
	Is this a form of domestic violence?									
Recognise Domestic Violence	D1	Slaps or pushes partner to cause harm or fear	Young men	913	76.37	14.13	7.43	1.47 [b]	0.34 [b]	90.50
			Young women	715	80.03	12.35	5.90	1.48 [b]	0.24 [b]	92.39
	D2	Scares or controls partner by threatening family members~	Young men	213	94.04	3.69 [b]	0.81 [b]	0.68 [b]	0.78 [b]	97.73
			Young women	173	92.38	4.02 [b]	2.57 [b]	1.02 [b]	0.00	96.40
	D3	Repeatedly criticises to make partner feel bad or useless	Young men	913	52.53 *	22.51	16.79	7.71	0.46 [b]	75.04 *
			Young women	715	**65.31 ***	19.32	12.17	3.08	0.11 [b]	**84.63 ***
	D4	Controls social life by preventing partner seeing family and friends	Young men	913	64.40 *	15.43	**10.83 ***	8.64	0.70 [b]	79.83 *
			Young women	715	**77.46 ***	13.22	5.12 *	3.73	0.47 [b]	**90.68 ***
	D5	Controls partner by denying them money	Young men	913	52.41 *	20.64	13.59	**11.91 ***	1.27 [b]	73.05 *
			Young women	715	**67.52 ***	14.19	13.14	4.58 *	0.57 [b]	**81.71 ***
	D6	Repeatedly keeps track of partner on electronic devices	Young men	913	56.86 *	17.62	12.35	**11.77 ***	1.39 [b]	74.48 *
			Young women	715	**71.61 ***	15.46	8.81	3.88 *	0.25 [b]	**87.06 ***
	D7	Controls partner by refusing to assist with their disability needs	Young men	913	55.15 *	20.04	12.17	**9.52 ***	2.90	75.19 *
			Young women	715	**66.03 ***	17.92	10.53	3.99 *	1.53 [b]	**83.95 ***
	D8	Controls partner with a disability by threatening to put them into care or a home~	Young men	225	66.56	18.72	9.11	3.98 [b]	1.63 [b]	85.28
			Young women	184	70.73	12.81	11.61	4.85 [b]	0.00	83.54
	D9	Repeatedly threatens to deport partner on temporary visa	Young men	913	69.96	13.72	8.64	6.54	1.06 [b]	83.68
			Young women	715	74.60	13.62	6.79	3.83	1.17 [b]	88.22

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Subscale	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Gender	*N*	% Yes, always	% Yes, usually	% Yes, sometimes	% No	% Unsure	% Strong yes[a]
	Is this a form of domestic violence?									
Recognise Domestic Violence	D10	Forces partner to stop practising their religion~	Young men	225	63.63	15.92	12.41	5.13 [b]	2.91 [b]	79.55
			Young women	184	73.37	12.51	7.55 [b]	5.62 [b]	0.95 [b]	85.88
	D11	Controls partner by forcing them to hide that they are trans gender	Young men	913	61.54 *	14.40	10.52	**10.26 ***	3.18	75.94 *
			Young women	715	**74.19 ***	12.67	7.90	4.42 *	0.82 [b]	**86.86 ***
	D12	Forces partner to undergo an unnecessary medical procedure, such as contraception or abortion~	Young men	225	73.29	15.38	6.75 [b]	3.66 [b]	0.91 [b]	88.68
			Young women	184	84.19	8.32 [b]	3.94 [b]	3.05 [b]	0.50 [b]	92.51
	Is this a form of violence against women?									
Recognise Violence against Women	V4	Stalking by repeatedly following/ watching at home/work	Young men	913	69.95	14.30	5.56	**9.14 ***	0.90 [b]	84.26
			Young women	715	76.40	12.37	6.70	3.57 *	0.96 [b]	88.77
	V5	Harassment via repeated emails, text messages etc.	Young men	913	54.08 *	19.36	14.69	**11.50 ***	0.36 [b]	73.44 *
			Young women	715	**66.77 ***	18.16	10.47	3.77 *	0.83 [b]	**84.93 ***
	V6	Abusive messages or comments targeted at women on social media	Young men	913	53.85 *	20.71	14.83	**9.87 ***	0.67 [b]	74.57 *
			Young women	715	**67.53 ***	19.08	10.37	2.59 * [b]	0.43 [b]	**86.61 ***
	V7	A man sends an unwanted picture of his genitals to a woman	Young men	913	59.44	12.83	13.95	12.62	1.16 [b]	72.27
			Young women	715	64.68	15.14	12.34	6.88	0.95 [b]	79.82

