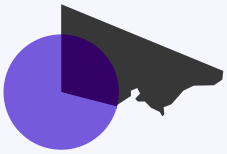
Prevention of Violence Against Women

WHAT IS NEEDED: A GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF THE FACTORS WHICH **ALWAYS INTERSECT WITH THE GENDERED DRIVERS OF VIOLENCE** AGAINST WOMEN AND GENDER DIVERSE PEOPLE ACROSS AUSTRALIA.

MULTICULTURAL CENTRE FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH



21.5% of females in Australia were born in a non-English speaking country and **migrant women make up 32% of the Victorian female population**

*ABS (2021) The Census of Population and Housing, Australian Government / ABS Personal Safety 92016), Australia

On average, **one woman a week is murdered** by her current or former partner

*Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS). 2018. Violence against women: Accurate use of key statistics (ANROWS Insights 05/2018). Sydney, NSW: ANROWS)

1 in 3 women (30.5%) has experienced **physical violence** since the age of 15

*Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). 2017. Personal Safety Survey, Australia, 2016 (ABS cat. no. 4906.0). Canberra, ACT: ABS.

1 in 5 women (18%) has experienced **sexual violence since** the age of 15

*Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). 2017. Personal Safety Survey, Australia, 2016 (ABS cat. no. 4906.0). Canberra, ACT: ABS.

Read the **All Together in Prevention and Response** advocacy brief from MCWH

WHAT RESEARCH SHOWS

- Family violence against migrant women is at least as prevalent as in the general population, with the added concern that migrant women are less likely to access appropriate family violence support at an early point.
- Migrant women experience violence more severely and for more prolonged periods of time than non-migrant women.
- Women on temporary visas report even higher levels of violence.
- Migrant women are less likely to receive the services they need due to structural and systemic barriers. The following factors prevent migrant and refugee women from accessing and/or seeking help from mainstream family violence services:
  - Lack of multilingual information
  - Services' inconsistent use of interpreters
  - Financial barriers
  - Social isolation
  - Potential backlash from social networks
  - Threats of deportation
  - Experiences of discrimination
  - Racial discrimination
  - Residency rights/visa generating challenges to women's independence through the lack of health, social, and economic opportunities available on temporary visas
  - Limited services for migrant and refugee women in rural areas
  - Under resourced family violence services
  - Disconnection between family violence and settlement services / multicultural organisations

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ensure that family violence services are high quality, gender equitable, accessible and culturally and linguistically responsive.
- Invest and strengthen intersectional policy development and analysis to ensure that Australian government policy addresses the multiple forms of disadvantage and barriers to accessing information and services by migrant and refugee women.
- Recognise the leadership of migrant and refugee specialist organisations who have expertise in gendered violence and involve them meaningfully in all program phases, such as in the planning, decision-making and evaluation of prevention of violence against women initiatives. There needs to be increased representation of these organisations at the appropriate governance groups.
- Increase bilingual and/or bicultural workforce representation within the family violence system.
- Support a better understanding of practitioners on a feminist intersectional approach to address power imbalances, systemic discrimination and inequalities.
- Fund more research on migrant and refugee communities and family violence that could demonstrate the scale and importance of the issues and its impacts.
- Fund more bilingual health education programs and embed them as an essential tool of prevention of violence against women initiatives. These programs increase migrant and refugee women's understanding and confidence in navigating services and strengthen migrant and refugee women's leadership and advocacy capabilities.
- Ensure all family violence prevention, early intervention, response and recovery services, and interpreting services, are available to migrant women free of charge, regardless of migration status.
- Remove residency restrictions and make support services available to migrant and refugee people on all visa categories in Australia. Make changes to a multi-tiered system in which certain groups of residents and citizens have access to more support than others.
- Support and develop meaningful and innovative approaches in prevention of violence against women initiatives, such as co-design and community-based advocacy.

KEY POLICY FRAMEWORKS

- Change the Story: a shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia