

Ending Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence: A Community Perspective

Position Paper submitted to inform the Second Action Plan under the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032

Wagga Women's Health Centre | July 2026

Wagga Women's Health Centre (WWHC) is a feminist, trauma-informed community health service supporting women and families across the Wagga Wagga region. This paper draws on our frontline experience to respond to the priority questions raised in the Second Action Plan Consultation Paper.¹ Our central argument is a simple one: violence overwhelmingly begins and escalates in the home, and the Second Action Plan will only succeed if it addresses the safety of the whole household — not only the identified victim-survivor — as the unit of change, and if it funds the community-based organisations best placed to build that safety from the family out.

In addition to our responses to the prompt questions below, we attach two relevant reports highlighting the findings from our local community in relation to engaging men on the issue of Domestic and Family Violence, and findings from Community Attitudes towards Domestic and Family Violence.

Attachment 1 – Wagga Wagga and Surrounds 'Men's Leadership Forum' Report (2024)

Attachment 2 - Fragile Progress: Community Attitudes Toward Domestic Violence in Wagga Wagga 2016-2025: Findings from Three Community Attitude Surveys (2025)

Priority Area 1: Victim-Survivors

What service or system responses would make the biggest difference to victim-survivors' safety, wellbeing, healing and recovery?

Grassroots, community-based responses make the greatest difference because they are trusted, local and able to respond quickly, before a crisis escalates. Yet national funding models continue to favour large, contract-ready providers over the small organisations embedded in the communities they serve, a pattern the domestic and family violence workforce literature links directly to service gaps and to a workforce under sustained strain.² The Second Action Plan should build core, funding pathways for grassroots and community-controlled organisations, rather than requiring them to compete against larger providers for short-term program grants.

Capacity building initiatives for smaller providers would also assist in 'levelling the playing field' when it comes to grant and tender submission processes.

Post-separation healing and recovery for victim-survivors should include trauma-informed support to address the ways trauma symptoms can affect boundary-setting, self-trust and risk recognition.³ This must be underpinned by economic independence and stable housing that the evidence shows are the strongest protective factors against re-entering violent relationships.⁴ The Second Action Plan must account for these structural drivers as an essential part of solving family, domestic and sexual violence.

¹Department of Social Services, Consultation Paper: Second Action Plan under the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032, engage.dss.gov.au, May 2026.

²Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS), Strengthening and Planning for Australia's Domestic and Family Violence Workforce (ARC Discovery Project DP210101214), 2025.

³Y.J. Ortega Pacheco, Y.D. Gallo-Barrera and C. Pozo Muñoz, 'Risk and protective factors for revictimization from intimate partner violence: A systematic review', Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, 2024.

⁴NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR), 'Assessing the risk of repeat intimate partner assault', Crime and Justice Bulletin, 2018.

What helps people access support earlier, and what barriers prevent help-seeking?

Evidence from women's own accounts of abuse shows that psychological and coercive controlling behaviours are consistently the earliest warning signs, appearing before physical violence in the great majority of cases.⁵ This points to two concrete levers that would support people to access supports earlier:

1. Training for general duties police as well as other first responders (ambulance etc) that equips all first responders to recognise coercive control (not only physical incidents) as a serious risk indicator and provides them with skills and knowledge to support victim-survivors and provide them options for support, and
2. Guaranteed access to emergency housing and crisis funding at the point a person first discloses, so that safety is not contingent on a waitlist.

What current or emerging issues should the Second Action Plan address, including in relation to coercive control and technology-facilitated abuse?

The misidentification of victim-survivors as perpetrators continues to be a prevalent issue. Incident-based policing remains at odds with an approach that can easily identify the cumulative pattern of coercive control.⁶⁷ These impact already marginalised women at higher rates specifically First Nations, migrant and refugee, women with disability, and women with mental health or substance use histories. Without deliberate reform to policing approaches, criminalising coercive control could compound rather than correct this pattern.⁸ The Second Action Plan needs to include a way of working with states to reform policing and court processes, focussed on increasing the recognition of coercive control and violent resistance. Furthermore, it should include tracking misidentification rates as a system safety indicator.

Public and professional understanding of coercive control itself remains in an immature state, with our community results mirroring national research, finding that the Australian public still struggles to recognise less overt presentations.⁹¹⁰ A sustained public education campaign is needed, illustrating this full range of coercive presentations. We have examples of women being coerced into workers compensation claims to benefit the user of violence, with many services involved (insurance, finance, rehabilitation) complicit in the abuse due to lack of awareness, policies and procedures to identify and deal with coercive control scenarios. A nationally mandated training program and continued professional development for all workforces would go a long way to addressing this issue. Additionally, quality accreditation for organisations need to include policies and procedures to address the presentation of coercive control in staff and clients/consumers.

Technology-facilitated abuse is the fastest-evolving aspect of coercive control. We are seeing cases monthly of women who are aware that GPS trackers have been placed in their phones, cars or property and need support in identifying and nullifying this threat. A national IT safety agency for domestic and family violence that provides guidance and policies to providers of these devices to reduce the complicity in the supply chain would assist this greatly.

⁵Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), 'Coercive control', Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence, 2025, citing A. McLindon et al., 2025.

⁶H. Nancarrow, K. Thomas, V. Ringwald et al., Accurately Identifying the 'Person Most in Need of Protection' in Domestic and Family Violence Law (Research report 23/2020), Sydney: ANROWS, 2020.

⁷'Misidentified Victim-Survivors as Domestic and Family Violence Perpetrators: Plea Negotiations as a Tool for Justice?', The British Journal of Criminology, 2025.

⁸Australian Institute of Family Studies, Coercive Control Literature Review, 2023.

⁹AIFS, Coercive Control Literature Review, 2023; AIHW, 'Coercive control', 2025.

¹⁰Del Pizzo et al., 'Public Awareness in Australia About Coercive Control in the Context of Intimate Partner Relationships', Australian Journal of Social Issues, 61(1), 2026.

What gaps remain in addressing the needs of diverse communities, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Healing options for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim-survivors and other diverse communities are too narrowly defined around talk-based, clinical models. The Second Action Plan and the complementary Our Ways - Strong Ways - Our Voices plan should fund culturally safe healing options that are non-verbal or body-based, including traditional healing practices and therapeutic massage, as legitimate trauma responses rather than adjuncts to mainstream counselling.¹¹

LGBTIQ+ Community

Transgender women and the broader LGBTIQ+ community face significantly elevated rates of intimate partner violence, and in our region this risk is intensifying. Local survey data shows LGBTQ+ people in rural and regional communities have noticed a marked increase in hate and discrimination over the past year, particularly transphobia and violence directed at trans women.¹² Mainstream family violence services and understanding remain built around a heterosexual, cisgender model, meaning LGBTIQ+ victim-survivors, and trans women in particular, are less likely to be recognised, believed or appropriately supported when they do seek help.¹³ The Second Action Plan should fund LGBTIQ+-inclusive training across mainstream services and dedicated crisis accommodation options, particularly in regional areas where LGBTIQ+-specific services are scarce or non-existent.

Rural and Remote Women

Geographical isolation is a defining feature of domestic and family violence in rural and remote Australia, and we see perpetrators actively exploit it as a tool of coercive control. Evidence shows perpetrators frequently disable vehicles, withhold access to transport, or relocate women to remote properties specifically to prevent them from seeking help.¹⁴ Without independent transport, a woman's ability to leave, attend an appointment, or reach a service at all is entirely controlled by the person causing harm. We propose the Second Action Plan fund community organisations to provide regular, safe transport services in these communities through dedicated grant and funding opportunities, giving women a practical and independent means of accessing transport regardless of what a partner allows or restricts.

Migrant Workers

Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme workers in regional and rural Australia, a workforce we are seeing grow locally, are extremely vulnerable to domestic and family violence in the relationships they form while here, and workers have very limited access to support due to their visa status. Consultations conducted specifically in the Wagga Wagga region found temporary migrant workers, including PALM workers, face gender-based violence and serious difficulty accessing suitable healthcare and crisis accommodation, compounded by cultural and language barriers and fear of the consequences of engaging authorities.¹⁵ Most PALM visa holders are not entitled to Medicare and must rely on private health insurance, meaning that while a health service is often the only point of contact available to someone

¹¹Department of Social Services, Our Ways - Strong Ways - Our Voices: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Plan to End Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence 2026-2036, 2026.

¹²N. Barlow, 'Regional LGBTQ+ community experiences higher rates of discrimination', Charles Sturt University News, 30 June 2026.

¹³Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), 'LGBTIQ+ people', Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence, 2025.

¹⁴M. Campo and S. Tayton, 'Domestic and family violence in regional, rural and remote communities: An overview of key issues', Australian Institute of Family Studies, CFCA Resource Sheet, citing Wendt, 2009 and George and Harris, 2015.

¹⁵Office of the NSW Anti-Slavery Commissioner, Be Our Guests: Addressing Urgent Modern Slavery Risks for Temporary Migrant Workers in Rural and Regional NSW, 2026.

experiencing violence, it cannot always be accessed or afforded for these women.¹⁶ We recommend the Second Action Plan review PALM visa conditions to extend Medicare access to workers, using health services as a genuine and reachable first point of contact for disclosure and support.

Priority Area 2: Prevention and Early Intervention

What would make the biggest difference in preventing and ultimately ending violence?

Australia needs a dedicated national strategy on men's use of violence, built around early intervention and trauma-informed approaches for boys and men, not only late-stage behaviour-change programs. The evidence base on engaging men and boys shows clearer results for shifting attitudes than for changing behaviour, and cautions against interventions that focus on the individual while leaving the structural and institutional drivers of violence unaddressed.¹⁷ A national men's strategy should therefore sit alongside, not replace, the gendered-drivers approach set out in Our Watch's Change the Story framework.¹⁸

At a community level, rural, remote, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities hold the highest rates of domestic and family violence, as well as elevated rates of other forms of violence, demonstrating the need in these communities to address structural drivers such as poverty, colonisation, alcohol availability and gaps in service and policing as part of the response.^{19,20} Approaches that work in metropolitan areas cannot work in these communities due to these underpinning structural inadequacies. These drivers need to be scoped and included in interventions in rural and remote locations with commensurate resourcing to have the significant impact required.

How can existing prevention efforts be strengthened, and what would support grassroots and community organisations to respond?

A focus on ongoing, long-term investment in high violence areas is critical in strengthening prevention. Community organisations are consistently out-competed for grants by larger, better-resourced providers, and are often ineligible for the funding streams that would let them survive between contracts. Long-term, patient investment in high-violence communities, rather than stop-start, competitive funding rounds, is needed for primary prevention to embed, because shifting social norms is slow work that depends on sustained local trust and relationships.^{21,22}

Our own primary prevention work with men through our DV2650 program, which was defunded in 2025, found that only 13.3% of men felt that the current language used in public conversation around domestic and family violence encouraged men to engage on the issue. While 75.6% of those surveyed indicated that they wanted to lead with others in the community in addressing domestic and family violence, 73.5% of those identified that they needed support to do so. We believe that support includes significant reform in

¹⁶Services Australia and Australian Taxation Office guidance on the PALM scheme (subclass 403 visa), noting temporary residents are generally not entitled to Medicare unless part of the Family Accompaniment Pilot; see also S. Adhikari, 'PALM Visa Conditions Exploit Pacific Neighbours Working in Lucrative Australian Industries', The Australia Institute.

¹⁷M. Flood, 'Work with men to end violence against women: a critical stocktake', Culture, Health & Sexuality, 2015.

¹⁸Our Watch, Change the Story: A Shared Framework for the Primary Prevention of Violence against Women and their Children in Australia, 2021 (2nd ed.).

¹⁹K. Carrington, 'Crime in rural and regional areas', in Crime in Rural Australia, 2007, as cited in 'The Rurality of Intimate Partner Femicide: Examining Risk Factors in Queensland', PMC, 2024

²⁰AIHW, 'Family violence among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples', 2006

²¹M. Puccetti et al., 'Exploring Readiness for Change: Knowledge and Attitudes towards Family Violence among Community Members and Service Providers Engaged in Primary Prevention in Regional Australia', International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 16(21), 2019.

²²Changing conversations about family violence in regional Western Australia: A primary prevention communication case study', ScienceDirect, 2023.

how we approach men and boys on this issue, with specific primary prevention funding for engaging grass roots organisations such as sporting clubs to drive change over a sustainable supported period.

What emerging issues should the Second Action Plan address in relation to primary prevention and early intervention?

Interpersonal conflict and violence occur inside the home, yet policy attention rarely asks the direct question: how do we make homes safer? This requires supporting mothers, fathers and intergenerational families to navigate conflict, and examining the role of the out-of-home care system in the broader picture of family safety. It also requires recognising addiction, gambling, and drug and alcohol misuse as core drivers of unsafe homes: national data already identify family and domestic violence, parental substance use and parental mental health as compounding risk factors for child protection involvement, and these issues should be addressed together rather than through separate, siloed responses.²³

Priority Area 3: Children and Young People in Their Own Right

What would make the biggest difference to safety, recovery and wellbeing outcomes for children and young people?

The problem should be reframed as one of the unsafe home, in which partners, children and any other dependants are all victims of the same dynamic, rather than treating children's experiences as secondary to an adult victim-survivor's case. Care-experienced Australians report a higher intensity, earlier onset and longer duration of maltreatment, including exposure to domestic violence, than people who were maltreated without entering care, underlining how much is at stake in getting the household-level response right in the first instance.²⁴ Addressing this means investing directly in supports for mothers and parents generally, and in supports that help family carers, such as grandparents step confidently into re-parenting roles when they are called on to do so.

How can systems better recognise and respond to children and young people experiencing violence or harm?

Foster care and out-of-home care systems, and the parameters used to remove children, need extensive review and change, alongside genuine investment in the interventions that can keep families safely together. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children remain significantly over-represented in child protection and out-of-home care, a legacy connected to past removal policies as much as to current risk, which makes family-preservation-first approaches a priority rather than an afterthought.²⁵

How should the Plan respond to technology-facilitated abuse and harmful online content affecting children and young people?

Technology-facilitated abuse is rapidly rising for young people specifically. We see presentations where exposure to porn from family members at an early age is a starting point for coercive control and grooming for child sexual assault. We additionally note image-based abuse reports to the eSafety Commissioner more than doubled in a single year.^{26,27} The Plan should invest in empowering caregivers to work directly with

²³AIHW, 'Child protection', Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence, 2025, citing Luu, B. et al., 2024

²⁴'Dimensions of Child Maltreatment in Australians With a History of Out-of-Home Care', PMC, 2025.

²⁵Australian Institute of Family Studies, 'Child protection and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children', Resource Sheet, based on AIHW Child Protection Australia 2017-18.

²⁶A. Powell et al., 'Half of Australians will experience technology-facilitated abuse in their lifetimes: new research', Monash Lens / The Conversation, 2026.

²⁷eSafety Commissioner, 'Domestic violence', Key Topics, 2025, citing D. Woodlock et al., Second National Survey of Technology Abuse and Domestic Violence in Australia, WESNET, 2020.

children on safe technology use, rather than relying on schools or platforms alone. This should sit alongside age-appropriate education for children regarding the legal age can they view sexually explicit material.

Priority Area 4: People Who Use Violence

What approaches are most effective in supporting accountability and behaviour change?

Trauma-informed approaches, delivered through both individual and group-based formats within communities, are more promising than generic behaviour-change models applied uniformly.²⁸ Shame-based interventions, language and conditioning should be actively avoided: research on shame and coercive control finds that a pervasive sense of shame is associated with the urge to dominate and control, and practitioner literature warns that shaming perpetrators can create a counterproductive risk of further harm to victim-survivors rather than reducing it.²⁹ The sector needs a genuine reform of how it talks about the use of violence, moving away from shame as a behaviour-change lever.

How can risk be recognised and shared more safely and objectively across services?

Services and institutions need objective, shared measures of violence risk so that the assessment of an individual user of violence is not left to the subjective judgement of any one worker or agency. The National Risk Assessment Principles for Domestic and Family Violence provide a foundation for this work and should be fully resourced for consistent national implementation with a focus on the user of violence rather than the victim-survivors risk profile.³⁰

How can culturally safe, accessible responses be strengthened for different communities and cohorts?

Communities are best placed to solve their own problems and should be resourced to design locally relevant solutions. National, one-size-fits-all rollouts consistently overlook the complexities of rural, remote and regional communities; case studies of regional primary prevention initiatives show that community collaborations need sustained local time, resourcing and coordination to succeed, and falter when that local investment is inconsistent.³¹

Priority Area 5: System Integration and Workforce

What would make the biggest difference in creating a more coordinated, connected system response?

Funding service organisations for permanent, rather than contract-tied, positions is the single most direct lever available to government. Current funding models drive high staff turnover and the loss of institutional knowledge, which in turn increases the underlying cost of service delivery, this is a dynamic documented across the sector.³² Training and professional development budgets should be built into core grant funding rather than treated as an optional extra.³³ Jurisdictions that have moved toward longer, five-year funding agreements, such as New South Wales has for some of its domestic and family violence sector programs, offer a workable model for national reform.³⁴

²⁸ANROWS, 'The role of men's behaviour change programs in addressing men's use of domestic, family and sexual violence', Evidence Brief, 2025.

²⁹Gender Policy Report, 'Why Shaming Perpetrators of Intimate Partner Violence Harms Survivors', University of Minnesota, 2019.

³⁰J. McCulloch et al., National Risk Assessment Principles for Domestic and Family Violence: Companion Resource, ANROWS, 2022, as cited in National Legal Aid, media statement on the Second Action Plan consultation, 2026.

³¹Our Watch, Change the Story: A shared Framework for the Primary Prevention of Violence against Women and Their Children in Australia 2021 (2nd ed.).

³²SBS NITV, 'NT domestic violence services funding decreased due to rising costs, an inquest has heard', 22 May 2024.

³³A. Fitz-Gibbon and S. Meyer, 'New government funding for family violence is unprecedented, but it can't afford to wait', The Conversation, 30 July 2025.

³⁴NSW Department of Communities and Justice, Strengthening the NSW Domestic and Family Violence Sector: Workforce Development Strategy 2025-2035, 2025.

What workforce capabilities, supports or conditions are most needed?

Community engagement skills and genuine trauma-informed practice are the capabilities frontline services most need to build and retain, and both require time and continuity to develop, precisely what short-term contracts erode.¹

What evidence, workforce or system gaps should the Plan prioritise?

Community services embedded in community should be recognised and funded as critical frontline infrastructure, not only as time-limited government-contracted 'programs'. Adequate, ongoing funding for specialist and universal services alike is the precondition for every other reform proposed in this paper; without it, integration and coordination goals will not be achievable in practice.

Other Areas of Action

Are there other actions that should be a priority to stop family, domestic and sexual violence?

The consultation needs to consider a fundamental question: why aren't Australian homes safe? Financial strain, housing access, addiction, use of technology and resistance and backlash to prevention and gender equality, are all feeding a culture that de-prioritises safety in the home. These sit alongside, and interact with, the gendered drivers of violence identified in the national evidence base. The Australian home remains one of the least safe spaces for women and children specifically, and this risk is not evenly distributed. Risk intensifies wherever structural disadvantage, isolation or a lack of service access compounds it, regardless of a household's composition. The Second National Plan would benefit this holistic approach with subsequent agreements across Government Departments to address the structural drivers of violence.

The past year alone has seen dozens of women and children killed in family and domestic violence incidents across Australia — a reminder that the cost of inaction, or of funding models that fail community organisations and do not provide adequate economic and housing options, is measured in lives. WWHC urges the Australian Government to use the Second Action Plan to invest in the grassroots, community-controlled, trauma-informed and adequately and securely funded system that this evidence base consistently points toward.

WAGGA WAGGA & SURROUNDS

MENS LEADERSHIP FORUM

DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE
(D&FV)

FULL REPORT 2024





ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The DVproject:2650 and the Wagga Women's Health Centre acknowledges the traditional custodians of this land, the Wiradjuri people.

Wiradjuri country is known as the 'land of the three rivers' the Wambuul (Macquarie), the Kalare (Lachlan) and the Murrumbidgee or Murrumbidjeri. We acknowledge and honour the culture and customs that have nurtured and continue to nurture these waterways and lands. We pay respect to Elders of the past, Elders who guide us in the present and those emerging. We extend our respect to all First Nations Peoples of Australia.

We also recognise the disproportionate levels of lived experience of First Nations peoples with Domestic and Family Violence. Their strength, resilience and knowledge continue to be invaluable to workplaces and communities today addressing this issue.

Cover: Uncle James Ingram leading conversations during the smoking ceremony. Uncle James' support was critical in ensuring this Men's Leadership Forum went ahead.

Left: Proud Wiradjuri man, Jordan Ingram, preparing the smoking ceremony.



SINCE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS REPORT UNCLE JAMES INGRAM HAS PASSED TO THE DREAMTIME.

We honour Uncle and his immeasurable contribution to leadership in our community.

His advocacy for the Wiradjuri people, especially the importance of bringing men onto country for healing, has had far reaching impacts. We hope this report in a small way attests to his legacy. We will continue to honour his vision and keep his legacy in our community strong.

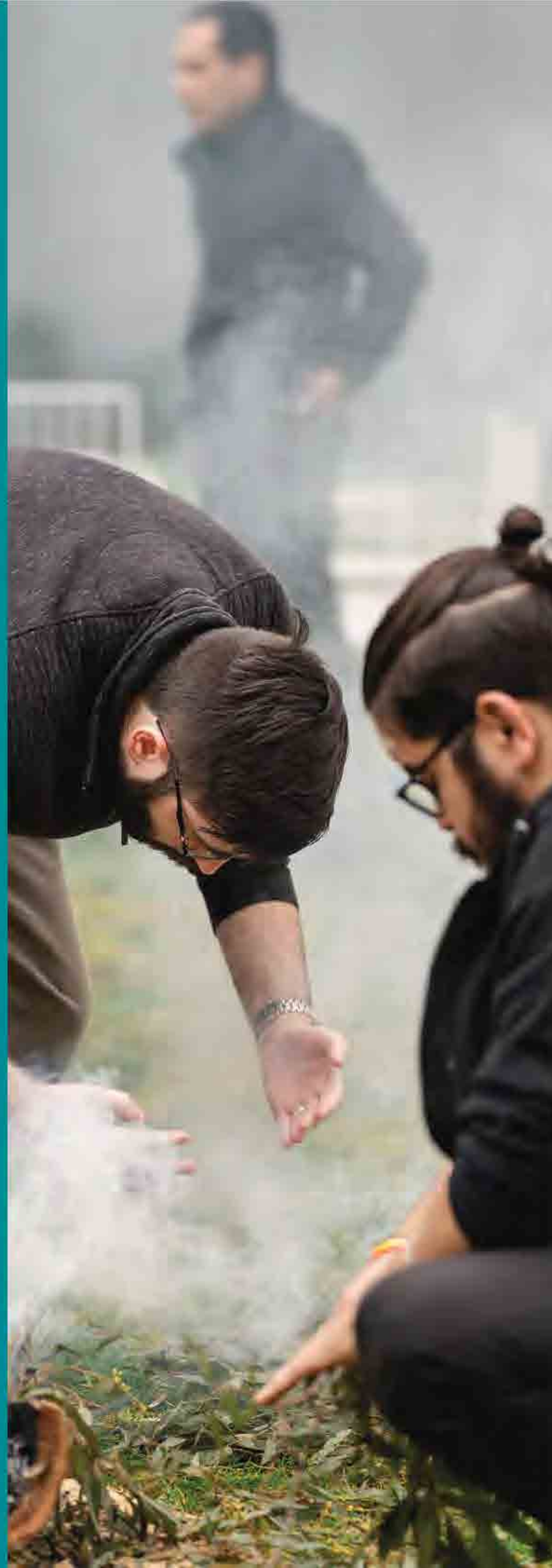
"The Men's Leadership Forum highlighted the crucial role of local leadership in ending domestic and family violence in communities and driving positive change. It's clear that community action and mobilisation are vital in transforming attitudes and effectively addressing men's use of family violence – I really believe this kind of coming together in local action, driven by local communities is a brilliant template that needs to be employed right across the country."

There is only so much that governments and agencies can do in tackling family violence and for just about everything else, local communities hold the key to driving the radical change we need to end family violence.

A massive shout-out to Wagga Women's Health Centre for their dedication and leadership in this important work – and for their warm generosity in inviting me to participate in their discussions."



Phillip Ripper
CEO, No to Violence



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This event was made unique by the collaborative efforts of both men and women in its planning and creation, culminating in a day delivered entirely by male contributors on site.

We would like to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of our steering committee, including Mawang Gaway, Uncle James Ingram, and Bernard Higgins. Special thanks to Mayor Dallas Tout and his office – particularly Cassandra Webster for her exceptional management and support of the invitations. We also extend our gratitude to Dr. Joe McGirr and his office, the Hon. Michael McCormack and his office, notably Ken Grimson for his hands-on support during the event. Wagga Wagga City Council and the Rotary Club, especially Deidre and Phillip Tome, were generous in their support.

Our heartfelt thanks go to our speakers, Jamie Way, Dave Kramer, Rhys Cummins, and Adam Blanch. Their courage in sharing lived experiences and insights shaped the day into a thought-provoking and inspiring event.

Thank you to Relationships Australia who provided male counsellors to be available on the day for any attendee's that needed support.

Thank you to Bernard Higgins and Jordan Ingram for their very moving Welcome to Country, Smoking Ceremony and Ochre application, this set the tone for the day.

We express our appreciation to The Wild Vine and its owners, Kate and Nick, for providing the ideal venue, seamless event support, and delicious catering. Their efforts in employing additional male event staff ensured the smooth operation of the day.

We extend our sincere thanks to William Hamzey for his professional onsite note-taking, which provided valuable documentation of the day's discussions. Zizi Charida's support in community engagement was instrumental in creating an effective, strength-based event.

Professional photography was provided by OLT Media, and thanks to No To Violence CEO, Phillip Ripper, for his presence and valuable support during the event.

Finally, we extend our gratitude to CVGT, Riverina Water, and Mission Australia for their donations to the event bags.

Thank you to the Wagga Wagga and surrounds community who are engaged and dedicated to make significant changes to the rates of D&FV in our community.



Attendee's collaborating on the opportunities in Wagga Wagga and surrounds to improve D&FV rates.

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OVERVIEW: ADDRESSING DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY

The Domestic and Family Violence (D&FV) rate in Wagga Wagga and surrounds is 1.5 – 1.8 times the NSW State Average (BOSCAR, 2024). Despite local investment in primary prevention initiatives demonstrating increased awareness and understanding of the issue broadly in community, the engagement of men was still lacking. To address this the Wagga Women's Health Centre, in consultation with leaders in the region, identified the potential for a community-based Men's Leadership Forum on Domestic and Family Violence.

The Wagga Women's Health Centre (the Centre) is one of 12 organisations across NSW who received the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) administrated Domestic and Family Violence Innovation Fund, leading the regions 'DV2650 Project'. The Centre, with the support of Wagga Wagga City Council and other community organisations, has been running primary prevention activities in Wagga and surrounds since 2018, encouraging continued conversations and collaboration in the community to address the high rate of D&FV.

In 2024, after a significant increase in men calling the Centre asking for assistance and information on the issue, the Men's Leadership Forum was devised. This initiative was enthusiastically supported by Council, State and Federal Government representatives as well as the Indigenous leadership body of Wagga Wagga. With this support the Forum was held in July 2024 with exceptional impact. To our knowledge, this is the first time a men's only forum of this scale and breadth has been held to address the prevalence of D&FV in Australian communities. The forum was a new initiative, uniquely promoting a 'whole of community' approach to D&FV in our region.



Murrumbidgee Men's Group Founder and local community advocate for Men's Mental Health Rhys Cummins sharing with attendees at the Forum.

**AIM:
EMPOWERING MEN TO LEAD CHANGE
ON DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE
IN WAGGA WAGGA & SURROUNDS**

The Forum was an innovative and unique approach with the aim of creating community-led, localised action on D&FV in Wagga Wagga and surrounds with the assistance of male leadership in the short, medium, and long term.

The Men's Leadership Forum aimed to empower men to be leaders of community change to reduce D&FV by:

- **Reframing D&FV** as a community issue, not a women's or gender issue solely;
- **Reducing the scope of the issue** to focus on our community of Wagga Wagga and surrounds with local data, case studies, and lived experience representatives;
- **Reducing stigma, myths, and barriers** for men's engagement with D&FV through trauma-informed frameworks to discuss violence; and,
- **Constructively engaging men** in the conversation about ways they can address D&FV in our community.

The forum focussed on empowering men to see themselves as leaders of change on the issue of D&FV.



Scene setting and opening remarks from MC Jamie Way and Federal Member for the Riverina Michael McCormack MP.

**KEY STAKEHOLDERS:
COMMUNITY LEADERS
WERE ENGAGED TO
CREATE CHANGE**

Gathering the support and advocacy of Wagga Wagga and surrounds established formal male leaders was critical to the success of the Forum. Wagga Women's Health Centre undertook individual engagement with elected representatives and Indigenous Elders to seek initial support and then formed a working group with these leaders to formulate the design and communication of the day. The working group included:



Mawang Gaway – Wiradjuri Elders Leadership Group represented by **Uncle James Ingram**, First Nations Elder, and, **Bernard Higgins**, Secretary.



Wagga Wagga City Council
– **Mayor Dallas Tout**.



Federal Member for Riverina
– **The Hon. Michael McCormack MP**.



Member for Wagga Wagga
– **Dr Joe McGirr MP**.

LOCATION & TIMING

The all-day Forum was held from 10am – 4.30pm on Friday 26th July 2024 at The Wild Vine, Oura, located 15 minutes Northeast of Wagga Wagga and near Oura Beach.

This location was significant as it sits on land known as Men's Country by Wiradjuri Peoples.

Hosting the event during work hours was a deliberate decision as we wanted attendees to feel they were formally representing their industries, sectors, and community groups.



Attendees partaking in Wiradjuri Smoking Ceremony.

APPROACH: INNOVATING HOW WE ENGAGE MEN ON THE ISSUE OF DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE

Critical to the design of the program was a values-based framework, agreed to by all stakeholders and informed by the 'Change the Story' key frameworks by Our Watch, and successful 'Men's Business' and 'Women's Business' programs run in remote Northern Territory for Indigenous communities.

The key pillars of the approach are:

1. A non-judgemental and safe space for men of all backgrounds

Reducing shame and fear responses for men when engaging on this issue, ensuring a culturally safe environment for all attendees. This included ensuring only men attended the event, including catering staff.

2. Trauma-informed approach

Acknowledging the impact of trauma on all in our community, and the impacts from the use of, and receipt of violence. This increased a sense of curiosity around the issue rather than judgement.

3. Utilising a Social Determinants of Health and Wellbeing model

Acknowledging the intersectionality of gender, ethnicity, abilities, social and economic pressure/challenge and many more factors that predispose one to use, receive, and/or witness violence (in all its forms).

4. Community first - Localising the issue

Local male engagement on this issue shares the burden of change - moving it from a women's issue to a community issue.



INTENDED OUTCOMES: WHAT WE SET OUT TO ACHIEVE

We sought to achieve defined outcomes at the end of the event that could be measured and reported on.

These were:

- Attendees have an increased understanding of D&FV, its contributing factors, and the role men play in D&FV prevention;
- Attendees have an individual 'Action Plan' that they design throughout the day and use to guide their actions and support behaviour change, with short-, medium- and long-term commitments;
- Individual action plans feed up into a 'Men's Community Action Plan for Wagga Wagga and Surrounds' created with leaders identified from the attendees; and,
- Attendees discuss the forum and its outcomes with family, friends, and colleagues, disseminating the information and understanding.

Local male engagement on this issue shares the burden of change - moving it from a women's issue to a community issue.

Asking questions and open discussion was a critical aspect of the Forum.

PRE-FORUM SURVEY: WHAT MEN IN WAGGA WAGGA AND SURROUNDS TOLD US

One hypothesis was that men in our community were not engaging readily on the issue of D&FV due to concern or confusion about whether it was socially appropriate for men to engage or be seen as leaders on the issue. We also hypothesised that the current approach to Primary Prevention of D&FV was not targeted or tailored for a male audience, with messaging therefore not resonating with this target group. We tested this through a series of surveys pre- and post-forum.

Prospective attendees were surveyed regarding their behaviours, attitudes, and perceptions about D&FV, as well as their confidence as men in discussing the issue, or taking on a proactive role to affect change. Forty-six individuals completed the survey.

Important highlights from survey responses include: (full results can be found in Appendix A)

- **For 95% of respondents, this was their first time participating in a 'men's only' event related to D&FV.** Prior to the Forum, 89.13% of respondents agreed that hosting men's only events to address D&FV was important or very important. This re-enforced our hypothesis that current primary prevention approaches are not tailored for men and that most men identify the need for a tailored approach.
- **71.74% cited their greatest motivator to participate in the forum was to support their local community,** with 87% specifically hoping to identify ways they can help their community from the event. This indicates that localising the issue was a significant driver of engagement with men.

- **75.6% of those surveyed indicated that they wanted to lead with others in the community in addressing D&FV.** However, 73.5% of those that wanted to lead identified that they needed support to do so. Another 24.5% responded that want to lead but lack confidence or have insecurities around leading on this issue. Critically, 0% of respondents said they do not wish to lead on this issue. This displays that the men in community leadership positions are willing and eager to engage on this issue but more needs to be done to support and empower them to do so.
- **71.1% of respondents reported being confident, or very confident, to discuss the issue of D&FV in public or with family and friends.** Only 4.4% indicated they had concerns about being ridiculed or dismissed. This provides some evidence that fear of backlash or social ridicule in relation to discussing this issue is not the primary driver for men's lack of engagement.
- **Notably, only 13.3% of respondents felt that the current language used in public conversation around D&FV encouraged men to engage on the issue,** and 26.7% felt that most language used was harmful and caused further division, alienation, and/or stigmatisation. Whereas 48.9% felt that conversation and language could be improved to engage men, but current language is mostly constructive. This did support our hypothesis that messaging around the issue needs to change to more readily engage men on the issue.

To view all pre-forum survey responses, please see Appendix A.

Men in community leadership positions are willing and eager to engage on [D&FV] issue, but more needs to be done to support and empower them to do so.



Key community leaders were participants in learning, with State Member Dr Joe McCarr MP, The Hon. Wes Fong MLC, Federal Member for the Riverina Michael McCormack MP, and Wiradjuri community leader Bernard Higgins listening with attendees.



**ATTENDEES:
FOCUS ON MALE
COMMUNITY LEADERS**

The targeted participants for the Forum were identified as leaders from industry, sectors, and community groups across Wagga Wagga and surrounds. Forum attendance was deliberately invitation-only, although all men had the opportunity to self-refer and express their interest in advance.

Invitations were deliberately stratified to ensure attendance across a range of professional and social sectors, faiths, and cultures. Key individuals and community leaders were specifically identified to ensure that important institutions were represented, including local government, Indigenous leaders, major government organisations, and private firms. Leaders were selected from both formal and informal roles, with influence being a key factor that was not necessarily tied to formal positions. This approach ensured that there was a wide cross-section of community members in attendance, and that several influential local leaders were “in the room” to contribute and listen to the discussion.

Identified leaders were sent a personalised invitation from the Mayor’s office on behalf of the Wagga Women’s Health Centre. This conveyed local leadership support of the event and encouraged commitment from key stakeholders.

There was a maximum capacity of 100 for the event. We reached capacity with 40 apologies, and another 6 interested men who were placed on a mailing list for the Forum outcomes and next steps. Representations from across the community are outlined in Table 1, right.

Table 1: Organisations, Businesses and Community Groups Represented at the Forum

EDUCATION, THE ARTS & SPORT • Charles Sturt University • Indie School • Riverina Conservatorium of Music • The Riverina Anglican College • Local Filmmakers • Southern Sports Academy • Wagga Rugby League Inc. • Southern Inland Rugby Union • Region Riverina	COMMUNITY GROUPS • Mawang Gaway • Murrumbidgee Men’s Group • Multicultural Council of Wagga Wagga • Sri Lankan Community Elder • Muslim Association of Riverina Wagga • Legacy Club Wagga • Rotary District 9705 • Rotary Wagga Wagga Sunrise • Rotary Wagga Wagga Koorringal • Rotary Tumbarumba • Rotary Wollundry Wagga Wagga • Rotary Leeton • WAFRICA • MARWA Inc. • Fijian Community Elder • Pakistani Community Elder	SERVICES • LikeMind • Committee4Wagga • Mission Australia • Relationships Australia • No To Violence • Country Hope • Beacon of Light • Riverina Bluebell
GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS • Wagga Wagga City Council • Wagga Wagga Police • Department of Communities & Justice • Department of Social Services		RELIGIOUS • St Aidan’s Presbyterian Church • St John’s Anglican Church • Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (EFKS)
MEDICAL • Riv Med • Wagga Wagga Base Hospital • Wagga Wagga Calvary Hospital • Shumack Dental		TRADE • AC Electrics • Riverina Water • Louis Dreyfus Company
		HOSPITALITY (PUBS & CLUBS) • Vino & Vinyl • Pastorate • Thirsty Crow

It is worth noting that the Women’s Health Centre worked with local suppliers and vendors to ensure only male staff attended on the day. The aim of this was not only to create a sense of social safety,

but to also signal that this day was led by and dedicated to men. This also served to shift the visual ownership from women organising these events.

FORUM AGENDA:
DESIGNING A DAY TO EMPOWER
MEN ON DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE

Wiradjuri Led Men's Business

First Nations-led practice and cultural safety were prioritised throughout the day. In consultation with Mawang Gaway and the local Wiradjuri community, the Forum began with a Welcome to Country, followed by smoking ceremony and ochre application. A stomping ceremony was also planned but was unable to go ahead due to heavy rains the night before the event. These ceremonies are central to Men's Business for the Wiradjuri people played a key role in creating an inclusive environment on the day. Participation was voluntary, however all attendees from all cultural backgrounds chose to take part. For many attendees, this was their first experience of Men's Business ceremonies and Wiradjuri culture.

Scene Setting and Leadership opening remarks

A local media leader from morning radio, Jamie Way, was asked to be the MC for the event. Jamie is well known across the region and hosts one of the areas most listened to radio shows. It was hoped his charismatic approach and local notoriety would demonstrate the importance of the event and encourage engagement from attendees.

Jamie was responsible for establishing a Code of Conduct with the attendees to foster a sense of safety and empowerment. The code of conduct as agreed by attendees is outlined below:

- **No social media** – “To enable participants to be present and in the moment, and to maintain the safety of what is said in the room is maintained here only, we ask that any social media or photos are not taken across the day. There is a professional photographer present and if you are interested in receiving copies you can reach out to the WWHC.”

- **Sharing** – “You are most welcome to share lived experience today and if you feel empowered to share, we encourage you speak generally. If you need to discuss these items in more detail, there are counsellors on site here today.”
- **Truth Telling** – “We encourage you to speak your mind and heart but be mindful that everyone has different experiences and backgrounds and use language that supports each other.”
- **Mutual respect** – “All in the room here today are community leaders and we need to demonstrate mutual respect for the unique perspective each of us brings.”
- **One person at a time talks** – “Please do not interrupt and build on what others are saying.”
- **Neurodiversity is welcome** – “Not everyone will receive and process information the same. There are quiet places to take time out. If you feel overstimulated, please feel welcome to walk at the back of the room, draw, doodle, or use the fidget rings to help you throughout the day.”

The opening remarks by the regions elected and Indigenous leaders was considered one of the most important success drivers for the day. As formal established male leadership identified as co-owners of the day, attendees already had a sense of the importance of the issue for our community and were more readily able to invest in the discussions.

Mawang Gaway Elder, Uncle James Ingram, spoke about the impact of D&FV on the Wiradjuri and wider First Nations community, highlighting the need for on country healing and helping boys and men return to their culture for healing.

“No future
in violence.”

Wagga Wagga City Mayor, Dallas Tout, emphasized the importance of respect as the central theme of the day. He encouraged participants, acknowledging the presence of many strong leaders, to foster inclusive conversations and avoid dominating discussions.

He underscored the significance of the day as a beginning rather than an endpoint, urging all attendees to engage in meaningful conversations that would lead to tangible outcomes and actionable steps moving forward.

Local Member for State, Dr. Joe McGirr MP, highlighted the alarming reality of violence against women in Australia, emphasising that a woman loses her life every four days due to domestic violence. Dr. McGirr described this as a “shameful statistic” and expressed deep concern over why such violence continues to occur in our society. Looking ahead, Dr. McGirr expressed his hope and commitment to outcomes from the day's discussions that would contribute to meaningful solutions in addressing domestic and family violence.

The Hon. Michael McCormack MP thanked the Wagga Women's Health Centre for establishing this important event. He agreed with and echoed Mayor Dallas Tout's words: **“No future in violence.”** He looked forward to the clear outcomes of the day's event and the steps taken to address and prevent violence in the community.

A program for the day can be found at Appendix E.

Ochre application, for many attendees this was their first experience of Wiradjuri Men's Business ceremonies.

ESTABLISHING BASELINE UNDERSTANDING OF DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE

A critical outcome of the Forum was for attendees to have an increased understanding of D&FV, its contributing factors, and the role men play in its prevention. As our hypothesis was that current approaches to D&FV education do not resonate with men, we sought to innovate how we would approach the messaging and education to create a shared understanding.

As the Wagga Women's Health Centre uses a trauma-informed framework to educate women, this was thought to be a critical lens through which we could discuss violence in our community without a focus on judgement or blame. As such, speakers and topics were selected based on a trauma-informed framework.

Each presenter chose how to deliver their information and allowed for a minimum of 15 mins of question time at the conclusion of the talk. Presenters remained at the Forum for the entire day to encourage informal and ad-hoc discussion in smaller groups. The value of both formal and informal information sharing was considered in the design of the day.



