

Evidence of Drivers of Violence Against Women

Driver 1: Condoning of Violence Against Women

- Public portrayals of men who use violence against women as passionate, protective, mentally ill, an alcoholic or drug addict, minimising or excusing their choice to use violence.
- Magistrates insinuating in their judgements that the victim's behaviour was a factor in her experience.
- Sexual harassment policies focussing on reporting, without onus on organisational duty of care, or on bystanders to act. Trivialising the impact of violence and placing responsibility on the victim to manage the situation.
- Sporting clubs allowing perpetrators to continue playing with little consequence – putting the organisation's reputation/sporting success first rather than supporting the victim or holding the perpetrator to account.

Driver 2: Men's control of decision making and limits to women's independence in public and private life

- 16% of Australians agree that men should take control in relationships and be the head of the household.
- Women's portrayal in media/entertainment by their relationship to males, rather than as their own independent characters.
- Underrepresentation of women in politics.
- Female-dominated industries such as health and education having significantly lower levels of pay than male-dominated industries and occupations.
- Men's dominance of leadership roles in organisations and community groups, even in female-dominated industries.

Driver 3: Rigid gender stereotyping and dominant forms of masculinity

- Double standard - men displaying assertiveness and leadership qualities are admired and respected. Women with the same qualities may be considered bossy or cold.
- Distinct and inflexible roles and practices for men and women within many religions.
- Lesser value of women's sporting achievements - lower professional salaries, media coverage and sponsorship opportunities.
- Unequal parental leave policies available for men and women, based on the stereotype and expectation that women will be the main family caregiver.
- Messages such as 'man up', 'boys don't cry' and 'don't be such a girl' put pressure on men and boys to hide their fear, sadness or pain. These messages also belittle girls and women.

Driver 4: Male peer relations and cultures of masculinity that emphasise aggression, dominance and control

- 34% of Australians believe that its natural for a man to want to appear in control of his partner in front of his male friends.⁴
- When aggression, sexism and disrespect towards women is normalised and important for being 'one of the boys'. Creating a culture where violence against women is more likely to be used, supported, excused, or ignored.⁵
- All-male sports commentary panels where degrading or demeaning talk about women is laughed off or ignored.
- Boys and young men consuming and sharing hard-core, violent pornography or circulating photos of women without consent.