

Addressing the contextual shift in gendered disrespect

National Campaign to End Violence Against Women and Children

Phase 5: Formative research report

Reference: 263407408

September 2023



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1. Executive Summary

1.1 Background

Addressing violence against women remains a high priority for the Australian Government and has bipartisan support. Since 2010, there has been endorsement from all Australian Governments for the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022. In October 2022, the Australian, state and territory governments renewed this commitment, with the release of the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032 ('National Plan'), supported by a \$1.7 billion investment.

One long-running component of the Australian Government's commitment to reducing domestic and family violence is the multi-award-winning national campaign, '*Stop it at the Start*'. Across all phases of the campaign to date, the communications strategy has focussed on encouraging adults, as influencers of young people, to: **recognise** their influence (a primary objective of Phase 1); **reconcile** the impact this can have on young people (a primary objective of Phase 2); inspire confidence to **respond** (Phase 3); and, encourage adults to **remember** how far they've come, the influence they can have, and to ensure conversations about respect are both proactive and ongoing (Phase 4).

The 2022-23 Federal Budget confirmed ongoing support for the campaign, with the Department allocated \$21.6 million to administer a fifth phase of the campaign. It is to this next stage (Phase 5) that this research is undertaken.

An innovative methodology

Since 2015, the research underpinning the National Campaign has gathered a wealth of evidence to support its ongoing development and delivery and, to this end, there is much that is already 'known'. It remained important, however, to find new ways of exploring the topic such that we continued to uncover new ground, and guide the future of the campaign, rather than simply repeat it.

Our approach, therefore focused on how things have changed since the campaign first launched, and how the behavioural strategy underpinning the campaign might need to shift focus in order to better respond to the current environment, influences and contexts (both for young people and adult influencers).

One of our key challenges in developing the formative research, for a campaign that focuses on influencers, was to understand the gaps and synergies between different age cohorts and generations. Previous work in this area has highlighted significant gaps in the perceptions and daily reality of young people, and the understanding of older "influencers". For our customised research design, we addressed this in the following different ways:

- An overall methodological focus on young people with a skew towards younger males.
- Developing and applying an innovative "generational chain" approach to provide direct insight to the perceptions *between* different cohorts allowing deep insight to the challenges for influencers and those they seek to influence.
- Focusing discussions on changes in terms of perceptions, definitions, community responses, contextual factors and behaviours.
- Specifically designed sessions interviewing victim survivors, LGBTQIA+ communities, people with disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and culturally and linguistically diverse communities allowed us to focus on nuances within this issue for these particular audiences who are more vulnerable.

1.2 Overall findings

A core objective of the original strategy (Phases 1 through 3 – 2015-2020) was to transition people from inaction to action by addressing unconscious heuristics ('recognise'), the perceived imbalance of costs versus benefits of getting involved ('reconcile'), and to build self-efficacy ('respond').

In Phase 4 (2021-2022), the qualitative and quantitative evidence suggested a positive shift in the way influencers recognised, reconciled and responded. As a result, there were more influencers holding a desire to be a part of a solution (primary prevention) as opposed to simply focusing on the problem. The strategy, therefore, turned to 'reminding' adult influencers to have proactive, preventative conversations with young people (males and females).

In 2023 (Phase 5), a **marked contextual shift** has driven a **significant knowledge and understanding gap** for adults, and created a **generational divide** in how Australians feel and experience disrespect. **New significant influences** have greater impact on the attitudes and behaviours of young people towards gendered disrespect and **adult influencers are largely absent from the conversation**. This has created a 'new problem' to solve.

1.3 Changes in the 'starting point'

In 2023 (Phases 5 and 6), adult influencers continue to recognise the impact of their own behaviour, reconcile the costs of not getting involved, and express a desire to respond.

However, this recognition is founded in an **understanding of the issue that is without full context**. As described fully through this report, there is a notable and significant shift in the external context in which the topic of disrespect and violence against women currently exists. Noting these contextual factors were not present during the 2021 exploratory research (Phase 4), they appear to have occurred, and **impacted, at-speed**.

At the heart of these contextual shifts appears to be the rhetoric of **social media influencers** (such as, but not limited to, Andrew Tate), the **dilution of positive movement influences** (such as #metoo), and other **external events** (such as high-profile cases of disrespect and violence against women). This rhetoric has:

- Challenged the appetite for further focus and change;
- Placed greater prominence on negatively charged 'voices' / rhetoric which directly target young audiences;
- Confused and cannibalised the topic of disrespect and violence against women with other topics (such as equality, LGBTQIA+, gender pay gaps etc.);
- Alluded that the system's historical focus has already solved the issue, and there is less requirement for additional focus;
- Desensitised some to the topic;
- Normalised disrespectful conversations as mechanism for exploration and debate, rather than to cause harm;
- Changed the behaviour we need to target – from one that is 'known' by influencers (their own behaviour) to one that is unknown;
- Created an environment where some young people are comfortable with disrespectful conversations being 'hidden' from adult influencers in order to mask any potential negative impact; and,
- Generated some aversion to thinking about the topic.

It is important to note that many of these are contextual changes – but particularly, those associated with social media influencers – appear to have **occurred in a vacuum that is significantly impacting young people (males and females)**. They exist in channels and conversations where ‘positive voices’ are not present, and they exist in channels and conversations where adult influencers are not present.

...I'm concerned about the next ten years...I don't like the change that's happening, it's not the life I want to live. 100 years ago, men were masculine, and women accepted their role as submissive ...I hope we get back there. (Male sibling, 18-24)

...if the guys are walking around believing all this stuff, then the girls might start believing in it too. It could lead to women thinking less of themselves ...to not having a voice because there are so many other people against them. (Female, 15-17)

As a result, adult influencers appear to believe the problem of disrespect and violence against women may be resolved (because of progress achieved to date), because they are **not aware of the current, powerful and negative influences around young people**.

Thus, **the role for primary prevention remains omnipresent** for the National Campaign – to ensure that adult influencers play a role in the prevention of disrespect, and violence-supportive attitudes among young people continue to generationally impact the prevalence of violence against women.

1.4 The heart of the problem

Australian adults **agree that violence against women and their children is wrong**, and over the years as our attitudes have been challenged and changed, we have modified our behaviours (heuristic responses), and held proactive, preventative conversations with young people.

However, it is undeniable that the last 18 months has seen **considerable contextual change**. Powerful social media influencers, who speak directly to young people have created an echo chamber of voices which threatens to unravel the progress made. As adults, **we're not always keeping up with these conversations**, and we don't know how to influence them. While we remain connected to the broader issue, we have become **disconnected and distant** from these new influences over young people.

For some of us, we **default to what it is "easiest to believe" so we don't have to "start again"** ...we may think the young people we're closest to wouldn't be influenced by these voices ...or, we might ignore it, hoping its "just a phase". We might feel concern that continuing to focus on the issue will 'tip the scale' ...question whether these new voices are simply a 'correction' ...or, feel challenged by whether continuing to focus on the issue is actually a good thing.

But ultimately, the **echo chamber of voices is having an impact on young people** – males and females. They are **changing the definition** of what is respect / disrespect without us ...they are **creating fertile ground for generationally violence supportive attitudes** to grow.

We **struggle** to talk about, and influence something we don't understand.

But the longer the **void** remains, the **bigger the challenge** may become.

1.5 Strategic recommendation – RE-ESTABLISH the problem

While adults retain an underlying desire to be part of the solution, we need to re-establish the problem for adults in the context of these new influences (online and offline) and their impact on gendered disrespect. Re-establishing the problem involves articulating to adult influencers that:

- The fundamental issue of violence against women remains and there is a need to better understand or, **re-establish the current reality** of the situation for women and children in Australia.
- The way young Australians are being influenced has changed, which can feel less proximate to the issues around domestic and family violence for adult influencers. This phase needs to **re-establish** the link between new influences of disrespect and the potential for this to grow into violence supportive attitudes and behaviours.
- While the link between physical disrespect and physical violence has been successfully drawn, it is important to **re-establish** the link between non-physical forms of violence and gendered disrespect and physical violence.

Fundamentally, the topic needs to be re-established within the current context, such that adult influencers understand the potential risks of conversations happening without positive voices (of adult influencers).

The recommended strategy (based on the qualitative evidence described previously, as well as testing of territories in this research – described in the section that follows as 'learnings' for this territory) is therefore as follows:

1.6 Territory recommendation

Current situation

(Recognise progress) We've made huge strides in gender equality and gendered disrespect over the last generation, it can be easy to feel like the problem isn't as real anymore...**to feel like the progress we've made has solved it.**

(Recognise reality) But still today ...in Australia ...1 in 3 women has experienced violence since the age of 15. And one woman is killed by their (current or former) partner every 10 days.

Context shift

(Re-establish the problem) It can be easy to stop at the questions of 'why' this is still happening ...but we can't lose sight of preventing it from happening in the future. There are new, powerful influences on young people which have gained pace in the last 18 months and are happening without us ...in places we don't see them. Being hidden makes them even more dangerous.

Behaviour

(Reinforcing behaviours) It's the conversations we don't have, and don't know about that allow disrespect and violence to grow. We need to understand and unveil these (online and offline) hidden conversations, to give young people a different voice ...to fill the void about respect and disrespect before its filled by someone else.

2. Background

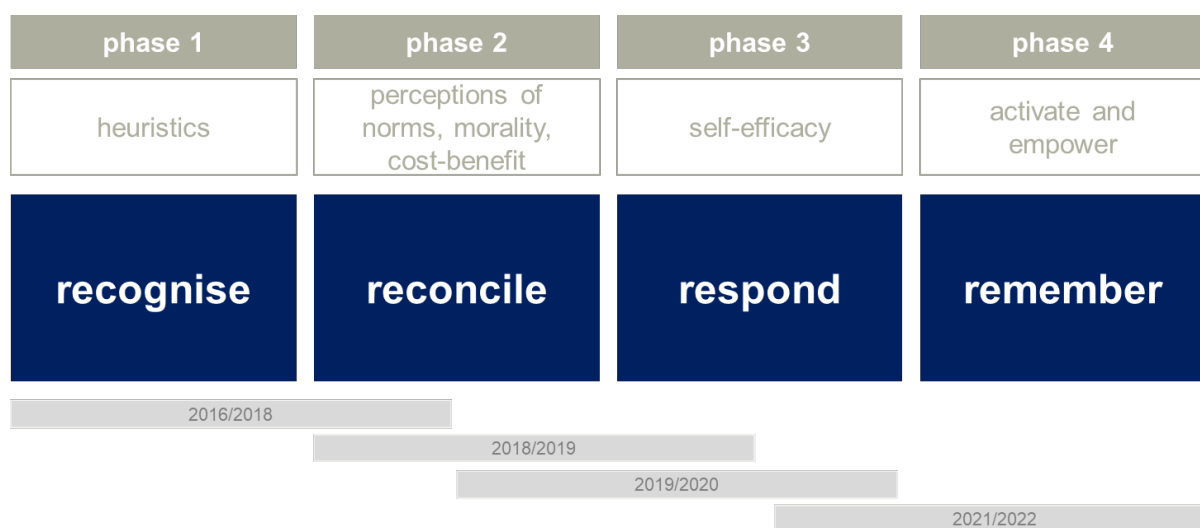
2.1 Campaign Background

Addressing violence against women remains a high priority for the Australian Government and has bipartisan support. Since 2010, there has been endorsement from all Australian Governments for the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022*.

In October 2022, the Australian, state and territory governments renewed this commitment, with the release of the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032* ('National Plan'), supported by a \$1.7 billion investment. The National Plan provides a national policy framework underpinning the shared vision to end gender-based violence in one generation. The plan specifically recognises situations where gender inequality intersects with other forms of disadvantage and discrimination highlighting the additional challenges for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children, those living with a disability and those from the LGBTQIA+ community.

One long-running component of the Australian Government's commitment to reducing domestic and family violence is the multi-award-winning national campaign, *Stop it at the Start*. Across all phases of the campaign to date, the communications strategy has focussed on encouraging adults, as influencers of young people to: **recognise** their influence (a primary objective of Phase 1); **reconcile** the impact this can have on young people (a primary objective of Phase 2); and, inspire confidence to **respond** (Phase 3). In Phase 4, the focus shifted to encouraging adults to **remember** how far they've come, the influence they can have, and to ensure conversations about respect are both proactive and ongoing. Additionally, the campaign has sought to engage the community and other influencers in a communications strategy that creates a ripple effect and **reinforces** change across Australia.

Phases 1-4 communications strategy



(Source of Stop it at the Start Phases 1 through 4 communication strategy)

The 2022-23 Federal Budget confirmed ongoing support for the campaign, with the Department allocated \$21.6 million to administer a fifth phase of the campaign. It is to this next stage (Phase 5) that this research is undertaken.

Family and domestic violence against women remains a significant issue in Australia, which all levels of Government are committed to addressing. The data strongly suggests the issue starts when people are young (that is, positive or problematic attitudes and behaviours are 'learned'). Communications are required to galvanise adults and communities to influence the attitudes of young people, particularly around respectful relationships and gender equality.

Positively, research over the life of the campaign indicates that the campaign has been successful in progressing audiences through elements of the existing strategic approach (recognise, reconcile, respond, remember/reinforce). As a result, the public's understanding and engagement with this issue has significantly changed. Moreover, the attitudes and heuristics that were impeding community engagement, have positively shifted between 2016 and today.

Phase 5 therefore presents an opportunity move the campaign, and the conversation, forward. Developmental research (to which this report pertains) aimed to uncover changes in the public landscape, any new and emerging attitudes and heuristics, and the support Australians need to further assist young people in developing positive attitudes and having respectful relationships.

Importantly, this research builds on all of the research completed to date and the strong underpinning evidence-based strategy that has been implemented since 2015/2016 (Phase 1). What this phase of developmental research seeks to understand is how this strategy applies in a changing environment and to identify the nuances that impact the efficacy of influence in a positive direction among peers, parents, setting influencers, siblings and grandparents.

To achieve this, phase 5 research was required to:

- Build on what is already known from Phases 1 through 4.
- Identify the need to progress or iterate the campaign's focus and strategic direction including target audiences and specific direction (target audiences, specific heuristics targeted), noting that primary prevention is still at the heart of the Government's strategies.
- Hypothesise the next behavioural challenge for *Stop it at the Start* campaign and where the layers of influence are now sitting.
- Explore 'what next' and whether the campaign's need has progressed through its strategic underpinning from 'recognition' to 'reconciling' to 'responding' and 'remembering' and whether an additional or alternative strategic component is required.
- Identify whether there is a continued role for the existing *Stop it at the Start* creative and if there is a new strategic territory, whether tonality needs to shift.
- Understand the target audience segmentation and understand whether there are specific needs within particular segments.
- Understand if there are particular differences in information needs amongst people with disability, First Nations and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) audiences, people from the LGBTQIA+ community, and among those with lived experience of family and domestic violence.

2.2 Research Methodology

The research was specifically designed to provide 'depth' of insight across the core objectives, allowing us to richly interrogate knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours from a variety of innovative techniques (described further below).