TOPIC ONE

**What is Domestic Violence?
Dispelling Myths**

- Adam Blanch

The first speaker was Adam Blanch, a Trauma and D&FV specialist psychologist who works with both men and women with experiences of violence. Adam's specialist interests in the field of trauma, the psychology of interpersonal violence, and the psychology of identity meant he was able to give an overview of the issue through many lenses. Adam is also an educator on Trauma and D&FV, currently working on delivering training to frontline workers.

A unique aspect of Adam's presentation was his use of trauma and attachment theory in combination with gender-based theory to describe D&FV. For many men in the room, they had never thought of D&FV through a trauma lens and the conversations that were stimulated were deeply personal and self-reflective.



TOPIC TWO

**Men talking with Men
for Healing - The Murrumbidgee
Men's Group**

- Rhys Cummins

Wagga Wagga local and founder of the Murrumbidgee Men's Group, Rhys Cummins, created space for a conversation with attendees on the importance of sharing your story with other men. Rhys works for Pathways Murrumbidgee in the drug and alcohol field and is an exceptional advocate for men's mental health in the community. His leadership in addressing men's mental health is well respected and his personal story of his struggles and survival resonates with men who are struggling with challenges related to mental health, addiction and personal relationships.

This topic was less structured and allowed for attendees to share elements of their personal stories in a safe way, with Rhys facilitating conversation similarly to a session of the Murrumbidgee Men's Group. This informal conversation created a real-life demonstration on the power of men sharing their stories of needing help with issues of mental health, addiction, burnout, shame and subsequent use of violence.

Furthermore, showcasing a local advocate and leader created the sense that this was an achievable approach for our community with Wagga men specifically encouraged to consider men's groups and supports for healing.



TOPIC THREE

**The Continuum of Misogyny
and Engaging Men on
Domestic & Family Violence**

- Dave Kramer

The final speaker was David (Dave) Kramer, an Ambassador for Small Steps 4 Hannah. Dave is a behavioural scientist who dedicates his life to empowering people to contribute to community safety since the loss of his best friend, Hannah Clarke, and her children in 2020. Dave blends his personal narrative with evidence-based violence prevention research to address critical issues such as masculinity, gender-based violence prevention, and respectful relationships.

One of the most discussed parts of the forum was Dave's presentation of the 'Continuum of Misogyny' based on the largely accepted Pyramid of Racial, Sexual and Gender-based Violence, first described by Tatiana Piper and Jackie Strohm through the Pennsylvania Coalition to Advance Respect (PCAR) in 2019. Dave reframed misogyny to be controlling of men's behaviour and reducing men's ability to be free and empowered individuals. This resonated with many and the discussions around this extended into the breaktime.



Group discussions allowed topics to be explored in deeper ways across the day.

MOVING TO ACTION: ADOPTING AN ASSET BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

To address the Forum objectives of attendees leaving with individualised 'Action Plans' to use, the final stage of the Forum engaged attendees in an activity that identified and designed specific community actions.

Consideration was given to how this was best achieved, with Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) identified as the most appropriate methodology. ABCD is a place-based framework pioneered by John McKnight and Jody Kretzmann, founders of the ABCD Institute at Northwestern University, USA. ABCD approaches promote resilience, ownership, collaboration, and leveraging social capital with existing community assets to create sustainable community changes.

A tool of ABCD is Appreciative Inquiry (AI) which uses open questions and dialogue to help participants uncover existing strengths (S), opportunities (O), advantages (A), and anticipated results (R) in their communities. This analysis (AI SOAR) was used as the key activity to drive discussion between attendees. It was anticipated that this approach would move away from 'What do we need to address D&FV?' to 'What do we have that can address D&FV?' in our community.

... this approach
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in our community.



Attendees shared their stories as part of a day that was underpinned by 'Sharing' and 'Truth Telling'.

SOAR ANALYSIS ACTIVITY

Attendees formed small groups to discuss one of five topics, self-selecting which topic was of most interest to them.

The five topics discussed during the group work were:

1. Men’s Leadership on Addressing Domestic & Family Violence in Wagga Wagga and Surrounds
2. Wagga Wagga and Surrounds Community Working Together to Address Domestic & Family Violence
3. Building Strong and Respectful Relationships in Wagga and Surrounds
4. Men’s Physical Health and Mental Health in Wagga Wagga and Surrounds
5. Addressing Alcohol, Drugs, Gambling and Men’s Violence in Wagga Wagga and Surrounds

Each topic had a facilitator guiding discussion. Participants used a SOAR Analysis template provided with the following prompts:

STRENGTHS

- What might be the intrinsic assets, advantages, and abilities you have to address this issue?
- What skills, knowledge, or attributes do you have to help approach the issue?

OPPORTUNITIES

- What influence, connections, or organisations might you be able to tap into to approach this problem?
- What change, education, or experience might help you solve this problem?

ASPIRATIONS

- What might the Wagga Wagga and surrounds community look like when it is safe from D&FV?
- What might safety look like, sound like, and feel like to community members?
- Is there a ‘good enough’ state we need to consider?

RESULTS

- How will we know when we have achieved a safe community?
- What measures or metrics may inform us that change is occurring?
- What indicators do we look for in the short, medium, and long term?

Due to the high levels of engagement during the education sessions, the timeline for the activity was shortened from 90 to 45 mins. Group discussion and completion of the SOAR analysis occurred over 45 mins with subsequent 30 mins for each group to share any key findings. Upon reflection, holding the group activity towards the end of the day, combined with a shortened amount of allocated time, did reduce levels of engagement and potential outcomes.

SOAR ANALYSIS RESULTS

Below is a summary of key findings from the SOAR analysis activity.

Strengths: A wide range of community assets including existing community groups and physical structures were identified

All groups were able to identify a wide range of community assets and strengths including the presence of strong community networks such as the Murrumbidgee Men’s Group, support from local council, organisations, schools, and sporting clubs, as well as leadership from women advocating for change.

References to ‘informal’ community assets and ‘third party’ locations (community spaces) were also highlighted and seen as ideal settings to engage community at the grassroots and meet people “where they are” in places they feel comfortable.

Opportunities: Men’s health and wellbeing, schools and justice corrections were identified as priorities

Participants highlighted key opportunities such as engaging young men through schools, juvenile justice settings, youth centres, and local sporting clubs, creating early intervention pathways that promote equality, accountability, and positive role modelling.

Opportunities for funding and resource allocation were also identified, with education and awareness raising a common theme amongst most groups.

Specifically an opportunity for developing a service model for a local Wagga Wagga “Men’s Wellness Centre” modelled on the Wagga Women’s Health Centre approach was raised. This gathered much support from attendees.

Aspirations: Availability and accessibility underpinned the ambitions identified

Many of the aspirations focused on fostering a zero-tolerance culture towards D&FV in the Wagga Wagga and surrounds community, ensuring women’s safety, strengthening support services for men and women, and embedding respectful relationships into Wagga Wagga and surrounds.

Reducing barriers to affordability, geographic restrictions, and regional inequities were raised as critical aspirations for the community to ensure services were not only available, but also accessible for local families.

Results: Tangible and measurable outcomes were identified by the groups ensuring we could demonstrate impact in our community

The desired results that were highlighted include a measurable decrease in D&FV incidents, significant behavioural changes within individuals and workplaces, improved collaboration between community groups, and a safer, more respectful and aware community.

Specifically, women feeling safe was raised amongst many groups as a critical outcome with acknowledgment on how this would impact overall community safety. Additionally, empowerment for users of violence through knowledge, skills and resources was also identified.

These results, while preliminary, highlight a community that is considering the impacts of D&FV in a nuanced way and understanding it’s impact across all members of the community. The outcomes of the SOAR analysis were collected and have formed the basis of a Men’s Consultation Group that will continue the work to expand and develop a Wagga Wagga and surrounds community led action plan.

Refer to Appendix C for detailed responses recorded across the five topics.

CLOSING THE FORUM: LEADERS COMMITTING TO NEXT STEPS

The Key Stakeholders concluded the Forum with their reflections on the day. Each representative made a public commitment to continuing the important discussions, and to form a Wagga Wagga and surrounds working group to take the opportunities identified through the SOAR analysis to their next steps.

Participants were invited to nominate themselves to be part of the working group, the details of which will be based on post-event survey responses.



Final remarks led by MC Jamie Way, with Federal Member for the Riverina committing to 'continue the conversation in our community'.

POST EVENT SURVEY RESULTS: WHAT MEN TOLD US AT THE END OF THE FORUM

A post-forum survey was conducted, with 39 attendees completing it on the day and an additional 19 responses collected over the following two weeks while the survey remained open. In total, 58 participants completed the survey.

Key findings from the post-forum Survey (full results can be found in Appendix C)

- **98.3% of survey respondents considered the Forum valuable**, or very valuable, in engaging men in the topic of D&FV.
- Interestingly, there was a shift over the day, with **98.3% of respondents now identifying that men's only events were important**, or very important, to address D&FV, compared to 89.1% prior to the Forum. This demonstrates the importance of tailoring approaches specifically to men in addressing D&FV.
- **100% of attendees felt very safe or comfortable, secure and empowered at the Forum**, while only 71.1% report feeling 'safe' to discuss the issues of D&FV in public or with family and friends. This also highlights the impact of creating 'safe spaces' for men to encourage engagement on the issue of D&FV.
- Comparing the pre and post survey results saw the proportion of **attendees who recognised D&FV as equally a societal and community issue, as well as an individual and family issue, grew from 67.4% to 77.2%** likely driven by a 9.3% shift from those that identified as being unsure prior to the Forum. There was a modest shift of attendee's viewing D&FV as an individual and family related issue from 18.6% prior to the forum to 15.8% after. There was little change in those that identified that D&FV was a community and societal issue with 4.6% prior to the Forum

and 4.1% after. While there was a modest shift towards a broader understanding of D&FV these results likely show that those with existing entrenched views on D&FV did not shift their understanding significantly despite engaging with new information. It highlights the need for further efforts to be done on improving men's understanding of D&FV and its underlying drivers.

- **98.2% of attendees reported that participating in the Forum helped them feel more comfortable to discuss D&FV with family, friends, and community members.** While 70% of men initially identified as confident in discussing D&FV, the significant increase in confidence post-Forum suggests that prior self-assessments may have been overestimated. This could indicate that men were less confident than they initially believed or that their initial confidence was based on limited knowledge, reflecting the idea that "you don't know what you don't know".
- **98.2% of attendees reported leaving the Forum feeling 'hopeful' or 'extremely hopeful'** about the community's ability to implement actions that drive positive change in Wagga Wagga and surrounds over the next five years. This reflects the success of our goal to empower men to see themselves as leaders and catalysts for change, demonstrating the Forum's meaningful impact.

We asked, **'What was your highlight of the Forum?'**
(Post-Forum Survey question)

Responses are grouped into common themes in Table 2 on the following page.

Table 2: Attendee’s Highlights of the Forum

Psychology & Theories	• The framing of D&FV as something that we unconsciously condone by not calling out attitudes and ideas and laughing along with inappropriate talk and behaviour. • The first presentation on psychology of violence. • The psychology of trauma talk was amazing. • The 10 min psychology degree and following talk. This session was impactful and insightful on both a personal and professional level. Great first speaker. • First session: DV is not a gender issue, it is a social issue, enable people to solve their problems without violence. Final session: The continuum of DV, and concrete strategies to address things as they occur. • The talks by psychologist and behavioural scientist were very thought provoking. • Understanding emotional outlets and responses. • Exposure to the bio, psych social model broadening understanding of domestic and family violence.
Guest Speakers	• The guest speakers, however, they did come from very different perceptions and viewpoints which wasn't all bad, however did conflict. • Dave Kramer’s story and message. • All three speakers were impressive and interesting and provided a range of important perspectives. • Dave and his line (the continuum). • Honesty and drive of the three speakers. • Talks were informative, non-judgemental and inclusive.
Sharing Stories & Conversations	• Guest speakers talking about real life experiences. • Real stories being shared by people. • Guest Speakers and Group Discussions. • David Kramer’s discussion (with forum participants). • The ‘safeness’ (Whilst not a word, it describes the feeling of openness and confidentiality). • Talking with men motivated to work on addressing domestic violence. • [Having] uncomfortable discussions.
Empowerment	• That I can do something about D&FV. • Listening to the speakers I can play an informed and more active role at home and in the community. • The discussion session - I wanted to see what else exists here in Wagga and what I can specifically do to help with my skills. • Self-responsibility message for domestic violence.
General	• The amount of people in the room. • The plethora of information. • That the Forum came to be – just a start! • Discovering the voluntary men’s mental health support group exists in Wagga. • Information on the Murrumbidgee Men’s Group

Attendees were asked to commit to actions they will take away after the Forum to lead change in their community and address D&FV. The question was open ended allowing participants to identify for themselves what they want to commit to.

Key Selected Responses:

- Keep promoting the work of the Wagga Women’s Health Centre as an example of the power of community-led initiative to engage men in a movement for change.
- Specific review of language and resistance to the model of endorsing men’s poor behaviour.
- Lead by example.
- Greater thought into the content I engage with and holding others/myself accountable.
- I will touch base with people who display behavioural traits in my company and discuss with them and/or their partner if suitable.
- Participate in future initiatives and publicly encourage better behaviour and attitudes among men and boys; continue to support the WWHC and their activities.
- It will be the little things I do or do not do that will help shape my community.
- Personal change first. Participation in next steps and provide influence in funding, supports and advocacy; initiate and participate in conversations; model positive behaviour; take opportunities to affect change and educate.

- Try to get my church better informed and interested.
- Examine my own attitudes and behaviours as relating to both men and women.
- Join groups to reduce and stamp out D&FV.
- Check in (with Victims) - counter (call out), be curious (encourage critical thought) - appeal to group (no one wants violence).
- Look for more practical activities. Use speakers to talk at other forums.
- Work more closely with colleagues in my industry to better educate our young men.
- Reflect on how men can be and should be part of the solution.
- I think this box needs to be bigger. We need to create a visible vision of what a future without DFV looks like and how to interrupt the Andrew Tate continuum of normalisation and prejudices.

All responses can be seen in Appendix C.

“It will be the little things I do, or do not do, that will help shape my community.”

POST EVENT SURVEY RESULTS:
SIX MONTHS LATER

A final survey was issued to the attendees of the Forum six months after the event to examine the ongoing impact of the Forum on participants. There was an 18% response rate, which is within target of providing us indicative results.

Key findings from the post-Forum Survey:
six months later
(full results can be found in Appendix D)

- **Attendee’s identified Men’s D&FV services (77.78%) and the role of community culture (61.11%) as areas they wanted to understand further.** This demonstrates the lack of awareness, and likely the availability, of men-specific services in the region. The desire to understand impacts of community culture further indicated that our approach of reframing D&FV into a ‘community issue’ was effective and engaged men.
- **100% of participants identified that attending the Forum led to them feeling more comfortable to discuss D&FV with family, friends and community members.** Compared to the 98.2% rate recorded at the end of the Forum, we can see that attendee’s confidence was sustained for a significant period, contributing to lasting improvements in men’s ability to engage in constructive conversations about the issue in community.
- **77.78% of participants indicated the Forum helped them identify what personal experience and assets could be harnessed for leading change.** This demonstrates significant progress toward our objective of men identifying individual action plans to address D&FV, while also highlighting the ongoing need to empower men in our community to become leaders of change.
- When asked whether the participant had taken any action in the community to address D&FV following the Forum, **88.9% of respondents could identify at least one example of steps they had taken** as a direct result of their participation.

The following responses are a selection of what was collected (note identifying information has been edited out for confidentiality):

- Yes, I have raised this workshop’s results with members of community groups and considered the impact of this workshop when re-designing working practices and learning procedures at my organisation.
- [I have] spoken to a male who I had previously spoken to about his comments and attitudes, which was a very fruitful conversation.
- [I raise D&FV] in general conversation in every event I attend.
- I’ve been talking with most people I come in contact with about D&FV in an effort to bring the issue into front-of-consciousness.
- I have made efforts to call out jokes and behaviour I previous didn’t.

One attendee reflected on how their increased understanding of D&FV from the Forum helped them identify ways to lead change:

“It reiterated how intervention at extremely early stages can change behaviours for others, even when setting examples and attitudes without directly addressing violent behaviour. The sequence of relationships between entitlement, objectification, aggression and frustration were also important to understand, combined with mental health interventions and treatment for addictions.”

These results indicate that the Forum delivered significant impact to the men of Wagga Wagga and surrounds with ongoing positive change still being felt.

Full results can be seen at Appendix D.



Lunch time yarns with attendees from RivMed, Wagga Wagga’s Indigenous Health Service, and members of the Wiradjuri community. Informal time for conversation and connection was highly valued across the day.

FORUM OUTCOMES: DID WE ACHIEVE WHAT WE SET OUT TO DO?

An analysis of our results compared to the intended outcomes of the Forum are demonstrated in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Forum outcomes analysis

INTENDED OUTCOMES	RESULTS
Attendees have an increased understanding of D&FV, its contributing factors, and the role men play in the prevention of domestic and family violence	Survey results and feedback gathered through conversations post forum indicated majority of attendees gained an increased understanding of D&FV, its contributing factors, and the role men play in the prevention of D&FV. Not only this but attendees identified significantly increased confidence to use the new knowledge when discussing D&FV in the community.
Attendees have an individual 'Action Plan' that they design throughout the day and use to change their behaviour and actions regarding the issue with short-, medium-, and long-term commitments	This outcome was dependant on the SOAR Analysis activity at the Forum. Due to the level of engagement with the guest speakers during the earlier educational part of the day, the time allocated for the SOAR activity was shortened. Consideration was given on whether to cut discussion short to enable time for the activity, however it was ultimately decided it was more valuable to allow space and time for men to share and explore the issues, and that this was more in line with the overall values and purpose of the day. Additionally, participation in the SOAR group activity demonstrated that the readiness for that level of planning was not there yet. We identified opportunities for more support and training in assisting men in articulating an 'Action Plan' that they feel is realistic and reflective of their time, skills and passions (personal assets). In lieu of a more detailed action plan, attendees did identify and commit to tangible actions on how they would take the learnings from the Forum into the community. We also identified those interested in delving deeper into the finding of the SOAR Analysis to create the more detailed plan.
Individual action plans feed up into an initial 'Men's Community Action Plan for Wagga Wagga and Surrounds' created with leaders identified from the attendees	Discussions around key topics and action steps from the SOAR activity indicated a strong interest and commitment to following up on 'aspirations' and 'opportunities' identified during the session. A key outcome achieved has been the forming of a Men's Consultation Group, who have already met and will be working on a community action plan. Key stakeholders (identified in this report) are committed to working on the community action plan.
Attendees discuss the Forum and its outcomes with family, friends, colleagues spreading the information and understanding	Post-forum survey results and post forum conversations clearly demonstrate that attendees would discuss and have been discussing the Forum. Survey outcomes indicate that attendees have been spreading information and having informal conversations with friends, colleagues, and community members about information and insights they had gained. A case study from one attendee who spoke with the organisation team demonstrated the impact of the Forum. Please see case study on the following page.

CASE STUDY: ATTENDEE'S STORY

"I attended the forum and was very overwhelmed with the content on that Friday night. When my wife asked how it went all I could answer was ... I can tell you what we ate and what the weather was like, but the rest you will have to wait for..."

The following day I picked up the phone to my mate, we hadn't talked in 6 months or so. I wanted to debrief with him my experience at the Forum. He was interstate so hadn't attended. We spent about 3 hours on the phone discussing the Forum, I found myself gently correcting some misconceptions he has about the issues that I knew I wouldn't have been able to do before.

After that conversation I felt relieved. Since the Forum I have gone back to business as usual but have pulled myself up on behaviours that I would have thought was funny, but now I don't want to be funny in that way anymore.

I'm also helping my wife around the house more. I try to step up when I see she is struggling where before I may not have even noticed if she was."

While we did not achieve the outcomes in the way we anticipated, there was a significantly stronger response from attendees than could have been predicted. The vast majority of attendees requested to receive a copy of the report, they also wanted to be engaged in the next steps as we develop action plans for our community.

We believe that this Forum has significantly changed the direction of local men's engagement with Domestic and Family Violence.

Local services provided information for attendees across the day.

NEXT STEPS: MEN'S CONSULTATION GROUP

The Forum was successful in shifting the focus of D&FV from being an isolated or individual issue to a community issue. Attendees identified as feeling more empowered to be part of the solution and become partners in the change that's needed. Feedback received from all participant surveys indicated an interest in participating in the next steps post-forum. The vast majority of participants, in various ways and capacities, committed to building on the momentum and success of the event.

The Key Stakeholders, community leaders Mawang Gaway, Mayor Dallas Tout, Dr Joe McGirr MP and The Hon. Michael McCormack MP remained committed post event and took part in a debrief. Commitments were made for the parties to remain involved in post forum events with the formation of a 'Men's Consultation Group' to continue the initial SOAR analysis and create action plans.

Discussion with the key stakeholders identified that keeping the men's group auspiced by the Wagga Women's Health Centre and supported through the DV2650 project would ensure it was aligned to primary prevention activities in the region more broadly but also remain in line with the original values of the Forum. There was also strong informal feedback that a women's organisation formally inviting men to discuss and lead on the issue was a key part of why so many participants were engaged.

Since the Forum a call out was issued for those interested in forming the 'Men's Consultation Group on engaging men on D&FV in Wagga Wagga and Surrounds'. There were over 30 responses with many more offering support but unable to attend meeting times. The first meeting was held 8 November 2024, four months after the Forum, and a Terms of Reference was established.

The group will meet monthly as it develops the next plans and looks to roll out the initiatives designed by men for men in our community.

CONCLUSION: WHY INVESTING IN PRIMARY PREVENTION WITH MEN MATTERS

The Wagga Wagga and Surrounds Men's Leadership Forum marked a significant step forward in shifting the conversation surrounding D&FV from being solely a women's issue to a shared community responsibility. By creating a safe, non-judgemental space for men to engage with the issue, the Forum successfully fostered a deeper understanding and increased confidence in discussing D&FV, and empowered attendees to take meaningful action in their personal and professional lives.

Post-forum surveys revealed a significant shift in perspectives, with attendees reporting greater willingness to engage in conversations about D&FV, challenge harmful attitudes, and contribute to positive change. Many attendees also committed to taking a proactive role within their areas of personal influence, highlighting the importance of a tailored approach that empowers men as allies and leaders in prevention initiatives.

A key outcome of the Forum has been the formation of the Men's Consultation Group, which will continue the momentum by facilitating conversations and developing community-led initiatives. The Consultation Group supports the notion that men are willing and eager to contribute when they are engaged as part of the solution. The Forum was a community-led innovation, and its success provides a strong foundation for future efforts, reinforcing the power of local leadership and collective action in addressing D&FV.

Looking ahead, the Wagga Women's Health Centre remains committed to supporting inclusive, trauma-informed, evidence-based strategies that engage men as partners in creating a safer community. By continuing to invest in primary prevention and fostering conversations that challenge stigma and misconceptions, we can work towards a future where all members of our community – men, women and children – live free from violence.



Left: Key stakeholders at the first meeting of the Men's Consultation Group (MCG) from left, The Hon Michael McCormack MP, Uncle Hewitt Whyman, Dr Joe McGirr MP, WWHC Director Johanna Elms, WWHC Community Engagement Manager Penny Stanbury, Joshua Pearson representing the Department of Communities and Justice, and Wagga Wagga Mayor Dallas Tout.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: PRE SURVEY RESULTS

This appendix contains the direct report generated from SurveyMonkey, the platform used for data collection. SurveyMonkey is an industry-standard tool for survey administration, ensuring reliable data collection and reporting. The report is presented in its original format to maintain transparency and accuracy.

APPENDIX B: SOAR RESULTS

APPENDIX C: POST FORUM RESULTS

This appendix contains the direct report generated from SurveyMonkey, the platform used for data collection. SurveyMonkey is an industry-standard tool for survey administration, ensuring reliable data collection and reporting. The report is presented in its original format to maintain transparency and accuracy.

APPENDIX D: 6 MONTH FORUM RESULTS

This appendix contains the direct report generated from SurveyMonkey, the platform used for data collection. SurveyMonkey is an industry-standard tool for survey administration, ensuring reliable data collection and reporting. The report is presented in its original format to maintain transparency and accuracy.

APPENDIX E : EVENT PROGRAM

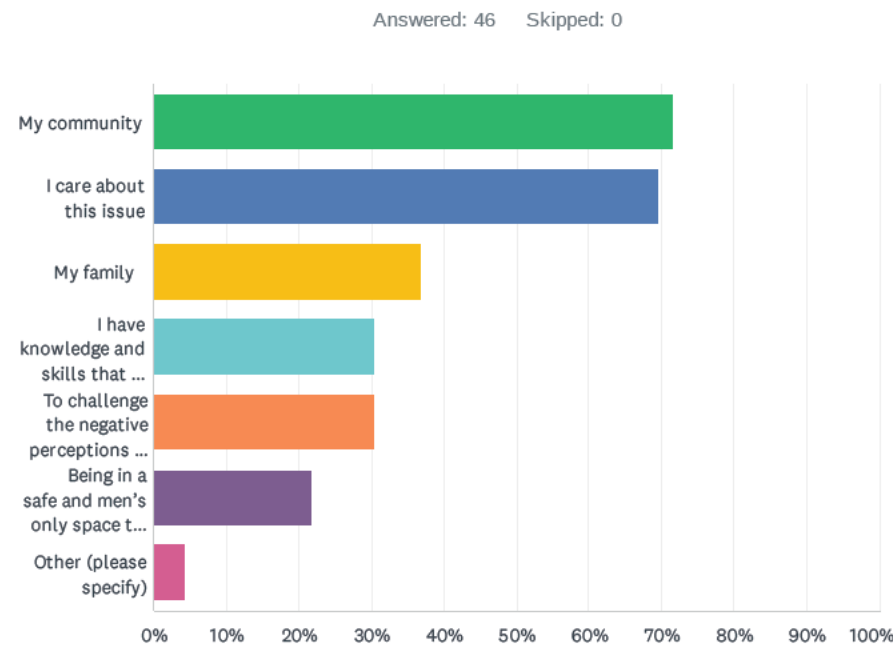
This appendix contains the event program that was distributed to all attendees. It outlines the schedule, speakers, and key activities as presented on the day.

APPENDIX A: PRE SURVEY RESULTS

This appendix contains the direct report generated from SurveyMonkey, the platform used for data collection. SurveyMonkey is an industry-standard tool for survey administration, ensuring reliable data collection and reporting. The report is presented in its original format to maintain transparency and accuracy.

Men's Leadership Forum : Pre Event

Q1 What was the greatest motivator/s for you to participate in this forum?
(select all that apply)

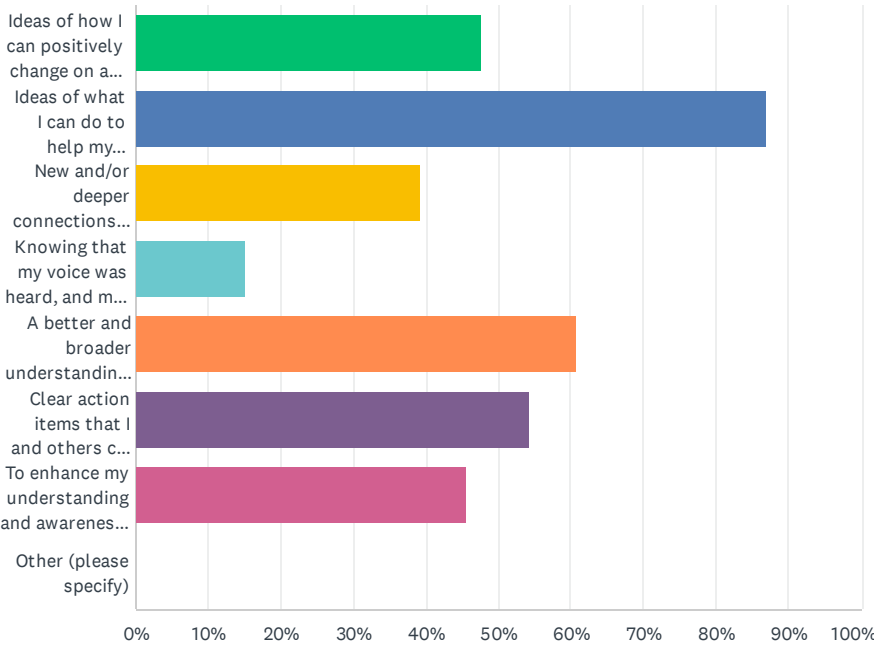


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
My community	71.74%	33
I care about this issue	69.57%	32
My family	36.96%	17
I have knowledge and skills that may help in creating solutions around this issue	30.43%	14
To challenge the negative perceptions and divisive language, especially as it relates to men	30.43%	14
Being in a safe and men's only space to openly discuss D&FV violence	21.74%	10
Other (please specify)	4.35%	2
Total Respondents: 46		

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	invited	7/29/2024 2:40 PM
2	I want to stop all violence, especially against women, children and pets	7/26/2024 9:56 AM

Q2 What is the main thing/s you hope to walk away with after the Forum?
(select all that apply)

Answered: 46 Skipped: 0

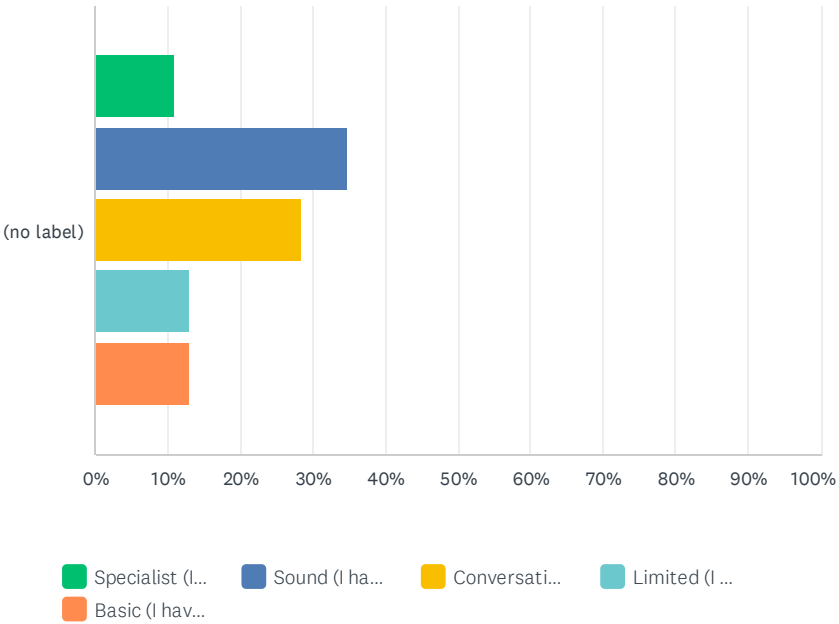


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Ideas of how I can positively change on a personal level	47.83%	22
Ideas of what I can do to help my community	86.96%	40
New and/or deeper connections with other men in our community so that we can work together as a collective	39.13%	18
Knowing that my voice was heard, and my views and ideas were acknowledged and considered	15.22%	7
A better and broader understanding of D&FV Violence	60.87%	28
Clear action items that I and others can implement to create positive change in our community	54.35%	25
To enhance my understanding and awareness of D&FV.	45.65%	21
Other (please specify)	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 46		

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
	There are no responses.	

Q3 How do you rate your level of understanding of the broad issues and challenges related to Domestic and Family violence?

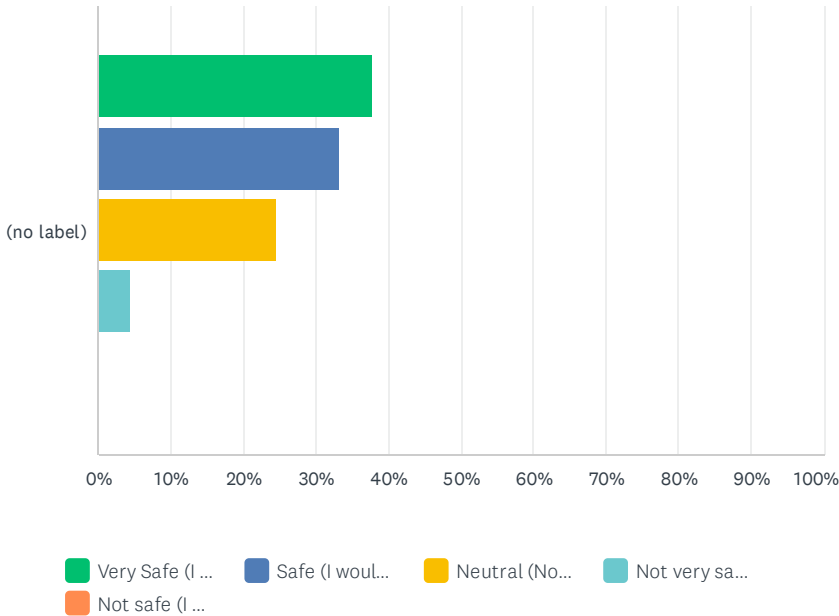
Answered: 46 Skipped: 0



	SPECIALIST (I HAVE IN-DEPTH UNDERSTANDING THAT IS FROM D&FV SPECIFIC TRAINING AND EDUCATION)	SOUND (I HAVE A GOOD UNDERSTANDING AND HAVE SOUGHT TO INCREASE MY KNOWLEDGE THROUGH AVAILABLE INFO)	CONVERSATIONAL (I HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING BASED ON INFORMAL CONVERSATIONS AND INFORMATION)	LIMITED (I MAINLY UNDERSTAND D&FV THROUGH MY OWN PERSONAL EXPERIENCE)	BASIC (I HAVE VERY BASIC UNDERSTANDING OR KNOWLEDGE OF THE CHALLENGES AND ISSUES)	TOTAL	WEIGH AVERA
(no label)	10.87% 5	34.78% 16	28.26% 13	13.04% 6	13.04% 6	46	

Q4 Generally, how safe (or comfortable, secure, empowered) do you feel to speak openly about your experiences or views related to D&F Violence?

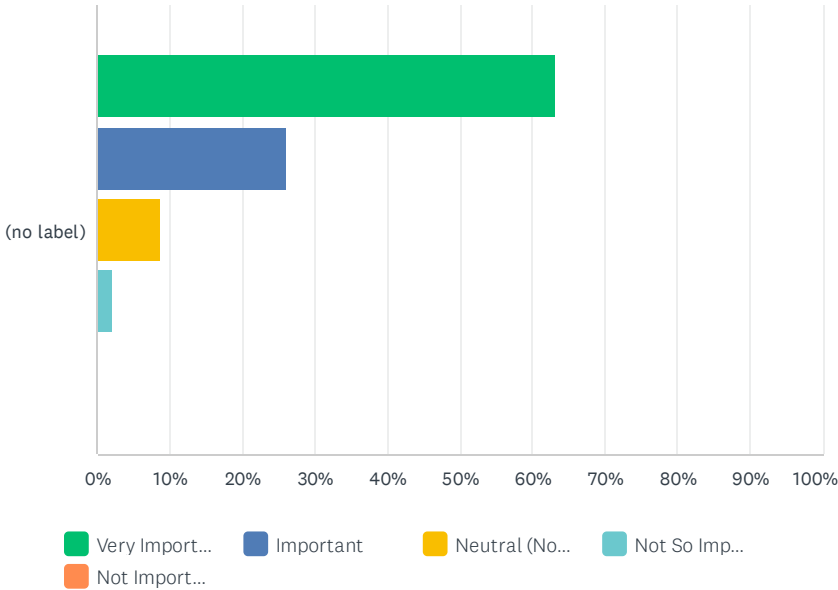
Answered: 45 Skipped: 1



	VERY SAFE (I WOULD CONFIDENTLY DISCUSS THIS ISSUE IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN WITHOUT CONCERN)	SAFE (I WOULD CONFIDENTLY DISCUSS THIS ISSUE WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS WITH LITTLE CONCERN)	NEUTRAL (NOT SURE)	NOT VERY SAFE (I HAVE SOME CONCERNS MY CONTRIBUTION WOULD BE DISMISSED, DEMEANED OR RIDICULE)	NOT SAFE (I WOULD NOT DISCUSS THIS ISSUE FOR CONCERN THAT MY CONTRIBUTION WOULD BE DISMISSED)	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	37.78% 17	33.33% 15	24.44% 11	4.44% 2	0.00% 0	45	1.96

Q5 How important is it to hold men's only events and forums in addressing D&FV Violence in our community?

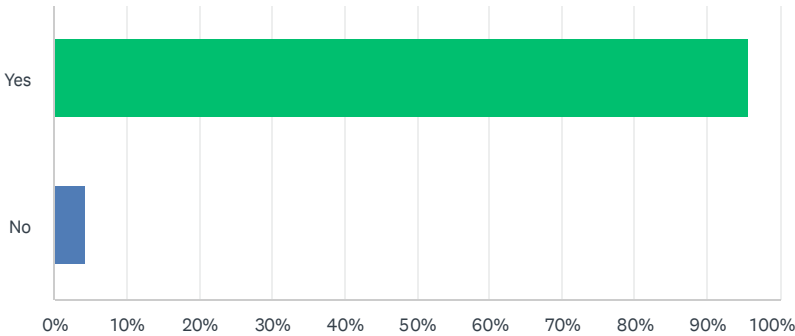
Answered: 46 Skipped: 0



	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	NEUTRAL (NOT SURE)	NOT SO IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	63.04% 29	26.09% 12	8.70% 4	2.17% 1	0.00% 0	46	1.50

Q6 Is this the first time you have participated in a men’s only event (including meetings with other stakeholders) to discuss D&FV?

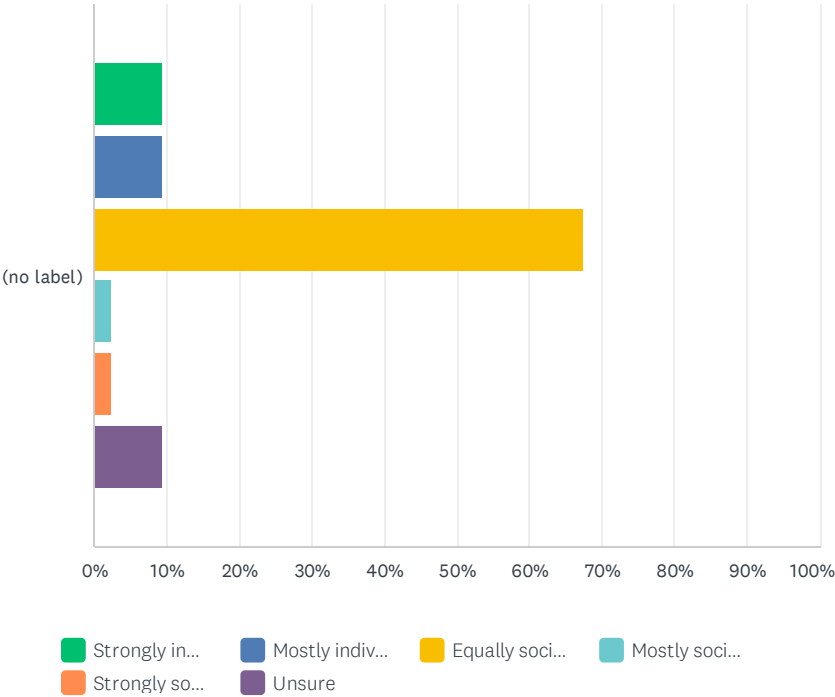
Answered: 46 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	95.65%	44
No	4.35%	2
TOTAL		46

Q7 Select the response you most believe ‘D&FV is an issue that is...’

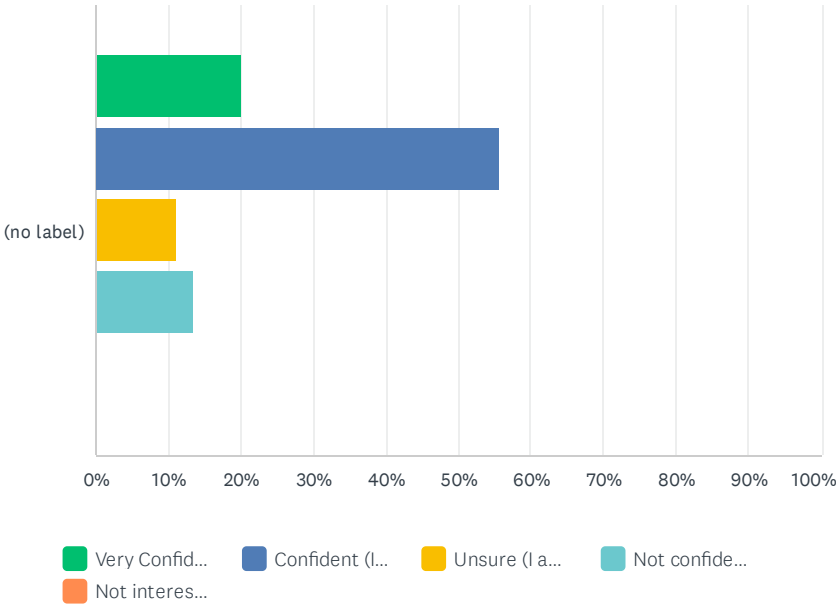
Answered: 43 Skipped: 3



	STRONGLY INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY RELATED	MOSTLY INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY RELATED	EQUALLY SOCIETAL AND COMMUNITY AND INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY RELATED	MOSTLY SOCIETAL AND COMMUNITY RELATED	STRONGLY SOCIETAL AND COMMUNITY RELATED	UNSURE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	9.30% 4	9.30% 4	67.44% 29	2.33% 1	2.33% 1	9.30% 4	43	2.77

Q8 How confident do you feel to lead with others in addressing D&FV in our community?

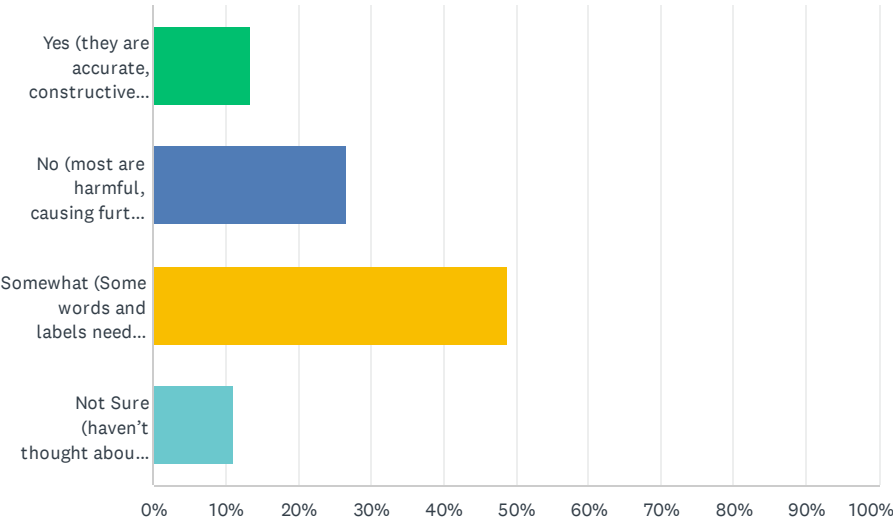
Answered: 45 Skipped: 1



	VERY CONFIDENT (I AM READY NOW TO LEAD)	CONFIDENT (I AM EAGER TO LEAD, BUT NEED SUPPORT)	UNSURE (I AM NOT SURE IF I HAVE LEADERSHIP QUALITIES)	NOT CONFIDENT (I FEEL HESITANT TO TAKE ON A LEADERSHIP ROLE)	NOT INTERESTED (I DO NOT WISH LEAD ON THIS ISSUE)	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	20.00% 9	55.56% 25	11.11% 5	13.33% 6	0.00% 0	45	2.18

Q9 Do you feel that the language and labels currently used in public conversation around D&FV encourages men to engage on the issue?

Answered: 45 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes (they are accurate, constructive and work)	13.33%	6
No (most are harmful, causing further blame, division, alienation and stigmatisation)	26.67%	12
Somewhat (Some words and labels need changing but they are mostly constructive)	48.89%	22
Not Sure (haven't thought about the impact of words and language)	11.11%	5
TOTAL		45

TOPIC 1

MEN’S LEADERSHIP ON ADDRESSING DOMESTIC & FAMILY VOILENCE IN WAGGA AND SURROUNDS

STRENGTHS

- Murrumbidgee Men’s Group (strengthening community groups)
- A lot of local organisations / speakers to address issue in work place
- Sporting groups / community

OPPORTUNITIES

- Funding available
- A lot of local orgs / speakers to address issue in work place
- Communication / Education
- Practical projects
- Sharing workload and spreading message
- School programs ensuring early intervention
- Domestic & Family Violence information session / workshops

ASPIRATIONS

- Raise awareness
- Zero tolerance
- Safe
- Making conversations on Domestic & Family Violence “the norm”
- Increase in courage to address on occurances
- Eduring Changes

RESULTS

- Behaviour patterns changed
- More events
- Reduction in Domestic & Family Voilence incidents
- Changes in Workplaces

TOPIC 2

WAGGA AND SURROUNDS COMMUNITY WORKING TOGETHER TO ADDRESS DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE

STRENGTHS

- Schools Community
- Lots of Groups & Committees
- Good Resources, local members, and mayor support
- Many Women Leaders

OPPORTUNITIES

- Improve Indigenous participation
- Need increase opportunities for men
- Need to educate others
- More information sessions in sport between groups

ASPIRATIONS

- Safety for women in all homes
- Ensure that women’s safety is on all agendas
- Increasing services to men and women and children

RESULTS

- Women feeling safe
- Healthy families
- Solutions for Programs
- Resources for action
- Get problems solved
- Better integration between ethnic groups

TOPIC 3

BUILDING STRONG AND RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS IN WAGGA AND SURROUNDS

STRENGTHS

- Education, Values
- Community (Strengths/Assets)
- Groups of willing participants
- Ability grow/ change

OPPORTUNITIES

- Visible Readiness
- Young Community
- Education Centre
- Wagga Women’s Health Centre

ASPIRATIONS

- Create new social norms
- Create better outcomes
- Youth engagement
- Equal playing field to decrease Domestic & Family Violence
- Foster Trust
- Safer community for women

RESULTS

- **Decrease Domestic & Family Violence**
- **Community understanding and respect**

TOPIC 4

MEN’S PHYSICAL HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH IN WAGGA AND SURROUNDS

STRENGTHS

- Safety for all
- Awareness through hubs inspaces where people gather
- Escape pathways
- Empowerment alternatives to violence through knowledge, skills, resources
- Men’s Health Centre
- Gender Freedom (narrative)
- Early Education & Accountability
- Maintain visibility

OPPORTUNITIES

- In Schools and any community gatherings
- Prevention education
- Positive action
- Social Media training
- Critical thinking skills
- Acknowledge that we are all part of the problem
- Putting community hubs / services in pubs - where people are
- Political unity on outcomes

ASPIRATIONS

- Create new social norms
- Create better outcomes
- Youth engagement
- Equal playing field to decrease Domestic & Family Violence
- Foster Trust
- Safer community for women

RESULTS

- **Fewer instances of domestic violence**
- **Equity (financial, gender, choice)**
- **Safety and actualised population**
- **Open conversation**
- **More positive, less polarised culture**
- **Greater critical thought**

TOPIC 5

ADDRESSING ALCOHOL, DRUGS, GAMBLING AND MEN’S VIOLENCE IN WAGGA AND SURROUNDS

STRENGTHS

- Education, Values
- Community (Strengths / Assets)
- Groups of willing participants
- Ability grow/ change

OPPORTUNITIES

- Larger community events
- Need to know where to find support groups
- Improve branding
- Limit gambling (Funds, Time?)
- Early intervention

ASPIRATIONS

- Reduce / eliminate advertising around gambling / alcohol
- Spending less time gambling in hotels?

RESULTS

- **Lower levels of violence in the community**



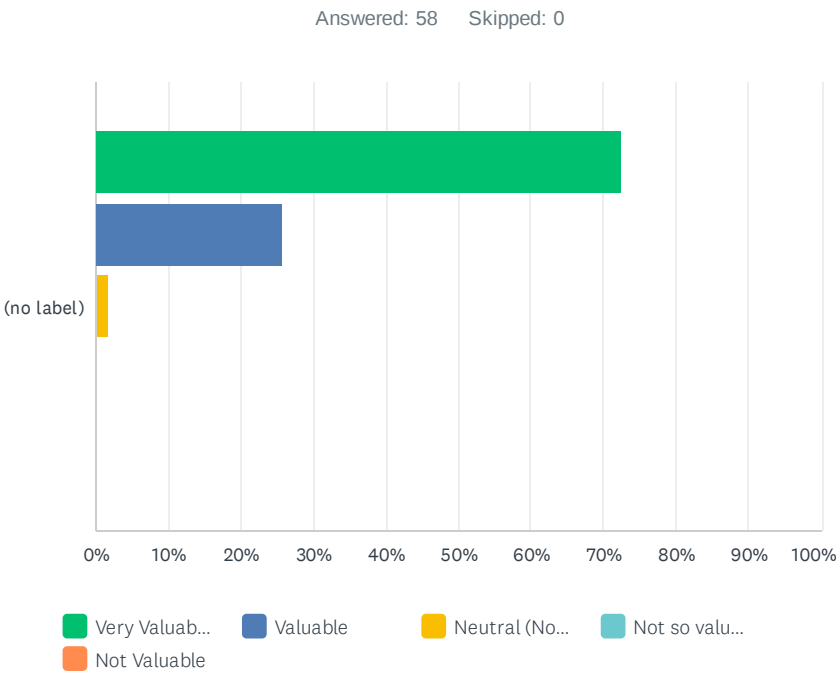
Attendees engaged in the Smoking Ceremony.

APPENDIX C: POST FORUM RESULTS

This appendix contains the direct report generated from SurveyMonkey, the platform used for data collection. SurveyMonkey is an industry-standard tool for survey administration, ensuring reliable data collection and reporting. The report is presented in its original format to maintain transparency and accuracy.

Mens Leadership Forum - Post Event Feedback (2 weeks)

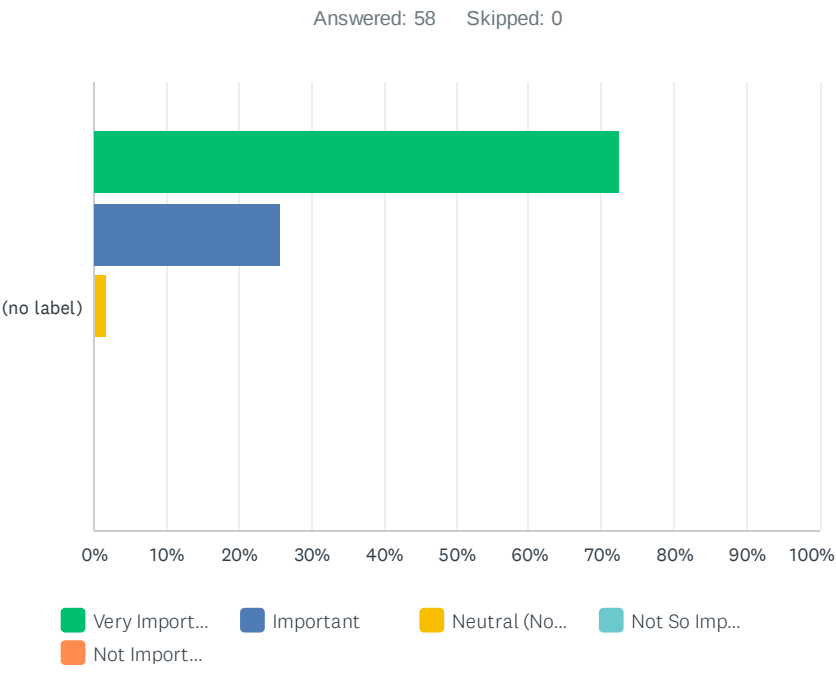
Q1 How valuable do you feel this forum was for engaging men in the topic of D&FV?



	VERY VALUABLE	VALUABLE	NEUTRAL (NOT SUCCESSFUL OR UNSUCCESSFUL)	NOT SO VALUABLE	NOT VALUABLE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	72.41% 42	25.86% 15	1.72% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	58	1.29

Mens Leadership Forum - Post Event Feedback (2 weeks)

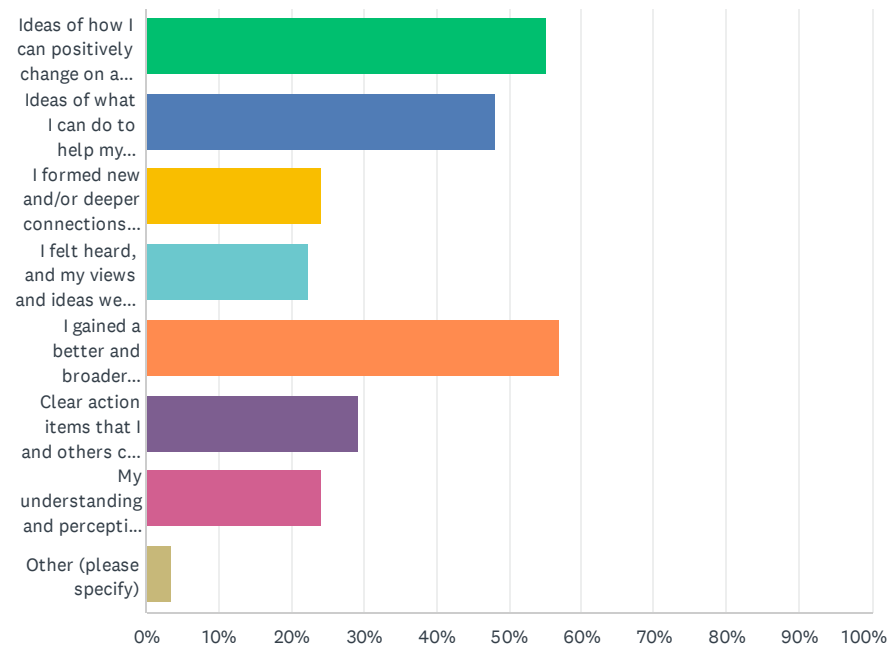
Q2 How important is it to hold men’s only events and forums in addressing D&FV Violence in our community?



	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	NEUTRAL (NOT IMPORTANT)	NOT SO IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	72.41% 42	25.86% 15	1.72% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	58	1.29

Q3 In participating in this forum, what were the key takeaways for you?
(Select all that apply)

Answered: 58 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Ideas of how I can positively change on a personal level	55.17%	32
Ideas of what I can do to help my community	48.28%	28
I formed new and/or deeper connections with other men in our community	24.14%	14
I felt heard, and my views and ideas were acknowledged and considered	22.41%	13
I gained a better and broader understanding of D & F Violence	56.90%	33
Clear action items that I and others can implement to create positive change in our community	29.31%	17
My understanding and perceptions of D&FV have changed.	24.14%	14
Other (please specify)	3.45%	2
Total Respondents: 58		

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	role within extended family	2/12/2025 2:22 PM
2	Much more needs to happen to engage with a broader range of men	8/6/2024 9:39 PM

Q4 What was your highlight of the Forum?

Answered: 58 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Dave Kramer's Presentation	2/13/2025 11:47 AM
2	Shared stories	2/13/2025 11:46 AM
3	that i can do something about D&FV	2/13/2025 11:45 AM
4	Speakers. 1- informative 2 - *illegible 3- enlightening	2/13/2025 11:43 AM
5	Guest speakers - knowledgeable, imparted good information	2/13/2025 11:42 AM
6	great presentations by people who have a lot of knowledge and experience	2/13/2025 11:41 AM
7	n/a	2/13/2025 11:38 AM
8	meeting more people, connection	2/13/2025 11:37 AM
9	Got 100 or so 'leaders' together for a start!	2/13/2025 11:35 AM
10	All good speakers. Dave - very good	2/12/2025 2:28 PM
11	learning about '.....' specifically located in wagga *work was illegible to read.	2/12/2025 2:26 PM
12	n/a	2/12/2025 2:25 PM
13	n/a	2/12/2025 2:23 PM
14	n.a	2/12/2025 2:22 PM
15	Listening to the speakers I can play a informed and more active role at home and in the community	2/12/2025 2:21 PM
16	Daves presentation and Video. Adam on psychology.	2/12/2025 2:19 PM
17	Continuum *(from Dave Kramers Talk)	2/12/2025 2:18 PM
18	skipped	2/12/2025 2:16 PM
19	Speakers all brought a different perspective	2/12/2025 2:15 PM
20	The honesty and drive of the three speakers	2/12/2025 2:13 PM
21	Continuum was very enlightening	2/12/2025 2:12 PM
22	Talking with men motivated to work on addressing domestic violence.	2/12/2025 2:10 PM
23	Talking with men motivated to work on addressing domestic violence.	2/12/2025 1:40 PM
24	The presentation from Dave.... Small steps 4 Hannah	2/12/2025 1:37 PM
25	No response	2/12/2025 1:35 PM
26	Adam was awesome	2/12/2025 1:32 PM
27	The discussion sessions, more so than the speakers. They were excellent but I wanted to see what else exists here in Wagga and what I can specifically do to help with my skills.	2/12/2025 1:30 PM
28	The Self responsibility message for domestic violence.	2/12/2025 1:26 PM
29	All of the speakers were incredibly insightful	2/12/2025 1:23 PM
30	The stories amd the talk at the end	2/12/2025 1:21 PM
31	Exposure to bio psycho social model broadening understanding of dfv	2/12/2025 1:19 PM

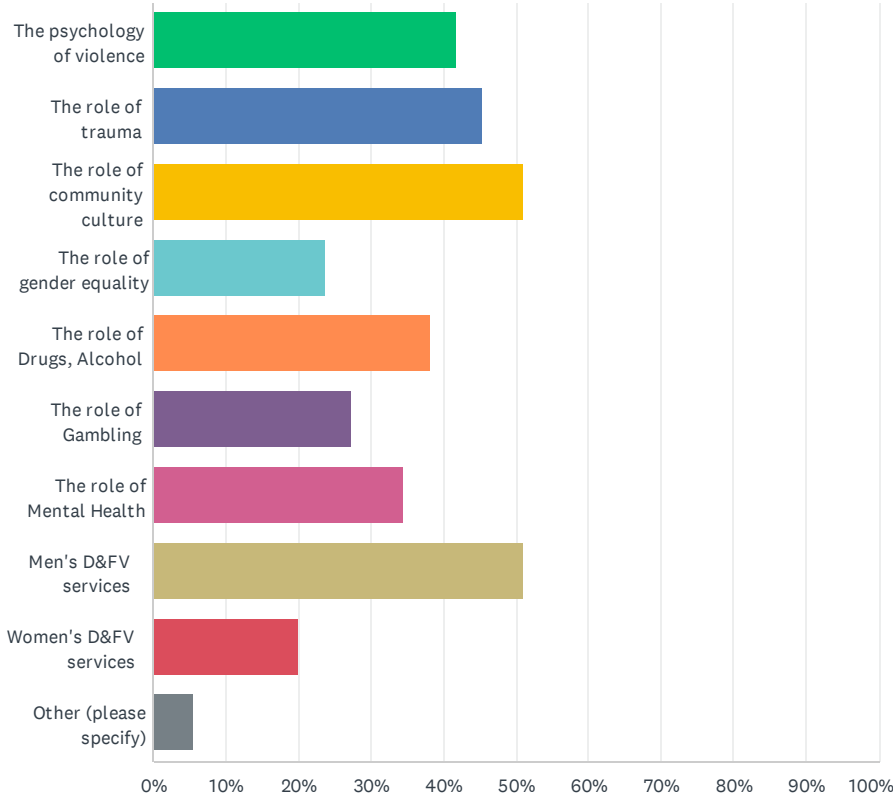
Mens Leadership Forum - Post Event Feedback (2 weeks)

32	Amazing speakers who shared their invaluable experiences	2/12/2025 1:16 PM
33	Being able to address multiple outcomes for q3. Learning about David's HALT program for schools, similar to love bites and respectful relationships	2/12/2025 1:12 PM
34	The presenters passion and delivery	2/12/2025 1:10 PM
35	Uncomfortable discussions	2/12/2025 1:07 PM
36	The talks were very informative, non judgemental and inclusive	2/12/2025 1:04 PM
37	Information received on Murrumbidgee Men's Group	2/12/2025 12:56 PM
38	THE AMPUNT OF PEOPLE IN THE ROOM	9/9/2024 1:26 PM
39	All three speakers were really impressive and interesting and provided a range of important perspectives	8/15/2024 2:12 AM
40	Dave and his line	8/14/2024 1:20 PM
41	Discovering that a voluntary men's mental health support group exists in Wagga and the basis for personality disorders in emotional outlets/responses	8/13/2024 2:19 PM
42	Guest speakers talking about real life experiences.	8/12/2024 11:42 AM
43	David Kramer's discussion	8/12/2024 11:22 AM
44	Guest Speakers and Group Discussions	8/9/2024 1:52 PM
45	Real stories being shared by people	8/8/2024 8:51 AM
46	The psychology of trauma talk was amazing. I'd love to get his slides if possible.	8/7/2024 10:59 AM
47	The framing of DV as something that we unconsciously condone by not calling out attitudes and ideas and laughing along with inappropriate talk and behaviour.	8/7/2024 9:50 AM
48	The first presentation on psychology of violence	8/7/2024 9:29 AM
49	The guest speakers, however they did come from very different perceptions and viewpoints which wasnt all bad, however did conflict.	8/7/2024 8:54 AM
50	The 10 min psychology degree and following talk. This session was impactful and insightful on both a personal and professional level. Great first speaker	8/7/2024 7:13 AM
51	Dave Kramer's story and message	8/7/2024 6:40 AM
52	That the meeting came to be - just a start!	8/6/2024 9:39 PM
53	First session: DV is not a gender issue, it is a social issue, enable people to solve their problems without violence. Final session: The continuum of DV, and concrete strategies to address things as they occur.	8/6/2024 9:11 PM
54	The 'safeness'.(that's not a word but it describes the openness, the confidentiality, the vibe)	8/6/2024 6:28 PM
55	The talks by psychologist and behavioural scientist were very thought provoking	8/6/2024 5:41 PM
56	Dave Kramer's presentation	8/6/2024 5:31 PM
57	None	8/6/2024 5:18 PM
58	The plethora of information	8/6/2024 5:11 PM

Mens Leadership Forum - Post Event Feedback (2 weeks)

Q5 What aspect(s) of D&FV do you wish was discussed further? (Select all that apply)

Answered: 55 Skipped: 3



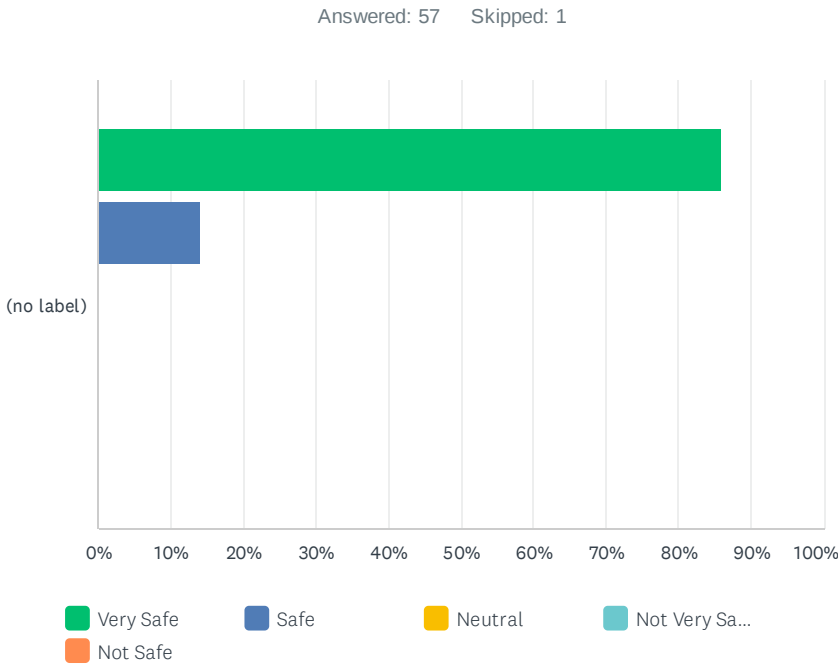
Mens Leadership Forum - Post Event Feedback (2 weeks)

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
The psychology of violence	41.82%	23
The role of trauma	45.45%	25
The role of community culture	50.91%	28
The role of gender equality	23.64%	13
The role of Drugs, Alcohol	38.18%	21
The role of Gambling	27.27%	15
The role of Mental Health	34.55%	19
Men's D&FV services	50.91%	28
Women's D&FV services	20.00%	11
Other (please specify)	5.45%	3
Total Respondents: 55		

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Practical Activities to use	2/12/2025 2:18 PM
2	Discussion/development of actions/steps that can be taken in daily life	8/7/2024 6:40 AM
3	Potential for mens services (not just d&fv) in creating spaces where men may feel comfortable to learn, ask for help, and develop new personal skills, or access needed social services	8/6/2024 5:41 PM

Mens Leadership Forum - Post Event Feedback (2 weeks)

Q6 How safe (or comfortable, secure, empowered) did you feel at this forum?

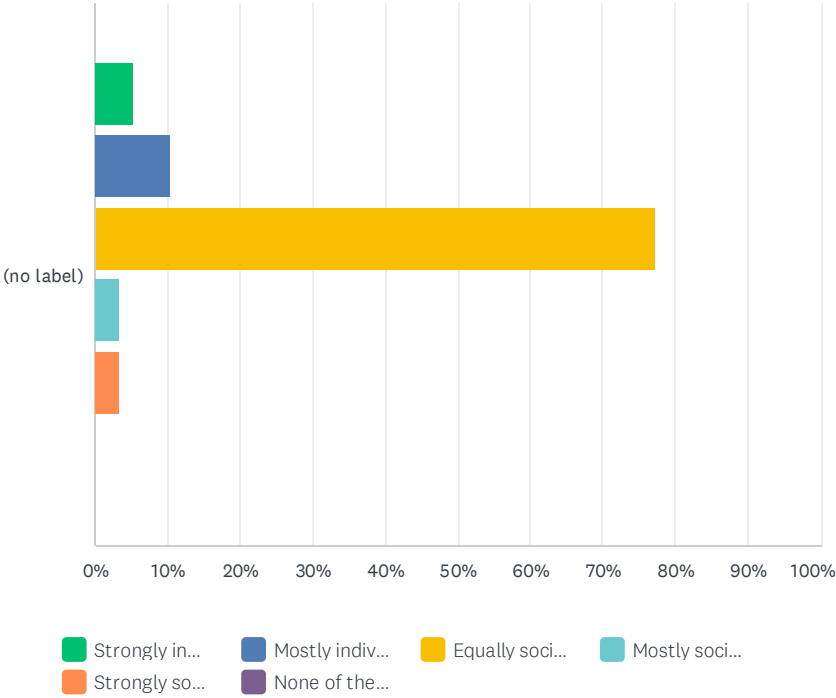


	VERY SAFE	SAFE	NEUTRAL	NOT VERY SAFE	NOT SAFE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	85.96% 49	14.04% 8	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	57	1.14

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	your words describe my safeness better	8/6/2024 6:28 PM
2	Confident	8/6/2024 5:18 PM

Q7 Now that you have attended this forum what is your response to the below. Select the response you most believe 'D&FV is an issue that is...'

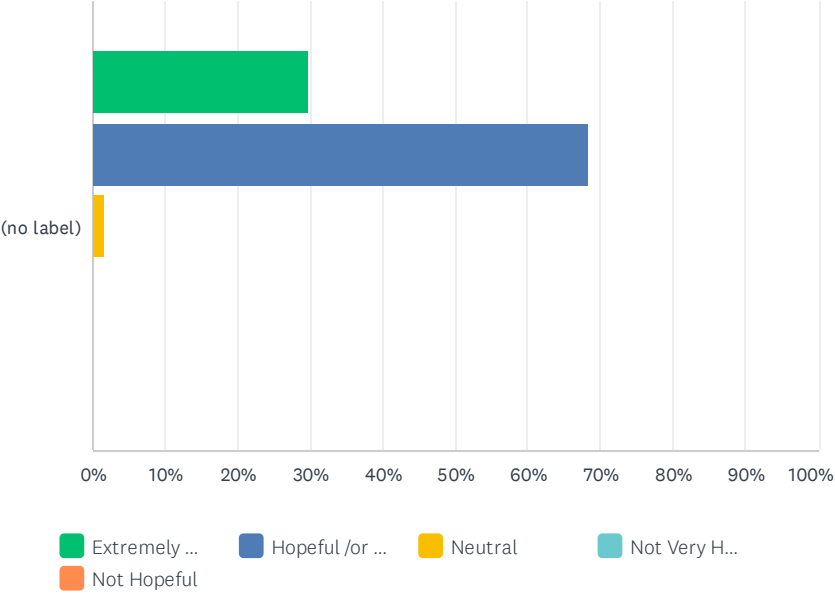
Answered: 57 Skipped: 1



	STRONGLY INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY RELATED	MOSTLY INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY RELATED	EQUALLY SOCIETAL AND INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY RELATED	MOSTLY SOCIETAL AND COMMUNITY RELATED	STRONGLY SOCIETAL AND COMMUNITY RELATED	NONE OF THE ABOVE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	5.26% 3	10.53% 6	77.19% 44	3.51% 2	3.51% 2	0.00% 0	57	2.89

Q8 With more people working together in our community to address the prevalence and occurrence of D/FV, how hopeful (or confident) are you that collaborative efforts and actions can be implemented to create positive changes in Wagga and Surrounds in the next 5 years?

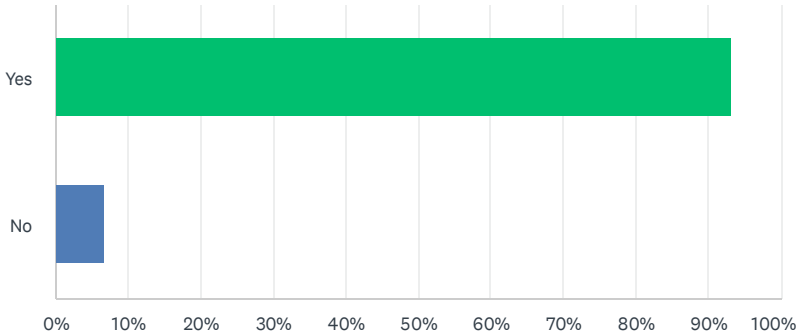
Answered: 57 Skipped: 1



	EXTREMELY HOPEFUL /OR CONFIDENT	HOPEFUL /OR CONFIDENT	NEUTRAL	NOT VERY HOPEFUL	NOT HOPEFUL	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	29.82% 17	68.42% 39	1.75% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	57	1.72

Q9 Has the Forum helped you identify how your experience and personal assets (skills, knowledge, passion, community connections etc) can be harnessed for leading change?

Answered: 58 Skipped: 0



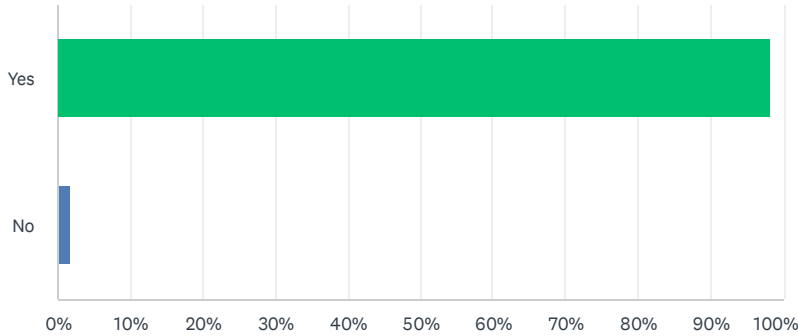
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	93.10% 54
No	6.90% 4
TOTAL	58

#	PLEASE PROVIDE MORE DETAILS (OPTIONAL)	DATE
1	The final group discussion, explore the issue	2/13/2025 11:41 AM
2	More services	2/13/2025 11:37 AM
3	not really	2/12/2025 2:26 PM
4	A bit - more concrete strategies	2/12/2025 2:25 PM
5	Learn from personal mistakes	2/12/2025 2:22 PM
6	More time for family	2/12/2025 2:21 PM
7	Continuing to provide counselling for people in situations of DV. Working with members of the community who are motivated to be involved.	2/12/2025 2:10 PM
8	Continuing to provide counselling for people in situations of DV. Working with members of the community who are motivated to be involved.	2/12/2025 1:40 PM
9	Although there was a bit too much information being provided and being 'talked to'. Some time after each speaker to reflect and discuss a couple of focus questions in small groups could have helped keep people engaged and created a greater sense of something coming out of the day.	8/15/2024 2:12 AM
10	It has changed the way I think and speak about men with public profiles, and a zero tolerance approach to anyone who is sliding on the spectrum of violent attitudes. I came up with this synopsis later - "Harmless to some is not harmless at all."	8/13/2024 2:19 PM
11	Mostly change on a personal level, but with more forum support I could potentially make change in a broader sense around the community.	8/12/2024 11:42 AM

12	My role is promoting better outcomes and behaviours in my community and peers.	8/7/2024 10:59 AM
13	I think DFV is one of those topics that you are either familiar with or have no idea at all. The forum has presented DFV as a complex matter, no one was of addressing it, however it did highlight small things men can do to model appropriate behaviours and thinking in other men.	8/7/2024 8:54 AM
14	As a person with some media profile (and known partly for comedic endeavours), I can lead by example, taking care to demonstrate mindfulness in selecting joke content to exclude sexism and oppression, and to call out problematic content where I see it (potentially in a way that can propagate learning)	8/7/2024 6:40 AM
15	Keep asking questions as progress is made.	8/6/2024 9:39 PM
16	Calling out stereotyping Strategies to encourage critical thought	8/6/2024 9:11 PM
17	But I am willing to be led	8/6/2024 6:28 PM

Q10 After participating in this forum do you feel more comfortable to discuss D&FV with family, friends and community members?

Answered: 58 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	98.28%	57
No	1.72%	1
TOTAL		58

#	PLEASE PROVIDE MORE DETAILS (OPTIONAL)	DATE
1	that i can do something about D&FV	2/13/2025 11:45 AM
2	raised some important issues to think about	2/13/2025 11:41 AM
3	Talk openly	2/13/2025 11:37 AM
4	!!!!	2/12/2025 2:26 PM
5	I felt that the conversation is starting to move away from a moralistic/punitive framework towards a constructive/healing framework.	9/9/2024 1:26 PM
6	Have done so in several opportunities with different groups of men	8/13/2024 2:19 PM
7	I connected on a more personal level with my partner and colleagues.	8/12/2024 11:42 AM
8	Always did, however the forum did open up talking points.	8/7/2024 8:54 AM
9	Every chance I get I am sharing with men mostly of the lessons learnt at the forum	8/6/2024 6:28 PM

Q11 What actions will you take after this forum to lead change in our community to address D&FV?

Answered: 58 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	i will strive to model better attitudes and behaviour	2/13/2025 11:47 AM
2	n/a	2/13/2025 11:46 AM
3	Lead others in the community	2/13/2025 11:45 AM
4	n/a	2/13/2025 11:43 AM
5	n/a	2/13/2025 11:42 AM
6	raised some important issues to think about	2/13/2025 11:41 AM
7	Talk more about it	2/13/2025 11:38 AM
8	More workshop - case study	2/13/2025 11:37 AM
9	support strongly ongoing actions and activites, clarify the role of ROTARY	2/13/2025 11:35 AM
10	more education at an early age	2/12/2025 2:28 PM
11	Too little space! Ask overnight, give time to reflect	2/12/2025 2:26 PM
12	Check in (with Victims) - counter (call out) Be curious (encourage critical thought) - appeal to group (noone wants violence)	2/12/2025 2:25 PM
13	n/a	2/12/2025 2:23 PM
14	Continue the discussion whenever the opportunity arises	2/12/2025 2:22 PM
15	Talk openly in the community	2/12/2025 2:21 PM
16	Be more open in conversations about DV	2/12/2025 2:19 PM
17	Look for more practical activities. Use speakers to talk at other forums	2/12/2025 2:18 PM
18	Additional education for coaches within my professional network	2/12/2025 2:16 PM
19	Work more closely with colleagues in my industry to better educate our young men.	2/12/2025 2:15 PM
20	Reflect on how as men we can be and should be a part of the solution	2/12/2025 2:13 PM
21	Call out disrespectful actions	2/12/2025 2:12 PM
22	I will communicate with a local football club about changing their club song to be more respectful.	2/12/2025 2:10 PM
23	I will communicate with a local football club about changing their club song to be more respectful.	2/12/2025 1:40 PM
24	Discussion within Sporting Groups to further educate young men	2/12/2025 1:37 PM
25	No response	2/12/2025 1:35 PM
26	I will try to be mindful of what I say and do, also acknowledge how this can influence others	2/12/2025 1:32 PM
27	I think this box needs to be bigger. We need to create a visible vision of what a future without DFV looks like and how to interrupt the Andrew Tate continuum of normalisation and prejudices.	2/12/2025 1:30 PM
28	Consciousness about sexism and its potential effects down the line.	2/12/2025 1:26 PM
29	Too early to say as I need to reflect	2/12/2025 1:23 PM

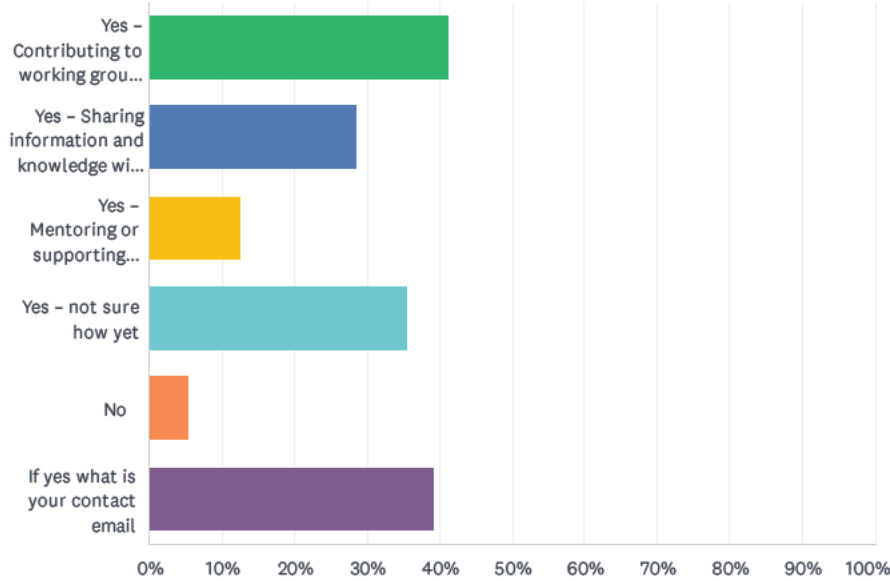
Mens Leadership Forum - Post Event Feedback (2 weeks)

30	No response	2/12/2025 1:21 PM
31	More consciousness of use of language	2/12/2025 1:19 PM
32	No response	2/12/2025 1:16 PM
33	No response	2/12/2025 1:12 PM
34	No response	2/12/2025 1:10 PM
35	No response	2/12/2025 1:07 PM
36	Call out bad behaviours	2/12/2025 1:04 PM
37	Look for opportunities to get the message and help out in the community.	2/12/2025 12:56 PM
38	Stayed involved in the follow up	9/9/2024 1:26 PM
39	Keep promoting the work of Wagga Women as an example of the power of community lead initiative to engage men in a movement for change	8/15/2024 2:12 AM
40	to call out actions that are inappropriate	8/14/2024 1:20 PM
41	Specific review of language and resistance to the 'larrikin' model of endorsing men's poor behaviour	8/13/2024 2:19 PM
42	I'm not sure I am well enough equipped to make change in the community, yet.	8/12/2024 11:42 AM
43	Positive role modeling Being an active bystander	8/12/2024 11:22 AM
44	Lead by example	8/9/2024 1:52 PM
45	Greater thought into the content I engage with and holding others/myself accountable.	8/8/2024 8:51 AM
46	I'll touch base with people who display behavioural traits 8n my company and discuss with them and or their partner if I suitable.	8/7/2024 10:59 AM
47	Participate in future initiatives and publically encourage better behaviour and attitudes among men and boys	8/7/2024 9:50 AM
48	continue to support the WWHC and their activities	8/7/2024 9:29 AM
49	As stated above, it will be the little things I do or don't do that will help shape my community.	8/7/2024 8:54 AM
50	Personal change first. Participation in next steps and provide influence in funding, supports and advocacy	8/7/2024 7:13 AM
51	Initiate and participate in conversations; model positive behaviour; take opportunities to affect change and educate	8/7/2024 6:40 AM
52	Try to get my church better informed and interested.	8/6/2024 9:39 PM
53	Call out or question behaviours that lie on the continuum	8/6/2024 9:11 PM
54	I will be a 'stick-in-the-mud' as I chide my workmates, myself and others that I am in contact with about sexist attitudes	8/6/2024 6:28 PM
55	Examine my own attitudes and behaviours as relating to both men and women	8/6/2024 5:41 PM
56	discuss D&FV with family, friends and community members	8/6/2024 5:31 PM
57	Spread the knowledge	8/6/2024 5:18 PM
58	Join groups to reduce and stamp out dv	8/6/2024 5:11 PM

Mens Leadership Forum - Post Event Feedback (2 weeks)

Q12 Would you be interested in participating in the next steps after this forum? If so, in what capacity?

Answered: 56 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes – Contributing to working groups and strategic planning	41.07%	23
Yes – Sharing information and knowledge with more in our community	28.57%	16
Yes – Mentoring or supporting others	12.50%	7
Yes – not sure how yet	35.71%	20
No	5.36%	3
If yes what is your contact email	39.29%	22
Total Respondents: 56		

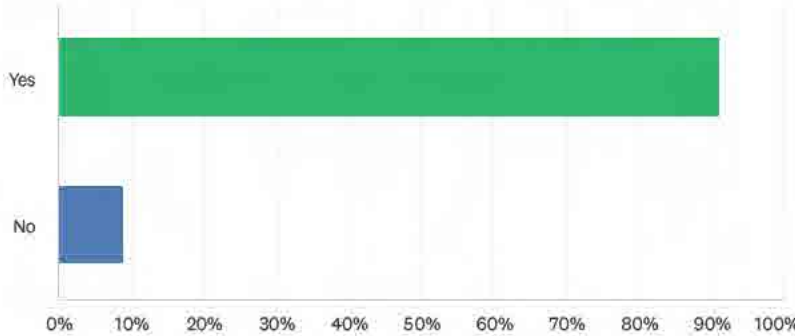


Wagga Wagga Police representatives attended on the day, contributing to the conversation on how D&FV impacts all aspects of our community

Mens Leadership Forum - Post Event Feedback (2 weeks)

Q13 Would you like to receive the report outcomes of this event?

Answered: 56 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	91.07%	51
No	8.93%	5
TOTAL		56

Q14 What do you think the next steps are?

