



Violence against Women Fact Sheet

Almost one in three women in Australia reports being physically assaulted and one in five reports being sexually assaulted. This means that if it's not you personally, it could be one of your friends, neighbours or another family member.

What is the problem

Violence against women is a fundamental breach of human rights, and sexual assault and domestic and family violence are the most pervasive forms of violence perpetrated against women in this country.

While both men and women can be perpetrators and victims, research shows that the vast majority of such violence in Australia is perpetrated by men against women.

- Over their lifetimes, sexual violence affects almost one in five Australian women and physical violence affects at least one in three.
- Women usually experience violence at the hands of men they know, often in their own homes, often repeatedly
- Almost one in four children in Australia has witnessed violence against their mother or stepmother

Any woman can become a victim of sexual assault and/or domestic violence – violence knows no geographical, socio-economic, age, ability, cultural or religious boundaries, although some women experience violence differently. For example

- Immigrant and refugee women are more likely to be murdered as a result of domestic violence
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are more likely to sustain serious injuries
- Young women experience higher rates of sexual assault
- Women with disabilities are more vulnerable to violence and often have fewer pathways to appropriate support or options to escape violence particularly when perpetrated by partners and/or carers

Without implementing a plan to reduce violence against women and their children, an estimated 750,000 Australian women will report being a victim of violence in 2021–22.

- Women and their children who have experienced violence have poorer health and use health services, including mental health services, more often, even after they have escaped the violence
- The cost of violence against women and their children to the Australian economy is estimated to be \$13.6 billion in 2008-09 and, if there is no reduction in current rates, it will cost the economy an estimated \$15.6 billion by 2021-22

What is needed?

Despite significant efforts and investments, the horrific numbers of women and their children affected by violence has not shifted over the decades. Funding commitments vary widely across jurisdictions, resulting in fragmented responses, and inadequate arrangements to support the portability of domestic violence orders across State and Territory borders. The separation of the Family Court from child protection in the Children's Court means that often children fall through the cracks and are forced to spend time with their abuser.

Adequate data and evaluation to understand what works and why, to ensure government and community investments are effective in reducing and ultimately preventing violence against women and their children, is absolutely essential.

And we need programs for perpetrators. Prevention is better than cure!

WEL will be using our Feminist Policy Framework to examine the policies and platforms of all major parties for fairness.

WEL believes that fair policies are those that:

- *Ensure the costs and benefits are fairly distributed between women and men, as well as between different groups of women*
- *Value and reward fairly people's different skills, experiences and contributions*
- *Recognise the value of caring and supporting roles, whether paid or unpaid*
- *Recognise and rectify past and current inequalities and between men and women; and*
- *Enhance opportunities for both women and men to take on equal rights and responsibilities in all aspects of society: politics, community, employment and social life*

What you can do

Ask your local candidates and the party leaders

- Will they address the anomalies that mean children cannot be protected through the Family Law System?
- Do they know the cost of domestic violence to the Australian economy and are they prepared to do something about it?
- Are they prepared to work with state agencies to improve safety for women and children and stop people falling through the cracks?

At this election - make your vote count for fairness