Note: Numbers in bold reflect the significantly higher value in the comparison.
Percentages may not add to 100 as the "unanswered" category is not shown in the table.
a "Strong yes" refers to answering "yes" either "always" or "usually".
b This result should be interpreted with caution because it has a relative standard error >25%.
* Statistically significant difference between young men and young women.
~ Asked of one quarter of the sample.

Table 15-2: Understanding of gendered nature of domestic violence by gender, young men and women (UVAWS subscale items), 2021

Subscale	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Gender	*N*	% Women	% Both equally	% Men (correct)	% Unsure
Understand Gendered Nature of Domestic Violence	D13	Who is domestic violence mainly committed by?~	Young men	213	1.12 [a]	50.31	47.91	0.32 [a]
			Young women	173	0.00	40.06	59.58	0.36 [a]
					% Men	**% Both equally**	**% Women (correct)**	**% Unsure**
	D14	Who is more likely to suffer physical harm from domestic violence?~	Young men	213	3.64 [a]	23.38	72.24	0.41 [a]
			Young women	173	2.42 [a]	25.95	71.63	0.00
	D15	Who is more likely to experience fear as a result of domestic violence?~	Young men	213	0.33 [a]	45.18	54.16	0.00
			Young women	173	2.35 [a]	42.53	55.12	0.00

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 as the "unanswered" category is not shown in the table.
a This result should be interpreted with caution because it has a relative standard error >25%.
~ Asked of one quarter of the sample.

Table 15-3: Additional knowledge items by gender, young men and women (not part of any scale), 2021

Area of knowledge	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Gender	*N*	% Strongly agree	% Somewhat agree	% Neither agree nor disagree	% Somewhat disagree	% Strongly disagree	% Unsure	% Net agree[a]	% Net disagree[b]
Knowledge of domestic violence support	D33	Would know where to get outside advice or support for someone about domestic violence~	Young men	251	21.88	37.73	0.28 [c]	29.35	9.65	0.82 [c]	59.61	39.00
			Young women	190	26.64	44.84	0.78 [c]	21.73	6.01 [c]	0.00	71.48	27.75
Stranger vs. acquaintance rape	S16	Women are more likely to be raped by someone they know than by a stranger~	Young men	213	25.98	39.68	2.74 [c]	15.31	5.69 [c]	9.62	65.66 *	21.00
			Young women	173	36.96	45.93	1.04 [c]	7.47 [c]	5.98 [c]	2.62 [c]	**82.89 ***	13.45

Note: Numbers in bold reflect the significantly higher value in the comparison.
Percentages may not add to 100 as the "unanswered" category is not shown in the table.
a "Net agree" refers to answering "agree" either "strongly" or "somewhat".
b "Net disagree" refers to answering "disagree" either "strongly" or "somewhat".
c This result should be interpreted with caution because it has a relative standard error >25%.
~ Asked of one quarter of the sample.

Table 15-4: Criminal offence understanding items by gender, young men and women (not part of any scale), 2021

Area of knowledge	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Gender	*N*	% Yes	% No	% Unsure
	To the best of your knowledge, are the following behaviours criminal offences in Australia NOW?						
Knowledge of criminal offences	S26	Is it a criminal offence for a man to have sex with his wife without her consent?~	Young men	244	85.59	8.67	5.74 [a]
			Young women	187	81.97	11.50	6.53 [a]
	S27	Is it a criminal offence to post or share a sexual picture of an ex-partner on social media without their consent?~	Young men	244	90.83	6.32 [a]	2.85 [a]
			Young women	187	96.25	3.75 [a]	0.00

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 as the "unanswered" category is not shown in the table. There were no statistically significant differences between young men and women on these items.

a This result should be interpreted with caution because it has a relative standard error >25%.

~ Asked of one quarter of the sample.