Since 2015, the research underpinning the National Campaign has gathered a wealth of evidence to support its ongoing development and delivery and, to this end, there is much that is already 'known'. It remained important, however, to find new ways of exploring the topic such that we continued to uncover new ground, and guide the future of the campaign, rather than simply repeat it.

Our approach, therefore focussed on how things have changed since the campaign first launched and how the behavioural strategy underpinning the campaign might need to shift focus in order to better respond to the current environment, influences and contexts (both for young people and adult influencers).

2.2.1 Detailed Qualitative Stratification

The first stage of the formative research, which is referred to below as phase 1a, (conducted in April/May 2023) focused on **understanding the context shift and generational gaps in understanding and talking about disrespect**. Following a human ethics review, the second stage of the formative research, referred to as phase 1b (conducted in July/August 2023) was focused on **further exploring the context, attitudes and behaviour shifts & evaluating communications territories**.

Stratification: This exploratory work purposefully had a particular focus on males and young people in order to uncover new and emerging insights into the landscape of disrespect and the generational gaps present in understanding, educating and talking about this topic.

Discussion structure: Discussion guides were designed by our lead researchers and provided to the Department for review and approval prior to use.

Phase 1a Stratification

Audience Type	Exploratory Phase 1a: 25 Sessions
General Population	2 x focus groups with mothers (parents with pre-primary, primary and high school age children)
	2 x focus groups with fathers (parents with pre-primary, primary and high school age children)
	2 x mixed gender focus groups with mother and fathers (parents with pre-primary, primary and high school age children)
	4 x focus group with older siblings (aged 18-24)
	4 x focus group with younger siblings (aged 15-17)
	4 x paired depth sessions with Parent and their child aged 10-14
	1 x focus groups with non-parent influencers
	2 x focus groups with grandparents
Culturally Diverse Community	1 x groups with fathers
	1 x groups older siblings aged 18-24
Indigenous Australians	1 x groups with mothers
	1 x groups older siblings aged 18-24
Special interest audiences	N/A

Phase 1b Stratification

Audience Type	Exploratory Phase 1b: 25 Sessions
General Population	2 x reflective session focus groups with mothers (parents of children aged 10-17)
	2 x reflective session focus groups with fathers (parents of children aged 10-17)
	1 x mixed gender focus groups with mothers and fathers (parents of children aged 10-17)
	1 x focus group with fathers (parents of children aged 10-17)
	2 x focus group with male siblings aged 18-30 (siblings of children aged 10-17)
Culturally Diverse Community	1 x focus group younger siblings aged 18-30
Indigenous Australians	1 x focus group males aged 15-17
Special interest audiences	4 x in-depth interviews with people with disability 1x mini-group with people with disability
	4 x in-depth interviews with LGBTQIA+ community
	1 x mini-group with LGBTQIA+ community
	4 x in-depth interviews with victim survivors of domestic and family violence

Stratification of Special Interest Audiences

Audience Type	Exploratory All phases
LGBTQIA+ (Total of n=25 participants)	10x participants in specifically designed special interest sessions
	15x participants who disclosed being part of the LGBTQIA+ community through the recruitment process and were captured in other sessions
People with Disability (Total of n=29 participants)	10x participants in specifically designed special interest sessions
	19x participants who disclosed having disability through the recruitment process or within their interview and were captured in other sessions
Victim Survivors	4x participants who identified as victim survivors Noting that victim survivors were not excluded from participating in all other sessions
CALD (Total of n=38 participants)	14x participants in specifically designed special interest sessions
	24x participants who disclosed being culturally and linguistically diverse through the recruitment process and were captured in other sessions
Indigenous Australians (Total of n=18 participants)	15x participants in specifically designed special interest sessions
	3x participants who identified themselves as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander during the recruitment process and were captured in other sessions

Sampling structure - Formative

One of our key challenges in developing the formative research, for a campaign that focuses on influencers, was to understand the gaps and synergies between different age cohorts and generations. Previous work in this area has highlighted significant gaps in the perceptions and daily reality of young people and the understanding of older “influencers”. For our customised research design, we addressed this in the following different ways:

- An overall methodological focus on young people with a skew towards younger males.
- Developing and applying an innovative “generational chain” approach which will provide insight to these gaps and synergies between different cohorts.
- Focusing discussions on changes in terms of perceptions, definitions, community responses, contextual factors and behaviours.

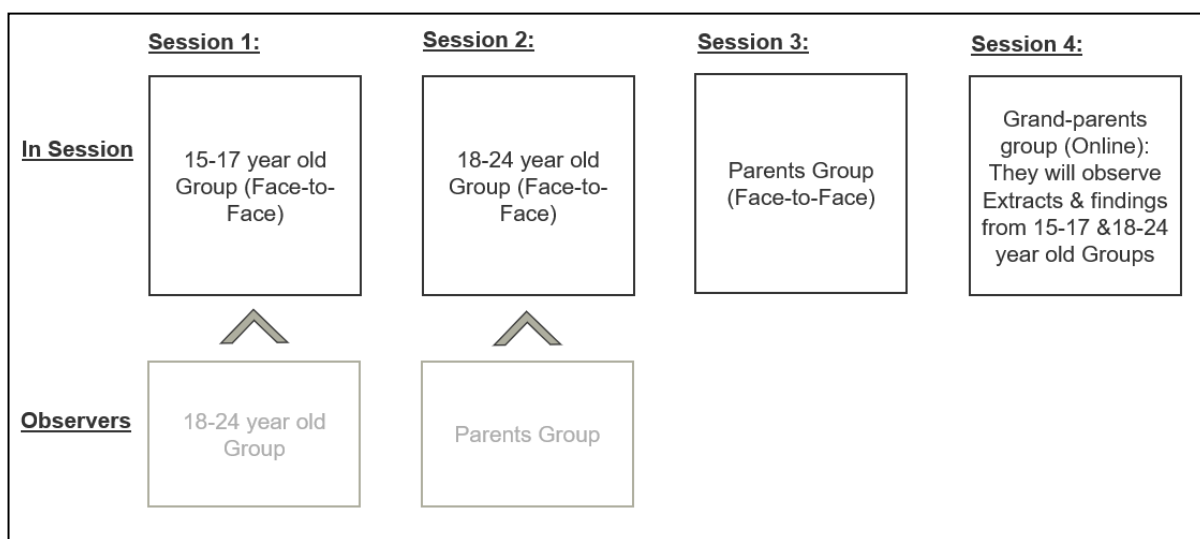
The Generational Chain

The purpose of this technique was to provide direct insight to the perceptions *between* different cohorts allowing deep insight to the challenges for influencers and those they seek to influence. The technique is designed around recruitment of three focus groups, conducted sequentially in the same location:

- Young people aged 15-17 years;
- Young people aged 18-24 years with younger siblings aged 10-17 years;
- Parents of young people aged 10-17 years.

Each cohort experiences a focus group that focuses on their understanding of the topic. This involved direct questioning as well as use of a projective technique to theorise responses to a real-life scenario drawn from social or traditional media that demonstrates gendered disrespect. Discussions also included their role as influencers in relation to respectful and disrespectful behaviour as peers and (where appropriate) as siblings, parents and setting influencers and how perceptions, beliefs and behaviours have changed over time.

With the exception of the youngest (15-17 year olds) and oldest (grandparents) cohorts, immediately prior to participating in the focus group, each cohort observed the focus group of the next youngest cohort. This means that the 18-24 year olds observed the focus group with the 15-17 year olds immediately prior to participating in their own focus group. Similarly, the parents firstly observed the discussions of the 18-24 year olds prior to their group.



(Source of Visual depiction of Generational Chain Methodology)

Grandparents participated in a later group session where they are exposed to excerpts and findings from the discussions of the previous groups with a focus on the discussions of the youngest two cohorts.

For those cohorts where they also observed a group, part of the discussion was dedicated to reviewing what they observed. This included discussion of the overall impression of the understanding and perceptions of gendered respect and disrespect among the younger cohort, the language and allusions used, the responses to the issues discussion, how they might be challenged in their attempts to positively influence the younger cohort. This discussion also allowed insight to the level of understanding between generations and will highlight the key challenges in driving positive influence between different age cohorts on this issue.

The process was conducted with two cohorts, young males and female parents and repeated with the same parameters, with young females and male parents.

Reflective mini-groups

This technique has been used on previous waves of the *Stop it at the Start* research and has proved highly valuable. This technique was deployed towards the end of the fieldwork period allowing us to adaptively test ideas and themes as they emerge from the analysis.

Discussions were conducted over two separate days (with break in between) with the same cohort of people. This approach allows for the development of a deeper level of rapport and trust between the moderator and the group and within the group than would be achieved in a single session.

Parents and influencers of children aged 10-17 were recruited to participate.

Focus groups & Mini-Groups

To give full depth and coverage of audiences, a range of focus groups were held with a slightly higher focus on younger people and males. To ensure wide geographic coverage, these groups will be conducted via video conferencing.

Sessions were targeted to the following groups:

- Parents of children aged 10-17 years
- Parents of children aged 10-17 years (mixed gender)
- Grandparents of grandchildren aged 10-17 years
- Young males and females aged 15-17 years
- Those with siblings aged 10-17 years
- Non-parent influencers

With the exception of mixed gender parent groups all sessions were gender split due to the sensitivity and gendered nature of the issue, allowing for honest conversations.

Specialist sessions

CALD and First Nations

As highlighted by the National Plan, the specific inclusion of those from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, and First Nations people is essential.

Groups with First Nations peoples were conducted as virtual groups with sessions conducted by cultural specialist.

Two of the CALD sessions were conducted in-language facilitated by the cultural specialist, while two further groups will be conducted in English by the Kantar Public team with a group

of people with a wider range of CALD backgrounds. This dual approach ensures both depth and breadth for this cohort.

Disability and LGBTQIA+

Two focus groups were held with those from specialist groups as reflected in the focus of the National Plan. These groups covered:

- Those living with a disability (people with physical disability and people with intellectual or psychosocial disability)
- Those who identify as LGBTQIA+

Note: groups were not conducted with victims/survivors of domestic and family violence as to protect their privacy and ensure their comfort levels. Only individual, in-depth interviews were conducted with this audience.