Answered: 58 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	n/a	2/13/2025 11:47 AM
2	n/a	2/13/2025 11:46 AM
3	n/a	2/13/2025 11:45 AM
4	n/a	2/13/2025 11:43 AM
5	n/a	2/13/2025 11:42 AM
6	n/a	2/13/2025 11:41 AM
7	n/a	2/13/2025 11:38 AM
8	n/a	2/13/2025 11:37 AM
9	n/a	2/13/2025 11:35 AM
10	n/a	2/12/2025 2:28 PM
11	n/a	2/12/2025 2:26 PM
12	n/a	2/12/2025 2:25 PM
13	n/a	2/12/2025 2:23 PM
14	n/a	2/12/2025 2:22 PM
15	n/a	2/12/2025 2:21 PM
16	n/a	2/12/2025 2:19 PM
17	n/a	2/12/2025 2:18 PM
18	n/a	2/12/2025 2:16 PM
19	n/a	2/12/2025 2:15 PM
20	n/a	2/12/2025 2:13 PM
21	n/a	2/12/2025 2:12 PM
22	n/a	2/12/2025 2:10 PM
23	No response	2/12/2025 1:40 PM
24	No response	2/12/2025 1:37 PM
25	No response	2/12/2025 1:35 PM
26	No response	2/12/2025 1:32 PM
27	No response	2/12/2025 1:30 PM
28	No response	2/12/2025 1:26 PM
29	No response	2/12/2025 1:23 PM
30	No response	2/12/2025 1:21 PM
31	No response	2/12/2025 1:19 PM
32	No response	2/12/2025 1:16 PM
33	No response	2/12/2025 1:12 PM

34	No response	2/12/2025 1:10 PM
35	No response	2/12/2025 1:07 PM
36	No response	2/12/2025 1:04 PM
37	No response	2/12/2025 12:56 PM
38	Committee or leadership group to create a strategic plan	9/9/2024 1:26 PM
39	It will be great to see the feedback report and maybe establish a local working group involving in men to plan the next steps	8/15/2024 2:12 AM
40	more forums to involve more men	8/14/2024 1:20 PM
41	Men must intervene on the language and attitudes of other men, especially the people they know and if they have a public profile.	8/13/2024 2:19 PM
42	Next step is another forum and talking about how men can lead change in the community.	8/12/2024 11:42 AM
43	Continue these discussions	8/12/2024 11:22 AM
44	Book in for a next Meeting	8/9/2024 1:52 PM
45	Creation of more spaces for these groups and men's programs for awareness building/support within the community.	8/8/2024 8:51 AM
46	Replicate the day for business groups and school kids	8/7/2024 10:59 AM
47	Education and support for local initiatives	8/7/2024 9:50 AM
48	Collate and analyse the feedback from this session and survey and consider bringing the same group together again to create an action plan to address some of the key issues	8/7/2024 9:29 AM
49	I think that this type of thing needs to continue, men from across Wagga Wagga attended this forum, Police, services, community members and government officials. Well worth out time.	8/7/2024 8:54 AM
50	A noticed gap in the participants on the day was younger men. Next forum need to engage demographic of young men, new fathers etc	8/7/2024 7:13 AM
51	Ongoing conversations at the very least. Formation of think tanks to formulate concrete actions everyday men can take	8/7/2024 6:40 AM
52	information sharing at a few community men's meetings after hours in, not out of Wagga. Inform key men;s groups of progress and likely next steps and ask their opinion!! Confidentially some statement about who comprises the current leadership "group" and who some of the constituent groups/bodies are could help understanding. I might help identify any obvious gaps! Well done so far.	8/6/2024 9:39 PM
53	The men at this forum are a start, but arguably most of the people who would benefit from this type of event were not there. These are the people who, in a safe way, need to be accessed and enabled to seek alternative solutions to violence. Other ideas were brain-stormed and notated on our butcher's paper, eg. hubs in places where people gather.	8/6/2024 9:11 PM
54	Let's get some seed funding from 'the government' to set up a Mens' Health Centre that can emulate the amazing work that the Womens' Health Center does.	8/6/2024 6:28 PM
55	Strategic planning at local level Develop male services (with emphasis on safety and positive masculinity)	8/6/2024 5:41 PM
56	Further opportunities to discuss	8/6/2024 5:31 PM
57	Talking to men in the community	8/6/2024 5:18 PM
58	Minimizing db	8/6/2024 5:11 PM

Q15 Is there anything else you want to say about the Forum or D&FV that we have not asked?

Answered: 58 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	AMAZING organisation, speakers, venue, everything!	2/13/2025 11:47 AM
2	n/a	2/13/2025 11:46 AM
3	n/a	2/13/2025 11:45 AM
4	n/a	2/13/2025 11:43 AM
5	n/a	2/13/2025 11:42 AM
6	n/a	2/13/2025 11:41 AM
7	n/a	2/13/2025 11:38 AM
8	all good	2/13/2025 11:37 AM
9	Please note the microphone and amplification were decidedly substandard. Marked reverberation was unpleasant and very hard to hear	2/13/2025 11:35 AM
10	very good - should do again in another 12 months	2/12/2025 2:28 PM
11	What was the equity circle?	2/12/2025 2:26 PM
12	n/a	2/12/2025 2:25 PM
13	n/a	2/12/2025 2:23 PM
14	n/a	2/12/2025 2:22 PM
15	Very useful	2/12/2025 2:21 PM
16	no	2/12/2025 2:19 PM
17	n/a	2/12/2025 2:18 PM
18	Thank you! A great session that open my eyes to new perspectives and a broader understanding of the complex nature of this issue	2/12/2025 2:16 PM
19	n/a	2/12/2025 2:15 PM
20	not sure	2/12/2025 2:13 PM
21	No	2/12/2025 2:12 PM
22	I would like to receive Adam's slides, if possible.	2/12/2025 2:10 PM
23	I would like to receive Adam's slides, if possible.	2/12/2025 1:40 PM
24	No response	2/12/2025 1:37 PM
25	Thank you	2/12/2025 1:35 PM
26	No response	2/12/2025 1:32 PM
27	What was the Equality Circle?	2/12/2025 1:30 PM
28	No response	2/12/2025 1:26 PM
29	No response	2/12/2025 1:23 PM
30	No response	2/12/2025 1:21 PM

31	No response	2/12/2025 1:19 PM
32	No response	2/12/2025 1:16 PM
33	No response	2/12/2025 1:12 PM
34	No response	2/12/2025 1:10 PM
35	No response	2/12/2025 1:07 PM
36	No response	2/12/2025 1:04 PM
37	No	2/12/2025 12:56 PM
38	SO grateful it happened and hopeful for real change to occur.	9/9/2024 1:26 PM
39	Great work - really impressive event and a demonstration of the good will and commitment in the community	8/15/2024 2:12 AM
40	no	8/14/2024 1:20 PM
41	Not yet	8/13/2024 2:19 PM
42	No thank you	8/12/2024 11:42 AM
43	Have a separate discussion for males as victims of DV. While Adam talked on this topic during the event, that particular event was not the appropriate event for that particular discussion.	8/12/2024 11:22 AM
44	Keep the momentum	8/9/2024 1:52 PM
45	No.	8/8/2024 8:51 AM
46	We need to stop the cycle of trauma. Build resilient young people who can understand the psychology of trauma before we miss another generation. The room was full of grey headed men. The next room needs to be full of young and old men, over and over. We need to get this style of talk to school groups, football clubs and business conferences.	8/7/2024 10:59 AM
47	nope	8/7/2024 9:50 AM
48	No thanks	8/7/2024 9:29 AM
49	I was pleasantly surprised by the numbers at this forum, I didn't expect so many.	8/7/2024 8:54 AM
50	no	8/7/2024 7:13 AM
51	While I think the "(cishet) men only" approach was wise for this event, future events may not need to exclude input from AFAB people, trans/NB/intersex people, and gay/ace men	8/7/2024 6:40 AM
52	Ensure any future psychology talks are not too academic or theoretical. They need to be understandable and practical (I speak as a retired GP !!)	8/6/2024 9:39 PM
53	Thanks!	8/6/2024 9:11 PM
54	The venue, food and hospitality were fantastic and the 'isolation' ensured neutral territory. Consideration should be given, IMHO, to running a bus from the CBD next time. Congratulations to the Womens' Health Centre for their vision and courage to suggest, promote and run such a worthwhile event and praise also to all three levels of government to attend.	8/6/2024 6:28 PM
55	No	8/6/2024 5:41 PM
56	No	8/6/2024 5:31 PM
57	No	8/6/2024 5:18 PM
58	No	8/6/2024 5:11 PM



Materials used for SQAI analysis were limited to focus on the conversation.

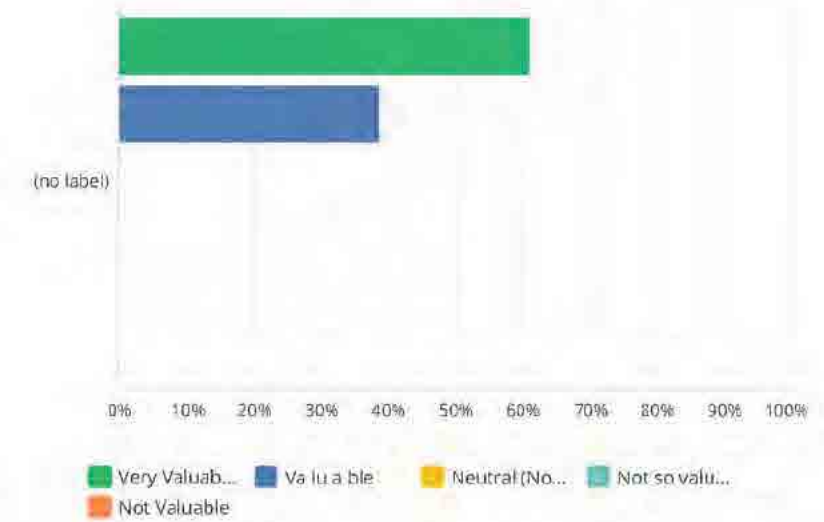
APPENDIX D: 6 MONTH FORUM RESULTS

This appendix contains the direct report generated from SurveyMonkey, the platform used for data collection. SurveyMonkey is an industry-standard tool for survey administration, ensuring reliable data collection and reporting. The report is presented in its original format to maintain transparency and accuracy.

2025 Planning

Q1 How valuable do you feel this forum was for engaging men in the topic of D&FV?

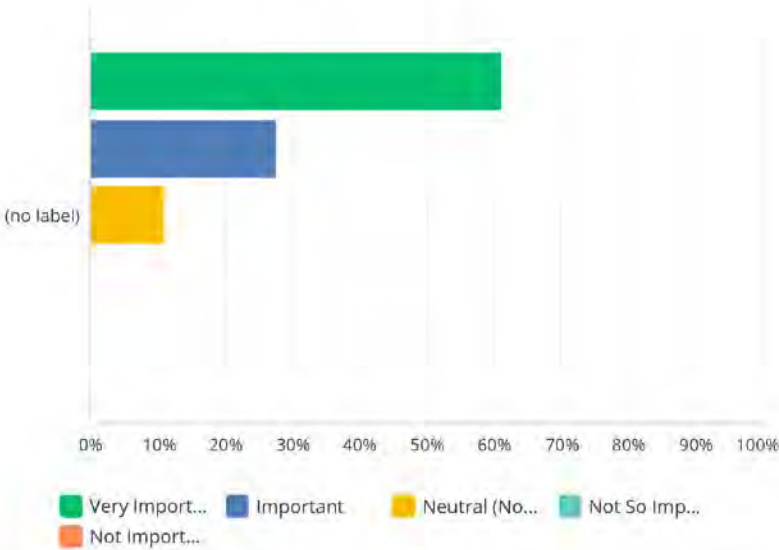
Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



	VERY VALUABLE	VALUABLE	NEUTRAL (NOT SUCCESSFUL OR UNSUCCESSFUL)	NOT SO VALUABLE	NOT VALUABLE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	61.11% 11	38.89% 7	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	18	1.39

Q2 How important is it to hold men's only events and forums in addressing D&FV Violence in our community?

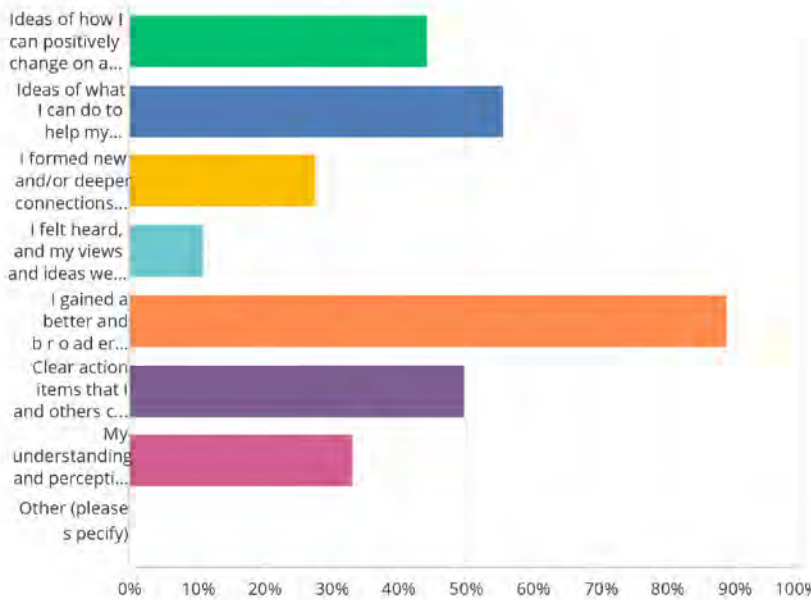
Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	NEUTRAL (NOT IMPORTANT)	NOT SO IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	61.11% 11	27.78% 5	11.11% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	18	1.50

Q3 Several months after the forum, what are still the key takeaways for you? (Select all that apply)

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0

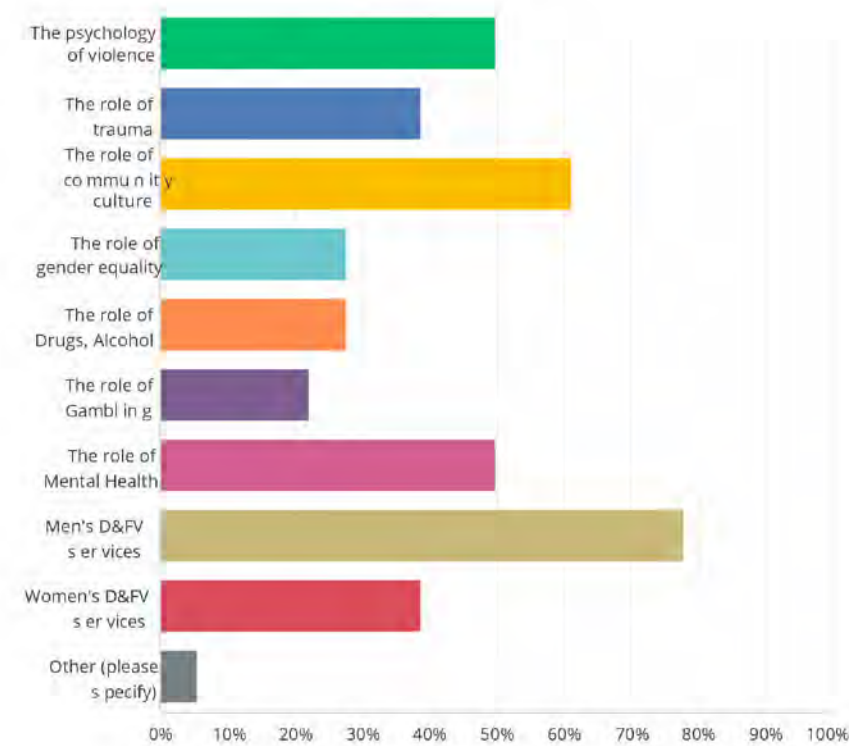


ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Ideas of how I can positively change on a personal level		44.44%	8
Ideas of what I can do to help my community		55.56%	10
I formed new and/or deeper connections with other men in our community		27.78%	5
I felt heard, and my views and ideas were acknowledged and considered		11.11%	2
I gained a better and broader understanding of D&FV		88.89%	16
Clear action items that I and others can implement to create positive change in our community		50.00%	9
My understanding and perceptions of D&FV have changed		33.33%	6
Other (please specify)		0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 18			

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
There are no responses.		

Q4 What aspect(s) of D&FV do you want to understand further? (Select all that apply)

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0

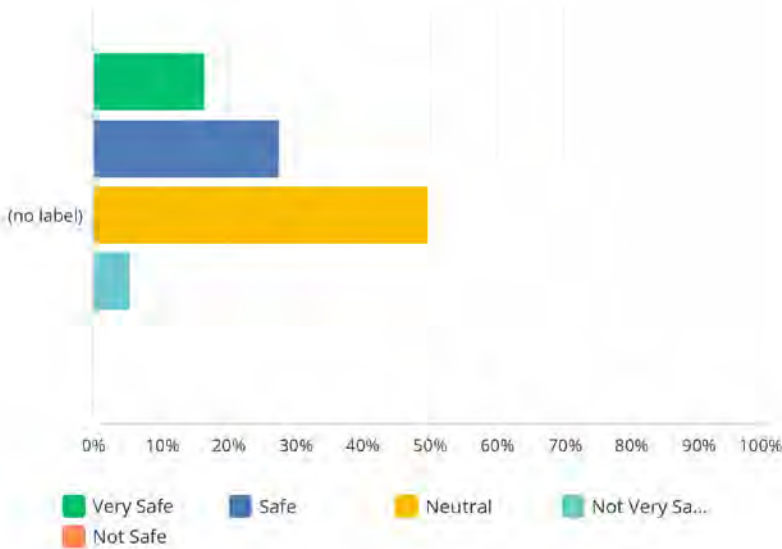


ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
The psychology of violence		50.00%	9
The role of trauma		38.89%	7
The role of community culture		61.11%	11
The role of gender equality		27.78%	5
The role of Drugs, Alcohol		27.78%	5
The role of Gambling		22.22%	4
The role of Mental Health		50.00%	9
Men's D&FV services		77.78%	14
Women's D&FV services		38.89%	7
Other (please specify)		5.56%	1
Total Respondents: 18			

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
---	------------------------	------

Q5 Since the forum, on reflection how safe (or comfortable, secure, empowered) do you think men in general feel in relation to speaking about D&FV in their community?

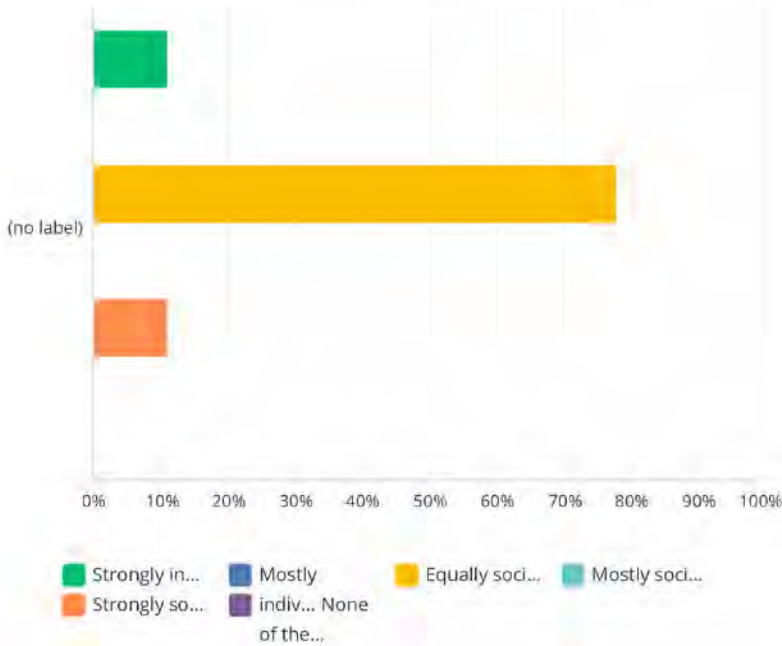
Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



	VERY SAFE	SAFE	NE UT RAL	NOT VERY SAFE	NOT SAFE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	16.67%	27.78%	50.00%	5.56%	0.00%	18	2.44
	3	5	9	1	0		
#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)						DATE
1	Men need to hear that more is being done about DV against men.						3/6/2025 11:17 AM

Q6 Now that you have attended this forum what is your response to the below.Select the response you most believe 'D&FV is an issue that is...'

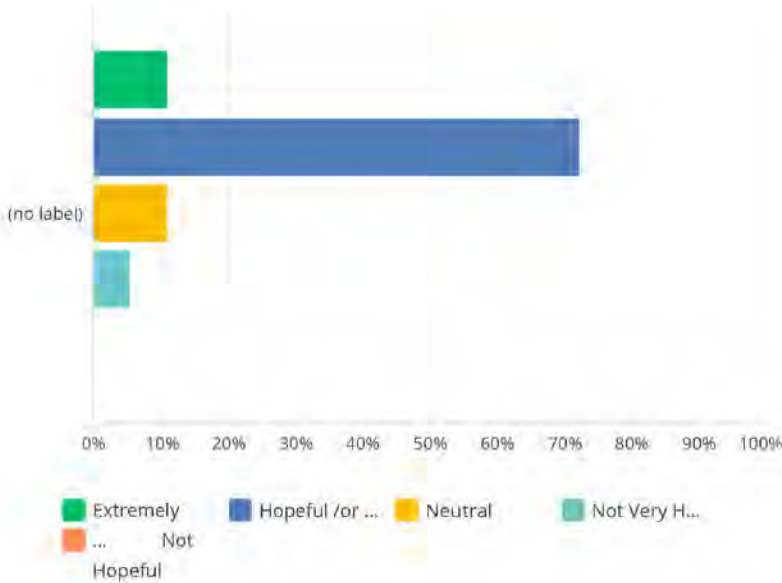
Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



	S T RONGLY I NDI V I DUAL AND FAM I LY RELATED	MOSTLY I NDI V I DUAL AND FAM I LY RELATED	EQUALLY SOCIETAL AND COM M UNI T Y AND I NDI V I DUAL AND FAMILY RELATED	MOSTLY S OCI E TAL AND COM M UNI T Y RELATED	S T RONGLY S OCI E TAL AND COM M UNI T Y RELATED	NONE OF THE ABOVE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	11.11%	0.00%	77.78%	0.00%	11.11%	0.00%	18	3.00
	2	0	14	0	2	0		

Q7 With more people working together in our community to address the prevalence and occurrence of D&FV, how hopeful (or confident) are you that collaborative efforts and actions can be implemented to create positive changes in Wagga and Surrounds in the next 5 years?

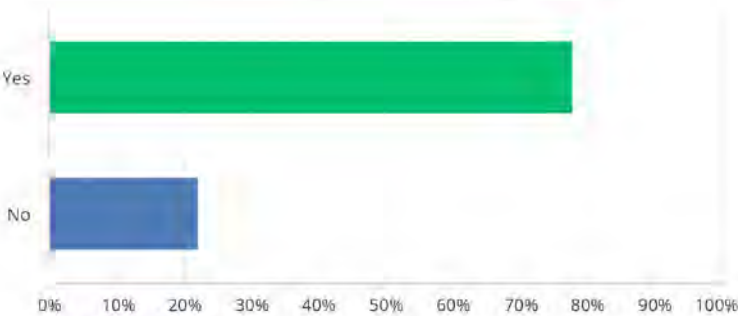
Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



	EXTREMELY HOPEFUL /OR CONFIDENT	HOPEFUL /OR CONFIDENT	NEUTRAL	NOT VERY HOPEFUL	NOT HOPEFUL	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	11.11%	72.22%	11.11%	5.56%	0.00%	18	2.11
	2	13	2	1	0		

Q8 Has the Forum helped you identify how your experience and personal assets (skills, knowledge, passion, community connections etc) can be harnessed for leading change?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0

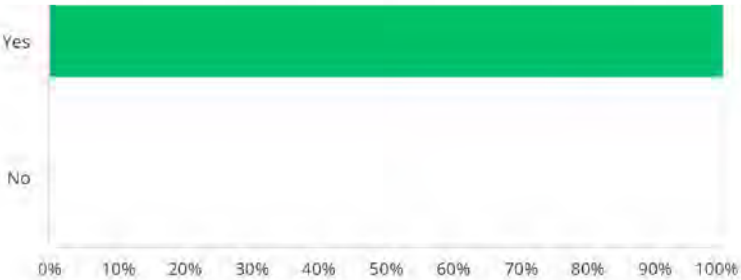


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	77.78%	14
No	22.22%	4
TOTAL		18

#	PLEASE PROVIDE MORE DETAILS (OPTIONAL)	DATE
1	I've never tolerated conversations or mentalities that would normalise dv or negative comments about partners, the forum cemented for me that I am justified to continue to call it out for what it is. Especially now it is evidence based	2/20/2025 3:52 PM
2	It reiterated how intervention at extremely early stages can change behaviours for others, even when setting examples and attitudes without directly addressing violent behaviour. The sequence of relationships between entitlement, objectification, aggression and frustration were also important to understand, combined with mental health interventions and treatment for addictions.	1/13/2025 3:18 PM
3	Not too sure. The forum gave me plenty to think about and reflect upon but I'm still not really sure what role I can play, if any, in leading change. If anything though I probably did feel at least the importance of 'frown power', to not join in with unacceptable jokes, and that this can be a relevant action.	12/17/2024 6:02 PM
4	Most valuable to me has been the very simple action of calling out stereotyping (male and female) as it occurs, as well as calling out misogynist and misandrist jokes.	12/17/2024 11:30 AM
5	Supporting an awareness campaign to end the silence around DV issues.	12/17/2024 12:50 AM

Q9 After participating in this forum have you felt more comfortable to discuss D&FV with family, friends and community members?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Yes		100.00%	18
No		0.00%	0
TOTAL			18

#	PLEASE PROVIDE MORE DETAILS (OPTIONAL)	DATE
1	Yes, I have been raising more conversations about this in many social settings and as a regional leader for young people.	1/13/2025 3:18 PM
2	Only a little. Discussion focuses on talking about it more	12/17/2024 12:50 AM

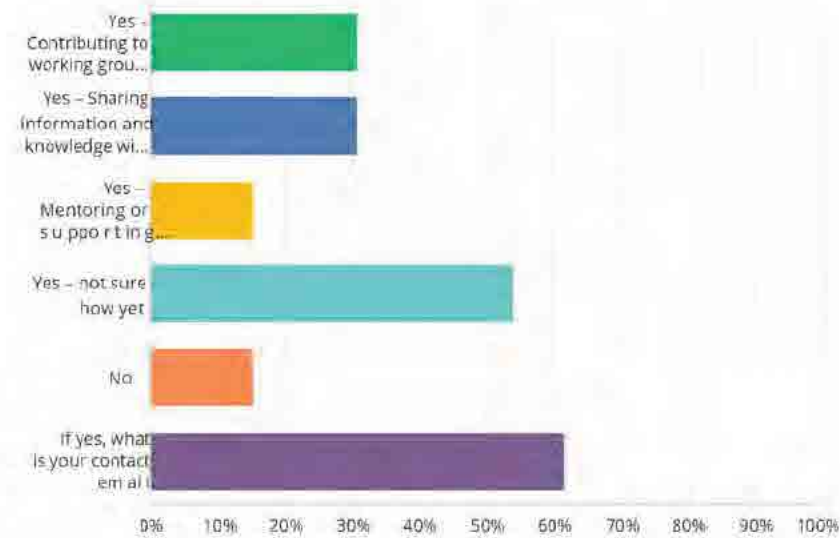
Q10 Have you taken any actions in our community to address D&FV, if so, what actions have you taken?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE	3/6/2025
1	Support to the local womens group through our Rotary club has increased.	11:17 AM	
2	Just talking more openly about it.	2/27/2025 1:09 PM	
3	Personal actions within family unit with a new understanding of the psychology of trauma. The 10 minute psych degree talk was eye opening and life changing for me personally	2/21/2025 9:17 AM	
4	Spoken with domestic violence victim and recommend them seeking assistance	2/20/2025 9:21 PM	
5	I have spoken to a male who i had previously spoken to about his comments and attitudes, which was a very fruitful conversation	2/20/2025 3:52 PM	
	Talking to people about it	2/20/2025 3:43 PM	
6	Organised some training for leaders in my church	2/20/2025 3:20 PM	
7	Part of the DV forum working group	2/20/2025 3:16 PM	
8	Yes, I have raised this workshop's results with members of community groups and considered the impact of this workshop when re-designing enrolment, working practices and staff / learning procedures at Charles Sturt University.	1/13/2025 3:18 PM	
	Created greater awareness in my community groups	12/20/2024 6:06 AM	
10	Discussion in regards to MCG and also general conversation in every event I attend	12/19/2024 10:56 AM	
11	Not really except perhaps extremely indirectly	12/17/2024 6:02 PM	
12	No	12/17/2024 2:05 PM	
13	I have made an effort to call out "jokes" and behaviour that previously I didn't.	12/17/2024 1:23 PM	
14	Just calling out stereotyping as it occurs. Interestingly, most of the stereotyping I have observed since the forum has been of men by women, though this is perhaps simply because my workplace has more women than men.	12/17/2024 11:30 AM	
15	Not exactly but I am better informed	12/17/2024 9:36 AM	
16	I've been talking with most people I come in contact with about D&FV in an effort to bring the issue into front-of-consciousness	12/17/2024 7:19 AM	
17	Supported DV marches, arranged guest speakers for Rotary Clubs, communicated with police on the DV campaign	12/17/2024 12:50 AM	
18			

Q11 Would you like to be involved in the Men's Consultation Group? If so, in what capacity?

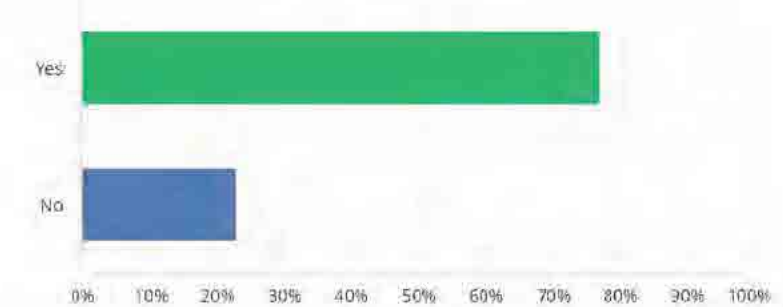
Answered: 13 Skipped: 5



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes - Contributing to working groups and strategic planning	30.77%	4
Yes - Sharing information and knowledge with more in our community	30.77%	4
Yes - Mentoring or supporting others	15.38%	2
Yes - not sure how yet	53.85%	7
No	15.38%	2
If yes, what is your contact email	61.54%	8
Total Respondents: 13		

Q12 Would you like to receive updates from the Men's Consultation Group?

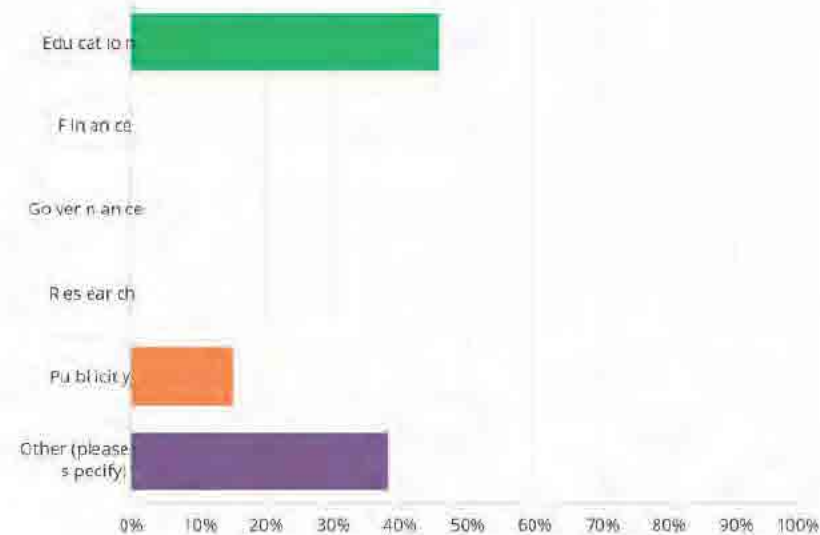
Answered: 13 Skipped: 5



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	76.92%	10
No	23.08%	3
TOTAL		13

Q13 Would you be interested in joining a Sub-Committee as part of the Men's Consultation Group? If so, is there a particular sub-committee that aligns with your skills/ interests:

Answered: 13 Skipped: 5

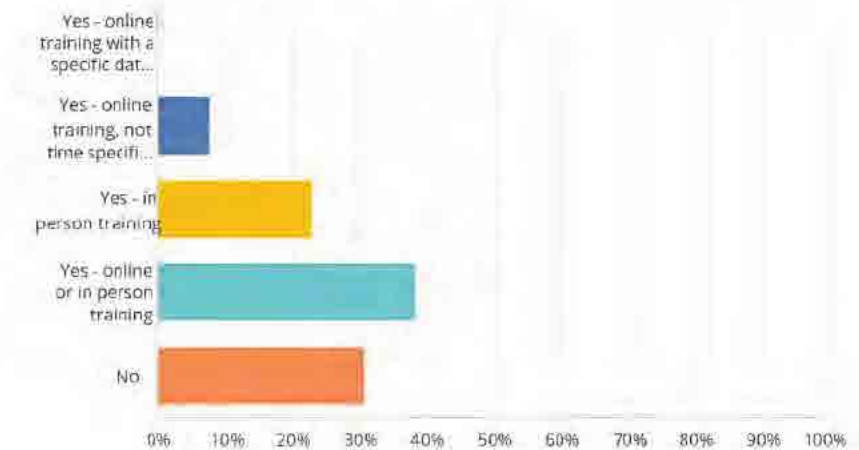


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
E d u c a t i o n	46.15%	6
F i n a n c e	0.00%	0
G o v e r n a n c e	0.00%	0
R e s e a r c h	0.00%	0
P u b l i c i t y	15.38%	2
Other (please specify)	38.46%	5
TOTAL		13

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY) Wherever I can be useful if	DATE
1	required	2/20/2025 3:54 PM
2	Biblical principles	2/20/2025 3:45 PM
3	Uns ure	2/20/2025 3:22 PM
4	Caring for Country	12/17/2024 2:09 PM
5	I will be Rotary District Governor for this District 2025/26	12/17/2024 12:53 AM

Q14 Would you be interested in receiving training in relation to primary prevention of D&FV?

Answered: 13 Skipped: 5



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes - online training with a specific date / time	0.00%	0
Yes - online training, not time specific, able to learn at own pace	7.69%	1
Yes - in person training	23.08%	3
Yes - online or in person training	38.46%	5
No	30.77%	4
TOTAL		13

Q15 Is there anything else you want to say about the Forum, Men's Consultation Group or D&FV that we have not asked?

Answered: 13 Skipped: 5

#	RESPONSES NO	DATE	2/20/2025
1	No	3:54 PM	
2	It was a good day. The speakers were all engaging and relevant. The final session doing workshoping was unclear and many people left.	2/20/2025 3:45 PM	
3	No thank you.	2/20/2025 3:22 PM	
4	No, this seems thorough. Thank you!	2/20/2025 3:18 PM	
5	A scourge on our community that needs urgent attention	1/13/2025 3:20 PM	
6	No	12/20/2024 6:10 AM	
7	No	12/19/2024 10:57 AM	
8	Play Archie Roach song "Walking into Doors" at the end of the sessions.	12/17/2024 6:04 PM	
9	NA	12/17/2024 2:09 PM	
10	It is easy to feel overwhelmed by a problem which starts in early childhood and concerns the fundamentals of our cultural identity. This forum is a good start though, and it feels good to be doing something.	12/17/2024 1:24 PM	
11	no	12/17/2024 11:33 AM	
12	N/A	12/17/2024 7:21 AM	
13		12/17/2024 12:53 AM	

APPENDIX E: EVENT PROGRAM

WAGGA WAGGA & SURROUNDS

MENS LEADERSHIP FORUM

PROGRAM

10:30am - 4:30pm
The Wild Vine, 1313 Oura Road, Oura 2650

Welcome to Country & Smoking Ceremony
Introduction to Forum
Speaker 1 : Adam Blanch
Morning Tea
Speaker 2 : Rhys Cummins
Lunch
Speaker 3 : Dave Kramer
Afternoon Tea
Community Activity & Discussion
Finish

SPEAKERS



ADAM BLANCH

Adam Blanch, Psychologist of 40 years with specialist interest in the field of trauma, the psychology of interpersonal violence and the psychology of identity. An amazing educator on Trauma and Domestic and Family Violence currently working with the organisation Benefolk to deliver training to frontline workers in Domestic and Family Violence.



RHYS CUMMINS

Rhys Cummins, a Wagga Wagga local and founder of the Murrumbidgee Men's Group. Rhys works for Pathways Murrumbidgee in the drug and alcohol field and is an exceptional advocate for Men's Mental Health in the community. His leadership in addressing Men's Mental Health is well respected.



DAVE KRAMER

Dave Kramer, Behavioural Scientist dedicated to empowering individuals to create safe, equitable, and inclusive homes, workplaces, schools, and communities. His journey into this work began after the tragic loss of his best friend, Hannah Clarke, and her three children in February of 2020.



**WAGGA
WOMEN'S**
HEALTH CENTRE



Community leaders engaged in conversation, taking the learnings beyond the Forum agenda.

CONTACT US

For more information or to discuss the Wagga Wagga and surrounds Men's Leadership Forum on Domestic and Family Violence, or other initiatives of the DVproject:2650, you can contact the Wagga Women's Health Centre directly via the details below.

Location	22 Peter Street, Wagga Wagga NSW 2650
Postal Address	PO Box 351, Wagga Wagga NSW 2650
Telephone	[REDACTED]
Email	[REDACTED]
Website	waggawomen.org.au



22 Peter Street Wagga Wagga NSW 2650
PO Box 351 Wagga Wagga NSW 2650





Charles Sturt
University

Fragile Progress: Community Attitudes Toward Domestic Violence in Wagga Wagga 2016-2025

Findings from Three Community Attitude Surveys

Faculty of Science and Health
Faculty of Arts and Education

Charles Sturt University - TEQSA Provider Identification: PRV12018 (Australian University).
CRICOS Provider: 00005F.

As members of the Charles Sturt community, we acknowledge the words of the Wiradjuri people, on whose land our university was founded, and share their aspiration of yindyamarra winhanganha, the aim for us all to learn the wisdom of respectfully living well, in a land worth living in. We pay our respect to the traditional custodians of the lands on which we live and work.

Authors: [REDACTED], PhD and Dr Fredrik Velander, PhD

Suggested citation: Schineanu, A. & Velander, F. (2026). *Fragile Progress: Community Attitudes Toward Domestic Violence in Wagga Wagga 2016-2025 - Findings from Three Community Attitude Surveys*, March 2026.

Electronic ISBN: 978-1-86-467527-6

All data included in this report were correct at the time of data collection, end of 2025.

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Executive Summary

Domestic violence (DV) remains a critical public health issue in Wagga Wagga, with the LGA reporting rates almost 60% higher than the NSW average (717.4 vs 457.5 per 100,000 population in 2024-25). This report examines community attitudes toward DV across three survey periods (2016, 2021, 2025), tracking changes over a pivotal decade marked by both feminist advocacy and concerning backlash movements.

The 2025 survey captured a more diverse demographic profile than previous waves: younger participants, greater ethnic diversity and broader educational representation. Post-stratification weighting by sex and age enhanced representativeness, though limitations include potential social desirability bias, cross-sectional design preventing causal inference, and survey timing potentially influenced by recent high-profile events.

Knowledge of DV

While community recognition of various forms of DV remained high (>85%), concerning patterns emerged. Physical violence and sexual coercion maintained strong recognition (>95%) across all survey periods, but non-physical forms including threats, criticism, financial control, stalking, and electronic harassment showed significant declines in recognition of seriousness between 2021 and 2025. This declining recognition suggests weakening social norms, competing discourses minimising psychological abuse, and normalisation of digital surveillance in relationships.

Stark gender gaps persisted, with women 2 to 5 times more likely than men to recognise coercive control tactics as DV. Ethnic variations were complex: Aboriginal respondents showed lower recognition across most categories but dramatically higher recognition of social isolation as abusive, while Asian respondents demonstrated paradoxical patterns—much lower recognition of physical harm but elevated recognition of criticism and social isolation. Education emerged as a protective factor, with university-educated participants 2 to 8 times more likely to recognise diverse forms of abuse.

Attitudes Toward DV

Temporal analysis revealed both progress and stagnation. Recognition of DV as a criminal offense increased dramatically (10.7 times higher in 2025 vs 2016), and rejection of myths such as "women fabricate claims" improved (1.7 times less likely in 2025 vs 2016). However, beliefs such that "men are better leaders" and "education is more important for boys" showed no significant difference from 2016 by 2025.

Persistent gender gaps remained, with men 2 to 4 times more likely than women to endorse victim-blaming beliefs including that women can easily leave, that male control is natural, and that women fabricate claims. Ethnic patterns were complex: Aboriginal respondents showed strongest rejection of DV as "private matter" and of false allegation myths but higher belief women can leave, while Asian respondents showed 3 to 6 times higher endorsement of traditional gender hierarchies and male control as natural.

Perceptions of Seriousness

While recognition of what behaviours constitute DV remained high, perceptions of their seriousness declined significantly. Threatening family members, repeated criticism, financial control, electronic harassment, and stalking all showed statistically significant declines in perceived seriousness between 2016-2025. By 2025, respondents were nearly twice as likely to believe women should stay for family, five times more likely to excuse violence if perpetrators experienced childhood abuse, and nearly twice as likely to believe women cannot be raped by partners. This troubling pattern suggests potential backlash where increased DV

discourse paradoxically triggered defensive responses and intensification of traditional attitudes among some segments.

Understanding Violence Causation

Significant gaps persist in understanding why men perpetrate violence. Only women and younger respondents consistently recognised power and control as the primary driver, while men and older adults more likely attributed violence to anger management issues or stress—frameworks that excuse perpetrators and misdirect intervention.