Table 15-5: Awareness of violence against women as a problem in Australia and locally by gender, young men and women (not part of any scale), 2021

Area of knowledge	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Gender	*N*	% Strongly agree	% Somewhat agree	% Neither agree nor disagree	% Somewhat disagree	% Strongly disagree	% Unsure	% Net agree[a]	% Net disagree[b]
Violence against women is a problem	V1	Violence against women is a problem in Australia~	Young men	268	55.24 *	**33.79 ***	1.00 [c]	5.55 [c]	1.24 [c]	3.18 [c]	89.03	6.80 [c]
			Young women	206	**74.35 ***	18.13 *	1.22 [c]	2.78 [c]	2.98 [c]	0.54 [c]	92.48	5.76 [c]
	V2	Violence against women is a problem in the suburb or town where you live~	Young men	268	12.95	31.43	6.54 [c]	21.01	10.39	17.69	44.39 *	31.39
			Young women	206	21.97	42.18	7.03 [c]	15.74	5.24 [c]	7.84	**64.15 ***	20.98

Note: Numbers in bold reflect the significantly higher value in the comparison.
Percentages may not add to 100 as the "unanswered" category is not shown in the table.
a "Net agree" refers to answering "agree" either "strongly" or "somewhat".
b "Net disagree" refers to answering "disagree" either "strongly" or "somewhat".
c This result should be interpreted with caution because it has a relative standard error >25%.
* Statistically significant difference between young men and young women.
~ Asked of one quarter of the sample.

Table 15-6: Attitudes towards Gender Inequality Scale (AGIS) items by gender, young men and women, 2021

Subscale	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Gender	*N*	% Strongly agree	% Somewhat agree	% Somewhat disagree	% Strongly disagree	% Undecided	% Net agree[a]	% Net disagree[b]
Deny Gender Inequality	G1	Many women exaggerate how unequally women are treated in Australia^	Young men	457	**10.16 ***	**37.65 ***	25.71	19.34 *	**6.50 ***	**47.81 ***	45.04 *
			Young women	360	4.47 *	20.96 *	26.63	**46.72 ***	1.23 *[c]	25.42 *	**73.35 ***
	G2	Many women mistakenly interpret innocent remarks or acts as being sexist	Young men	913	**9.99 ***	**35.60 ***	32.68	15.48 *	6.07	**45.59 ***	48.16 *
			Young women	715	3.43 *	22.08 *	32.29	**38.65 ***	3.27	25.51 *	**70.95 ***
	G3	Many women don't fully appreciate all that men do for them^	Young men	457	**9.01 ***	**22.15 ***	33.85	26.17 *	**8.49 ***	**31.16 ***	60.03 *
			Young women	360	2.97 *[c]	10.87 *	30.29	**52.99 ***	2.87 *[c]	13.85 *	**83.28 ***
Limit Autonomy	G12	Men should take control in relationships and be the head of the household	Young men	913	4.28	**13.30 ***	**23.96** *	53.76 *	4.62	**17.58 ***	77.71 *
			Young women	715	0.97 [c]	5.76 *	11.18 *	**80.61 ***	1.32 [c]	6.73 *	**91.78 ***
	G13	Women prefer a man to be in charge of the relationship	Young men	913	3.78	**30.16 ***	27.16	28.66 *	**10.01 ***	**33.94 ***	55.82 *
			Young women	715	1.34 [c]	16.45 *	29.38	**49.93 ***	2.73 *	17.79 *	**79.31 ***
Normalise Sexism	G10	Discrimination against women is no longer a problem in the workplace in Australia~	Young men	299	1.73 [c]	8.15	**35.47 ***	52.80 *	1.85 [c]	9.88	88.27
			Young women	235	0.51 [c]	4.85 [c]	17.47 *	**76.35 ***	0.82 [c]	5.36 [c]	93.82

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Subscale	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Gender	*N*	% Strongly agree	% Somewhat agree	% Somewhat disagree	% Strongly disagree	% Undecided	% Net agree[a]	% Net disagree[b]
Normalise Sexism	G16	I think there's no harm in men making sexist jokes about women when they are among their male friends~	Young men	299	3.39 [c]	14.98 *	**33.01 ***	43.45 *	4.61 [c]	18.37 *	76.46 *
			Young women	235	0.00	4.43 *[c]	13.40 *	**81.21 ***	0.96 [c]	**4.43 *[c]**	94.61 *
	G17	I think it's OK for men to joke with their male friends about being violent towards women~	Young men	441	0.39 [c]	4.31 [c]	**11.55 ***	82.94 *	0.81 [c]	4.69 [c]	94.49
			Young women	363	0.47 [c]	0.99 [c]	3.62 *[c]	**94.59 ***	0.00	1.46 [c]	98.20
Reinforce Gender Roles	G7	I think it is embarrassing for a man to have a job that is usually held by a woman	Young men	913	0.90 [c]	3.40	**16.04 ***	77.72 *	1.86	4.30	93.77
			Young women	715	1.31 [c]	1.56 [c]	4.68 *	**91.96 ***	0.32 [c]	2.87 [c]	96.65
	G8	A man should never admit when others have hurt his feelings	Young men	913	1.38 [c]	4.61	**15.46 ***	77.29 *	1.11 [c]	5.99	92.75
			Young women	715	0.41 [c]	1.61 [c]	5.15 *	**92.01 ***	0.65 [c]	2.02 [c]	97.16
	G9	Women need to have children to be fulfilled^	Young men	457	1.67 [c]	**4.62 ***	**18.86 ***	72.01 *	2.84 [c]	**6.29 ***	90.87 *
			Young women	360	0.34 [c]	0.26 *[c]	7.00 *	**91.80 ***	0.36 [c]	0.60 *[c]	**98.80 ***
	G14	If a woman earns more than her male partner, it is not good for the relationship^	Young men	457	1.82 [c]	3.98 [c]	**19.14 ***	73.42 *	1.49 [c]	5.80	92.56 *
			Young women	360	0.50 [c]	1.37 [c]	9.83 *	**88.14 ***	0.17 [c]	1.86 [c]	**97.96 ***

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Subscale	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Gender	*N*	% Strongly agree	% Somewhat agree	% Somewhat disagree	% Strongly disagree	% Undecided	% Net agree[a]	% Net disagree[b]
Reinforce Gender Roles	G15	When a couple start dating, the woman should not be the one to initiate sex^	Young men	457	1.88 [c]	3.22 [c]	**29.80 ***	52.06 *	**11.67 ***	5.09	81.85
			Young women	360	0.96 [c]	5.08 [c]	18.27 *	**69.98 ***	5.71 *	6.04	88.25
Undermine Leadership	G4	On the whole, men make better political leaders than women	Young men	913	3.42	**9.59 ***	22.14	55.45 *	**8.87 ***	**13.01 ***	77.59 *
			Young women	715	0.73 [c]	3.76 *	15.01	**77.97 ***	2.52 *	4.49 *	**92.99 ***
	G5	In the workplace, men generally make more capable bosses than women^	Young men	457	3.75 [c]	**9.12 ***	**24.99 ***	54.46 *	**7.15 ***	**12.86 ***	79.45 *
			Young women	360	0.69 [c]	3.93 * [c]	15.51 *	**78.78 ***	1.09 * [c]	4.61 * [c]	**94.29 ***
	G6	Men, rather than women, should hold positions of responsibility in the community^	Young men	457	4.65	8.43	**22.20 ***	58.14 *	**5.95 ***	13.07	80.33 *
			Young women	360	4.75 [c]	4.38 [c]	13.87 *	**76.40 ***	0.59 * [c]	9.14	**90.28 ***
	G11	Women are less capable than men of thinking logically	Young men	913	2.05	4.99	**10.49 ***	79.52 *	2.68	7.04	90.01
			Young women	715	0.94 [c]	3.60 [c]	4.76 *	**90.06 ***	0.47 [c]	4.53	94.83

Note: Numbers in bold reflect the significantly higher value in the comparison.
Percentages may not add to 100 as the "unanswered" category is not shown in the table.
a "Net agree" refers to answering "agree" either "strongly" or "somewhat".
b "Net disagree" refers to answering "disagree" either "strongly" or "somewhat".
c This result should be interpreted with caution because it has a relative standard error >25%.
* Statistically significant difference between young men and young women.
^ Asked of half the sample.
~ Asked of one quarter of the sample.