In-depth paired interviews

In-depth paired interviews involve a 60-minute discussion between a researcher and a participant usually conducted virtually over video conferencing. This approach was used specifically for interviewing children aged 10-14 years and will involve a parent and child participating in the same discussion. This parental involvement is needed particularly for the cohort under 15. Participant information sheets were provided to parents during the recruitment process to enable informed consent.

In-depth interviews

Individual in-depth interviews were conducted among those living with disability (who were also able to have a carer present), those who identified as a part of the LGBTQIA+ community and victims/survivors of family and domestic violence.

Recruitment

Recruitment for this study was undertaken by Q&A Research. During recruitment, it was essential that each participant had a clear understanding of the nature of the research prior to agreeing to participate. The recruiter was clear on the purpose of the research, who it was for, and the role of Kantar Public as an independent third party. Following the discussion of the nature of the research, and their in-principle agreement to progress with recruitment, participants were asked any screening questions.

The recruitment process for those 10-17 years of age was as follows:

- Initial contact was made with the parent. The parent was briefed on the topic of the project and the intent of the research. Active consent was gained from all parents of those aged 10-17 years who participated in the research.
- Once active parental consent was obtained, screening questions were asked to the parent in order to determine stratification variables of importance of their child – for example, age, gender, cultural background...
- Parents then liaised with the child on our behalf to facilitate their participation in the research.
- Where possible, recruiters spoke to both parent and child on speaker to explain the structure of participation.

The recruitment process for specialist groups followed a Human Research Ethics committee (HREC) process which was as follows:

Victim survivors of domestic and family violence

As victim survivors have highly sensitive personal information, organised through DSS, the Victim Survivor Advisory Council (VSAC) provided details to Kantar Public (using password protected files, via a secure file transfer site) of people with lived experience who have agreed to participate in the research. Kantar Public subsequently contacted these people to provide them with the option to participate in either a focus group setting or a one-on-one in-depth interview.

People with Disability

People with disability were recruited through DSS connections with different Disability Representative Organisations (DRO's). As with victim survivors, the DRO's provided details to Kantar Public of people with disability who have agreed to participate in the research. Kantar Public subsequently contacted these people to provide them with the option to participate in either a focus group setting or a one-on-one in-depth interview. Additionally, Kantar public conducted one group with people with disability that were also parents of a child aged 10-17. Recruitment for this element was undertaken by Q&A research given their expertise of specialised recruitment.

LGBTQIA+

Recruitment for LGBTQIA+ participants was also undertaken by Q&A research given their expertise of specialised recruitment.

Moderation

All sessions were moderated by experienced qualitative Kantar Public researchers. All moderators were given a full project and ethics briefing prior to conducting research. Similar to the previous research phases, projective and enabling techniques were used to allow participants to communicate without feeling pressured to 'talk' directly.

At the end of each session, all participants were provided information packs containing details of specific resources and agencies where they could access help or a support service.

Moderators were gender-matched for all sessions that were not mixed gender. For family sessions, the moderator was matched in gender to the child's gender (as the primary recruited individual).

Analysis and Reporting

Following the conduct of fieldwork, responses were analysed to determine the main themes. Researchers drew on the findings from all field components to consider their implications in terms of study objectives. This report details study findings and provides a series of conclusions for further consideration by the Department.

3. The contextual shift in gendered disrespect

3.1 The external context has changed over the duration of the National Campaign, with significant changes over the most recent period

Throughout the life of the National Campaign, there have been a range of – positive and negative – external influences on the topic. On balance, through Phases 1-4 of the campaign, these influencers generated a largely supportive role in the impact of the campaign. However, in more recent times, the changed external environment (noted below) appears to have generated a non-supportive role for the campaign objectives (noted in Section 3.2).

2015/2016

- In the period immediately prior to the Phase 1 campaign launch, there was a considerable amount of activity, and consistent messaging with regards to this topic, including:
 - Cases of domestic and family violence regularly featuring as **headline news** on television, online and print mediums and editorial pieces (including editorial pieces such as, for example, Tracy Grimshaw calling for action via her role on A Current Affair);
 - **Community driven movements** to honour victims, such as #putyourdressout (April 2015, onwards), a tribute to Stephanie Scott who was murdered prior to her wedding. This saw women across Australia hanging a dress outside and sharing photos on social media. Additionally, it headlined in news media.
 - **Rosie Batty as Australian of the Year** having a personal voice regarding the topic of domestic and family violence that was used with some consistency in news media.
 - **Phase 1 of “Stop It at the Start” launched** in April 2016.

2016/2017

- **High profile cases of disrespect towards women** gained attention and were featured in news media. Examples include:
 - A BBL cricketer issuing comments that were considered towards a female television presenter during an interview (January 2016);
 - President Trump's explanation of a filmed conversation from 2005 as “locker room banter” (October 2016);
 - The signing of an anti-abortion executive order by President Trump, which featured a photo surrounded by eight male staff (January 2017); and,

- An instance between a male tennis player and female media interviewer that was considered disrespectful during the French Open (May 2017).
- **Conversations started regarding 'revenge porn' and 'image based abuse' laws**, with recognition there was inconsistent legislation across Australia (November 2016).
- **Proposed amendments to Section 18C** of the Racial Discrimination Act Changes, specifically regarding the removal of words 'offend, insult, humiliate', being replaced with 'harass' and a 'reasonable person test' (March 2017).
- An increase in **perceived prevalence of extreme violent acts and terrorism** featured in the media, both in Australia and globally.
- A small maintenance burst of "Stop It At The Start" Phase 1 campaign activity returned in March 2017, following nine months off-air (online, digital and out-of-home only).