Barriers to Leaving

Understanding of structural barriers declined between 2021-2025. Respondents in 2025 were less likely than those in 2021 to recognise lack of choice/support and fear of worsening violence as reasons women stay. Women demonstrated 2 to 5 times greater awareness of barriers (fear, shame, family pressure) compared to men.

Bystander Intervention

Intentions varied dramatically by gender. Men were twice as likely than women to physically intervene showing greater willingness for physical confrontation, potentially reflecting masculine norms. Aboriginal respondents were 3.4 times less likely to choose formal system involvement (police), reflecting mistrust of colonial legal systems. Temporal changes were modest, with increased commitment to both action and inaction by 2025 but no change in physical intervention intentions.

Critical Implications

Six critical implications emerge from these findings.

1. **Fragile Progress** - Gains achieved between 2016-2021 have stalled or reversed, demonstrating attitude change requires sustained investment.
2. **Gendered Understanding** - Persistent gaps in men's recognition of coercive control, structural barriers, and power dynamics indicate urgent need for male-targeted education.
3. **Cultural Responsiveness Essential** - Dramatic ethnic variations demonstrate one-size-fits-all prevention is ineffective and potentially harmful, culturally responsive, community-led approaches are mandatory.
4. **Education as Protective** - Consistent protective effects of education support continued investment in comprehensive relationship education addressing diverse abuse forms.
5. **Backlash Reality** - Simultaneous increases in DV awareness alongside harmful attitude intensification suggest organised resistance requiring strategic counter-messaging.
6. **Younger Cohorts Show Promise** - Stronger understanding among youth validates school-based prevention but underscores need to reach older community members.

The report provides detailed, culturally specific recommendations for each finding domain, emphasising community partnerships, sustained campaigns, male engagement, and culturally safe approaches for Aboriginal and culturally diverse communities.

Introduction

Domestic violence (DV) in Australia remains a pervasive public health issue, disproportionately affecting women across all demographics. According to the 2021-2022 Personal Safety Survey, 20% of Australian adults (3.8 million people) reported experiencing physical and/or sexual abuse since age 15 (AIHW, 2025) and the rate of women killed by partners rose 28% from 2021-22 to 2022-23, ending a 30-year decline (Miles & Bricknell, 2025). While recent years have shown modest progress—with DV among women declining from 1.7% in 2016 to 0.9% in 2021-22, and partner emotional abuse decreasing from 4.8% to 3.9% over the same period (AIHW, 2025)—significant underreporting persists. Police data suggest only approximately 40% of FDV incidents are ever formally recorded (DVNSW, n.d.), masking the true scale of violence in our communities. This underreporting is particularly pronounced in regional and rural areas, where geographic isolation, limited service access, and community dynamics create additional barriers to disclosure (Australian Institute of Family Studies [AIFS], 2023).



The Wagga Wagga LGA presents a particularly concerning profile. In 2024-25, the rate of DV incidents—defined as grievous bodily harm or assault—was 717.4 per 100,000 population, almost 60% higher than the NSW average of 457.5 per 100,000. At the same time, the population of Wagga Wagga has diversified, the proportion of overseas-born residents has grown from 12% to 16%, partly reflecting the city's designation as a Refugee Welcome Zone, while residents identifying as Aboriginal have nearly doubled from 6.4% in 2011 to 11.8% in 2021, significantly exceeding the national average.

It is important to note that increases in DV rates are not caused by the increase in community diversity. Research consistently shows that immigrant and Indigenous women are disproportionately victims rather than drivers of increased violence. Immigrant women face heightened vulnerability due to insecure migration status that limits help-seeking, reporting and accessing support due to language difficulties, cultural stigma, and mistrust of formal systems (Ghafournia & Easteal, 2018; AIHW, 2023). Indigenous Australians, particularly women who are up to 35 times more likely to experience DV suffer from intergenerational trauma resulting from colonisation, dispossession, and forced family removals (Cripps & Davies, 2012; Closing the Gap Clearinghouse, 2016; Blagg et al., 2018).

Across all populations, the primary drivers of DV are gender inequality, rigid masculine stereotypes (with young men adhering to these stereotypes being 17 times more likely to perpetrate partner violence), patriarchal attitudes, and structural factors such as socioeconomic disadvantage, unemployment, and substance abuse (Matthews et al., 2025). Understanding DV through this lens shifts the focus from victim characteristics to the societal and structural conditions that enable violence.

This report examines whether community knowledge, perceptions, and attitudes toward DV in the Wagga Wagga LGA have shifted between 2016 and 2025. Through comparative survey data, we investigate how demographic factors—including age, gender, ethnicity, education, and socioeconomic status—influence understanding of and attitudes toward DV. Evidence suggests that community attitudes play a crucial role in prevention efforts, with attitudinal change correlating with reduced tolerance for violence and increased help-seeking behaviour (Taylor & Mouzos, 2006; VicHealth, 2014). Our findings reveal both progress and persistent gaps that require targeted intervention.

The following sections present survey methodology, demographic analysis, key findings on attitude changes over the nine-year period, and evidence-based recommendations for culturally responsive interventions. While national trends show improvement (ABS, 2023), the persistently high rates in Wagga Wagga underscore the urgent need for sustained investment in prevention, education, and support services tailored to our community's unique demographic profile. Contemporary research emphasises that effective DV prevention requires multifaceted approaches that address individual, relationship, community, and societal factors simultaneously (World Health Organization [WHO], 2010; Our Watch, 2021), with particular attention to culturally safe practices for diverse populations (Nancarrow et al., 2020).

Key events that impacted the community and on violence against women

Demographic changes

Wagga Wagga LGA experienced significant demographic transformation between 2016 and 2025, becoming increasingly culturally diverse with overseas-born residents rising from 12% to 16% (ABS Census 2021), driven largely by the city's designation as a Refugee Welcome Zone which attracted substantial refugee populations from Northern Iraq and Afghanistan, alongside smaller groups from Myanmar and Tibet. While Australian and English ancestries remain prominent, their proportional representation declined as the community welcomed established immigrant populations from India, Iraq and the Philippines. Most notably, the proportion of residents identifying with Aboriginal ancestry nearly doubled from 6.4% in 2011 to 11.8% in 2021, significantly exceeding the national average and reflecting both demographic shifts and potentially improved identification practices within the Indigenous community.

2016-2021

Since the first Wagga Wagga Community Attitudes Survey (WWCAS) in 2016, key global and Australian events have intensified focus on violence against women. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly exacerbated violence against women due to lockdowns forcing close contact between victims and perpetrators, job losses, economic hardship, and reduced access to support services, with some researchers describing gender-based violence as a "shadow" pandemic (AIHW, 2021; Boxall & Morgan, 2021). Despite ongoing tolerance and high-profile incidents of violence between 2017-2021, this period also saw increased advocacy momentum, particularly through the #MeToo movement which brought sexual violence to public consciousness (Chandra & Erlingsdóttir, 2021). In Australia, community pressure led to legislative reforms including affirmative consent laws in New South Wales requiring active steps to confirm consent, and national efforts to address coercive control (Coumarelos et al, 2023).

2021-2025

Between 2021 and 2025, Australia witnessed significant legislative momentum in addressing violence against women alongside both progressive and concerning cultural developments and political backlash. The period began with the powerful advocacy of Grace Tame and Brittany Higgins, with both women advocating strongly for structural change beyond vague policy statements. Their activism contributed to the 2022 federal election where women's issues became pivotal, leading to the election of the Albanese government with Australia's most diverse cabinet ever, comprising ten of 23 cabinet ministers who are women (43%). At the same time, the NSW Parliament passed coercive control legislation in November 2022, while the Albanese Government

invested over \$3.4 billion in women's safety and the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032, including \$925.2 million for the permanent Leaving Violence Program (Gibbon & Buxton-Namisnyk, 2024). This period also coincided with growing global concerns about online misogyny, with figures such as Andrew Tate becoming focal points. Studies have shown that male students' engagement with this content directly correlates with increased sexist discrimination toward female students and staff in schools (Roberts & Westcott, 2024). Furthermore, in online “manosphere” communities, a form of “evidence-based misogyny” is used to argue that gender relations are a zero-sum game—men are portrayed as the real victims, while women are blamed for social problems (Kelly, Rothermel & Sugiura, 2024). The 2024 re-election of Trump as president of United States of America further amplified and legitimised misogynistic rhetoric and sexual violence on an international scale, creating a complex backdrop where legislative progress occurred alongside persistent cultural challenges.

The National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032

The National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032 (COAG, 2022) is Australia's 10-year policy framework with the vision of ending gender-based violence in one generation. It emphasises four interconnected domains of action.

- Prevention (primary prevention) focuses on changing underlying social drivers by addressing attitudes and systems that enable violence before it occurs.
- Early intervention (secondary prevention) identifies and supports high-risk individuals to prevent escalation or recurrence.
- Response (tertiary prevention) provides crisis support, police intervention, and trauma-informed justice systems to address existing violence and hold perpetrators accountable.
- Recovery and healing supports victims and survivors in overcoming trauma and the physical, mental, emotional, and economic impacts of violence.

The framework is guided by six key principles:

1. Advancing gender equality as fundamental to addressing violence;
2. Implementing Closing the Gap agreements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;
3. Centering victim and survivor experiences in policy development;
4. Ensuring accountability that focuses on perpetrator responsibility while supporting survivors;
5. Recognising intersectionality where multiple forms of discrimination compound violence experiences; and
6. Promoting person-centered coordination across services.

The approach requires multi-setting interventions across schools, workplaces, sporting institutions, media, justice and health systems, with success measured by population understanding of violence, strong rejection of attitudes condoning gender inequality, and community preparedness to intervene when witnessing abuse.

Overview of DV in Wagga Wagga LGA

Data from NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) and NSW Health were extracted and analysed at the Local Government Area (LGA) level and, where available, disaggregated by sex to provide an overview of the current situation.

In 2024–25, the rate of DV incidents in Wagga Wagga LGA—defined as grievous bodily harm or assault—was 717.4 per 100,000 population, compared with 457.5 per 100,000 for NSW overall. This equates to a rate almost 60% higher than the state average (56.8%).

Over the past decade, the trend in DV incidents in Wagga Wagga increased by 2.3%, slightly below the state-wide increase of 3% (see Figure 1). In 2023–24, hospitalisations for DV-related assault most commonly

involved a spouse or domestic partner as the perpetrator for women, and ‘other’ family member for men (AIHW, 2025).

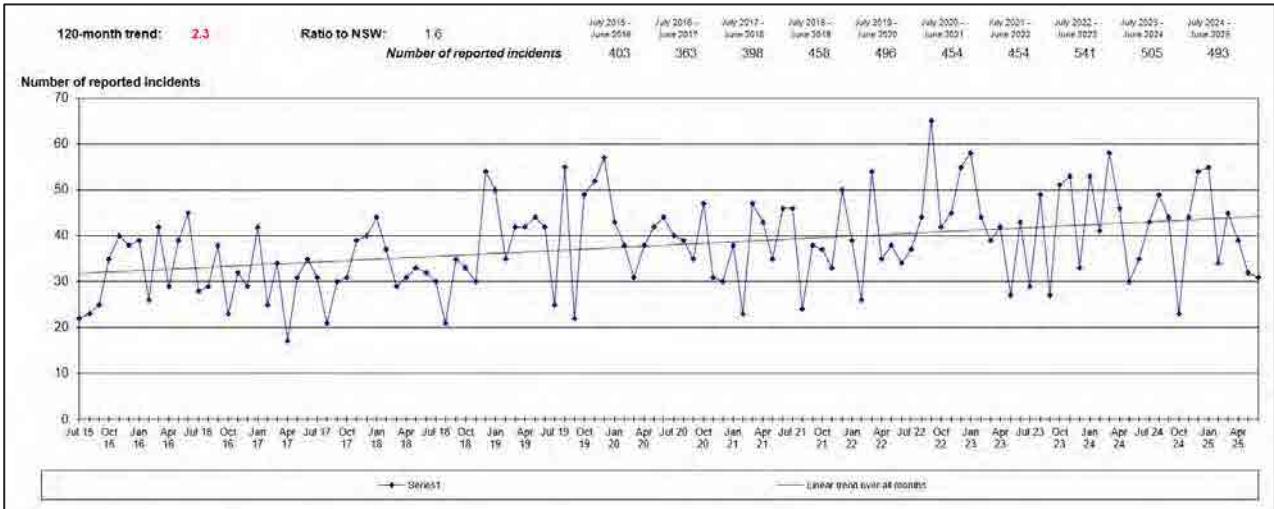


Figure 1. DV related assaults for Wagga Wagga LGA, July 2015 to June 2025.
Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research

Nearly 90% of hospitalisations for assault by a partner involved female patients. The overall rate of DV-related hospitalisations was 35 per 100,000 population. For women, the rate was 52 per 100,000, which was 3.1 times higher than the rate for males (17 per 100,000) (AIHW, 2025; see Figure 2).

Since 2019–20, hospitalisation rates for DV assaults perpetrated by a spouse or domestic partner have consistently been around 7 times higher for females aged 15 years and older than for males.

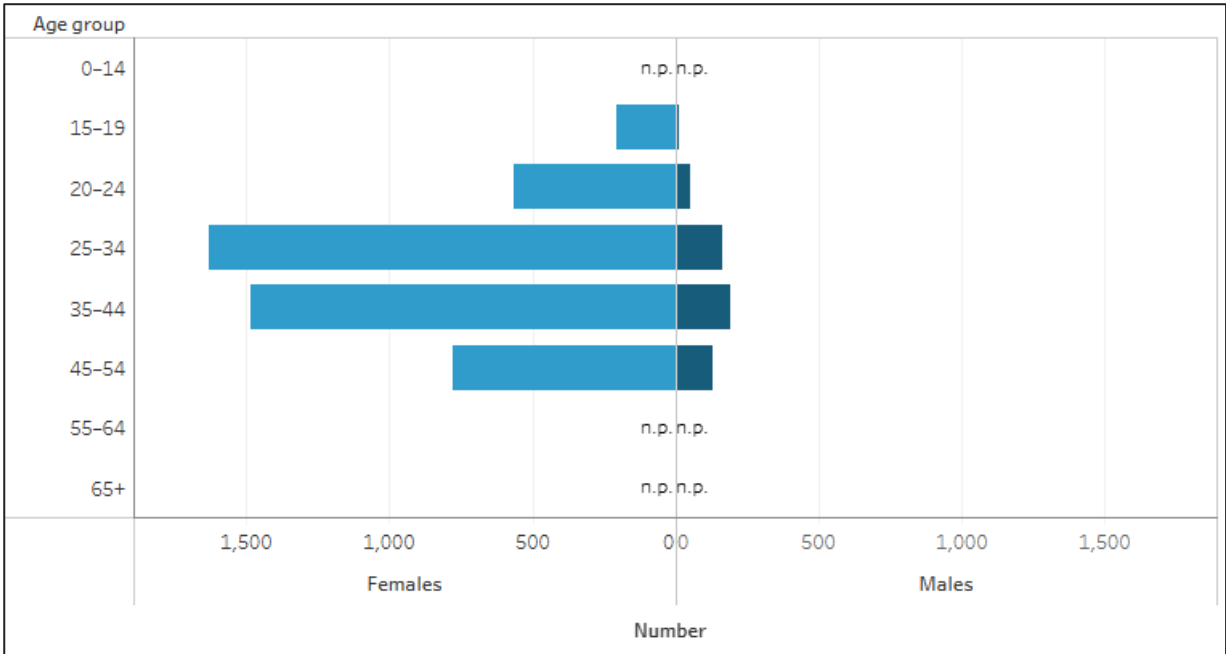


Figure 2. Hospitalisations for DV in NSW by sex. Source: AIHW

Sexual Assault

In 2023–24, there were 880 hospitalisations for sexual assault treatment, with women accounting for 92% (n = 810). The most common perpetrator was recorded as an ‘unspecified person’ (28%, n = 245). Where a perpetrator was specified, the most common for women was a partner (33%), while for men it was an unknown person (38%) (AIHW, 2025).

Over the past five years, hospitalisations for sexual assault have increased by 30%, almost entirely among women, while rates for men have remained stable (AIHW, 2025).

In summary, DV remains a critical and deeply gendered public health issue both nationally and within the Wagga Wagga LGA, where rates continue to exceed the NSW average despite broader improvements in community awareness and policy reform. The findings presented in this report highlight that violence against women is shaped not by cultural diversity itself, but by intersecting structural factors including gender inequality, rigid gender norms, socioeconomic disadvantage, trauma, and barriers to support. Over the past decade, Australia has experienced significant legislative reform, public advocacy, and increased national attention toward coercive control, consent, and gendered violence. At the same time, communities have also faced emerging challenges including online misogyny, backlash against gender equality, and persistent underreporting—particularly in regional areas. Understanding how attitudes toward DV vary across demographic groups is essential for developing effective prevention strategies. This report therefore provides important local evidence to inform culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and community-specific interventions aligned with the goals of the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032.

Methods

In 2016, the Wagga Women's Health Centre (WWHC) undertook the first local National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS), and stakeholder interviews which were used to guide a 3-year prevention and community education project, funded by the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ). This project, named the DVproject:2650 was delivered in conjunction with Wagga Wagga City Council (WWCC) and was evaluated through a repeat of the Community Attitudes Survey in 2021. The reports on the two previous surveys can be obtained from Wagga Women's Health Centre.

In 2021 funding for DVproject:2650 was transferred back to WWHC which switched to delivering programs generally targeted to specific groups, until 2025, when funding ceased. In 2024/2025, WWHC collected community responses using the previous survey tools for a third time to enable the longitudinal tracking of community attitudes and beliefs towards gender equality and DV. Postcards with information about the survey and a QR code linking to a Survey Monkey survey were distributed to all Wagga Wagga residents via Australia Post. Posters with QR codes linking to the online survey were also distributed throughout the community. The survey was open for several months over 2024-2025.

The survey results were downloaded from Survey Monkey into Excel. This report presents the results of the third survey and compares the key results against the previous two survey results.

Data analysis

Statistical Software and Analytical Framework

Data analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS version 30 for Windows (Field, 2018; Pallant, 2020). SPSS provides sophisticated analytical tools particularly suited to community attitude surveys, enabling both descriptive and inferential statistical procedures necessary for comprehensive examination of complex social phenomena (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019).

Data Import and Initial Processing

The analytical process commenced with data extraction from SurveyMonkey, which was downloaded in Microsoft Excel format and subsequently imported into SPSS. The initial dataset underwent comprehensive screening procedures to identify potential data entry errors, missing values patterns, and outlier observations that could compromise analytical validity. Systematic data screening procedures were implemented following the framework outlined by Tabachnick and Fidell (2019) followed by several data transformation procedures to optimise analytical efficiency and interpretability:

- **Variable Recoding:** Continuous demographic variables, particularly age, were collapsed into meaningful categorical groupings to facilitate comparative analysis and ensure adequate cell sizes for statistical testing. This approach aligns with established demographic research conventions and enhances the interpretability of findings for policy and practice applications (Babbie, 2020). However, the grouping of age into broad categories (e.g., 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, etc.) may mask important nuanced differences in DV attitudes that exist within these age ranges, potentially overlooking critical attitude variations that occur at specific life stages or generational boundaries.
- **Response Scaling:** Where appropriate, Likert-scale responses were recoded to ensure consistent directionality and to facilitate meaningful statistical comparisons across survey waves.

Post-Stratification Weighting

To enhance the representativeness of the sample and reduce potential selection bias, post-stratification weighting was implemented for key demographic variables including sex and age groups. This weighting methodology is considered the gold standard in survey research for correcting sample imbalances and improving population representativeness it also increases variance (Kalton & Flores-Cervantes, 2003). The weighting procedure assumes that within each sex-age group, those who responded to the survey hold similar DV attitudes to those who did not respond, which may not be valid if non-response is related to sensitive attitudes about DV that correlate with demographic characteristics beyond sex and age.

Post-stratification weights were calculated by adjusting sample proportions to match known population parameters derived from Australian Bureau of Statistics Census (2021) data. The weighting procedure involved:

1. **Stratification Framework:** Creation of mutually exclusive demographic cells based on the intersection of sex and age group categories
2. **Population Benchmarking:** Alignment of sample distributions with official population estimates for the Wagga Wagga region
3. **Weight Calculation:** Computation of adjustment factors for each stratum using the formula: $\text{Weight} = (\text{Population proportion} / \text{Sample proportion})$
4. **Weight Evaluation:** Assessment of weight distributions to ensure stability and prevent excessive inflation of individual cases

This approach uses auxiliary information to reduce sampling error and potential non-response bias, thereby enhancing the external validity of findings and their generalisability to the broader Wagga Wagga community.

Statistical Analysis Framework

Descriptive Analysis

Comprehensive descriptive statistics were generated for all key variables, including frequency distributions, measures of central tendency, and variability indices. These descriptive analyses serve as the foundation for understanding community attitude patterns and provide essential context for subsequent inferential testing (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Temporal comparisons were conducted with data from previous survey waves (2016 and 2021) to identify trends in community attitudes toward DV. This longitudinal perspective is crucial for understanding attitude change over time and assessing the impact of community interventions and awareness campaigns (Menard, 2008).

Inferential Statistical Procedures

Binary and Multinomial Logistic Regression were employed to examine relationships between predictor variables and categorical outcome measures related to DV attitudes. Logistic regression is particularly appropriate for attitude research as it accommodates the categorical nature of many attitude measures while controlling for potential confounding variables (Hosmer et al., 2013). Statistical significance was evaluated at conventional levels ($p < 0.05$ and $p < 0.01$), with effect sizes reported to provide substantive interpretation of findings beyond statistical significance. A limitation in this study is that regression models predicting attitudes toward DV intervention or service awareness may be affected by multicollinearity between related demographic or attitudinal predictors, and the multinomial regression examining multiple attitude categories may require larger sample sizes than available to ensure stable parameter estimates, particularly for less frequently endorsed attitude positions.

Pearson chi-square tests were utilised to examine associations between categorical variables, providing foundational understanding of bivariate relationships within the dataset (Hosmer et al., 2013). In examining associations between demographic characteristics and DV attitudes, some cross-tabulations may have produced cells with small expected frequencies, particularly when analysing less common demographic combinations or specific attitude responses, potentially reducing the reliability of significance testing for these relationships.

The strength and direction of categorical relationships were quantified using:

- Cramér's V: A standardised measure of association ranging from 0 to 1, indicating the strength of relationship between categorical variables
- Somers' D: An asymmetric measure providing information about the proportional reduction in error when predicting one variable from another, including directional information about the relationship

These measures provide essential information about both the magnitude and practical importance of observed relationships (Sheskin, 2020).

All analyses adhered to established standards for social science research, with particular attention to:

- Statistical Assumptions: Verification of assumptions underlying each statistical test
- Effect Size Reporting: Documentation of practical significance alongside statistical significance
- Confidence Intervals: Provision of precision estimates for key parameters

Results are systematically presented in the following section, organised thematically around key research areas. The presentation follows a structured approach that moves from descriptive findings to inferential results, providing clear interpretation of statistical outcomes in the context of community attitudes toward DV.

The subsequent discussion contextualises these findings within the current local, national, and international political, social, and cultural landscape surrounding gender inequality and DV prevention and response to ensure that findings are meaningfully connected to real-world implications and provide a foundation for evidence-based recommendations for policy and practice.

Limitations

This study used a cross-sectional community survey and therefore provides prevalence estimates and cross-sectional associations but cannot establish causality. While the analysis can identify that certain demographic characteristics are associated with particular attitudes, it cannot determine whether demographic factors cause attitude differences, whether attitudes influence demographic identification, or whether both are influenced by unmeasured third variables, limiting the ability to make causal claims about what drives attitude formation in the Wagga Wagga community.

Self-report measures of attitudes are likely affected by social-desirability bias, which typically produce underestimates of true prevalence (Fisher, 1993). Namely the potential for social desirability bias may have influenced responses to questions about acceptance of DV behaviours or victim-blaming attitudes, potentially resulting in more socially acceptable responses that underestimate the true prevalence of problematic attitudes within the Wagga Wagga community.

The timing of this Wagga Wagga survey may have been influenced by recent DV incidents in the community, national campaigns, or national and international media coverage of high-profile issues for example related to Tate and Trump, which could temporarily shift attitudes in ways that may not reflect stable, long-term community perspectives.

Community members in Wagga Wagga may express supportive attitudes toward DV prevention and intervention in the survey context but may not translate these attitudes into actual helping behaviours, reporting incidents, or supporting survivors when confronted with real situations, limiting the predictive utility of attitude measurements for community response planning.

We note that precision is limited, and interpretation should be cautious. Findings are therefore most generalisable to the target LGA population at the time of data collection and should be triangulated with local administrative data.

Results

As researchers, we acknowledge that the NCAS survey instrument reflects dominant Western legal and clinical constructions of DV. Interpretations of ethnic variation are therefore shaped by the epistemological assumptions embedded within the tool itself. These findings represent differences in survey-based categorisation within this framework and should not be construed as cultural endorsement of violence or hierarchy of awareness. Care has been taken to avoid deficit framings and to situate variation within broader social, historical, and structural contexts.

Demographic Summary

Across the three survey periods, notable demographic shifts were observed. Female representation declined steadily (79.0% in 2016 to 62.5% in 2025), while male participation rose from 20.3% to 37.0% (Table 1).

Table 1. Sex/gender breakdown of the survey participants in 2016, 2021 and 2025.

	2016	2021	2025
	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)
Female	816 (79.0)	795 (73.2)	512 (62.5)
Male	210 (20.3)	286 (26.3)	303 (37.0)
Other/refused	7 (0.7)	5 (0.25)	4 (0.5)
Total	1033 (100)	1086 (100)	819 (100)

Age distribution expanded in 2025 with the inclusion of participants under 18 years (25.2%) and a higher proportion of older adults, 56 years and older, (27.3%), while the 25–39-year group declined (34.0% to 21.2%) (Table 2).

Table 2. Age group of survey participants in 2016, 2021 and 2025

	2016	2021	2025
	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)
Under 18 years	n/a	n/a	206 (25.2)
18 to 24 years	97 (9.4)	151 (14.0)	68 (8.3)
25 to 39 years	351 (34.0)	364 (33.6)	173 (21.2)
40 to 55 years	365 (25.3)	314 (29.0)	147 (18.0)
56 years and over	220 (21.3)	253 (12.4)	224 (27.3)
Total	1036 (100.0)	1086 (100.0)	819 (100.0)

Ethnic diversity increased markedly by 2025, with White/Anglo-Saxon participants in the study decreasing from 86.4% (2016) to 71.7% (2025), alongside growth in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (5.5% to 12.9%) and Asian participants (2.4% to 10.5%).

Table 3. Ethnicity composition of survey participants in 2016, 2021 and 2025

	2016	2021	2025
	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)
White/Anglo-saxon	892 (86.4)	956 (88.0)	588 (71.7)
ATSI	57 (5.5)	41 (3.8)	105 (12.9)
Asian	25 (2.4)	20 (1.9)	86 (10.5)
Other	27 (2.7)	22 (2.1)	40 (4.9)
Total	1001 (100.0)	1039 (100.0)	819 (100.0)

Educational attainment shifted toward lower levels, with university-educated participants falling from 50.6% to 31.9% and Year 10 or below rising from 9.2% in 2016 to 25.5% by 2025 (Table 4).

Table 4. Highest level of education achieved, 2016, 2021 and 2025

	2016	2021	2025
	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)
Year 10 and under	95 (9.2)	152 (14.1)	209 (25.5)
Year 12	117 (11.3)	175 (16.2)	162 (19.8)
TAFE/Trade/College	298 (28.8)	311 (28.7)	185 (22.6)
University	523 (50.6)	445 (41.1)	261 (31.9)
Total	1033 (100.0)	1083 (100.0)	817 (100.0)

Employment levels declined modestly (74.1% to 68.9%), while student participation peaked in 2021 (28.8%) and remained higher than baseline in 2025 (15.7%) (Table 5).

Table 5. Employment status of participants, 2016, 2021 and 2025

	2016	2021	2025
	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)
Employed (F/T or P/T)	800 (74.1)	793 (76.8)	565 (68.9)
Retired	103 (9.5)	80 (7.7)	81 (9.9)
Student	60 (5.6)	298 (28.8)	129 (15.7)
Not working (various reasons)	116 (10.7)	111 (10.7)	45 (5.5)
Total	1084 (100.0)	1033 (100.0)	819 (100.0)

Household income profiles showed upward mobility, with households earning \$150K+ increasing from 10.5% in 2016 to 27.6% in 2025, and those earning \$50K and under declining from 28.4% to 18.2% (Table 6).

Table 6. Total household income of survey participants, 2016, 2021 and 2025

	2016	2021	2025
	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)
\$50K and under	308 (28.4)	252 (24.4)	149 (18.2)
\$51 - \$100K	334 (30.8)	352 (34.1)	227 (27.7)
\$101 – \$150K	201 (18.5)	220 (21.3)	140 (17.0)
%150K and over	114 (10.5)	209 (20.2)	226 (27.6)
Prefer not to say	117 (10.8)	-	78 (9.5)
Total	1086 (100.0)	1033 (100.0)	819 (100.0)

Summary

The 2025 survey sample was younger, more culturally diverse, and more affluent than earlier cohorts, with greater representation of both highly educated and lower-educated individuals. Compared with Wagga Wagga's population, the 2025 sample overrepresented females, Indigenous and Asian participants, and those at both younger and older age extremes. While university qualifications were more common, so too were lower education levels. Household incomes were higher, and student participation increased alongside strong employment rates. Overall, the 2025 cohort represents a more diverse and demographically distinct group than the local population, with shifts in composition over time that may affect longitudinal comparability.

Community Knowledge of DV

Community knowledge of different forms of DV is critically important because it enables earlier recognition and help-seeking by victims who may not identify non-physical abuse as DV, facilitates bystander intervention and informal social support when community members can recognize diverse warning signs beyond physical harm, and ensures appropriate professional responses from legal, healthcare, and social service providers who must recognize coercive control, financial abuse, stalking, and other tactics as serious violence requiring intervention (Stark, 2007; Powell et al., 2015; Meyer, 2012). When communities only recognise physical violence, non-physical forms of abuse remain invisible and normalised, perpetrators avoid accountability, victims receive inadequate support, and the systematic nature of coercive control—which research shows is often more damaging than isolated physical incidents—goes unaddressed (Dutton & Goodman, 2005; Johnson, 2008). Comprehensive community knowledge challenges cultural minimisation of psychological, sexual, financial, and technology-facilitated abuse, enabling societies to respond effectively to the full spectrum of DV rather than only the most visible physical manifestations (Bancroft, 2002; Flood & Pease, 2009).

For the Wagga Wagga community, change in knowledge increased more between 2016 to 2021 than between 2021 and 2025, see Figure 1.

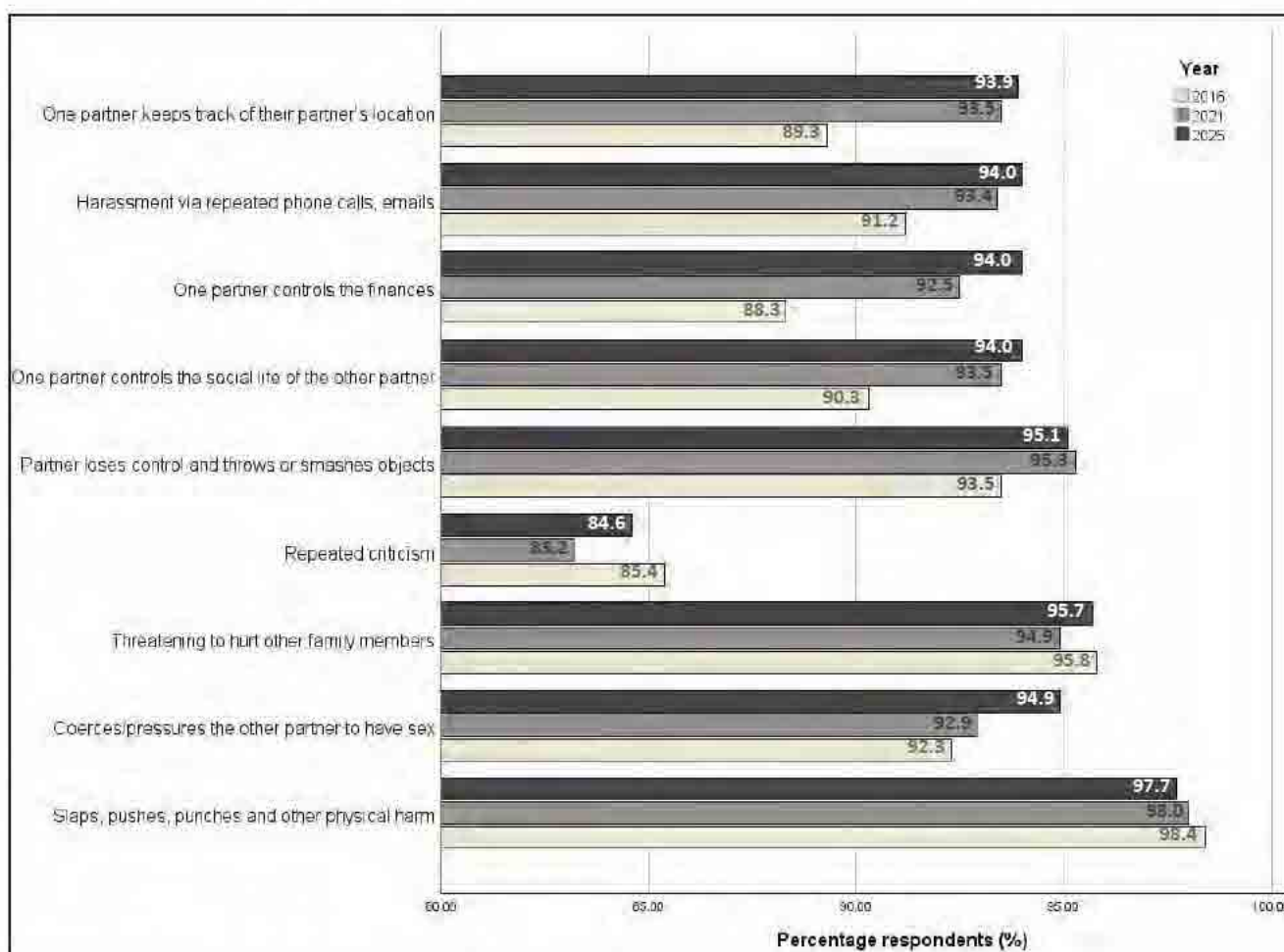


Figure 1. Responses (as percentages of the entire survey population) who agree that the specified behaviours are considered forms of DV.

Implications

This pattern could be explained by:

- Implementation of the DV project: 2650 between 2016 and 2025
- Significant feminist victories (like #MeToo in 2017, or Grace Tame's advocacy in 2021)
- Legal changes around consent, coercive control and DV across various states and nationally
- The rise of organised misogynist counter movements post 2021
- The use of digital platforms by misogynistic, right wing and conservative influencers to reach a wide audience.
- Change in community demographics with influx of people from cultures where gender roles and associated knowledge and attitudes are more stereotyped.

A binary logistic regression was conducted to examine the influence of time (2016 vs 2021 vs 2025) on the likelihood of identifying DV behaviours. There was no significance for time, that is, there was no statistically significant increase or decrease in the recognition of the below behaviours as DV although the trend is in the right direction. This points to two possibilities, namely that changes in community knowledge of what constitutes DV is already high and secondly that any changes in knowledge at a community level take a long time, especially where there is limited to no funding for community education programs on this topic.

Knowledge of DV

DV encompasses a spectrum of behaviours and understanding what the level of knowledge and understanding of these behaviours by different demographic groups is vital for shaping effective education and intervention strategies. This analysis examined demographic predictors of recognising nine forms of DV: physical harm, sexual coercion, threats, criticism, destructive aggression, social isolation, financial control, electronic harassment, and stalking. The patterns reveal significant gaps in recognising non-physical forms of abuse, with notable demographic variations (Table 7).

Statistical reporting - the Odds Ratio (OR) and the Confidence Interval (CI)

To help readers interpret these statistics, the Odds Ratio (OR) and 95% Confidence Interval (CI) are used to measure the strength and certainty of a finding. The Odds Ratio acts as a multiplier that represents likelihood; an OR of 1.0 suggests no difference between groups. An OR higher than 1.0 indicates that the first group is more likely to experience or identify the outcome while an OR under 1.0 means the first group is less likely compared to the other group. For example, an OR of 2.0 would mean one group is twice as likely as the other and an OR of 0.5 would mean the first group is half as likely as the other group.

The 95% Confidence Interval provides the "margin of error" for that likelihood, offering a range where the true value likely sits. If this range does not include 1.0, the result is "statistically significant," meaning we can be confident the difference is real and not due to random chance. A narrow interval indicates high precision in the data, while a wider interval suggests more variation, though the overall trend remains statistically valid as long as it stays entirely above or below 1.0.

The full regression tables are found in the Appendix. In the report the statistics are presented in an accessible version.

Table 7. Recognition of different forms of DV across demographic groups (Green up arrow indicates groups more likely to recognise behaviours as DV; red down arrow indicates groups less likely to recognise behaviours as DV; dash indicates no difference).

Predictor	Physical violence	Sexual coercion	Threats	Criticism	Property damage	Social isolation	Financial control	Online harassment	Stalking
Women	-	↑	-	↑↑	↑↑	↑	-	↑	↑↑
Older respondents	-	↓↓	↑↑	↑↑	↑	-	-	↑	↑
Aboriginal respondents	↓	↓↓	↓↓	↓↓	↓↓	-	↓↓	-	↓
Asian respondents	↓↓	-	-	↓	↓↓	↓↓	-	↓	-
High school education	-	-	-	-	-	↑	↑	↑↑	-
TAFE/trade/college education	-	-	↑	-	-	-	-	↑↑	-
University education	-	-	↑↑	-	-	↑↑	↑↑	↑↑	-
Students	-	-	-	↑↑	↑	↓	-	-	-
People not currently working	↓	-	-	↑	-	-	-	-	-
Higher income	-	-	↑	↑	↓	-	-	↓	-

Note: Findings compare each group with a reference group (e.g., men, White participants, employed people). Single arrow $p < 0.05$, double arrows $p < 0.01$.

Sex

Women demonstrated significantly greater recognition of multiple forms of DV compared to male respondents, particularly non-physical forms of abuse. The Odd Ratio (OR) indicates likelihood, so women are roughly twice as likely (OR 2.11) than men to identify sexual coercion as DV. The Confidence Intervals (CI) confirm these are not just random findings; even the most conservative estimates show a clear gap between how men and women perceive these behaviours. However, when it comes to obvious physical harm or threats, both genders recognise them equally, so the 'gap' disappears.

- Sexual coercion (OR 2.11, 95% CI 1.097-4.043)
- Criticism (OR 1.926, 95% CI 1.329-2.791)
- Destructive aggression (OR 3.715, 95% CI 2.091-6.601),
- Social isolation (OR 1.780, 95% CI 1.080-2.936),
- Electronic harassment (OR 1.931, 95% CI 1.225-3.043),
- Stalking (OR 4.379, 95% CI 2.690-7.128).
- No significant gender difference was found in recognising physical harm, threats or financial control.

This pattern reveals that while both sexes recognise overt physical violence, women demonstrate substantially greater awareness of coercive control tactics, the systematic patterns of non-physical abuse that research shows are central to intimate partner violence and often more damaging than isolated physical incidents (Stark, 2007; Johnson, 2008). Women's enhanced recognition likely reflects multiple factors: direct or vicarious experience with these forms of abuse through personal victimisation or experiences of female friends and family, greater attention to relationship dynamics and power imbalances through gendered socialisation, and potentially greater exposure to contemporary DV education emphasising coercive control frameworks (Dutton & Goodman, 2005).

The lack of sex difference in recognising physical harm may reflect broader societal consensus on its severity, whereas men's relative blind spots regarding sexual coercion, criticism, destructive aggression, isolation, electronic harassment, and stalking represent critical gaps in community understanding. These forms of abuse are often minimised as "not real violence," dismissed as normal relationship conflict, or rendered invisible by cultural scripts emphasising only physical violence as serious abuse (Stark, 2007). Men's failure to recognise these behaviours has profound implications: male community members may fail to identify abuse in their social networks, male service providers may minimise non-physical abuse in their professional responses, and male perpetrators may genuinely not recognise their own controlling behaviours as abusive. This underscores the urgent need for male-targeted education explicitly naming and explaining coercive control tactics beyond physical violence.

Age

Age emerged as a significant predictor across multiple abuse types, with older respondents showing both strengths and gaps in recognition. The following are DV behaviours where age had a significant impact:

- Sexual coercion (OR = 0.547, 95% CI 0.399-0.750)
- Threats (OR 1.852, 95% CI 1.395-2.465)
- Criticism (OR 1.450, 95% CI 1.228-1.712)
- Destructive aggression (OR 1.448, 95% CI 1.152-1.820),
- Electronic harassment (OR 1.313, 95% CI 1.081-1.595),
- Stalking (OR 1.310, 95% CI 1.064-1.613).

The pattern suggests generational differences in which forms of abuse receive attention and legitimacy. Younger respondents' stronger recognition of sexual coercion likely reflects contemporary education about consent, sexual autonomy, and marital rape—concepts that have gained prominence only in recent decades

(Powell & Webster, 2018). Additionally, theDVproject:2650 delivered school based healthy relationship programs to local youth, which may be reflected in this outcome. Older generations were socialised during periods when marital rape was legal and sexual obligations within marriage were culturally normalised, potentially explaining their lower recognition (Flood & Pease, 2009).

Conversely, older respondents' stronger recognition of threats, criticism, psychological abuse, electronic harassment, and stalking may reflect life experience providing greater awareness of abuse's diverse manifestations, personal or vicarious exposure to various forms of violence over longer lifespans, or potentially cohort effects where older generations received different educational messaging emphasising psychological harm. The recognition of electronic harassment and stalking among older respondents is particularly notable given these are contemporary phenomena, suggesting older adults are successfully integrating new forms of technology-facilitated abuse into their understanding despite less personal experience with these technologies.