Table 15-7: Attitudes towards Violence against Women Scale (AVAWS) items by gender, young men and women, 2021

Subscale	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Age	*N*	% Strongly agree	% Somewhat agree	% Somewhat disagree	% Strongly disagree	% Undecided	% Net agree[a]	% Net disagree[b]
Minimise Violence	D16	Domestic violence is a private matter that should be handled in the family^	Young men	456	3.52 [c]	13.21	30.56	49.93	2.78 [c]	16.73	80.49
			Young women	355	3.45 [c]	10.36	23.07	61.17	1.95 [c]	13.81	84.25
	D17	A lot of what is called domestic violence is really just a normal reaction to day-to-day stress and frustration	Young men	913	3.95	17.35	25.26	49.85 *	3.51	21.30	75.12 *
			Young women	715	3.57	10.99	19.76	**64.79 ***	0.88 [c]	14.57	**84.55 ***
	D18	Domestic violence can be excused if it results from people getting so angry that they temporarily lose control	Young men	913	4.80	10.73	13.75	69.65	1.08 [c]	15.53	83.40
			Young women	715	4.39	6.50	12.29	75.72	0.95 [c]	10.90	88.02
	D19	Domestic violence can be excused if, afterwards, the violent person genuinely regrets what they have done	Young men	913	4.49	**15.58 ***	27.63	49.24 *	3.06	**20.08 ***	76.86 *
			Young women	715	2.34 [c]	8.06 *	26.78	**61.54 ***	1.28 [c]	10.40 *	**88.32 ***
	D20	Domestic violence can be excused if the offender is heavily affected by alcohol	Young men	913	2.62	2.85	11.34	82.60	0.60 [c]	5.46	93.94
			Young women	715	2.97	4.05	7.89	85.08	0.00	7.02	92.98
	D21	Domestic violence can be excused if the victim is heavily affected by alcohol	Young men	913	2.24 [c]	4.85	14.68	76.66	1.55 [c]	7.10	91.35
			Young women	715	1.73 [c]	5.00	9.47	83.11	0.69 [c]	6.73	92.58
	D22	Domestic violence can be excused if the violent person was themselves abused as a child	Young men	913	2.61	6.40	23.62	65.36	2.02	9.01	88.97
			Young women	715	3.39 [c]	5.06	17.44	72.83	1.28 [c]	8.45	90.27

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Subscale	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Age	*N*	% Strongly agree	% Somewhat agree	% Somewhat disagree	% Strongly disagree	% Undecided	% Net agree[a]	% Net disagree[b]
Minimise Violence	D24	It's a woman's duty to stay in a violent relationship to keep the family together^	Young men	456	2.74 [c]	2.36 [c]	7.28	86.91	0.71 [c]	5.10	94.19
			Young women	355	2.33 [c]	2.81 [c]	5.40	89.46	0.00	5.14 [c]	94.86
	D25	Sometimes a woman can make a man so angry that he hits her when he didn't mean to^	Young men	456	4.50 [c]	14.81	**15.86 ***	60.04 *	4.50	19.30	75.90 *
			Young women	355	2.48 [c]	9.72	7.69 *	**78.23 ***	1.64 [c]	12.20	**85.92 ***
	D30	Women should keep quiet about domestic violence to protect their family's reputation	Young men	913	0.97 [c]	1.23 [c]	6.22	91.21	0.37 [c]	2.20 [c]	97.43
			Young women	715	1.26 [c]	1.97 [c]	3.14	93.63	0.00	3.23 [c]	96.77
	D31	Women who stay in abusive relationships deserve less help from counselling and support services than women who leave their abusive partner^	Young men	456	1.73 [c]	4.55 [c]	**10.59 ***	81.06 *	1.92 [c]	6.28	91.66
			Young women	355	2.09 [c]	2.82 [c]	3.93 * [c]	**89.80 ***	1.37 [c]	4.90 [c]	93.73
	D32	It's acceptable for police to give lower priority to domestic violence cases they've attended many times before^	Young men	456	3.95 [c]	8.92	18.53	65.46 *	3.14 [c]	12.87	83.99
			Young women	355	2.77 [c]	6.27	10.73	**78.84 ***	1.11 [c]	9.04	89.57
	S9	Women who are sexually harassed should deal with it themselves rather than report it^	Young men	612	0.53 [c]	2.20 [c]	10.55	84.85 *	1.88 [c]	2.72 [c]	95.40
			Young women	471	0.93 [c]	0.90 [c]	5.61	**91.92 ***	0.64 [c]	1.83 [c]	97.53
	S19	A man is less responsible for rape if he is drunk or affected by drugs at the time^	Young men	456	5.13 [c]	3.94	10.17	79.85	0.62 [c]	9.07	90.02
			Young women	355	4.96 [c]	2.94 [c]	9.00	82.47	0.46 [c]	7.90	91.47