2017/2018

- A five week **maintenance burst of Phase 1** campaign activity throughout November / early December (television, digital, out-of-home, CALD and Indigenous).
- The **#metoo** movement gained global prominence. Media reports indicate it was tweeted more than half a million times and used by 4.7 million people in 12 million posts in the first 24 hours following a tweet from Alyssa Milano (October 15, 2017). A 2018 PEW review of the movement stated the hashtag was used more than 19 million times on Twitter since the initial tweet. The #metoo movement was considered high profile globally and included a number of cases in Australia.
- **Phase 2 of "Stop It at the Start"** launched in October, running through November 2018 (television, digital, out-of-home, print, cinema, radio). Phase 2 included new creative that was focussed on the 'Reconcile' component of the original campaign strategy. Evaluation research (conducted by Hall and Partners) described the campaign as generating strong awareness (recognised by around 70% of Influencers), a clean communicator across diverse audiences and generating attitudinal impacts.

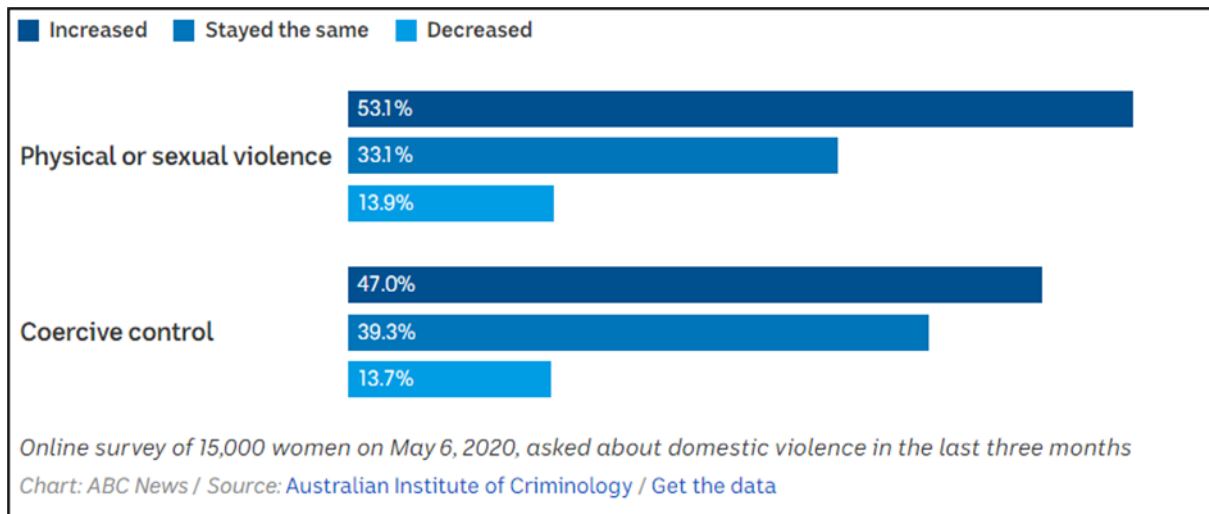
2018/2019

- Several **high-profile cases of violence against women** received media coverage, including that of: murder of Melbourne comedian Eurydice Dixon (June 2018); Sydney-based video-gamer accidentally live-streams assault of his partner while playing video game (December 2018); murder of Israeli student Aïa Maasarwe (January 2019).
- **Inquiry of family court system** relating to domestic violence claims in custody battles announced (September 2019).
- **White Ribbon Australia** announced its Australian closure (October 2019).
- Media attention to incident involving **Melbourne private boys school students and a sexist chant** sung on public transport and in public locations that were captured on video, discussed in news media, and shared across social media (October 2019).

2020/2021

- **The COVID19 pandemic commenced and domestic violence rates increased**, labelled as creating 'perfect conditions' for abusers allowing new empathising with male position heuristics to take form – loss of work and income, childcare pressures and living in close quarters treated as excuses.

Figure 1: Reported rates of domestic violence in the first three months of the Pandemic



(Source of chart depicting reported rates of domestic violence in the first three months of the pandemic)

- The Survey by the Australian Institute in Criminology of 15,000 women (May 2020) showed that **one in 12 experienced physical violence from their live-in partner in the first three months of the pandemic**, when most Australians were locked down. Additionally, 53.1% respondents reported an increase in reported physical or sexual violence and a 47% reported an increase of coercive control. (Source: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-01-21/covid-19-pandemic-was-perfect-conditions-for-domestic-violence/100770418>)
- The **'Help is Here'** campaign launched in response to the pandemic, assuring both males and females that help was available, even in the context of local 'lock-down' situations.
- **High profile tragedies such as the murder of Brisbane woman Hannah Clarke** and her three children by her estranged husband in 2020.
- The **'Manosphere' begins to expand** from an Incel only community to include a wider spectrum of men: *MIT Technology review "The 'manosphere' is getting more toxic as angry men join the incels"* (Feb 2020)
- **Andrew Tate Program (Hustlers University) launched in 2021**, amassing 200,000 subscribers before its initial closedown in 2022. It sought to inspire young people to "escape the matrix and take the red pill", teaching young people how to make money, get rich, be a man and gain power. Since its closure, and following Tate's ban on social media, it was relaunched by Tate as "The Real World".
- On 15 February 2021, Liberal Party junior staffer Brittany Higgins alleged to two media outlets that she was sexually assaulted in a ministerial wing of Parliament. The resulting court case received significant media attention and the case concluded without verdict.