Ethnicity

Although ethnic background showed the most pronounced variation in abuse recognition, subgroup sizes for non-White/Anglo-Saxon respondents were relatively small in earlier waves. These findings should therefore be interpreted cautiously, as some estimates may be unstable and not generalisable beyond this sample. Given the history of research being used to stigmatise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, particular care is required in interpreting and presenting these results.

Compared with White/Anglo-Saxon respondents, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants were statistically less likely to categorise several behaviours as DV within the survey instrument, including physical harm, sexual coercion, threats, criticism, destructive aggression, financial control, and stalking (see Table 7 for ORs and 95% CIs). Conversely, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents were more likely to identify social isolation as abusive.

These differences should not be interpreted as reduced awareness of harm or endorsement of violence. Rather, they may reflect culturally situated understandings of relational harm shaped by kinship structures, collective identity, historical trauma, and the ongoing impacts of colonisation and structural inequity (Blagg, 2018; Cripps & Davis, 2012). The survey instrument is grounded in dominant legal–clinical definitions of DV, which may not fully align with culturally embedded conceptualisations of relational harm within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contexts.

The elevated identification of social isolation is particularly noteworthy given the centrality of kinship, community connection, and relational continuity in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social and cultural life. Within collectivist and kinship-based worldviews, disconnection from family and community may represent a profound form of harm. This finding highlights the importance of relational and community-centred dimensions of violence that are not always foregrounded in mainstream frameworks.

Rather than indicating a deficit in knowledge, these patterns underscore the need for DV education, prevention, and measurement approaches that are developed in genuine partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and that reflect culturally grounded definitions, language, and lived experience. Greater alignment between survey instruments and diverse epistemologies may improve both validity and cultural safety.

Asian respondents showed a markedly different pattern, with lower recognition of some behaviours and substantially elevated recognition of others. Asian respondents were less likely to identify physical harm or electronic harassment as DV (see Table 7 for ORs and 95%CIs), but were more likely to identify behaviours such as criticism, destructive aggression, and social isolation as abusive.

This complex pattern may reflect diverse cultural norms and contextual factors. Lower identification of physical harm may relate to stigma surrounding public disclosure of family violence, different thresholds for defining physical discipline or conflict as abuse, or caution in endorsing survey items framed through Western

legal terminology (Yoshihama, 2002; Raj & Silverman, 2002). Elevated recognition of social isolation, criticism, and destructive aggression may reflect collectivist values emphasising family interconnectedness, social reputation, and relational harmony (Vaughan et al., 2016). In cultural contexts where interdependence and family cohesion are highly valued, behaviours that disrupt social bonds or undermine relational standing may be especially salient as harmful.

Education

Education emerged as a powerful protective factor for recognising multiple forms of abuse, though interestingly not for physical harm, sexual coercion, or destructive aggression. Participants with TAFE/trade/college or university education were significantly more likely to identify threats, social isolation, financial control, electronic harassment, and stalking, with ORs ranging from 2.084 to 7.678. These dramatic education effects align with extensive research showing education's role in expanding awareness of rights and appropriate relationship dynamics, exposure to contemporary understandings of DV that emphasise coercive control, enhanced critical thinking skills to recognise power imbalances, and access to information about legal definitions of abuse (Flood & Pease, 2009; Webster et al., 2018). The particularly strong education effects for recognising threats, isolation, financial control, and electronic harassment, and all non-physical coercive control tactics, suggest that education is especially important for moving beyond narrow physical violence frameworks to comprehensive understanding of abuse.

Employment

Employment status showed limited but notable effects. Those not working were 4.8 times less likely to recognise physical harm (OR = 0.209, 95% CI 0.061-0.709), potentially reflecting social isolation or limited exposure to contemporary discourse. Students showed elevated recognition of criticism (OR = 3.766, 95% CI 1.781-7.960) and destructive aggression (OR = 3.082, 95% CI 1.166-8.143), while being 10 times less likely to recognise social isolation (OR = 0.099, 95% CI = 0.047-0.207). Students' pattern may reflect contemporary educational emphasis on psychological abuse while potentially underestimating isolation tactics due to limited life experience with coercive relationships. Those not working also showed elevated recognition of criticism (OR = 2.523, 95% CI = 1.106-5.759), possibly through personal experience with vulnerability and control.

These findings suggest that engagement in educational environments may enhance awareness, while economic marginalisation may limit exposure to DV discourse. Outreach efforts should prioritise unemployed individuals to ensure equitable access to DV education.

Income Effects

Income showed modest effects: higher income predicted greater recognition of threats (OR = 1.594, 95% CI 1.170-2.173) and criticism (OR = 1.230, 95% CI 1.056-1.432), but lower recognition of destructive aggression (OR = 0.786, 95% CI 0.639-0.967) and electronic harassment (OR = 0.812, 95% CI 0.682-0.967). These mixed patterns suggest income's effects are modest compared to education and may reflect competing dynamics where higher income provides access to information but potentially less direct experience with certain abuse forms.

Implications

These findings reveal profound gaps in community recognition of DV beyond physical harm, with critical demographic variations requiring targeted responses. The gender gap, particularly men's failure to recognise coercive control tactics, urgently indicates the need for male-focused education explicitly naming psychological abuse, sexual coercion, isolation, financial control, and technology-facilitated abuse as serious DV (Flood, 2019). The ethnic variations, particularly Aboriginal communities' low recognition across most categories and Asian communities' paradoxical patterns, demonstrate that one-size-fits-all prevention is

ineffective and potentially harmful. Culturally responsive, community-led approaches are essential (Cripps & Davis, 2012; Vaughan et al., 2016).

Education's powerful protective effects support continued investment in comprehensive relationship and sexuality education that explicitly addresses diverse forms of abuse, while the age patterns suggest both strengths to build upon in older cohorts and new educational needs among younger people regarding sexual coercion. Effective prevention requires sustained, multi-level education ensuring all community members—regardless of sex, age, ethnicity, or educational background—can recognise the full spectrum of DV behaviours and understand that abuse is fundamentally about power and control, manifesting through diverse tactics beyond physical violence (Stark, 2007; Our Watch, 2021).

Recommendations

1. Prioritise Community Education on Coercive Control
 - Develop and deliver education sessions explaining coercive control (criticism, isolation, financial control, technology-facilitated abuse).
 - Use survivor-informed storytelling and community workshops to build shared language around “what control looks like.”
 - Partner with local media or social media influencers to promote messages like “Violence isn’t just physical — control, threats and isolation are abuse too.”
 - Train female community advocates to act as “recognition ambassadors,” equipped to explain coercive control in workplaces, schools, and community groups.
 - Source or create short video explainers or infographics that visualise subtle abuse patterns (e.g., “The Hidden Signs of Control”).
2. Culturally Responsive, Community-Led Approaches
 - Partner with Aboriginal women’s services, Elders, and community leaders to co-develop culturally grounded education resources. Frame prevention around healing, kinship strength, and balance, rather than punishment or blame.
 - Co-design culturally sensitive workshops with bilingual facilitators that address the seriousness of physical harm while validating collective values. Use family harmony and mutual respect as entry points to discuss how control, criticism, and isolation violate cultural principles of care.
 - Develop translated DV recognition guides showing how to seek help safely without shame or family dishonour.
3. Leverage Education and Employment Networks
 - Collaborate with TAFEs, training colleges, and community education centres to include DV awareness in life skills or women’s leadership courses.
 - Offer to deliver micro-workshops in employment programs or job-seeker settings.
 - Train workplace champions (especially in female-dominated sectors) to identify early signs of non-physical abuse among colleagues.
4. Focus Education on At Risk Groups
 - Create intergenerational dialogue sessions led by women where younger and older participants discuss what “consent” and “sexual rights” mean today.
 - Use faith-based or cultural women’s groups to reframe sexual coercion as a violation of dignity and partnership.
 - Produce women’s storytelling podcasts or videos normalising open discussions of sexual autonomy within marriage and long-term relationships.

- Integrate DV awareness into financial literacy and budgeting workshops—e.g., identifying red flags of financial control.
- Collaborate with youth organisations to co-create short TikTok or Instagram reels on “When online messages cross the line.”
- Showcase women’s voices through community exhibitions or local radio storytelling on “What I learned about control.”

Seriousness of DV

Exploring community perceptions of DV seriousness is essential because these perceptions directly influence how individuals and institutions respond to abuse, shaping whether victims receive support or blame, whether perpetrators face accountability or excuses, and whether behaviours are treated as criminal violence or dismissed as minor relationship problems (Webster et al., 2018; Powell & Webster, 2018). When communities minimise certain forms of abuse, such as viewing psychological control, sexual coercion, or financial abuse as less serious than physical violence, this creates permission-giving environments where perpetrators feel entitled to engage in these behaviours, victims doubt the legitimacy of their experiences and delay help-seeking, bystanders fail to intervene, and service providers offer inadequate responses (Flood & Pease, 2009; Stark, 2007). Understanding which behaviours community members perceive as serious versus trivial reveals critical gaps in public awareness that prevention efforts must address, identifies where victim-blaming attitudes persist, and highlights which forms of abuse require targeted education to shift social norms from tolerance to condemnation (Heise & Kotsadam, 2015; Our Watch, 2015). Ultimately, community perceptions of seriousness determine whether DV is treated as the significant public health crisis and human rights violation it represents, or, dismissed as private relationship matters unworthy of intervention (VicHealth, 2014).

The following results explore respondents' perception about the seriousness of DV over time.

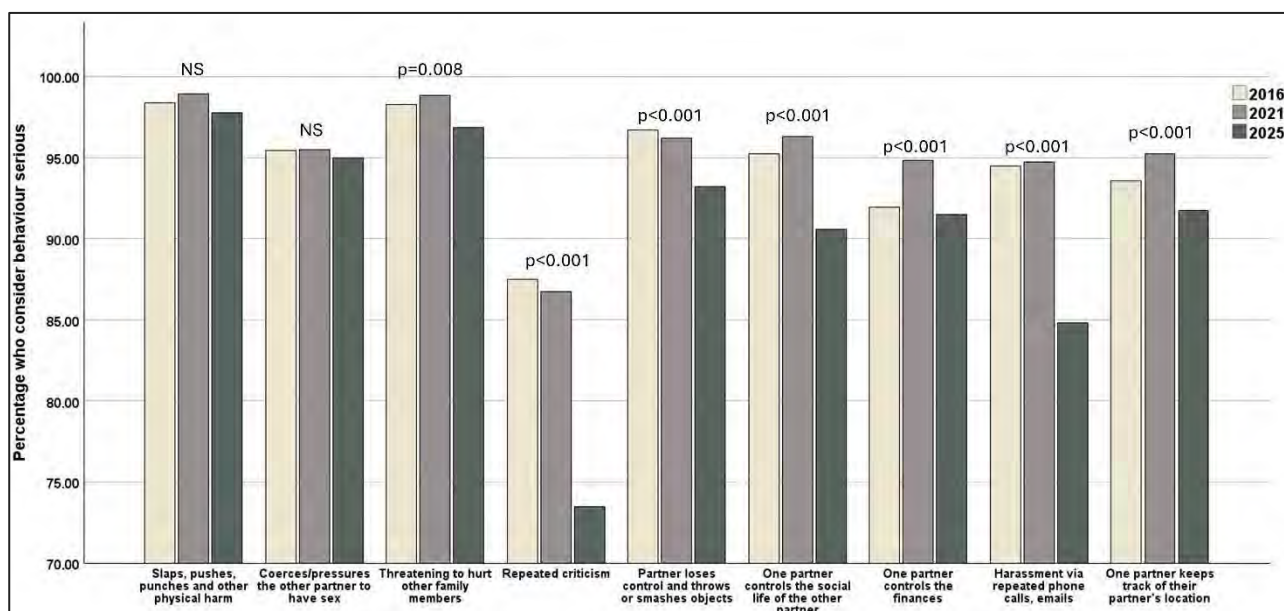


Figure 2. Percentage of respondents who agree that the specified behaviours are serious, compared across the three time waves.

Across the three survey waves, Wagga Wagga residents consistently and overwhelmingly recognise physical violence and sexual coercion as serious forms of abuse. Behaviours such as “slaps, pushes, punches and other physical harm” and “coercion/pressure to have sex” consistently had very high recognition (>95% across all years). These show no significant change over time, reflecting strong and stable public consensus that such behaviours are serious.

However, there has been a notable decline in public recognition of the seriousness of non-physical and controlling forms of abuse between 2016 and 2025. Perceptions of seriousness for behaviours such as “controlling finances”, “harassment via calls/emails”, and “tracking a partner’s location” are lower than for physical/sexual violence and, in many cases, show a statistically significant decline between 2021-2025:

- Threatening to hurt family members
- Repeated criticism

- Destructive aggression
- Social isolation and control
- Financial control
- Electronic harassment
- Stalking

The significant erosion in recognition of non-physical/coercive behaviours between 2016 and 2025 suggest that social norms around psychological and controlling abuse are weakening. This may reflect:

- Switching of the DVproject:2650 from branded whole of community approach to programs targeted to specific groups, which may have reduced the visibility of DV as a community issue that needs addressing.
- Competing social discourses that minimise the harm of non-physical abuse.
- Shifting thresholds of what is perceived as “serious” or
- Normalisation of controlling behaviours in digital contexts (e.g., location tracking seen as “caring” or “protective” by some).

Multinomial logistic regression model was used to examine whether perceptions of the seriousness of the various behaviours differed across survey years (2016, 2021, 2025), while controlling for the effects of age, sex, ethnicity. However, because majority of respondents viewed most behaviours as serious, it created a highly skewed dependent variable, meaning the results are not reliable. Therefore, these have not been reported.

Implications

The data highlights the need for renewed public awareness campaigns to emphasise that coercive control, psychological abuse, and harassment are serious forms of DV with significant impacts on victims. Targeted prevention and early intervention activities are required to counteract declining recognition of DV, for example, to counteract online misogynist content. Legal reforms (such as coercive control laws) need to be accompanied by public education to shift attitudes.

Recommendations

1. Reinvigorate community education campaigns
 - Re-launch or partner in local awareness initiatives similar to DVproject:2650 to restore visibility of DV as a community issue and emphasise that non-physical and controlling behaviours are serious forms of abuse.
 - Address digital-age misconceptions eg. youth-focused campaigns that reframe digital tracking, surveillance, and online harassment as abusive, not protective, targeting younger demographics where normalisation appears strongest.
2. Advocate for male specific organisations to engage men and boys as allies against DV and to challenge minimisation of coercive behaviours and foster shared responsibility for preventing gender-based violence.
3. Align messaging with coercive control legislation and service responses, ensuring public understanding matches evolving legal definitions of abuse.
4. Promote survivor voices and lived experiences eg. storytelling, art, and media platforms to centre women’s experiences of non-physical abuse, helping shift community empathy and understanding from physical harm to the broader continuum of control.

Attitudes towards DV

Attitudes minimising DV as a private matter reflect historical norms that DV is beyond public intervention, effectively shielding perpetrators from accountability while isolating victims and reducing bystander intervention, reporting rates, and community support (Powell et al., 2015). Similarly, the myth that "women can leave if they want" fundamentally misunderstands the complex structural, economic, social, and psychological barriers that trap victims in violent relationships, including economic dependency, lack of safe housing, fear of escalated violence (separation is the most dangerous time), child custody concerns, immigration status, disability, and social isolation (Meyer, 2012). This victim-blaming belief shifts responsibility from perpetrators to victims and minimises the coercive control tactics that systematically undermine victims' autonomy and safety (Stark, 2007).

Perhaps most harmful is the pervasive myth that women fabricate DV claims, a belief empirically contradicted by research showing false reporting rates for DV mirror those of other crimes (approximately 2-8%) and are far lower than public perception suggests (Lisak et al., 2010; Flood & Pease, 2009). Communities with higher endorsement of these attitudes demonstrate lower rates of formal help-seeking, reduced conviction rates for DV offenses, and greater tolerance for ongoing abuse (Webster et al., 2018). Therefore, understanding community attitudes toward DV is essential for designing effective prevention and intervention strategies. The following sections synthesise how demographic variables influence agreement with various DV-related statements (Table 8).

Table 8. Attitudes towards DV across demographic groups (Green up arrow indicates groups more likely to agree with these attitudes; red down arrow indicates groups less likely to agree with these attitudes; dash indicates no difference).

Predictor	DV is not a crime	DV is private matter	Most women can leave if they want	It is natural for men to be in control	Women make up DV claims	Men better leaders than women
Women	-	-	↓↓	↓↓	↓↓	↓↓
Older respondents	-	-	-	↑	-	↑↑
Aboriginal respondents	-	↓↓	↑↑	↓↓	↑↑	-
Asian respondents	-	-	↓↓	↑↑	-	-
High school education	-	-	↑	-	-	-
TAFE/trade/college education	-	-	-	-	-	↑
University education	-	-	-	↓	↓↓	-
Retired people	-	↑↑	-	-	-	-
People not currently working	↓	-	-	-	-	-
Higher income	-	↓	-	-	-	↑
2021 respondents	↑↑	-	↓↓	↓	↓↓	↓↓
2025 respondents	↑↑	-	↓↓	-	↓↓	-

Note: Findings compare each group with a reference group (e.g., men, younger respondents, White respondents, employed people, 2016 respondents). Single arrow $p < 0.05$, double arrows $p < 0.01$.

Sex

Female respondents consistently demonstrated more progressive attitudes across nearly all domains compared to male respondents, though notably not regarding whether DV is a criminal offense or a private matter. Women were 2.3 times less likely than men to agree that "most women can leave if they want" (OR = 0.442, 95% CI 0.297-0.654), suggesting greater awareness of the complex structural, financial, psychological, and safety barriers that trap victims in violent relationships. They were also 2.3 times less likely than men to agree that "it is natural for men to be in control" (OR = 0.437, 95% CI 0.276-0.691), indicating stronger rejection of patriarchal norms that legitimise male dominance and control in intimate partnerships.

Women were 2.6 times less likely than men to agree that "women make up DV claims" (OR = 0.391, 95% CI 0.267-0.573), demonstrating greater understanding that false allegations are rare and that such stereotypes serve to silence and discredit genuine victims, and were 3.6 times less likely than men to agree that "men are better leaders" (OR = 0.274, 95% CI 0.153-0.490), reflecting substantially lower support for gender stereotypes that reinforce male superiority in both public and private spheres.

This pattern reveals that women demonstrate greater understanding of structural barriers preventing victims from leaving, stronger rejection of gender hierarchies that underpin violence, more consistent support for victim credibility, and broader rejection of male superiority beliefs (Flood & Pease, 2009; Webster et al., 2018). Women's awareness likely stems from personal or vicarious experience with gender-based constraints, greater attention to power dynamics in relationships, and lived understanding of how societal expectations limit women's autonomy and choices (Meyer, 2012). However, men's persistent belief that women can easily leave, that male control is natural, and that women lie about abuse reveals fundamental gaps in understanding the gendered power dynamics, coercive control, and structural barriers that characterise DV (Stark, 2007). These male attitudes directly enable violence by minimising perpetrator responsibility, questioning victim credibility, and normalising male dominance and suggest a need for targeted education campaigns that challenge rigid gender roles, address victim-blaming narratives, and increase understanding of the systemic barriers faced by those experiencing DV (Coumarelos et al., 2023). Gender-sensitive advocacy and community education programs should prioritise engaging men in critical reflection on these attitudes, as acceptance of such beliefs is associated with increased risk of perpetration and reduced support for victim-survivors.

Age

Age was a significant predictor only around endorsement of traditional gender beliefs that underpin DV. Older respondents were 1.3 times more likely to agree that "it is natural for men to be in control" (OR = 1.310, 95% CI 1.057-1.624), indicating that older cohorts are more accepting of patriarchal norms that legitimise male dominance in intimate relationships. Older respondents were also 1.6 times more likely to agree that "men are better leaders" (OR = 1.635, 95% CI 1.250-2.137), reflecting substantially stronger support among older generations for gender stereotypes that reinforce male superiority and authority.

These findings reveal a clear generational divide in attitudes toward gender roles and power dynamics. Older respondents' greater acceptance of traditional gender hierarchies suggests that patriarchal norms remain more deeply embedded among those socialised in earlier eras when such beliefs were more culturally normative and less frequently challenged (Webster et al., 2018; Flood & Pease, 2009).

This generational pattern has important implications for prevention efforts: while younger cohorts appear to be rejecting rigid gender roles — possibly due to changing social norms and school-based education initiatives — older community members may require targeted messaging that directly challenges outdated beliefs about male authority and control.

Ethnicity and Cultural Influences

Ethnicity emerged as a significant and multifaceted predictor of attitudes toward DV, revealing important cultural variation in beliefs about gender roles, community responsibility, and victim agency. Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander respondents demonstrated a distinct and internally coherent pattern. They were 11.4 times less likely to view DV as a private matter (OR = 0.088, 95% CI 0.018–0.441), representing the strongest rejection of privacy framing across any demographic group. This finding aligns with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural frameworks that emphasise collective responsibility, kinship accountability, and community obligation, positioning violence as a shared social concern rather than an individual or couple-based issue (Blagg, 2008; Cripps & Davis, 2012).

At the same time, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents were 2.9 times less likely to believe it is natural for men to be in control (OR = 0.343, 95% CI 0.122–0.961), and approximately 20 times less likely to endorse the myth that women fabricate DV claims (OR = 0.049, 95% CI 0.014–0.180), indicating particularly strong rejection of gendered control narratives and powerful affirmation of victim credibility. These findings reflect clear resistance to harmful myths that minimise or delegitimise women's experiences of abuse.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents were, however, 2.6 times more likely to agree that most women can leave if they want to (OR = 2.590, 95% CI 1.478–4.537). Rather than interpreting this as victim-blaming or minimisation of structural barriers, several culturally grounded explanations are plausible. First, this response may reflect a strengths-based orientation that affirms women's agency, resilience, and decision-making capacity. Second, in many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, extended kinship systems provide practical pathways for temporary or immediate safety. Women may have access to an aunt, cousin, sibling, or other family member with whom they can stay, meaning "leaving" can be enacted in relational and collective ways rather than as permanent separation from a partner. It is also possible that respondents interpreted "leave" situationally — as leaving in the moment to seek safety — rather than as permanently exiting the relationship. Within kinship-based and community-connected contexts, separation may be fluid, negotiated, and supported by extended family structures rather than framed solely through individualised, legalistic understandings of relationship termination (Cripps & Davis, 2012).

This complexity demonstrates that rejecting DV myths does not necessarily align with dominant policy framings of structural barriers. Attitudinal dimensions evolve in layered and context-specific ways, and communities may hold strong pro-survivor beliefs while conceptualising agency and safety through relational and collective frameworks rather than individualised structural models.

The strong foundation of victim credibility, rejection of harmful gender myths, and resistance to privacy framing among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents should be recognised as significant protective attitudinal assets. Prevention and education initiatives should build upon these strengths, working in partnership with communities to integrate discussions of structural constraints—such as housing access, service barriers, and systemic inequities—within culturally grounded understandings of kinship, collective responsibility, and relational safety.

Rather than positioning communities as lacking awareness, this approach recognises that structural barriers may be understood and navigated differently within extended family systems and community-based support networks. Effective responses should therefore prioritise culturally safe, community-led strategies that align structural advocacy with existing relational strengths.

Asian participants were 2.6 times more likely to agree that "most women can leave if they want" (OR = 2.590, 95% CI 1.478–4.537), suggesting reduced awareness of or acknowledgment of the complex structural, financial, psychological, and safety barriers that prevent victims from leaving violent relationships. Asian participants were also 3.6 times more likely to agree that "it is natural for men to be in control" (OR = 3.564, 95% CI 1.422–8.931), indicating stronger endorsement of traditional gender hierarchies and patriarchal norms that legitimise male dominance. Finally, Asian participants were 6 times more likely to agree that "men are better leaders than women" (OR = 6.047, 95% CI 3.363–10.87), reflecting substantially stronger support for gender stereotypes that position men as inherently superior in authority and decision-making roles.

Participants from other ethnic backgrounds were 2.8 times more likely to agree that "men are better leaders than women" (OR = 2.820, 95% CI 1.310–6.072), indicating elevated endorsement of traditional gender role beliefs.

This heterogeneous category contains diverse populations, making interpretation challenging, but the pattern indicates targeted work is needed to challenge false allegation myths across various cultural communities. These cultural differences likely reflect diverse socialisation experiences, varying exposure to gender equality messaging, different cultural frameworks around family authority and gender roles, and potentially different levels of engagement with Australian DV prevention initiatives. The findings underscore the critical need for culturally tailored education and support services that acknowledge and respectfully address culturally specific beliefs while promoting gender equality and victim safety.

Education

Education was a protective factor against harmful FDV attitudes with participants with university education 2.5 times less likely to agree that "women make up DV claims" (OR = 0.401, 95% CI 0.195-0.826), demonstrating stronger rejection of harmful myths that delegitimise survivor experiences and suggesting greater critical thinking about victim-blaming narratives. University-educated participants were also 3.5 times less likely to agree that "men are better leaders than women" (OR = 0.288, 95% CI 0.161-0.515), reflecting substantially lower endorsement of gender stereotypes that reinforce male superiority and patriarchal authority structures. By contrast, those with vocational education were 2.5 times more likely to agree that "men are better leaders than women" (OR = 2.541 95% CI 1.041-6.203), indicating elevated endorsement of traditional gender role beliefs, a surprising finding that may reflect gender segregation in trades and exposure to male-dominated workplace cultures that reinforce traditional gender hierarchies (Flood & Pease, 2009). Participants with trade/TAFE or college education were also 2 times more likely to agree that "most women can leave if they want" (OR = 1.958, 95% CI 1.108-3.460), suggesting reduced awareness of the complex structural, financial, psychological, and safety barriers that prevent victims from leaving violent relationships.

These findings reveal that education serves as a protective factor against harmful DV attitudes, but the relationship is nuanced and depends on the type and content of education received. University education appears strongly associated with rejection of both victim-blaming myths and traditional gender hierarchies, possibly reflecting exposure to critical thinking curricula, diverse peer groups, and progressive institutional cultures that explicitly challenge stereotypes and promote equality.

In contrast, vocational education pathways (trade/TAFE or college) show a mixed pattern: while these qualifications provide important employment skills, they may offer less exposure to content addressing gender equality, DV awareness, and the structural barriers facing victim-survivors. The higher endorsement of beliefs that women can easily leave and that men are better leaders among vocationally educated participants suggests that the content and context of education matter as much as educational attainment itself. Incorporating comprehensive DV and gender equality education in secondary school (before educational pathways diverge) may help establish foundational knowledge across all future educational trajectories.

Employment

Employment status showed limited but significant effects. Employment serves as a proxy for life stage, economic circumstances, and exposure to different social contexts, all of which shape DV attitudes in distinct ways. Compared to employed participants, unemployed participants were 8.5 times less likely to agree that "most women can leave if they want" (OR = 0.118, 95% CI 0.027-0.526), demonstrating significantly greater awareness of the barriers to leaving violent relationships. This may reflect personal experience with economic vulnerability, housing insecurity, and limited resources, the very barriers that make leaving violence difficult, leading to more realistic understanding of victims' constrained choices.

Retired participants were 3.5 times more likely to agree that "DV is a private matter" (OR = 3.457, 95% CI 1.383-8.637), indicating stronger endorsement of traditional views that frame DV as a private issue rather than a public health and criminal justice concern. This likely reflects generational attitudes formed in eras when DV was less publicly discussed and intervention was discouraged and now potentially less engaged with workplace or educational settings where prevention messaging occurs, retirees may maintain outdated beliefs about family privacy despite decades of advocacy positioning FDV as a public concern.

Students were 3 times less likely to agree that "men are better leaders than women" (OR = 0.327, 95% CI = 0.119-0.900), reflecting substantially lower endorsement of traditional gender stereotypes, likely due to exposure to contemporary gender equality education, more diverse peer networks, shifting cultural norms and socialisation in contexts that increasingly challenge rigid gender roles.

Income

Higher income predicted reduced likelihood of viewing DV as private (OR = 0.715, 95% CI 0.554-0.924) and reduced belief in male leadership superiority (OR = 0.708, 95% CI 0.552-0.907), suggesting economic resources may facilitate access to information and exposure to egalitarian norms, though effects are modest compared to education and gender. This relationship likely operates through multiple pathways: higher income typically correlates with greater educational attainment, exposure to diverse professional environments, access to information and media that challenge traditional norms, residential stability that enables community engagement, and reduced economic stress that may otherwise reinforce traditional power dynamics.

However, this pattern also raises important equity considerations. Lower-income individuals may face multiple barriers to accessing prevention education and may live in contexts where traditional gender norms are more strongly reinforced due to limited exposure to alternative frameworks. Additionally, economic vulnerability may make the "privacy" of DV more appealing as a protective strategy when formal systems (police, courts, services) are perceived as punitive, inaccessible, or unhelpful.

Time trends

Survey year emerged as a highly significant predictor across multiple attitude dimensions, revealing both encouraging progress and concerning patterns in how community attitudes have evolved between 2016 and 2025. Statistically significant changes towards the better occurred across most categories between 2016 and 2021. Many of these improvements were not maintained between 2021 and 2025.

Recognition of DV as a criminal offense increased dramatically: respondents in 2021 were 6.3 times more likely than those in 2016 to recognize DV as criminal (OR = 6.255, 95% CI 3.715-10.53), increasing further by 2025 (OR = 10.67, 95% CI 5.511-20.65). The accelerating trend from 2021 to 2025 suggests that legislative reforms, public awareness campaigns, and high-profile cases have successfully shifted community understanding of the legal status and seriousness of DV (Pfitzner et al., 2020).

In 2021 respondents were 2.2 times less likely to agree that "most women can leave if they want" (OR = 0.452, 95% CI = 0.360-0.568) but by 2025, this decreased to 1.5 times (OR = 0.657, 95% CI 0.510-0.847). The declining agreement with this victim-blaming statement reflects growing community awareness of the complex structural, financial, psychological, and safety barriers that trap victims in violent relationships. The strongest shift occurred between 2016 and 2021, with some attenuation by 2025, suggesting that intensive awareness campaigns during that period successfully challenged simplistic narratives about victim agency, though sustained education remains necessary to prevent backsliding.

Respondents in 2021 were 1.5 times less likely to agree that "women make up DV claims" (OR = 0.648, 95% CI = 0.526-0.799) and 1.7 times less likely in 2025 (OR = 0.593, 95% CI = 0.461-0.763). The progressive decline in this harmful myth indicates growing community support for victim credibility and rejection of narratives that falsely suggest widespread fabrication of abuse claims. The continued decline through 2025 suggests

sustained progress in challenging this particularly damaging stereotype, however progress slowed considerably from the decrease seen between 2021 and 2016.

Respondents in 2021 were 2.1 times less likely to agree that "men are better leaders than women" (OR = 0.482, 95% CI = 0.339-0.686). However, the significant decline in endorsement of traditional gender hierarchy beliefs between 2021 and 2016 was not maintained, and by 2025 there was no significant change to 2016. This is concerning as a rejection of male leadership superiority is foundational to preventing DV, as rigid gender roles and beliefs about male authority create conditions that enable and justify controlling and violent behaviour in relationships.

Implications

These temporal patterns reveal mixed progress: strong advances in recognising DV criminality and understanding barriers to leaving, alongside stalling or potential reversal in challenging broader gender ideologies. This may reflect:

- Saturation of messaging reaching those most receptive to attitude change
- Need for refreshed prevention campaigns to reach resistant populations
- Potential for backsliding without sustained education and advocacy
- Emerging counter-narratives or backlash against gender equality progress

Uneven progress - While aggregate trends are positive, earlier analyses showed concerning patterns:

- Men lag behind women in attitude change
- Some ethnic groups show different trajectories
- Progress on some dimensions (e.g., recognising DV as serious) doesn't guarantee progress on others (e.g., understanding coercive control)

From awareness to action - Knowing DV is criminal and serious doesn't automatically translate to:

- Bystander intervention when violence is witnessed
- Supporting victim-survivors in one's social network
- Challenging sexist attitudes and behaviours in daily life
- Advocating for policy and systemic change

While targeted DV messaging has achieved measurable success, underlying gender equality attitudes remain contested (Our Watch et al., 2015; Flood, 2019). Attitude change is multidimensional: communities may embrace progressive views on some issues while retaining harmful beliefs on others, highlighting the need for comprehensive, sustained, and culturally nuanced prevention strategies.

Temporal patterns show that community attitudes can shift over time, validating prevention efforts while underscoring that meaningful change is ongoing. Women, younger individuals, and those with higher education or income are more likely to reject harmful DV myths, whereas older adults, some ethnic minorities, and lower socioeconomic groups are more likely to hold traditional beliefs. These findings point to the importance of targeted, culturally responsive interventions to address the diverse attitudes and needs within the community.

Recommendations

1. Challenge Victim-Blaming Narratives (Possible theme: "Leaving isn't easy—leaving can be deadly.")
 - Share survivor-informed stories (anonymised) explaining financial dependence, fear, coercive control, and parenting barriers.

- Develop a visual “barriers wall” activity for public events: each brick names a barrier (e.g., no money, fear for children, nowhere safe to go) to visibly demonstrate cumulative weight.
 - Message tone: Empowering, not pitying—acknowledge women’s strength while exposing systemic constraints.
2. Tackle the Myth That Women Fabricate DV Claims
 - Public education materials: Create a myth vs fact flyer eg. “Truth Matters: What the Evidence Says About DV Reports.”
 - Use trusted messengers: Police DV liaison officers, legal advocates, and survivors share clear facts: false reports are 2–8%, same as other crimes.
 - Partner with local media and radio to feature short community spots or interviews busting common myths.
 - Frame this as a justice issue: disbelief delays help, endangers victims, and benefits perpetrators.
 3. Promote Understanding of Coercive Control and Male Dominance (Possible theme: “Control isn’t care—it’s coercion.”)
 - Share short social media stories contrasting “healthy” and “controlling” relationship behaviours.
 - Reinforce positive male roles—showing empathy, listening, and accountability as true leadership.
 - Use storytelling and historical framing: compare “the way it used to be” with progress in protecting families today.
 - Recruit older women as advocates—grandmothers, community elders—who can credibly speak against silence and privacy.
 4. Culturally Tailored Engagement
 - Co-design materials with Aboriginal women’s organisations focusing on community responsibility for safety and systemic barriers to leaving.
 - Use yarnning circles to discuss structural violence (e.g., racism, housing, policing).
 - Frame messages around collective strength and healing, not deficit or blame.
 - Develop messages in-language about respect and equality that align with cultural values of harmony and dignity.
 - Develop messages in-language about Australian legislation surrounding DV.
 - Use bilingual community educators and ethnic media (radio, newspapers) to challenge male superiority norms.
 - Showcase female leadership stories from within those communities to model equality.
 5. From Awareness to Action
 - Offer bystander training to local women’s groups, workplaces, and community clubs
 - Distribute “What You Can Do” cards—simple steps for checking in, supporting, and referring safely.
 - Encourage community pledges or mural projects celebrating “our town stands against violence.”
 - Highlight stories of ordinary women who intervened safely—model small acts of courage.
 6. Sustain Public Momentum and Prevent Backsliding
 - Run annual mini-campaigns tied to major events (16 Days of Activism, International Women’s Day).
 - Refresh messaging every 1–2 years to reach new audiences and prevent desensitisation.

- Gather community attitude feedback via short surveys or post-event reflections to monitor change.
- Showcase progress stories (e.g., “what’s changed in our town”) to reinforce community pride in rejecting DV.
- Use findings to lobby local council and MPs for increased investment in housing, safety planning, and early intervention.
- Frame advocacy in community benefit terms—safer families, healthier workplaces, stronger local economy.
- Publish an annual “State of Women’s Safety” snapshot summarising local attitudes and services needed.

Perceptions of DV

Harmful perceptions about DV—including beliefs that women cannot be raped by intimate partners, that women should remain in violent relationships for the sake of family unity, or that violence can be excused under certain circumstances—are strongly associated with both perpetration of violence and reduced help-seeking by victims. These violence-supportive attitudes function as "permission-giving beliefs" that rationalise, justify, or minimise violence, creating social conditions where perpetrators face reduced accountability, and victims encounter victim-blaming rather than support (Webster et al., 2018). Community-level endorsement of such beliefs predicts higher rates of DV, as these attitudes shape social norms about what behaviours are acceptable within relationships and what consequences perpetrators can expect (Heise & Kotsadam, 2015). Critically, challenging these harmful perceptions through primary prevention education has been shown to reduce violence-supportive attitudes and, over time, contribute to reductions in violence perpetration rates (Jewkes et al., 2015). The following section presents key findings highlighting the influence of sex, age, and socioeconomic status on perceptions of DV (Table 9) and attitudes towards gender stereotypes (Table 10).

Table 9. Perceptions of DV across demographic groups (Green arrow up indicates groups more likely to agree with these statements; red down arrow indicates groups less likely to agree with these statement; dash indicates no difference).

Predictor	DV is a problem in Wagga Wagga	DV is common in Wagga Wagga	Women should stay in DV for family	Women cannot be raped by partner	DV can be excused if perp abused as a child
Women	-	↑↑	-	-	-
Older respondents	-	-	↑	↑↑	↑↑
Aboriginal respondents	↑	↓↓	-	-	-
Asian respondents	-	↓↓	-	-	↑
High school education	↑	-	↓	-	-
TAFE/trade/college education	↑	↑	↓	-	-
University education	↑↑	↑↑	↓↓	↓	-
Retired people	↓	↓	-	↑	-
Students	-	↑	-	-	-
People not currently working	↓	↓↓	-	-	-
Higher income	↑	↑	-	-	↓
2021 respondents	↑↑	-	-	↑	-
2025 respondents	↑↑	↑	↑	↑↑	↑

Note: Findings compare each group with a reference group (e.g., men, younger respondents, White respondents, employed people, 2016 respondents). Single arrow $p < 0.05$, double arrows $p < 0.01$.

Community awareness that DV is a problem in Wagga Wagga has increased over time (both 2021 and 2025 show significantly higher odds vs 2016). This suggests rising local recognition/visibility of FDV across the study period which aligns with national findings (Coumarelos et al., 2023).

Sex

Women were 4.7 times more likely than men to say “DV is common in Wagga Wagga” (OR = 4.688, 95% CI 2.85–7.70). Other outcome items did not show significant sex differences. This indicates women report higher perceived prevalence/awareness even when other attitudes (e.g., victim-blaming items) do not differ significantly by sex. This pattern (women reporting greater awareness/perception of prevalence) is consistent with prior community attitude surveys (Coumarelos et al., 2023). The striking sex difference in perceptions of local DV prevalence likely reflects multiple factors. Women may have greater awareness through personal or vicarious experience—either having experienced violence themselves, knowing friends or family members who have, or being more attuned to stories and signs of abuse in their community networks.

Women may also be more likely to recognise and label behaviours as DV, whereas men might minimise or normalise similar behaviours. This gap in perceived prevalence is concerning because if men underestimate how common DV is in their own community, they may be less likely to recognise warning signs in relationships around them, intervene as bystanders when they witness concerning behaviour, support prevention initiatives they perceive as addressing a “rare” problem, or understand DV as a community-wide issue requiring collective response.

Age

Increasing age was associated with higher odds of endorsing several harmful beliefs: that a woman “should stay in DV for the family” (OR=1.823, 95% CI 1.101-3.020), that a “woman cannot be raped by partner” (OR =2.158 95% CI 1.461-3.189), and that “DV can be excused if perpetrator was abused as a child” (OR =1.771 95% CI 1.205-2.604). In short: older respondents in this sample were more likely to hold traditional / victim-blaming views on intimate partner sexual and family violence.

These views reflect earlier social contexts of stigma around divorce and traditional family roles. Such attitudes are damaging as they pressure women to remain in unsafe relationships, limit girls’ opportunities, perpetuate harmful norms across generations, and reduce community support for intervention. While younger cohorts largely reject these beliefs, indicating cultural change, older generations’ views continue to influence family decisions, community norms, and the transmission of values.

Ethnicity

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents were over 10 times more likely to agree that DV is a problem in Wagga Wagga (OR = 10.33, 95% CI 1.62–66.15), while also being less likely to characterise DV as “common.” This distinction suggests a nuanced differentiation between seriousness and prevalence: an issue can be recognised as urgent and unacceptable without being perceived as normative or widespread across the community. Such a pattern may reflect resistance to deficit-based narratives that portray Aboriginal communities as uniformly affected by violence, while simultaneously acknowledging the real and serious harms that occur. It may also reflect the presence of cultural protective factors such as strong kinship systems, collective accountability, and community care practices, that are perceived to mitigate widespread normalisation of violence.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents were also more likely to agree that DV can be excused if a perpetrator was abused as a child (OR = 7.27, 95% CI 1.35–39.21). This finding may not indicate justification of violence, but rather recognition of intergenerational trauma and the enduring impacts of colonisation on family systems. Within communities where historical and ongoing trauma are lived realities, there may be greater acknowledgement of the cyclical nature of harm and the need for trauma-informed responses that address root causes. Importantly, this perspective coexisted with very strong rejection of victim-blaming myths and powerful endorsement of victim credibility, suggesting that explanatory understanding of perpetrator pathways does not equate to minimisation of harm.

National data consistently demonstrate disproportionately high rates of family violence–related harms experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, driven by structural determinants including

colonisation, forced child removal, socioeconomic marginalisation, and systemic inequities (AIHW, 2025). Greater likelihood of identifying DV as a serious community problem may therefore reflect heightened awareness grounded in lived and collective experience, rather than abstract perception.