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Subscale	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Age	*N*	% Strongly agree	% Somewhat agree	% Somewhat disagree	% Strongly disagree	% Undecided	% Net agree[a]	% Net disagree[b]
Minimise Violence	V8	It's only really stalking if it's by a stranger^	Young men	612	1.80 [c]	3.43 [c]	7.28	86.20	1.08 [c]	5.22	93.47
			Young women	471	1.08 [c]	2.85 [c]	5.84	89.84	0.38 [c]	3.94 [c]	95.69
Mistrust Women	D23	Women going through custody battles often make up or exaggerate claims of domestic violence in order to improve their case^	Young men	456	6.47	**30.27 ***	29.27	15.08 *	**18.56 ***	**36.73 ***	44.35 *
			Young women	355	3.96 [c]	19.24 *	38.11	**32.08 ***	6.48 *	23.20 *	**70.19 ***
	D27	If a woman keeps going back to her abusive partner, then the violence can't be very serious^	Young men	456	3.15 [c]	11.62	19.85	63.47	1.91 [c]	14.77	83.32
			Young women	355	3.91 [c]	5.80 [c]	17.44	72.16	0.68 [c]	9.71	89.60
	D28	It's easy for a woman to leave an abusive relationship^	Young men	456	5.30	4.51	**27.23 ***	59.92 *	3.05 [c]	9.80	87.15
			Young women	355	6.56 [c]	3.12 [c]	14.24 *	**76.07 ***	0.00	9.69	90.31
	D29	A female victim who does not leave an abusive partner is partly responsible for the abuse continuing	Young men	913	5.41	**26.09 ***	**25.01 ***	40.86 *	2.63	**31.50 ***	65.87 *
			Young women	715	3.82	16.24 *	16.60 *	**61.60 ***	1.75 [c]	20.05 *	**78.20 ***
	S1	Women with mental health issues who report being sexually assaulted are probably lying~	Young men	231	1.91 [c]	8.90	**27.29 ***	56.34 *	4.38 [c]	10.81	83.64 *
			Young women	171	0.68 [c]	4.04 [c]	13.89 *	**80.72 ***	0.68 [c]	4.71 [c]	**94.61 ***
	S2	When lesbian or bisexual women claim to have been sexually assaulted by their partner, they probably shouldn't be taken too seriously~	Young men	231	1.92 [c]	2.36 [c]	11.76	83.26	0.71 [c]	4.28 [c]	95.02
			Young women	171	1.48 [c]	1.83 [c]	4.22 [c]	92.09	0.37 [c]	3.31 [c]	96.32

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Subscale	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Age	*N*	% Strongly agree	% Somewhat agree	% Somewhat disagree	% Strongly disagree	% Undecided	% Net agree[a]	% Net disagree[b]
Mistrust Women	S10	Women who wait weeks or months to report sexual harassment are probably lying	Young men	913	1.66 [c]	6.96	**23.05 ***	64.83 *	3.43	**8.62 ***	87.88 *
			Young women	715	0.63 [c]	2.62 [c]	6.53 *	**89.44 ***	0.78 [c]	3.25 *	**95.97 ***
	S18	Many allegations of sexual assault made by women are false~	Young men	244	1.75 [c]	**15.17 ***	**38.87 ***	37.80 *	6.41 [c]	**16.92 ***	76.67 *
			Young women	187	1.43 [c]	5.57 *[c]	18.67 *	**71.43 ***	2.13 [c]	6.99 *[c]	**90.10 ***
	S22	If a woman claims to have been sexually assaulted but has no other physical injuries, she probably shouldn't be taken too seriously	Young men	913	0.89 [c]	5.74	**14.68 ***	76.99 *	1.70 [c]	6.63	91.67
			Young women	715	1.31 [c]	1.82 [c]	5.25 *	**90.61 ***	0.47 [c]	3.14	95.86
	S23	It is common for sexual assault accusations to be used as a way of getting back at men	Young men	913	**10.14 ***	**32.59 ***	25.77	24.41 *	6.98	**42.73 ***	50.18 *
			Young women	715	3.68 *	17.84 *	24.83	**50.32 ***	2.80	21.52 *	**75.15 ***
	S24	A lot of times, women who say they were raped had led the man on and then had regrets	Young men	913	4.90	**21.35 ***	28.42	34.02 *	**10.79 ***	**26.25 ***	62.45 *
			Young women	715	2.72	10.65 *	20.06	**62.16 ***	3.77 *	13.36 *	**82.21 ***
	S25	Women who wait weeks or months to report sexual assault are probably lying	Young men	913	1.57 [c]	**6.23 ***	**22.85 ***	66.70 *	2.48	**7.80 ***	89.55 *
			Young women	715	0.81 [c]	2.02 *[c]	8.23 *	**87.16 ***	1.25 [c]	2.83 *[c]	**95.39 ***
	V3	Many women exaggerate the extent of men's violence against women^	Young men	612	3.39	**23.71 ***	30.49	30.47 *	**11.79 ***	27.09	60.96 *
			Young women	471	4.94 [c]	14.03 *	24.31	**53.45 ***	3.27 *	18.97	**77.76 ***

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Subscale	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Age	*N*	% Strongly agree	% Somewhat agree	% Somewhat disagree	% Strongly disagree	% Undecided	% Net agree[a]	% Net disagree[b]
Objectify Women	D26	Women who flirt all the time are somewhat to blame if their partner gets jealous and hits them^	Young men	456	1.60 [c]	8.46	17.99	68.29 *	3.51 [c]	10.07	86.29
			Young women	355	1.52 [c]	6.37 [c]	11.03	**79.93 ***	1.15 [c]	7.89	90.96
	S3	A woman should be flattered if she gets wolf-whistles or catcalls when walking past a group of men in public^	Young men	612	2.54 [c]	5.12	**23.91 ***	64.76 *	3.24	7.66	**88.67**
			Young women	471	2.40 [c]	3.20 [c]	15.45 *	**77.55 ***	1.16 [c]	5.59	93.00
	S4	If a woman is drunk and starts having sex with a man, but then falls asleep, it is understandable if he continues having sex with her anyway^	Young men	456	1.16 [c]	2.79 [c]	**11.10 ***	82.84 *	2.12 [c]	3.95 [c]	93.94
			Young women	355	0.38 [c]	3.21 [c]	3.74 * [c]	**92.16 ***	0.50 [c]	3.60 [c]	95.90
	S5	Women often say “no” when they mean “yes”^	Young men	612	2.02 [c]	7.20	**16.30 ***	70.39 *	3.98	9.22	86.69
			Young women	471	1.92 [c]	7.75	7.47 *	**81.45 ***	1.41 [c]	9.67	88.92
	S6	If a woman sends a naked picture to her partner, then she is partly responsible if he shares it without her permission	Young men	913	5.71	12.45	11.67	68.61	1.49 [c]	18.16	80.28
			Young women	715	6.08	11.44	10.12	72.01	0.36 [c]	17.51	82.13
	S7	Since some women are so sexual in public, it’s understandable that some men think they can touch women without permission	Young men	913	2.21	6.12	**7.58 ***	82.82 *	1.05 [c]	8.33	90.41
			Young women	715	1.93 [c]	3.71	2.91 *	**90.99 ***	0.47 [c]	5.64	93.90