Asian respondents displayed a different pattern. They showed lower endorsement of certain victim-blaming or rape myths, yet were significantly less likely to agree that DV is common in Wagga Wagga (OR = 0.167, 95% CI 0.067–0.417). This may reflect a range of contextual factors, including cultural stigma surrounding public discussion of family violence, differing thresholds for defining behaviours as abuse, variable integration into local information networks, recent migration histories, or language barriers influencing access to prevalence data. As with other groups, these findings represent culturally situated perceptions rather than deficits in awareness.

Overall, these ethnic variations highlight that attitudes toward DV are shaped by cultural frameworks, lived experience, community positioning, and historical context. Perceptions of whether DV is a “problem” versus “common” appear to operate as distinct constructs, with the former reflecting moral urgency and the latter potentially implying normalisation.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, the strong rejection of privacy framing and victim-blaming myths, along with clear recognition of DV as a serious issue, represents a powerful foundation upon which community-led prevention and trauma-informed perpetrator interventions can build. Messaging and service models should align with kinship-based and collective accountability frameworks, integrating structural advocacy with culturally grounded understandings of healing and safety.

For Asian communities, prevention strategies may benefit from culturally safe engagement approaches that reduce stigma, improve access to information about local supports, and ensure materials are linguistically and culturally accessible.

Education

Compared to those with only year 10 or below education, people with higher education levels were more likely to report “DV a problem in Wagga Wagga” (ORs about 2.3–3.0); but university education had the strongest association with lower odds of endorsing rape myths and excusing DV (e.g. ORs ≈0.10, 0.33, 0.20, and 0.25 for various victim-blaming items). Put simply, higher education is linked to greater problem recognition and less endorsement of pro-violence/victim-blaming beliefs. This aligns with literature showing education tends to be protective against acceptance of DV myths (Postmus et al., 2011).

Employment

Retired respondents were *less* likely than employed people to say “DV a problem” (OR = 0.43 95% CI 0.202–0.914) and less likely to say “DV is common” (OR = 0.419 95% CI 0.180–0.933). Those who were unemployed or not working were also less likely to report “DV a problem” (OR ≈0.21) but had mixed associations across other items. Students on the other hand were more likely to say “DV is common” (OR ≈2.61). This pattern likely reflects generational and life-stage factors—older cohorts socialised when DV was minimised, now less exposed to workplace or social media prevention messaging, and more distant from high-risk relationship stages. However, rather than viewing retirees as disconnected, these findings highlight the need for tailored outreach and engagement strategies for this group.

Those not working show the lowest recognition of DV as both a problem and as common, likely due to social isolation, economic stress, and limited access to information or community networks. This pattern may reflect reduced social integration rather than lack of personal exposure, as unemployment itself can increase DV risk.

Income

Higher household income was associated with increased odds of saying “DV a problem” and “DV is common” (OR ≈1.24–1.26), but *lower* odds of endorsing “DV can be excused” (OR ≈0.68). This suggests higher-income

respondents may be more aware that DV occurs locally while being less accepting of excuses for perpetrators — consistent with the idea that higher socioeconomic position associates with greater awareness and reduced acceptance of violence-supportive norms (though prevalence can be high across SES) (AIHW, 2025).

Time trends

Compared with 2016, both 2021 and 2025 show significantly higher odds of perceiving DV as a problem (OR = 1.773 95% CI 1.357-2.316 for 2021 and OR = 3.152 95% CI 2.235-4.445 for 2025) and of saying it is common (OR = 2.959 95% CI 2.148-4.077) and 2025 often shows the strongest increases. The dramatic increase specifically in 2025 suggests awareness campaigns or high-profile local cases started to shift perceptions about prevalence before 2021 but the change in awareness only became statistically significant in 2025, demonstrating community recognition that DV is a local issue requiring attention and resources, not just a problem that happens "elsewhere."

However, alongside increased recognition, harmful attitudes also intensified over time. By 2025, respondents were nearly twice as likely as in 2016 to believe women should stay in violent relationships for family (OR = 1.924 95% CI 1.045-3.544), five times more likely to excuse violence when perpetrators experienced childhood abuse (OR = 5.151, 95% CI 2.629-10.10), and nearly twice as likely to believe women cannot be raped by partners (OR = 1.854 95% CI 1.061-3.239). This troubling pattern suggests a potential backlash phenomenon, where increased public discourse about DV may paradoxically trigger defensive responses or intensification of traditional gender attitudes among some segments of the population (Flood, Dragiewicz & Pease, 2021). The dramatic increase in excusing violence based on perpetrators' childhood abuse may reflect growing public awareness of intergenerational trauma without corresponding understanding that trauma histories, while contextually important, do not excuse violence or remove perpetrator accountability.

These temporal patterns highlight the complexity of social change: while awareness and recognition of DV as a serious problem have increased substantially—a positive development—this has not uniformly translated into rejection of violence-supportive attitudes. This underscores the ongoing necessity for primary prevention efforts that go beyond awareness-raising to actively challenge the underlying gender inequalities, power dynamics, and attitudes that enable violence (Webster et al., 2018).

Implications

The findings reveal that DV perceptions in Wagga Wagga are shaped by complex intersections of demographics, cultural positioning, and social change. Education emerges as particularly protective across multiple dimensions, supporting continued investment in educational prevention programs. The ethnic variations demonstrate the necessity for culturally responsive, community-led approaches rather than universalistic messaging. The temporal patterns suggest that while community awareness has increased substantially, this must be accompanied by sustained efforts to challenge violence-supportive attitudes, particularly among vulnerable groups showing increased tolerance over time. The divergence between increased recognition of DV as serious and simultaneous increases in harmful attitudes suggests the need for more sophisticated prevention approaches that address underlying gender inequalities and power relations, not merely increase awareness of violence as an issue.

Recommendations

1. Deepen Understanding Beyond Awareness
 - Shift from “DV is a problem” to “DV is never excusable.” Campaigns should emphasise accountability and responsibility, not just prevalence. Example messaging:
 - o “Understanding trauma doesn’t excuse violence.”
 - o “Love never means fear or control.”
 - o “DV is common—but it’s never acceptable.”

- Partner with local media and councils to highlight survivor voices and stories of community accountability, avoiding narratives that centre or justify perpetrators. Example topics include:
 - o “What trauma explains—and what it doesn’t excuse.”
 - o “Why awareness alone isn’t enough.”
- 2. Create Intergenerational Community Dialogues eg., “Respect Across Generations”
 - Younger and older participants discuss changing understandings of marriage, respect, and safety. Topics include:
 - o “Strong families protect, not silence.”
 - o “Staying for the family should never mean staying unsafe.”
 - Create short videos/social posts:
 - o “If you think DV doesn’t happen here, you’re not looking close enough.”
 - o “Men who care call it out.”
- 3. Culturally Responsive Messaging for Aboriginal and Asian Communities
 - Co-design local messaging with Aboriginal and Asian community leaders emphasising community strength and rejection of violence.
 - Use community media and WhatsApp/WeChat networks to spread discreet, stigma-sensitive awareness content.
 - Focus on recognising DV as unacceptable and serious, not simply “common,” to avoid normalisation.
 - Partner with volunteer organisations to train peer champions who can normalise conversations about safety and equality. Messaging examples:
 - o “Violence can hide in plain sight—let’s talk about it.”
 - o “Everyone deserves safety, at every age.”
- 4. Sustain Momentum and Counter Backlash
 - Frame campaigns around hope, community pride, and shared responsibility, not guilt or blame.
 - Build narratives of positive change (“We’ve come a long way, but we’re not done yet”).
 - Refresh messages regularly with local data and human stories to keep the issue visible without overwhelming audiences.
 - Train local leaders to respond constructively to resistance: “Understanding trauma isn’t the same as excusing harm.”
 - Partner with media, police, and council to publicly reinforce the distinction between explanation and excuse and maintain consistent, united messaging rejecting excuses for violence.
 - o Trauma increases risk but never removes responsibility eg. “Your past may explain your pain—but not your violence.”
 - o Healing from trauma and preventing harm go hand in hand eg. “Accountability is part of healing.”

Attitudes toward gender roles

The relationship between traditional gender roles and DV is well-established in contemporary research, with rigid gender norms serving as a primary risk factor for intimate partner violence. Gender inequality at both structural and interpersonal levels creates conditions that enable and perpetuate violence against women, with traditional masculine norms emphasizing dominance, control, and entitlement over women's behaviour being particularly strongly associated with perpetration (Jewkes et al., 2015; Flood & Pease, 2021). Adherence to rigid gender roles—including beliefs that men should be decision-makers, that women are responsible for family harmony, and that male authority in relationships is natural—consistently predicts both perpetration of and tolerance for DV across diverse cultural contexts (Webster et al., 2018; Our Watch et al., 2015). The following section presents and discusses the results for Wagga Wagga's attitudes towards gender roles (Table 10).

Table 10. Perceptions of DV across demographic groups (Green arrow up indicates groups more likely to agree with these statements; red down arrow indicates groups less likely to agree with these statements; dash indicates no difference).

Predictor	Women fulfilled by children	Discrimination not an issue for women	Women prefer men to be in charge	Education more important for boys	Men have more rights to a job
Women	-	↓ ↓	↓ ↓	-	-
Older respondents	↑	-	↓	↑	-
Aboriginal respondents	-	↑ ↑	↑ ↑	-	-
Asian respondents	↓	↑ ↑	↑ ↑	-	-
High school education	-	-	-	-	-
TAFE/trade/college education	-	-	-	-	-
University education	↓ ↓	↓ ↓	↓	↓	↓
Retired people	-	-	↑ ↑	-	-
Students	-	↓	↓ ↓	-	↑ ↑
People not currently working	-	-	-	-	-
Higher income	↓	↓	↓	-	↓ ↓
2021 respondents	↓ ↓	-	↓ ↓	↓ ↓	↓ ↓
2025 respondents	-	-	↓ ↓	-	-

Note: Findings compare each group with a reference group (e.g., men, younger respondents, White respondents, employed people, 2016 respondents). Single arrow $p < 0.05$, double arrows $p < 0.01$.

Sex

Differences were apparent for two of the measured attitudes. Women were significantly less likely than men to agree that discrimination is not an issue for women (OR = 0.32, 95% CI 0.19–0.52) or that women prefer men to be in charge (OR = 0.21, 95% CI 0.12–0.36). No significant sex differences emerged for the remaining items. These results suggest that women recognise gender discrimination and are less supportive of male-dominant roles than men—patterns consistent with national and international evidence. The NCAS (Coumarelos et al., 2021) and similar attitude surveys show women consistently express greater awareness of gender inequality and less support for patriarchal norms than men (Flood & Pease 2009).

Age

Age was positively associated with endorsement of some traditional beliefs. Older respondents were more likely to agree that women are fulfilled by having children (OR = 1.30, 95% CI 1.06–1.58) and that education is more important for boys (OR = 1.91, 95% CI 1.13–3.22), but were less likely to believe that women prefer men to be in charge (OR = 0.78, 95% CI 0.61–0.99). These results reflect mixed generational effects, where older adults tend to hold more traditional views about women's fulfilment and gendered education priorities, though slightly less endorsement of male dominance may reflect cultural shifts over time. Research on generational differences (Charlesworth & Mullan 2020) similarly finds younger cohorts are more egalitarian, while older ones retain traditional views around family and motherhood.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity was a strong predictor of several attitudes. Both Aboriginal and Asian respondents were more likely than white respondents to downplay gender discrimination and to prioritise education for boys (See Table 7 of ORs and 95% CIs). These findings should not be interpreted as diminished support for women's rights or endorsement of inequality. Rather, they may reflect differing cultural and structural framings of gender, opportunity, and social advancement. For some communities, particularly those shaped by histories of colonisation, migration, or socioeconomic marginalisation, priorities around education may be understood through collective advancement frameworks (Hawkins 2020; Pease 2019; AIHW 2022) where educational success for boys is perceived as contributing to broader family or community stability. Similarly, perceptions of discrimination may be shaped by intersectional experiences in which gender inequity is understood as intertwined with racism, economic exclusion, or other systemic forces, rather than experienced as a singular axis of disadvantage.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, gender roles and responsibilities have historically operated within complex kinship systems that were significantly disrupted by colonial intervention and imposed patriarchal structures. Contemporary attitudes may therefore reflect layered negotiations between cultural continuity, imposed gender hierarchies, and ongoing structural inequities. For Asian communities, gendered expectations around education and family obligation may be embedded within cultural traditions that prioritise intergenerational mobility, filial responsibility, and collective wellbeing.

Importantly, these variations illustrate that gender attitudes are culturally situated and cannot be understood solely through mainstream Western feminist benchmarks. Beliefs about discrimination and educational priority are shaped by historical context, migration experience, socioeconomic positioning, and community values. Interpreting these patterns requires attention to structural conditions and cultural epistemologies rather than assuming deficit or resistance to gender equity.

Education

Educational attainment showed a consistent pattern: respondents with higher education were less likely to hold traditional gender role beliefs. Compared with those who had not completed Year 10, participants with a university degree were significantly less likely to agree that women prefer men to be in charge (OR = 0.37, 95% CI 0.16–0.85), that education is more important for boys (OR = 0.19, 95% CI 0.04–0.90), or that men have more right to jobs (OR = 0.41, 95% CI 0.17–0.99). Those with vocational or trade education were also less likely to minimise discrimination against women (OR = 0.38, 95% CI 0.18–0.79). These results reinforce the well-documented relationship between higher education and more gender-egalitarian beliefs. Exposure to tertiary education is linked to higher critical thinking, gender-equity values, and awareness of discrimination (Flood & Pease 2009; ANROWS 2021). These findings align with global evidence that education reduces support for gender hierarchies and increases endorsement of equality.

Employment

Employment status was also associated with traditional attitudes. Students were less likely than employed participants to agree that discrimination is not an issue for women (OR = 0.36, 95% CI 0.15–0.88) or that

women prefer men to be in charge (OR = 0.25, 95% CI 0.09–0.69). Conversely, respondents who were not working were more likely to believe that women prefer men to be in charge (OR = 3.40, 95% CI 1.44–8.02), and retired participants were more likely to agree that men have more right to jobs (OR = 3.38, 95% CI 1.35–8.47). These results indicate that engagement in work or study may promote more progressive gender attitudes, while being outside the workforce may be associated with more traditional beliefs. This aligns with research showing that labour-force participation and exposure to contemporary gender norms shape beliefs about women's roles (Charlesworth & Mullan 2020).

Income

Income displayed a clear inverse relationship with traditional gender attitudes. Higher-income respondents were less likely to endorse statements that women are fulfilled by children (OR = 0.76, 95% CI 0.30–0.92), that discrimination is not an issue for women (OR = 0.80, 95% CI 0.65–0.99), that women prefer men to be in charge (OR = 0.78, 95% CI 0.63–0.98), and that men have more rights to jobs (OR = 0.58, 95% CI 0.45–0.75). This pattern suggests that higher socioeconomic status is associated with more egalitarian gender perspectives. Prior literature (e.g., Inglehart & Norris 2003; ANROWS 2021) links higher socio-economic status with access to education, diverse workplaces, and progressive gender ideologies.

Time trends

Substantial temporal shifts were evident between 2016, 2021, and 2025. Compared with 2016, the odds of agreeing that women are fulfilled by children decreased markedly in 2021 (OR = 0.39, 95% CI 0.29–0.52). Endorsement of the view that men have more rights to jobs also fell significantly in both 2021 (OR = 0.24, 95% CI 0.16–0.34) and 2025 (OR = 0.63, 95% CI 0.45–0.88). Similarly, agreement that women prefer men to be in charge (2025 OR = 0.31, 95% CI 0.16–0.60) declined over time. These results suggest there has been progress towards more equitable attitudes in Wagga Wagga over the past decade.

Respondents in 2021 were 3.3 times less likely to agree that boys' education is more important than girls' (OR = 0.305, 95% CI = 0.155–0.600), showing strong progress in rejecting gendered educational discrimination. However, by 2025, this progress had completely reversed, with no significant difference from 2016 baseline levels. This reversal may reflect reduced visibility of gender equity initiatives, social and economic pressures from COVID-19 and cost-of-living challenges reinforcing traditional views about prioritising boys as future earners, and the re-emergence of entrenched beliefs in regional areas like Wagga Wagga once campaigns and public discourse lost momentum. This pattern suggests earlier gains were fragile and highlights the critical need for sustained, community-based education and advocacy to support lasting cultural change rather than temporary attitudinal shifts.

Respondents in 2021 were 2.7 times less likely to agree that "men have more rights to jobs than women" (OR = 0.364, 95% CI = 0.245–0.541), but no significant change occurred between 2025 and 2016, suggesting that strong progress in rejecting male job entitlement between 2016 and 2021 stalled or reversed by 2025, with attitudes reverting closer to 2016 levels. This pattern may reflect the discontinuation of prevention initiatives, backlash against diversity and gender equity programs, economic anxiety producing zero-sum thinking about employment, influence of online "manosphere" content promoting male grievance, political discourse challenging equity measures, and fatigue or resistance to sustained equality messaging. This stalling is concerning because it demonstrates that progress on gender equality is neither linear nor inevitable—gains can erode without sustained effort and in the face of counter-narratives (Coumelas et al., 2023).

Implications

Together, these temporal patterns underscore that while gender attitudes in Wagga Wagga have shifted toward greater equity at certain points over the past decade, progress remains uneven and vulnerable to social, economic, and political forces. Sustained investment in gender equality education, community

engagement, and visible leadership is essential to consolidate gains and prevent regression toward traditional gender norms.

Recommendations

1. Advocate for the Men's Leadership Forum to deliver initiatives that:
 - Engage men as partners in change eg. short social media clips or local radio messages with men saying, "Respect is strength, not control."
 - Collaborate with sporting clubs and workplaces to deliver 10-minute "Respect Chats" during team meetings or toolbox talks.
2. Advocate for Reinvestment in School and Youth Programs
 - Support school-based programs that explore respectful relationships, gender stereotypes, and shared leadership e.g., "Love Bites".
 - Sponsor peer-led student campaigns for Wellbeing Month promoting equality and respect.
 - Create youth ambassador programs—train local young people as "Gender Respect Champions" to run peer conversations and social media campaigns.
 - Source and offer small project grants for student-led initiatives addressing equality in schools or sports clubs e. Wagga Wagga City Council Community Grants.
3. Culturally Responsive Engagement with Aboriginal and Asian Communities
 - Co-design workshops with Aboriginal and Asian community leaders, focusing on how cultural respect, family roles, and equality coexist.
 - Translate equality messages into culturally resonant terms (e.g., respect, harmony, balance).
 - Develop community-led messaging—for example:
 - o "Strong families respect all voices."
 - o "Respect starts at home—for everyone."
4. Collaborate for Sustainable Change after Reversal of Progress (2021–2025)
 - Form a Wagga Wagga Gender Equality Coalition bringing together NGOs, councils, schools, and community groups to coordinate local initiatives.
 - Align any messaging with current community concerns (e.g., cost of living, family wellbeing): frame equality as improving economic stability and family resilience.
 - Collaborate on annual visibility events (e.g., International Women's Day March, Reclaim the night, 16 Days of Activism) with strong local leadership and follow-up activities year-round.
 - Work with local media to publish stories about the real benefits of gender equality for families and communities.
 - Reinforce equality as a shared community value, not a divisive issue. Example taglines for posters or social media:
 - o "Respect has no gender."
 - o "Equality makes families stronger."
 - o "Boys and girls deserve the same chances."
 - o "No one should have to choose between love and respect."
 - o "Old habits can change—respect lasts."

Justification of DV

The justification of DV under specific circumstances such as provocation, humiliation, financial disputes, or maintaining control, represents a critical risk factor for perpetration and community tolerance of abuse. Violence-supportive attitudes function as "permission-giving beliefs" that rationalise and excuse abusive behaviour, creating contexts where perpetrators face reduced accountability and victims encounter blame rather than support (Flood & Pease, 2009; Webster et al., 2018). When communities view violence as understandable in certain situations, this normalises abuse as acceptable conflict resolution, undermines intervention, and discourages help-seeking (Heise & Kotsadam, 2015). Cross-cultural research shows that societies with higher violence justification demonstrate elevated DV rates, as these attitudes shape norms about acceptable relationship behaviour and signal tolerance to potential perpetrators (Jewkes et al., 2015). Justifications rooted in honour, masculine entitlement, or family authority are particularly predictive of severe violence, framing abuse as legitimate rather than criminal (Flood, 2019). Analysis of predictors of DV justification in this study revealed significant demographic and socio-cultural influences on attitudes (Table 11).

Table 11. Justification of DV across groups (Green up arrow indicates groups more likely to support these justifications; red down arrow indicates groups less likely to agree with these justifications; dash indicates no difference).

Predictor	When partner cheats	When partner humiliates them	When partner ends relationship	To get access to children	To settle property or financial issues
Women	↓↓	↓↓	-	↓↓	↓
Aboriginal respondents	↑↑	↑↑	↑↑	↑↑	↑↑
Asian respondents	↑↑	↑↑	↑↑	↑	↑↑
2021 respondents	-	-	-	-	-
2025 respondents	↓↓	↓↓	↓↓	-	↓↓

Note: Findings compare each group with a reference group (e.g., men, younger respondents, White respondents, employed people, 2016 respondents). Single arrow $p < 0.05$, double arrows $p < 0.01$.

Sex

Female respondents consistently demonstrated lower tolerance for violence justification across nearly all scenarios compared to male respondents. Women were 2.8 times less likely to justify violence in response to infidelity (OR = 0.36, 95% CI 0.22-0.59), 2.1 times less likely when humiliated (OR = 0.47, 95% CI 0.29-0.75), 3.2 times less likely when denied child access (OR = 0.31, 95% CI 0.21-0.46), and 1.8 times less likely to justify violence over financial disputes (OR = 0.57, 95% CI 0.34-0.95).

These findings align with extensive research demonstrating that men show greater tolerance for instrumental violence—violence used to achieve goals, restore status, or maintain control—particularly in contexts threatening masculine authority or entitlement (Flood & Pease, 2009; Jewkes et al., 2015).

The lack of sex difference in justifying violence when partners end relationships suggests this scenario may tap into more universally condemned dynamics, or alternatively, may be seen by both sexes as an extreme provocation. The consistent pattern across most scenarios reflects gendered socialisation where men are more likely to view violence as a legitimate tool for conflict resolution, boundary enforcement, or status restoration, while women more consistently reject violence as acceptable under any circumstances (Webster et al., 2018).

Ethnicity

Ethnic background was associated with significant variation in attitudes toward violence justification across scenarios, with findings best understood through the lens of cultural frameworks, structural context, and historical experience rather than as reflections of group characteristics.

Aboriginal respondents showed higher rates of violence justification across multiple scenarios, approximately 4 times for infidelity (OR = 3.98, 95% CI 2.03–8.80), 11 times when humiliated (OR = 10.82, 95% CI 5.93–19.77), 6 times when relationships end (OR = 5.98, 95% CI 2.83–12.62), 4.4 times regarding child access (OR = 4.42, 95% CI 2.68–7.29), and 5 times over financial disputes (OR = 5.10, 95% CI 2.56–10.15) compared to the reference group. These patterns are most meaningfully interpreted through intersecting structural and historical factors: the ongoing impacts of colonisation have disrupted traditional conflict resolution mechanisms while exposing communities to systemic and intergenerational trauma (Cripps & Davis, 2012); cultural frameworks in which honour, respect, and communal standing carry deep relational significance (Blagg, 2018); and higher rates of exposure to violence as a product of systemic disadvantage rather than cultural disposition. These findings reflect the consequences of historical disruption to protective cultural practices, not inherent cultural characteristics.

Asian respondents showed higher justification rates across several scenarios, nearly 9 times for infidelity (OR = 8.85, 95% CI 4.32–18.13), 8.3 times when humiliated (OR = 8.32, 95% CI 3.66–18.89), 6.6 times when relationships end (OR = 6.62, 95% CI 2.52–17.39), and 6.7 times over financial disputes (OR = 6.67, 95% CI 2.73–16.30). Notably, Asian respondents were significantly less likely to justify violence to gain child access (OR = 0.35, 95% CI 0.14–0.88), a pattern that may reflect cultural values prioritising children's wellbeing and family harmony, or different frameworks for understanding custody that do not position it as a conflict requiring force. Where higher justification rates were observed, these likely reflect the weight that honour-based frameworks place on public reputation and family standing, in which scenarios like humiliation, relationship dissolution, or financial conflict may be experienced as serious threats requiring a response (Raj & Silverman, 2002). In collectivist contexts where "face" and family honour carry significant social meaning, attitudes toward these scenarios are shaped by cultural logic rather than individual pathology.

Time trends

Temporal analysis revealed encouraging declines in violence justification between 2016 and 2025 across multiple scenarios, though notably not for child access disputes. By 2025, respondents were 4.7 times less likely than in 2016 to justify violence for infidelity (OR = 0.212, 95% CI = 0.086–0.526), 3.2 times less likely when humiliated (OR = 0.314, 95% CI = 0.143–0.687), 7.9 times less likely when relationships end (OR = 0.127, 95% CI = 0.033–0.486), and 6.1 times less likely over financial disputes (OR = 0.165, 95% CI = 0.056–0.482). These substantial declines represent genuine progress in community rejection of violence justification, likely reflecting sustained primary prevention efforts, increased public discourse challenging violence, high-profile campaigns emphasising that no excuse justifies abuse, and generational shifts toward more egalitarian relationship norms (Our Watch, 2015; Flood, 2019). The absence of significant change in justifying violence to access children is notable and concerning, potentially reflecting ongoing narratives about fathers' rights, family court grievances, and men's groups framing custody disputes as battles requiring extreme measures (Dragiewicz, 2011). This suggests child access remains a domain where violence justification persists despite progress in other areas, indicating the need for targeted messaging about non-violent legal pathways for resolving parenting disputes.

Implications

These findings reveal that violence justification remains concerningly prevalent among specific demographic groups, despite overall temporal progress. The significant ethnic variations underscore the absolute necessity for culturally responsive prevention approaches developed in genuine partnership with Aboriginal and Asian communities, addressing cultural frameworks around honour, shame, and conflict while building on

protective cultural values (Vaughan et al., 2016; Cripps & Davis, 2012). The persistent gender gap indicates men require continued targeted engagement to challenge beliefs that violence is an acceptable response to threats to status, control, or entitlement. The temporal progress demonstrates that sustained primary prevention can shift community attitudes, but the lack of change regarding child access highlights how specific narratives can persist even as general tolerance declines. Effective prevention must address the underlying beliefs that enable justification including male entitlement, honour-based frameworks, and instrumental views of violence, while promoting non-violent conflict resolution, challenging rigid gender norms, and emphasising perpetrator accountability regardless of circumstances (Jewkes et al., 2015; Our Watch, 2021).

Recommendations

1. Local Campaigns eg. “No Excuse for Violence”
 - Create short, clear public messages for posters, social media, and community radio:
 - o “There’s never a reason for violence.”
 - o “Feeling angry is human—choosing violence is not.”
 - o “Respect doesn’t hurt.”
 - Highlight real-life alternatives: promote local mediation, counselling, or men’s behaviour change programs.
 - Use storytelling and community champions to reinforce that strong families solve problems without violence.
 - Run pop-up stalls at local events (markets, NAIDOC Week, cultural festivals) with simple myth-busting quizzes like “Excuse or Accountability?” to engage the public interactively.
 - Report activities in community newsletters or local media to demonstrate change and attract future funding.
2. Culturally Responsive Partnerships and Co-Design
 - Co-create messages with local Aboriginal Elders, community leaders, and cultural organisations emphasising healing, respect, and traditional non-violent values.
 - Focus on restoring balance and community safety, not blame.
 - Develop multilingual resources and community discussions that highlight non-violent conflict resolution consistent with cultural values (e.g., harmony, dignity, collective wellbeing).
 - Employ bilingual or bicultural facilitators or work with existing ones at the Multicultural Centre of Wagga Wagga to bridge cultural and conceptual differences in understanding DV.
3. Address Child Access and Family Court Narratives
 - Develop a public education leaflet or infographic explaining that violence in parenting disputes harms children and weakens custody claims.
 - Promote non-violent communication and mediation pathways, showcasing fathers who choose peaceful solutions as positive role models.
 - Work with local media to debunk “fathers’ rights” myths that imply violence is a reasonable response to perceived injustice.
4. Strengthen Youth and School-Based Prevention
 - Advocate for delivery of “Love Bites” program in schools across Wagga Wagga
 - Partner with schools and youth centres to deliver creative workshops on “Respect, Power, and Choice,” using art, music, or digital storytelling.
 - Support peer-led initiatives, where young people develop messages for their own communities: e.g., “Being angry doesn’t make it right.”
 - Work with schools to create Youth Respect Ambassadors, students recognised for promoting non-violence and equality.

Attribution for male perpetration of DV

Attributing DV to men's inability to manage anger or stress misrepresents its deliberate and controlling nature. Research shows DV is primarily a pattern of coercive control—calculated behaviours used to dominate and isolate partners—rather than spontaneous loss of control (Stark, 2007). This misattribution also obscures the gendered roots of DV in inequality and male dominance (Flood & Pease, 2009). The section below explores the outcomes around this issue in Wagga Wagga (Table 12).

Table 12. Attributions for why some men are violent towards women across groups (Green up arrow indicates groups more likely to support these justifications; red down arrow indicates groups less likely to agree with these justifications; dash indicates no difference).

Predictor	Men not being able to control anger	Men being under stress	Men need to maintain power and control
Women	↓↓↓	-	↓↓↓
Older respondents	↑↑↑	-	↑↑↑
Aboriginal respondents	-	-	↓↓↓
Asian respondents	-	↑↑↑	↓↓↓
2021 respondents	-	-	-
2025 respondents	-	-	↓↓↓

Note: Findings compare each group with a reference group (e.g., men, younger respondents, White respondents, employed people, 2016 respondents). Single arrow $p < 0.05$, double arrows $p < 0.01$.

Sex

Female respondents demonstrated substantially more sophisticated understanding of violence causation compared to male respondents. Women were 2.1 times less likely to attribute violence to anger management issues (OR = 0.47, 95% CI 0.36-0.59) and 5.6 times more likely to recognize violence as rooted in men's need for power and control (OR = 0.18, 95% CI 0.14-0.22), which inverted indicates women are less likely to choose other options over power/control). These dramatic differences align with research showing women have greater awareness of coercive control dynamics, whether through personal experience, vicarious knowledge through social networks, or greater attention to gendered power relations (Stark, 2007). Male respondents' stronger endorsement of anger and stress explanations may reflect both lack of direct experience with victimization and investment in narratives that excuse male violence as unintentional loss of control rather than deliberate domination (Flood & Pease, 2009).

This gender gap has critical implications for intervention, as male gatekeepers in criminal justice, healthcare, and social services who misunderstand violence causation may implement inappropriate responses, minimize severity, or fail to hold perpetrators accountable.

Age

Age emerged as the strongest predictor of causal attributions, with younger respondents dramatically more likely to recognise power and control as the fundamental cause of violence. Compared to those under 18 (the reference group), all adult age groups were substantially less likely to attribute violence to power and control: ages 18-24 were 14.9 times more likely to choose anger management explanations (OR = 5.375) or stress (though not significant), ages 25-39 were 4.8 times more likely (OR = 4.751), ages 40-55 were 4.8 times more likely (OR = 4.774), and ages 56+ were 5.1 times more likely (OR = 5.070) to endorse anger management over power and control frameworks.

When examining the power and control category directly, younger respondents showed dramatically stronger recognition: compared to under-18s, 18-24 year-olds were 14.9 times more likely to recognize power and control (OR = 14.892, 95% CI 7.988-27.764), 25-39 year-olds were 13.2 times more likely (OR = 13.16), 40-55 year-olds were 15.6 times more likely (OR = 15.62), and those 56+ were 14.7 times more likely (OR = 14.66).

These patterns suggest that contemporary prevention education in schools and universities is successfully teaching younger people about coercive control frameworks, while older generations retain outdated psychological models emphasizing anger and stress (Webster et al., 2018; Our Watch, 2021). However, it's notable that even 18-24 year-olds show lower power/control recognition than under-18s, suggesting the most recent educational initiatives targeting school-aged youth may be particularly effective. This generational divide underscores both the promise of educational prevention and the challenge of reaching older community members whose frameworks were formed before contemporary understandings of coercive control became prominent.

Ethnicity

Cultural background was associated with variation in how respondents understood the causes of DV, with differences best interpreted through culturally situated frameworks rather than as indicators of awareness or knowledge deficits.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents were less likely than White/Anglo-Saxon respondents to attribute violence to men's need for power and control (OR = 0.39, 95% CI 0.22–0.68) and more likely to respond "don't know/can't say" (OR = 2.75, 95% CI 1.63–4.64). Rather than reflecting limited understanding, this pattern may indicate that collective and contextual ways of making sense of violence — ones that account for community stressors, family dynamics, and the ongoing impacts of colonisation — do not map neatly onto a single causal explanation (Cripps & Davis, 2012; Carlson et al., 2021). Uncertainty in this context may represent a considered response to genuinely complex lived experience or reflect cultural norms around discussing family violence publicly in ways that could implicate community members.

Asian respondents were less likely to attribute violence to power and control (OR = 0.18, 95% CI 0.10–0.33) and more likely to attribute it to stress or external pressures (OR = 3.42, 95% CI 1.94–6.03). This pattern aligns with collectivist frameworks in which interpersonal conflict is understood relationally and situationally where external pressures, loss of face, and relational disruption are foregrounded as meaningful explanatory factors (Liu, 2020; Easteal et al., 2019). This reflects a culturally coherent interpretive framework rather than a departure from accurate understanding.

Where uncertainty or stigma around discussing DV shapes responses across minority communities, this is better understood as a product of cultural norms around privacy, community cohesion, and family reputation as well as the limitations of survey instruments designed within particular cultural frameworks rather than reluctance or evasion (Nguyen, 2021).

Taken together, these findings highlight that causal understandings of DV are culturally situated, and that prevention and education efforts will be most effective when they engage with the interpretive frameworks communities already hold, rather than treating any single explanatory model as the universal standard against which others are measured.

Time trends

Overall, time did not seem to have a significant effect other than recognition of power/control explanations weakened in 2021 but recovered by 2025.

The temporal patterns for anger management and stress attributions showed marginal trends suggesting these explanations may have peaked in 2016 and declined somewhat, though not reaching statistical significance. The persistence of these alternative explanations is concerning because they fundamentally mischaracterize DV as loss of control rather than deliberate coercive control, inappropriately excusing

perpetrators and misdirecting intervention efforts toward anger management rather than accountability programs (Bancroft, 2002; Gondolf, 2012).

In summary, community understanding of men's violence is shifting. Women and older respondents consistently recognise power and control as the central driver of violence, aligning with evidence-based frameworks. Men and younger respondents are more likely to minimise or deflect, attributing violence to stress or anger, or being unsure. Furthermore, time period (2016 vs 2021 vs 2025) does not significantly explain differences once demographics are controlled, suggesting that demographic shifts, rather than temporal change, are driving differences in attitudes.

Implications

These findings reveal concerning gaps in community understanding of violence causation, with the power and control framework, despite being the evidence-based foundation of contemporary intervention, recognised by less than half of respondents as the primary cause. The strong gender gap with men favouring individualistic psychological explanations, and the generational divide with older adults clinging to outdated anger management models all indicate substantial work remains in shifting community understanding (Pence & Paymar, 1993; Stark, 2007).

The persistence of anger management and stress attributions is particularly problematic because these frameworks fundamentally mischaracterise DV, excuse perpetrators by framing violence as unintentional loss of control, minimise the systematic nature of abuse, and misdirect intervention efforts toward anger management programs that research shows are ineffective for DV perpetrators (Gondolf, 2012). Effective prevention requires sustained, clear messaging that DV is not about anger or stress but about deliberate patterns of power, control, and entitlement, emphasising that perpetrators control their violence selectively and strategically (Johnson, 2008).

The promising finding is that younger cohorts show substantially stronger power/control recognition, suggesting educational prevention in schools is working. However, the temporal decline indicates these gains are fragile without sustained reinforcement. Communities require ongoing education emphasising that violence is a choice, not a loss of control; perpetrators are calm and controlled with others; stress affects everyone but only some choose violence; and anger is a feeling, while violence is a behaviour chosen to dominate and control (Flood, 2019).

Recommendations

1. Targeted Community Education: "Violence Is a Choice" Messaging
 - Develop simple, clear messaging (posters, social media tiles, flyers) emphasising:
 - o "Violence is about control, not anger."
 - o "Stress affects everyone—violence is a choice."
 - o "Perpetrators control their behaviour—violence is used to dominate."
 - o Partner with local media or radio for community segments highlighting myths about anger and stress as causes of violence.
2. Continue to support Men and Boys in Attitude Change
 - Continue to support Men's Leadership Forum
 - Encourage Forum Members to deliver short talks or posters at Men's Sheds, or workplaces to challenge "anger management" narratives.
 - Encourage male champions (e.g., coaches, teachers, business owners) to publicly model and share messages like "Being calm is strength—violence is control."
3. Build Intergenerational Understanding

- Run youth-led community awareness projects (e.g., schools or youth centres) where young people create short videos or posters teaching about coercive control.
 - Facilitate intergenerational workshops—“What’s changed in how we talk about DV?”—bringing youth and elders together to share perspectives.
4. Culturally Responsive Education and Partnerships
- Partner with local Aboriginal organisations and Elders to co-design culturally grounded conversations on violence, focusing on healing, respect, and accountability rather than blame.
 - Engage with Multicultural Council of Wagga Wagga, Red Cross and faith leaders to co-host sessions reframing “stress” and “family harmony” narratives while maintaining cultural sensitivity.
 - Provide translated and culturally adapted resources explaining coercive control using relevant metaphors and examples (e.g., relational balance, respect, safety).
5. Ongoing Public Awareness and Reinforcement
- Run short, low-cost social media campaigns around key dates (e.g., 16 Days of Activism, International Women’s Day) reinforcing that violence is about power, not anger.
 - Partner with local schools to showcase student artwork, poetry, or performances about healthy relationships and respect.
 - Display community art or storyboards illustrating the cycle of control vs the myth of “loss of control.”
 - Use local festivals, markets, or community days to host pop-up information stalls or mini “myth-busting” games.

Reasons for staying

Understanding community perceptions about why women remain in violent relationships is critical, as these beliefs shape responses to victims, influence help-seeking behaviour, and reflect underlying attitudes about agency, responsibility, and structural barriers. Table 13 reveals significant variation across demographic groups and time periods in how communities explain women's entrapment in abusive relationships.

Table 13. Perceptions for why women do not leave abusive relationships across groups (Green up arrow indicates groups more likely to support these justifications; red down arrow indicates groups less likely to agree with these justifications; dash indicates no difference).

Predictor	No other choice/support	To keep family together	Shame	They choose to stay - could leave	Fear violence getting worse
Women	↑↑	↑↑	↑↑	-	↑↑
Aboriginal respondents	↑	-	↓	↑	↑↑
Asian respondents	-	↑↑	↓↓	-	↓↓
2021 respondents	-	-	-	-	-
2025 respondents	↓↓	-	↓↓	-	↓↓

Note: Findings compare each group with a reference group (e.g., men, younger respondents, White respondents, employed people, 2016 respondents). Single arrow $p < 0.05$, double arrows $p < 0.01$.

Sex

Female respondents demonstrated significantly greater awareness of structural barriers and threats keeping women in violent relationships compared to male respondents. Women were 2.7 times more likely to recognize lack of choice or support as a primary reason (OR = 2.68, 95% CI 2.01–3.57), nearly twice as likely to identify pressure to keep families together (OR = 1.98, 95% CI 1.4–2.79), 4.9 times more likely to recognize shame as a barrier (OR = 4.90, 95% CI 3.10–7.75), and 2.7 times more likely to identify fear of escalating violence (OR = 2.7, 95% CI 2.01–3.57). These patterns align with research showing that women, whether through personal experience, vicarious knowledge through social networks, or greater empathy for other women's experiences, demonstrate more nuanced understanding of the complex barriers trapping victims in violent relationships (Meyer, 2012). Men's relative underestimation of these barriers may reflect both social distance from victims' experiences and the influence of individualistic frameworks that emphasize personal choice over structural constraints (Flood & Pease, 2009). This gender gap in understanding has important implications: male community members, including those in gatekeeping positions such as police, judges, and service providers, may be more likely to exhibit victim-blaming attitudes if they fail to recognize the profound constraints limiting victims' options.

Ethnicity

Cultural background was associated with meaningful differences in how respondents understood why women remain in violent relationships, with patterns reflecting distinct cultural frameworks, community knowledge, and structural awareness rather than more or less accurate understanding.

Aboriginal respondents were 2.8 times more likely to recognise lack of choice or support as a barrier (OR = 2.81, 95% CI 1.19–6.61) and 4.2 times more likely to recognise fear of worsening violence (OR = 4.24, 95% CI 1.86–9.66), suggesting strong awareness of the structural and safety barriers Aboriginal women face — including racism within services, poverty, and housing insecurity. At the same time, Aboriginal respondents were less likely to identify shame as a barrier (OR = 0.16, 95% CI 0.03–0.76) and more likely to attribute staying to women's choice (OR = 7.48, 95% CI 1.10–51.0). Rather than reading these as contradictory, this

pattern may reflect culturally grounded understandings in which shame operates differently within Aboriginal communities than in dominant Anglo-Australian frameworks, and where women's decision-making capacity and resilience are centred as meaningful (Cripps & Davis, 2012). The emphasis on agency may reflect a strengths-based orientation toward Aboriginal women rather than a dismissal of barriers — though the cumulative and intersecting nature of the barriers Aboriginal women specifically navigate warrants continued attention in how these conversations are framed.