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Subscale	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Age	*N*	% Strongly agree	% Somewhat agree	% Somewhat disagree	% Strongly disagree	% Undecided	% Net agree[a]	% Net disagree[b]
Objectify Women	S8	When a man is very sexually aroused, he may not even realise that the woman doesn't want to have sex	Young men	913	8.75	22.55	**14.64 ***	48.21 *	5.24	31.30	62.85
			Young women	715	9.38	15.54	7.91 *	**63.89 ***	3.16	24.91	71.81
	S11	Women find it flattering to be persistently pursued, even if they are not interested^	Young men	456	2.19 [c]	11.63	22.14	58.31 *	5.30	13.82	80.45 *
			Young women	355	0.97 [c]	7.37	17.18	**72.62 ***	1.26 [c]	8.34	**89.80 ***
	S17	If a woman doesn't physically resist – even if protesting verbally – then it isn't really rape~	Young men	244	1.00 [c]	4.14 [c]	8.34	83.53	2.49 [c]	5.14 [c]	91.86
			Young women	187	1.94 [c]	3.29 [c]	6.67 [c]	87.32	0.00	5.22 [c]	94.00
	S20	If a woman is raped while drunk or affected by drugs, she is at least partly responsible	Young men	913	2.75	7.09	12.87	76.25 *	1.05 [c]	**9.84 ***	89.11 *
			Young women	715	1.25 [c]	2.82 [c]	8.31	**86.65 ***	0.68 [c]	4.07 *	**94.96 ***
	S21	If a woman meets up with a man she met on a mobile dating app, she's partly responsible if he forces sex on her^	Young men	612	1.72 [c]	3.09 [c]	7.62	87.04	0.53 [c]	4.82	94.66
			Young women	471	1.39 [c]	4.50 [c]	5.60	87.88	0.14 [c]	5.89	93.48
	After coming home from a party, a man kisses his wife and tries to have sex with her. She pushes him away, but he has sex with her anyway.										
	S12	Do you agree or disagree that the man is justified? (*Married – He initiates*)~	Young men	215	0.62 [c]	1.78 [c]	6.60 [c]	90.00	1.00 [c]	2.40 [c]	96.60
			Young women	173	1.28 [c]	4.55 [c]	4.65 [c]	88.38	1.13 [c]	5.83 [c]	93.03

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Subscale	Code	Abbreviated item wording	Age	*N*	% Strongly agree	% Somewhat agree	% Somewhat disagree	% Strongly disagree	% Undecided	% Net agree[a]	% Net disagree[b]
Objectify Women	S13	What if she had taken him into the bedroom and started kissing him before pushing him away. Do you agree or disagree that the man is justified in having sex with her anyway? (*Married – She initiates*)~	Young men	215	1.33 [c]	8.69	15.88	69.81	4.29 [c]	10.02	85.69
			Young women	173	3.08 [c]	8.97 [c]	16.17	69.54	2.24 [c]	12.05	85.71
	A man and woman have just met at a party and get on well. They go back to the woman's home where he kisses her and tries to have sex with her.										
	S14	She pushes him away, but he has sex with her anyway. Do you agree or disagree that the man is justified in his behaviour? (*Acquaintance – He initiates*)~	Young men	219	2.60 [c]	4.01 [c]	6.14 [c]	86.53	0.73 [c]	6.60 [c]	92.66
			Young women	166	1.74 [c]	1.24 [c]	4.00 [c]	91.96	0.37 [c]	2.98 [c]	95.96
	S15	What if she had taken him into the bedroom and started kissing him before pushing him away? Do you agree or disagree that the man would have been justified in having sex with her anyway? (*Acquaintance – She initiates*)~	Young men	219	2.88 [c]	9.22	15.97	68.84	3.10 [c]	12.10	84.80
			Young women	166	4.20 [c]	6.96 [c]	10.74 [c]	75.65	2.44 [c]	11.17	86.40

Note: Numbers in bold reflect the significantly higher value in the comparison.
Percentages may not add to 100 as the "unanswered" category is not shown in the table.
a "Net agree" refers to answering "agree" either "strongly" or "somewhat".
b "Net disagree" refers to answering "disagree" either "strongly" or "somewhat".
c This result should be interpreted with caution because it has a relative standard error >25%.
* Statistically significant difference between young men and young women.
^ Asked of half the sample.
~ Asked of one quarter of the sample.

ATTITUDES MATTER:

ANROWS

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THE 2021 NATIONAL COMMUNITY ATTITUDES TOWARDS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN SURVEY

Findings for young Australians