Asian respondents showed a distinct pattern, being 3.4 times more likely to attribute staying to keeping families together (OR = 3.42, 95% CI 1.94–6.03), which aligns with collectivist values in which family unity carries significant relational and social weight, and where separation or family breakdown may represent a profound loss across multiple dimensions (Vaughan et al., 2016). Asian respondents were less likely to identify shame as a factor (OR = 0.024, 95% CI 0.003–0.17) and less likely to recognise fear of escalating violence as a reason for staying (OR = 0.12, 95% CI 0.04–0.35). The lower identification of shame as a barrier is notable given research documenting its significance for Asian women experiencing violence, particularly around family honour and marital expectations (Raj & Silverman, 2002). This may reflect that shame is conceptualised and experienced differently across cultural contexts, or that the framing of "shame" in the survey instrument carried individualistic connotations that did not resonate with collectivist understandings. The lower recognition of fear of escalation may similarly reflect different cultural scripts around discussing violence, reluctance to characterise situations within one's community as dangerous, or differences in how escalation dynamics are named and understood across cultural contexts.

Time trends

Significant changes emerged between 2021 and 2025 in two key areas. Respondents in 2021 were 3 times more likely than those in 2025 to recognise lack of choice or support as reasons women stay (OR = 0.33, 95% CI 0.23–0.49), and twice as likely to recognise fear of worsening violence (OR = 0.49, 95% CI 0.33–0.74). These declines represent a concerning erosion in community understanding of structural barriers between 2021 and 2025. This backward shift may reflect several factors: the switch of the DVproject:2650 from whole of community to targeted group programs, reducing visibility of DV education and awareness campaigns, potential backlash against victim-centered narratives in favour of emphasising personal responsibility, economic pressures during cost-of-living crises leading to victim-blaming ("why don't they just leave?"), and possible pandemic fatigue reducing empathy and engagement with complex social issues (Pfitzner, Fitz-Gibbon & True, 2020). The decline is particularly troubling because it suggests earlier gains in public understanding have proven fragile and reversible. This underscores that community attitudes are not fixed achievements but require ongoing reinforcement through education, media representation, and public discourse.

Implications

These findings reveal that public understanding of why women stay in violent relationships is shaped by gender, cultural positioning, and temporal context, with important gaps persisting across all groups. The gender gap suggests men require targeted education to understand structural barriers, while ethnic variations indicate the necessity for culturally specific messaging that resonates with different communities' values and experiences. The temporal decline in structural understanding between 2021 and 2025 demonstrates that progress is fragile and reversible without sustained effort. Effective prevention requires ongoing, culturally responsive community education emphasising the complex interplay of factors—economic dependency, fear, lack of safe options, systemic failures, social isolation, coercive control, and cultural expectations—that trap women in violent relationships, countering simplistic victim-blaming narratives that ask "why doesn't she just leave?" rather than "why does he abuse?" (Meyer, 2012; Stark, 2007).

Recommendations

1. Gender-Responsive Education and Engagement
 - Community and workplace campaigns specifically engaging men in understanding structural barriers to leaving violent relationships. Use real stories and data to challenge “choice” narratives and promote empathy.
 - Incorporate positive masculinity and bystander programs (e.g., Our Watch, Men’s Referral Service) that emphasise responsibility and challenge victim-blaming attitudes.
 - Use respected male community leaders, coaches, or faith representatives as messengers to normalise supportive, informed responses to DV.
2. Culturally Tailored and Community-Led Initiatives
 - Aboriginal communities
 - Support community-designed education that integrates cultural strengths, collective decision-making, and local understandings of safety.
 - Incorporate two-way learning frameworks to address both structural disadvantage (racism, poverty, housing insecurity) and culturally grounded understandings of agency and resilience.
 - Asian communities
 - Partner with cultural and faith-based organisations to co-create messages that reflect collectivist values around family unity but reframe “keeping families together” as ensuring safety and dignity.
 - Address shame and stigma through community storytelling, confidential services, and messaging that avoids Western framings but validates cultural understandings.
3. Sustained and Adaptive Public Communication
 - Reinstate consistent DV awareness campaigns that highlight coercive control, fear, and systemic barriers rather than personal responsibility.
 - Avoid “one-off” campaigns, maintain visibility through media partnerships, community events, and digital storytelling.
 - Implement regular attitude-tracking surveys to detect early signs of erosion in understanding and adapt messaging accordingly.
 - Link DV awareness with public discussions about economic stress, housing insecurity, and cost-of-living pressures, highlighting how these amplify women’s vulnerability.

Bystander intervention

Bystander intervention represents a critical component of community-level DV prevention, as active bystanders can interrupt violence, support victims, and challenge social norms that enable abuse. This nominal regression analysis examined factors predicting whether respondents would choose to do nothing, physically intervene, do something else (such as call police or speak to the person later), or report uncertainty when witnessing a man being physically violent toward his female partner in public (Table 14). The analysis reveals significant temporal progress alongside persistent gender and ethnic variations in intervention intentions.

Table 14. Bystander response across groups (Green up arrow indicates groups more likely to support these justifications; red down arrow indicates groups less likely to agree with these justifications; dash indicates no difference).

Predictor	Do nothing	Physically intervene	Do something else
Women	↑↑	↓↓	↑↑
Aboriginal respondents	-	-	↓
Asian respondents	-	-	-
2021 respondents	↓	-	-
2025 respondents	↓↓	-	↓↓

Note: Findings compare each group with a reference group (e.g., men, younger respondents, White respondents, employed people, 2016 respondents). Single arrow $p < 0.05$, double arrows $p < 0.01$.

Sex

Gender produced the most dramatic variation in bystander intentions, revealing starkly different intervention strategies between men and women. Female respondents were 2.0 times more likely than males to report they would do nothing (OR = 1.98, 95% CI = 1.21-3.25), 2.1 times less likely to physically intervene (OR = 0.47, 95% CI = 0.30-0.72), and 2.9 times more likely to choose alternative actions like calling police or speaking to the person later (OR = 2.88, 95% CI = 1.93-4.31).

This gendered pattern reflects both protective safety awareness and different socialization around intervention. Women's lower likelihood of physical intervention likely stems from realistic assessment of personal safety risks given gender-based vulnerability, awareness that direct confrontation by women may escalate male perpetrators' violence, concern that intervention could endanger the victim further, and gendered socialization that emphasizes indirect intervention and help-seeking over direct confrontation (Powell et al., 2015; Banyard et al., 2004). Women's significantly higher preference for alternative strategies—such as calling police, creating distraction, checking on the victim later, or seeking help from others—demonstrates more nuanced understanding of victim safety considerations and strategic intervention options that don't require physical confrontation (Banyard, 2015).

Men's greater willingness to physically intervene may reflect masculine norms emphasizing physical strength and protector roles, greater confidence in their ability to safely intervene physically given size and strength advantages, and gendered socialisation that frames direct confrontation as the appropriate masculine response to violence (Carlson, 2008; Flood & Pease, 2009). While physical intervention can be appropriate in imminent danger situations, it also carries risks of escalating violence, creating a masculinity contest between perpetrator and intervener, or reinforcing problematic scripts about violence as legitimate conflict resolution.

Women's higher likelihood of doing nothing (relative to expressing uncertainty) may reflect several factors: greater awareness of the complexity and danger of intervention leading to realistic acknowledgment that inaction may sometimes be safest, fear of personal harm, or social conditioning that discourages women from confronting male violence directly. However, their simultaneous strong preference for alternative actions suggests this "doing nothing" may represent acknowledgment of physical intervention risks rather than complete inaction or apathy.

These findings highlight the critical importance of bystander training that: validates multiple intervention strategies beyond physical confrontation, emphasises safety considerations for both victims and bystanders, challenges masculine norms that prioritise direct physical response over strategic alternatives, recognises gendered safety constraints that shape appropriate intervention options, and frames alternative actions—such as calling for help, later support, or indirect intervention—as equally valuable forms of active bystandership rather than passive inaction (Banyard, 2015; Powell et al., 2015).

Ethnicity

Ethnic background was associated with limited variation in bystander response preferences overall, with one significant finding: Aboriginal respondents were less likely than White respondents to select alternative actions such as calling police or speaking to the person later (OR = 0.29, 95% CI = 0.10–0.88). No significant differences emerged for doing nothing or physical intervention.

This finding is best understood in the context of Aboriginal communities' well-documented and historically grounded relationship with formal legal systems. Lower uptake of responses involving police reflects not uncertainty or inaction, but a rational and informed response to the realities of over-policing, historical and ongoing police violence against Aboriginal people, and legitimate concern that formal system involvement may result in the criminalisation of victims or the removal of children by child protection services (Cripps & Davis, 2012; Blagg, 2018). Formal systems have frequently failed to provide responses that are culturally safe, appropriate, or effective, meaning that avoiding these pathways represents community knowledge rather than a gap in bystander capacity.

This finding points clearly to the limitations of mainstream bystander frameworks that centre police involvement as the default safe option. Such approaches effectively exclude Aboriginal people from meaningful bystander action by offering responses that contradict lived experience and community safety. Effective bystander approaches for Aboriginal communities need to be developed with and led by those communities, building on existing cultural strengths including collective responsibility, kinship obligations, elder authority, and community-based healing practices, rather than defaulting to punitive legal interventions that have caused demonstrable harm (Cripps & Davis, 2012; Blagg, 2018).

Time trends

Temporal analysis revealed modest but significant changes in bystander intentions over time. Comparing 2016 to 2025, respondents in 2016 were 1.4 times less likely to do nothing (OR = 0.69, 95% CI = 0.57-0.83) and 1.3 times less likely to choose alternative actions (OR = 0.76, 95% CI = 0.63-0.92) compared to 2025. Between 2016 and 2021, respondents in 2016 were marginally less likely to do nothing (OR = 0.87, 95% CI = 0.76-0.99).

These patterns suggest that by 2025, respondents showed increased willingness to commit to both inaction and alternative actions rather than remaining uncertain. The increase in "doing nothing" relative to uncertainty is concerning, potentially indicating growing resignation, desensitisation, or belief that intervention is futile or dangerous. However, the simultaneous increase in alternative actions represents positive progress, suggesting that some community members are becoming more confident in safe intervention strategies like calling police or offering later support.

The lack of temporal change in physical intervention intentions suggests this response has remained relatively stable, neither increasing nor decreasing significantly despite nearly a decade of bystander

campaigns. This stability may indicate that physical intervention is driven more by individual characteristics (particularly gender) than by changing social norms or education.

Overall, the temporal patterns reveal that while bystander campaigns have successfully increased some forms of active response (alternative actions), they have not universally shifted communities toward intervention, with concerning increases in explicit inaction alongside progress in strategic responses. This highlights the ongoing challenge of converting awareness into action and the need for more sophisticated messaging addressing barriers to intervention (Our Watch, 2021; Powell et al., 2015).

Implications

These findings reveal critical considerations for bystander intervention programming. The gendered patterns indicate the need for sex-specific approaches: engaging men around safe, strategic intervention that doesn't rely solely on potentially escalatory physical confrontation, while validating and expanding women's diverse intervention strategies as equally important forms of active bystandership (Banyard, 2015). Programs must explicitly challenge the assumption that physical intervention represents the most valuable or masculine response, instead promoting a broader range of safe, effective strategies.

The Aboriginal finding demonstrates that culturally responsive bystander approaches are not optional enhancements but fundamental requirements. Prevention programs must work in genuine partnership with Aboriginal communities to develop intervention strategies aligned with cultural values, community structures, and lived experiences of systemic racism, rather than imposing mainstream approaches centered on formal legal system involvement (Cripps & Davis, 2012; Blagg, 2018).

The modest temporal progress alongside increased inaction suggests that awareness alone is insufficient, communities need concrete skills, confidence, and support to convert recognition of violence into safe, effective intervention. Future bystander programs should emphasize: the full spectrum of intervention options from direct to indirect, immediate to delayed; tools for assessing which strategies are safest in specific contexts; addressing barriers like fear, uncertainty about effectiveness, and concern for personal safety; and building collective community responsibility rather than individual heroic intervention (Banyard, 2015; Powell et al., 2015).

Recommendations

1. Acknowledge Safety Concerns and Equip All Genders with a Range of Response Options
 - Public messaging and bystander training should recognise that physical intervention is not always safe or expected, especially for women.
 - Provide bystander training that includes non-physical intervention techniques for everyone, not just women.
 - Emphasise that effective intervention doesn't require confrontation, it requires awareness, action, and safety.
2. Highlight the Role of Context in DV Response
 - Campaigns should show that people respond differently depending on the situation and that's okay.
 - Use storytelling to illustrate how risk, relationship, and presence of children influence decisions.
3. Encourage Men to Reflect on Risk and Responsibility
 - While men are more likely to intervene physically, they may underestimate the risks or overlook safer alternatives.
 - Encourage men to consider non-violent intervention as a powerful and responsible choice.
4. Promote Collective Responsibility
 - Shift the narrative from individual heroism to community-based intervention: "You don't have to do it alone, but you do have to do something."

Gendered Nature of Interventions

This report's findings reveal a consistent and concerning pattern: men demonstrate significantly lower awareness, understanding, and rejection of DV attitudes across nearly every measured domain. Compared to women, men are:

- 2 to 5 times less likely to recognise coercive control tactics (sexual coercion, criticism, destructive aggression, social isolation, electronic harassment, stalking) as forms of DV
- 2 to 4 times more likely to endorse victim-blaming beliefs, including that women can easily leave violent relationships, that male control is natural, and that women fabricate abuse claims
- 2 to 5 times less likely to understand structural barriers (lack of support, fear, shame, family pressure) that trap women in violent relationships
- Significantly more likely to attribute male violence to anger management issues or stress rather than deliberate power and control
- More likely to choose physical confrontation as a bystander response rather than strategic alternatives that prioritise victim safety

These gaps are not merely statistical artifacts, they represent fundamental differences in how men and women understand DV, its causes, and appropriate responses. Men's persistent framing of violence through individualistic psychological explanations (anger, stress, loss of control) rather than structural gendered power dynamics means that male community members, service providers, and gatekeepers may minimise abuse severity, implement inappropriate interventions, fail to hold perpetrators accountable, and inadvertently reinforce narratives that excuse male violence (Flood & Pease, 2009; Webster et al., 2018).

Furthermore, men are the overwhelming perpetrators of DV. National data consistently shows that approximately 95% of DV is perpetrated by men against women, with women accounting for nearly 90% of hospitalisations for assault by an intimate partner (AIHW, 2025). The evidence is unequivocal: preventing men's violence requires engaging men directly in challenging the attitudes, beliefs, and social norms that enable and justify violence (Jewkes, Flood & Lang, 2015).

Evidence-Based Male Engagement Approaches

International and national research demonstrates that effective violence prevention requires primary prevention programs specifically designed for and delivered to men and boys (Our Watch, 2021). These approaches include:

- Challenging rigid masculinity norms that equate manhood with dominance, control, emotional suppression, and violence as conflict resolution (Flood, 2019)
- Building critical consciousness about how patriarchal attitudes and male privilege enable violence (Pease, 2019)
- Developing empathy and perspective-taking regarding women's experiences of violence and structural barriers (Carlson, 2008)
- Promoting positive masculinity that values equality, respect, communication, accountability, and non-violence, for example through role models (Flood & Pease, 2021)
- Engaging male peer networks to shift social norms within male-dominated spaces (sporting clubs, workplaces, social groups) (Jewkes, Flood & Lang, 2015)
- Training male bystanders to safely interrupt sexist attitudes and behaviours before they escalate to violence (Powell et al., 2015; Banyard, 2015).

Programs such as The Men's Project (Jesuit Social Services), Men's Referral Service, and Our Watch's evidence-based frameworks emphasise that men must be engaged not as auxiliary supporters but as primary targets of prevention work, with content specifically addressing male socialisation, masculine identity, and men's responsibility for ending violence (Our Watch, 2021; Flood, 2019).

Organisational Scope and Service Model Considerations

Wagga Women's Health Centre (WWHC) operates within a feminist women's health framework with an explicit mission to serve women and girls. This identity and service model are essential for ensuring that women—particularly those who have experienced violence—have access to safe, women-only spaces for healing. Historically, women's health needs have been deprioritised within mainstream systems, making the preservation of WWHC's core clinical and support services a primary responsibility.

However, it is also recognised that achieving long-term safety for women requires shifting the cultural attitudes that drive violence. WWHC has already demonstrated local leadership in this space. The organisation has convened the Men's DV Leadership Forum (2024) and Men's DV Consultation Groups (2024-25) to progress work focused on male engagement in DV prevention — concrete first steps that signal both organisational commitment and community appetite for this work. This work aligns with evidence suggesting that men are often more receptive to prevention messages when they are framed through "allyship" rather than blame, moving them from passive observers to active partners in change (Flood, 2019). By leading these initiatives, WWHC ensures that male engagement remains grounded in "feminist accountability", a practice where work with men is guided by the experiences and safety requirements of women (Our Watch, 2021).

Recommended Approach: Strategic Partnership and Advocacy

The data unequivocally demonstrates that preventing DV in Wagga Wagga requires substantial, sustained investment in engaging men and boys and WWHC is best positioned to act as a strategic leader and expert consultant in the region's prevention landscape:

1. Advocacy for Male-Focused Organisations and Funding

WWHC can use this research to:

- **Continue Active Leadership:** Build on the forums and working group already underway to grow male engagement in the issue.
- **Develop Male Champions:** From within these existing initiatives identify and build the capacity of local men who can carry prevention work forward sustainably and independently
- **Guide Male Engagement:** Act as a quality-assurance partner for local male-focused programs, ensuring women's voices are embedded in the design and delivery of primary prevention.
- **Strengthen Regional Advocacy:** Use research findings to advocate to the Wagga Wagga City Council and State Government for dedicated funding that supports both specialist women's services and accountable men's prevention programs.
- **Bridge the Data Gap:** Share evidence regarding male attitudes toward non-physical abuse to help local policymakers develop more targeted and effective public health campaigns.
- **Support Integrated Funding:** Provide letters of support and research data for funding applications by male-led organisations, fostering a coordinated regional approach that adheres to the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032.
- **Demonstrate Economic Impact:** Illustrate the community-wide benefits of prevention, showing how investing in male allyship can reduce the long-term demand on crisis response systems.

This strategic approach allows WWHC to lead community-wide change while maintaining its status as a specialist sanctuary for women and girls and aligns with the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032 (COAG, 2022).

2. School and Youth Program Partnerships

While WWHC focuses on women and girls, many effective prevention programs engage both genders in age-appropriate ways:

- Advocate for expansion of programs like Love Bites (delivered by trained facilitators to mixed-gender school groups) that address respectful relationships, consent, and equality
- Ongoing support for schools to implement evidence-based curricula that challenge rigid gender norms among boys while empowering girls
- Partner with youth organisations that can deliver gender-transformative education to boys and young men
- Provide expertise and resources to school counsellors, teachers, and youth workers who work with male students

Research demonstrates that early intervention through school-based programs is particularly effective in shifting attitudes before they become entrenched (Our Watch, 2021; Flood & Pease, 2021).

3. Workplace and Community Education Through Partnership

Many workplaces and community settings require male-focused education that WWHC cannot appropriately deliver:

- Develop resources and training packages that male facilitators can deliver in male-dominated workplaces (trades, mining, agriculture, emergency services)
- Educate management about the cost to the workplace associated with sickness absence, retention, recruitment and lost productivity and relate this to the cost of prevention.
- Partner with Our Watch, or regional male advocates to deliver workplace bystander training
- Advocate for and support council and businesses to implement male engagement strategies while WWHC provides data, evaluation, and women-centered services

4. Policy Advocacy and Systems Change

WWHC's most powerful contribution to male engagement may be systemic advocacy rather than direct service:

- Advocate for mandatory respectful relationships education in all NSW schools addressing masculine norms
- Push for workplace gender equality requirements including male-focused sexual harassment prevention
- Support coercive control legislation implementation requiring perpetrator accountability programs
- Advocate for dedicated men's behaviour change program funding as complement to women's services
- Publish research demonstrating the gaps in male attitudes and the return on investment of male engagement programs

Summary

Engaging men and boys is not optional — it is a fundamental requirement of any serious effort to prevent DV in Wagga Wagga. WWHC has already taken meaningful steps toward this goal and the organisation's role in this space is best understood as catalytic. The organisation is positioned to:

- Lead whole-of-community primary prevention by continuing to initiate and facilitate male engagement conversations, building on the momentum already established through the forums and working group
- Develop male champions from within these existing initiatives, building the capacity of local men to carry prevention work forward independently over time
- Continue to monitor, collect, and evaluate data related to community attitudes and local DV trends, ensuring the region's prevention efforts remain evidence-based
- Support and amplify male allies and champions to carry prevention messages into male-dominated spaces where their influence will be greatest
- Advocate for and support dedicated male engagement funding and programs, making the case to councils, government, and funders for sustained investment
- Partner strategically with male-focused organisations as the champion network grows, transitioning delivery responsibility while maintaining feminist accountability and quality assurance
- Maintain organisational integrity by preserving WWHC's core identity as a women-centered safe space, with male engagement work structured to complement rather than compete with specialist women's services

WWHC has already demonstrated that active leadership in this space is both possible and consistent with its feminist mission. The goal now is to build on that foundation — deepening the pipeline of male champions until this work can be sustained and led by men themselves, with WWHC as the expert partner and accountability anchor that made it possible.

Effective DV prevention requires parallel investment in both women's services and men's behaviour change programs. WWHC is uniquely placed to ensure that in Wagga Wagga, both are delivered with appropriate expertise, feminist grounding, and genuine accountability to the women and girls this work ultimately exists to protect (COAG, 2022; Our Watch, 2021).

Culturally Responsive Interpretation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Findings

The attitudinal patterns observed among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents must be interpreted within the broader historical, cultural and structural context of Australia. Differences identified in this report do not indicate greater acceptance of violence within Aboriginal communities. Rather, they likely reflect sample size bias as well as the complex social realities shaped by colonisation, dispossession, systemic discrimination, and ongoing structural inequities.

Across key domains, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents demonstrated strong recognition of domestic and family violence as a serious community issue. In some instances, recognition of seriousness was even more pronounced than among non-Aboriginal respondents. This likely reflects higher community visibility of violence, intergenerational exposure, and the collective impacts of trauma rather than normative endorsement of harm.

Where modest differences emerged in relation to victim-blaming or “mutual violence” framing, these findings should be interpreted cautiously. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities often face structural barriers that constrain the practical ability to leave violent situations, including:

- Housing shortages and overcrowding
- Financial insecurity
- Geographic isolation
- Limited access to culturally safe services
- Child protection system involvement
- Distrust of mainstream institutions

In contexts where leaving is structurally constrained, responses to survey items may reflect lived realities rather than endorsement of violence-supportive attitudes.

Importantly, one of the more consistent differences observed was lower confidence in institutional responses, including police and service systems. This finding aligns with longstanding evidence of strained relationships between Aboriginal communities and statutory systems. Historical over-policing, under-protection, removal practices, and ongoing experiences of racism contribute to complex perceptions of institutional legitimacy. Lower institutional confidence should therefore be understood as a reflection of structural trust dynamics rather than diminished concern about violence.

The data also suggest some variation in endorsement of traditional gender roles. However, gender norms within Aboriginal communities are shaped by both pre-colonial cultural frameworks and the disruptive impacts of colonisation. Colonisation profoundly altered family structures, governance systems, and gendered roles. Contemporary attitudes cannot be disentangled from these historical processes.

Overall, the findings reinforce several important principles:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities do not demonstrate broad endorsement of violence-supportive attitudes.
- Differences observed are contextual and structural rather than moral or cultural deficits.
- Prevention strategies must address social determinants alongside attitudinal change.
- Institutional trust-building is central to effective violence prevention.
- Community-led, culturally grounded responses are essential.

Interpretation of these findings must avoid deficit narratives. Framing Aboriginal communities as more tolerant of violence risks reinforcing harmful stereotypes and obscures the structural drivers of harm. Instead, the data highlight the importance of culturally safe prevention approaches that:

- Strengthen community governance and self-determination

- Address housing and socioeconomic inequities
- Build trust between communities and institutions
- Support Aboriginal-led service delivery
- Recognise the role of intergenerational trauma

In summary, the attitudinal differences identified in this report should be understood as reflections of structural conditions and lived experience. Effective policy responses must therefore extend beyond individual belief change and engage with the broader systems that shape safety, trust, and opportunity within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Conclusion

This longitudinal analysis of Wagga Wagga community attitudes reveals a community at a critical juncture. While Wagga Wagga residents demonstrate strong consensus that DV is serious and criminal, fundamental gaps persist in understanding its nature, causes, and the complex barriers trapping victims in violent relationships. More concerning, hard-won progress achieved between 2016-2021 has proven fragile, with significant erosion of gains by 2025.

The evidence is also clear that DV in Wagga Wagga is not caused by increasing community diversity. Rather, immigrant and Indigenous women face heightened vulnerability as victims due to systemic barriers—immigration status insecurity, language difficulties, cultural stigma for immigrants; and intergenerational trauma from colonisation, systemic racism, and forced family removals for Indigenous Australians. Across all populations, the primary drivers remain gender inequality, rigid masculine stereotypes, patriarchal attitudes, and structural factors including socioeconomic disadvantage, unemployment, and substance abuse.

Three critical patterns demand urgent attention:

- 1. Community understanding remains dangerously incomplete.**

While physical violence recognition is universal, the sophisticated patterns of coercive control—criticism, isolation, financial manipulation, digital surveillance, stalking—that characterise most DV receive declining recognition and are increasingly minimised. This knowledge gap is profoundly gendered: men consistently lag women in recognising non-physical abuse, understanding barriers to leaving, and accepting that violence stems from deliberate power and control rather than uncontrollable anger or stress. When half the community cannot recognise the most common and damaging forms of abuse, victims remain isolated, perpetrators avoid accountability, and intervention opportunities are missed.

- 2. Cultural variation is profound and complex, defying simplistic generalisations.**

Aboriginal respondents simultaneously demonstrate some of the most progressive attitudes, strongest rejection of DV as private, powerful support for victim credibility, recognition of community responsibility, while also showing lower recognition of specific abuse forms and higher belief that women can leave despite structural barriers. Asian respondents show dramatically elevated support for traditional gender hierarchies while paradoxically demonstrating heightened awareness of certain psychological harms. These patterns reflect not inherent cultural characteristics but rather complex intersections of cultural frameworks, colonial trauma, racism in formal systems, and differential exposure to Western-centric DV education. The implication is clear: mainstream prevention approaches are failing to reach or resonate with culturally diverse communities, and genuine partnership in co-designing culturally grounded responses is not optional, it is essential.

- 3. Progress is reversible without sustained efforts.**

The regression observed between 2021-2025 demonstrates that attitude change is not linear or permanent. Rising online misogyny, economic pressures reinforcing zero-sum gender competition, and political backlash against equality initiatives, has enabled erosion of earlier gains. Communities do not automatically maintain progressive attitudes once achieved; they require ongoing education, visible leadership, consistent messaging, and active resistance to counter-narratives that excuse violence, blame victims, and restore traditional hierarchies.

Yet there is genuine cause for hope. Younger cohorts demonstrate substantially stronger understanding of coercive control, rejection of violence justifications, and recognition of gender equality, validating that comprehensive school-based education works. Women across all demographics consistently demonstrate more sophisticated understanding than men, representing an untapped resource for community education and peer support. Specific temporal gains, dramatic increases in recognising DV as criminal, declining

tolerance for violence justification in most scenarios, and modest increases in bystander commitment to alternative action—prove that communities can change.

The path forward requires commitment to several fundamental principles:

- Sustained investment: Prevention requires ongoing, adequately resourced community education, not episodic campaigns
- Cultural partnership: Co-design with Aboriginal and culturally diverse communities, respecting different frameworks while promoting safety
- Male engagement: Targeted work with men and boys challenging rigid masculinity, building accountability, and expanding understanding
- Comprehensive education: Addressing the full spectrum from physical violence to subtle coercive control
- Intersectional approach: Recognising how gender inequality intersects with racism, poverty, disability, immigration status
- From awareness to action: Building community capacity for safe bystander intervention and survivor support

Wagga Wagga faces a choice. The community can allow recent backsliding to continue, returning to outdated frameworks that minimise abuse, blame victims, and normalise male control. Or it can recommit to the vision articulated in the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032: ending gender-based violence in one generation through prevention, early intervention, effective response, and healing.

The data shows both the challenge and the opportunity. The challenge is that changing deeply entrenched beliefs about gender, power, and violence requires sophisticated, sustained, culturally responsive work reaching every demographic segment. The opportunity is that this community has demonstrated capacity for change, possesses untapped resources in women's leadership and youth understanding, and maintains strong foundational consensus that DV is unacceptable.

Ending DV is possible—but only through collective commitment to challenging the underlying gender inequality, patriarchal attitudes, and structural conditions that enable it. This requires each community member to recognise their role: as bystanders who intervene safely, as parents who model equality, as educators who challenge stereotypes, as service providers who recognise coercive control, as leaders who prioritise prevention funding, and as community members who refuse to accept violence as inevitable. The question facing Wagga Wagga is not whether change is possible, but whether this community will sustain the commitment necessary to achieve it.

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Appendix - Full regression tables

Table 7. Demographic predictors to community knowledge of DV behaviours

Predictor	Physical harm (OR 95%CI)	Sexual coercion (OR 95%CI)	Threats (OR 95%CI)	Criticism (OR 95%CI)	Destructive aggression (OR 95%CI)	Social isolation (OR 95%CI)	Financial control (OR 95%CI)	Electronic harassment (OR 95%CI)	Stalking (OR 95%CI)
Sex									
Female vs Male	NS	2.11 (1.097-4.043)*	NS	1.926 (1.329-2.791)**	3.715 (2.091-6.601)**	1.780 (1.080-2.936)*	NS	1.931 (1.225-3.043)*	4.379 (2.690-7.128)**
Age	NS	0.547 (0.399-0.750)**	1.852 (1.395-2.465)**	1.450 (1.228-1.712)**	1.448 (1.152-1.820)*	NS	NS	1.313 (1.081-1.595)*	1.310 (1.064-1.613)*
Ethnicity									
Aboriginal vs white	0.242 (0.072-0.820)*	0.195 (0.078-0.491)**	0.100 (0.044-0.225)**	0.321 (0.183-0.562)**	0.215 (0.111-0.415)**	NS	0.506 (0.259-0.989)*	NS	0.373 (0.202-0.691)*
Asian vs white	0.089 (0.017-0.463)**	NS	NS	3.958 (1.385-11.31)*	14.33 (1.981-103.7)*	130.1 (23.9-707.5)**	NS	0.261 (0.107-0.636)*	NS
Other vs white	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Education									
≤Yr 12 vs < Yr 10	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	2.543 (1.306-4.952)*	2.084 (1.062-4.090)*	7.678 (3.894-15.14)**	NS
TAFE/trade/college	NS	NS	3.133 (1.177-8.340)*	NS	NS	NS	NS	4.104 (2.143-7.873)**	NS
University	NS	NS	5.563 (1.856-16.67)**	NS	NS	4.550 (2.241-9.240)**	4.495 (2.069-9.766)**	5.828 (3.109-10.92)**	NS
Employment									
Retired vs employed	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Student vs employed	NS	NS	?	3.766 (1.781-7.960)**	3.082 (1.166-8.143)*	0.099 (0.047-0.207)**	NS	NS	NS
Not working vs employed	0.209 (0.061-0.709)*	NS	?	2.523 (1.106-5.759)*	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Income	NS	NS	1.594 (1.170-2.173)*	1.230 (1.056-1.432)*	0.786 (0.639-0.967)*	NS	NS	0.812 (0.682-0.967)*	NS
Time									
2021 vs 2016	NS								
2025 vs 2016	NS								

NS= not significant; *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01

Table 8: Sociodemographic and temporal predictors of attitudes toward FDV (Regression model results – adjusted odds ratios)

Predictor	DV is criminal offence (OR 95%CI)	DV is private matter (OR 95%CI)	Most women can leave if they want (OR 95%CI)	It is natural for men to be in control (OR 95%CI)	Women make up DV claims (OR 95%CI)	Men better leaders than women (OR 95%CI)
Sex Female vs Male	NS	NS	0.442 (0.297-0.654)**	0.437 (0.276-0.691)**	0.391 (0.267-0.573)**	0.274 (0.153-0.490)**
Age	NS	NS	NS	1.310 (1.057-1.624)*	NS	1.635 (1.250-2.137)**
Ethnicity Aboriginal vs white Asian vs white Other vs white	NS NS NS	0.088 (0.018-0.441)** NS NS	2.590 (1.478-4.537)** 0.049 (0.014-0.180)** NS	0.343 (0.122-0.961)** 3.564 (1.422-8.931)** NS	6.047 (3.363-10.87)** NS 2.820 (1.310-6.072)*	NS NS NS
Education ≤Yr 12 vs < Yr 10 TAFE/trade/college vs < Yr 10 University vs < Yr 10	NS NS NS	NS NS NS	1.958 (1.108-3.460)* NS NS	NS NS 0.401 (0.195-0.826)*	NS NS 0.288 (0.161-0.515)**	NS 2.541 (1.041-6.203)* NS
Employment Retired vs employed Student vs employed Not working vs employed	NS NS 0.118 (0.027-0.526)**	3.457 (1.383-8.637)** NS NS	NS NS NS	NS NS NS	NS NS 0.327 (0.119-0.900)*	NS NS NS
Income	NS	0.715 (0.554-0.924)*	NS	NS	NS	0.708 (0.552-0.907)*
Time 2021 vs 2016 2025 vs 2016	6.255 (3.715-10.53)** 10.67 (5.511-20.65)**	NS NS	0.452 (0.360-0.568)** 0.657 (0.510-0.847)**	0.636 (0.478-0.847)* NS	0.648 (0.526-0.799)** 0.593 (0.461-0.763)**	0.482 (0.339-0.686)** NS

Table 9: Sociodemographic and temporal predictors of perceptions related to DV (Regression model results – adjusted odds ratios).

Predictor	DV a problem in Wagga Wagga (OR 95%CI)	DV is common in Wagga Wagga (OR 95%CI)	Woman should stay in DV for family (OR 95%CI)	Woman cannot be raped by partner (OR 95%CI)	DV can be excused if perp abused as child (OR 95%CI)
Sex Female vs Male	NS	4.688 (2.853-7.703)**	NS	NS	NS
Age	NS	NS	1.823 (1.101-3.020)*	2.158 (1.461-3.189)**	1.771 (1.205-2.604)**
Ethnicity Aboriginal vs white Asian vs white Other vs white	10.33 (1.615-66.15)* NS NS	0.261 (0.131-0.518)** 0.167 (0.067-0.417)** NS	NS NS NS	NS NS NS	NS 7.270 (1.348-39.21)* NS
Education ≤Yr 12 vs < Yr 10 TAFE/trade/college University	2.971 (1.221-7.232)* 2.276 (1.099-4.716)* 2.792 (1.394-5.592)**	NS 3.133 (1.177-8.340)* 5.563 (1.856-16.67)**	0.101 (0.014-0.737)* 0.331 (0.118-0.930)** 0.197 (0.063-0.615)**	NS NS 0.252 (0.094-0.677)*	NS NS NS
Employment Retired vs employed Student vs employed Not working vs employed	0.430 (0.202-0.914)* NS 0.209 (0.061-0.709)*	0.419 (0.180-0.933)* 2.613 (1.062-6.425)* 0.180 (0.080-0.403)**	NS NS NS	1.403 (1.055-5.476)* NS NS	NS NS NS
Income	1.262 (1.016-1.568)*	1.245 (1.019-1.520)*	NS	NS	0.678 (0.477-0.963)*
Time 2021 vs 2016 2025 vs 2016	1.773 (1.357-2.316)** 3.152 (2.235-4.445)**	NS 2.959 (2.148-4.077)**	NS 1.924 (1.045-3.544)*	2.598 (1.325-5.094)* 5.151 (2.629-10.10)**	NS 1.854 (1.061-3.239)*

NS= not significant; *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01

Table 10. Sociodemographic and temporal predictors related to traditional gender role attitudes (Regression model results – adjusted odds ratios)

Predictor	Women fulfilled by children (OR 95%CI)	Discrimination not an issue for women (OR 95%CI)	Women prefer men to be in charge (OR 95%CI)	Education more important for boys (OR 95%CI)	Men have more rights to jobs (OR 95%CI)
Sex Female vs Male	NS	0.318 (0.194-0.522)**	0.212 (0.124-0.361)**	NS	NS
Age	1.298 (1.064-1.582)*	NS	0.779 (0.613-0.989)*	1.907 (1.128-3.224)	NS
Ethnicity Aboriginal vs white Asian vs white Other vs white	NS 0.172 (0.038-0.770)* NS	4.365 (2.236-8.521)** 6.522 (2.634-16.15)** NS	3.640 (1.730-7.658)** 12.08 (4.476-32.60)** NS	NS NS NS	NS NS NS
Education ≤Yr 12 vs < Yr 10 TAFE/trade/college University	NS NS 0.323 (0.158-0.660)**	NS NS 0.380 (0.184-0.785)**	NS NS 0.366 (0.157-0.852)*	NS NS 0.189 (0.040-0.899)*	NS NS 0.412 (0.172-0.987)*
Employment Retired vs employed Student vs employed Not working vs employed	NS NS NS	NS 0.363 (0.150-0.875)* NS	3.398 (1.440-8.019)** 0.248 (0.089-0.687)** NS	NS NS NS	NS 3.384 (1.351-8.474)* NS
Income	0.760 (0.30-0.918)**	0.801 (0.649-0.990)*	0.782 (0.627-0.976)*	NS	0.581 (0.449-0.751)**
Time 2021 vs 2016 2025 vs 2016	0.389 (0.290-0.523)** NS	NS NS	0.237 (0.164-0.341)** 0.625 (0.446-0.876)**	0.305 (0.155-0.600)** NS	0.364 (0.245-0.541)** NS

NS= not significant; *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01

Table 11. Sociodemographic and temporal predictors of beliefs that justify FDV (Regression model adjusted odds ratios)

Predictor	When partner cheats (OR 95%CI)	When partner humiliates (OR 95%CI)	When partner ends relationship (OR 95%CI)	To get access to children (OR 95%CI)	To settle property or financial issues (OR 95%CI)
Sex Female vs Male	0.36 (0.22-0.59)**	0.47 (0.29-0.75)**	NS	0.31 (0.21-0.46)**	0.57 (0.34-0.95)*
Ethnicity Aboriginal vs white Asian vs white Other vs white	3.98 (2.03-8.80)** 8.85 (4.32-18.13)** NS	10.82 (5.93-19.77)** 8.32 (3.66-18.89)** NS	5.98 (2.83-12.62)** 6.62 (2.52-17.39)** 2.61 (1.11-6.14)*	4.42 (2.68-7.29)** 0.35 (0.14-0.88)* NS	5.10 (2.56-10.15)** 6.67 (2.73-16.30)** NS
Time 2021 vs 2016 2025 vs 2016	NS 0.212 (0.086-0.526)**	NS 0.314 (0.143-0.687)**	NS 0.127 (0.033-0.486)**	NS NS	NS 0.165 (0.056-0.482)**

NS= not significant; *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01

Table 12. Sociodemographic and temporal predictors of attributions for why some men are violent towards women

Predictor	Men not being able to control anger OR (95%CI)	Men being under stress OR (95%CI)	Men need to maintain power and control OR (95%CI)
Sex Female vs Male	0.45 (0.36–0.58)**	NS	0.18 (0.14–0.22)**
Age 18–24 vs under 18 25–39 vs under 18 40–55 vs under 18 56+ vs under 18	6.16 (3.50–10.86)** 5.49 (3.30–9.15)** 5.74 (3.42–9.62)** 6.18 (3.75–10.19)**	NS NS NS NS	15.52 (8.51–28.31)** 14.17 (8.21–24.46)** 17.51 (10.10–30.36)** 16.75 (9.80–28.62)**
Ethnicity Aboriginal vs white Asian vs white Other vs white	NS NS NS	NS 3.42 (1.94–6.03)** NS	0.39 (0.22–0.68)** 0.18 (0.10–0.33)** NS
Time 2016 vs 2025 2021 vs 2025	NS NS	NS NS	NS 0.47 (0.34–0.66)**

NS= not significant; *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01

Table 13. Sociodemographic and temporal predictors of attributions for community perceptions of why women do not leave abusive relationships.

Predictor	No other choice/support OR (95%CI)	To keep family together OR (95%CI)	Shame OR (95%CI)	OR (95%CI)	Fear violence getting worse OR (95%CI)
Sex Female vs Male	2.68 (2.01–3.57)**	1.98 (1.4–2.79)**	4.90 (3.10–7.75)**	NS	2.7 (2.01–3.57)**
Ethnicity Aboriginal vs white Asian vs white Other vs white	2.81 (1.19–6.61)* NS NS	NS 3.42 (1.94–6.03)** NS	0.16 (0.03–0.76)* 0.024 (0.003–0.17)** NS	7.48 (1.10–51.0)* NS NS	4.24 (1.86–9.66)** 0.12 (0.04–0.35)**
Time 2016 vs 2025 2021 vs 2025	NS 0.33 (0.23–0.49)**	NS NS	NS NS	NS NS	NS 0.49 (0.33–0.74)**

NS= not significant; *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01

Table 14. Nominal regression predicting bystander response

Predictor	Do nothing OR (95%CI)	Physically intervene OR (95%CI)	Do something else OR (95%CI)
Sex Female vs Male	1.98 (1.21–3.25)**	0.47 (0.30–0.72)**	2.88 (1.93–4.31)**
Ethnicity Aboriginal vs white Asian vs white Other vs white	NS NS NS	NS NS NS	0.29 (0.10–0.88)* NS NS
Time 2016 vs 2021 2016 vs 2025	0.87 (0.76, 0.99)* 0.69 (0.57–0.83)**	NS NS	NS 0.76 (0.63–0.92)**