2022/2023

- **'Stop it at the Start'** Phase 4 launched in March 2022, encouraging adult influencers to remember to have ongoing conversations with young people about respect.
- Reversal of **Roe vs Wade** (June 2022), often described globally as a regression for the rights of women.

- **Amber Heard vs Johnny Depp** defamation trial occurred, considered a trial by social media where #JusticeforJohnny received 20 billion views globally on social media vs #JusticeforBmber at 75 million.
- Sydney Morning Herald report on the '**money mad misogynist: The danger of Andrew Tate's rise** in Aug 2022.
- August 2022: **Andrew Tate blocked** by Meta (Facebook and Instagram), YouTube and TikTok, because of a campaign that touted Tate as being damaging to his young audience. However, platforms still remain inundated with clips of him.
- Teenager's disturbing **Schoolies 'checklist'** emerges online which features a number of different sexually explicit and disrespectful acts against women in November 2022.
- News.com.au reported that Andrew Tate's sexist propaganda is taking over Australian classrooms in Jan 2023.
- ABC news reported on a survey done by the Man Cave of 500 boys which found 28% of boys strongly agreed they looked up to Tate, while 36% found him relatable (Jan 2023).
- In June 2023 in the USA, Governor Ron DeSantis **launches his election campaign via the "War on Woke" platform** which is embodied by DeSantis as the answer to the war against merit, while others see it as an attack on equality.
- August 2023: **Department of Social Services** launch a 5 year plan to reduce the number of women killed by their partners by 25% each year. This plan includes a first action plan and the first dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander plan.

3.2 Ten contextual shifts impacting attitudes

Given the contextual changes, and injection of new influences, it is understandable that the context in which people respond to the topic of disrespect and violence against women has also changed. The current exploratory research identified ten key contextual shifts since the preceding stage of formative research (September 2021) in the way people think and feel about the topic of disrespect and violence against women, many of which are interrelated and described below.

3.2.1 The 'appetite for change'

Since 2015, the appetite for change when it comes to gendered disrespect appears to have shifted. In Stages 1-4 (2015-2022), there was:

- **A desire for active participation in change.** There was wide recognition of the 'problem', with regular media reporting and strong media voices which generated support from the community to be involved as a part of the 'solution' – there was an underlying readiness for action and change in the community.
- **Clarity of the link between disrespect and violence.** The link between disrespect and domestic violence was 'new' (in 2015, that 'not all disrespect ends in violence against women, but all violence against women starts with disrespect'), but accepted and largely embraced (particularly post launch of phase 1 of the national campaign).

In stage 5 (2023), there is emerging:

- **Scepticism (and, some resistance) towards ongoing / future change.** For some, there are questions regarding the legitimacy in the pursuit of additional change in terms of, for example, 'how much change is too much', and 'when does change irrevocably and negatively alter the status-quo fabric of society?'
- **Lack of clarity on the link between disrespect and violence.** For some, newer forms of disrespect (described later in this report) can be considered a natural (even, healthy) part of expression. This occurs when disrespectful statements are positioned as 'conversation', or a way to 'defend' a position or 'explore' personal beliefs. When this happens, such comments are not universally considered an 'attack' on others and, can be discounted in their potential to be both disrespectful and violence supportive.

As a result of this shift, for many, conversations around the topic result in a 'fight' or 'flight' response – whereby there is a desire to actively dispel the potential need for future change ('fight'), or to accept that change is too controversial or difficult to achieve and either ignore the topic or, remain silent ('flight').

Me personally I think it's a bit of an over talked topic, I'm not saying it doesn't matter, **I feel like it's just talked about too much.** (Male, 15-17)

'Equality' would feel like if history had completely reversed. (Male, 15-17)

3.2.2 The 'loudest voices'

In Stages 1-4 (2015-2022), there were:

- **Strong positive voices.** High profile advocates and cases of domestic violence (e.g. Rosie Batty and Ken Lay) challenged national thinking in-line with the campaign's impetus – this helped create a natural environment of active support, particularly during the initial launch phase 1.
- **Minimal negative voices.** Negative advocacy was considered a 'vocal minority', being relatively low in scale and largely outnumbered by positive voices. Where negative advocacy did exist, it spoke directly to adults via largely traditional media channels, all of which the national campaign held a larger counter-presence.

In stage 5 (2023) there are:

- **Comparatively fewer positive voices.** Noting there continue to be champions of the topic, however, there are comparatively fewer that are mentioned by the community, reducing the natural environment for active support.
- **'Popularised' negative voices.** Self-proclaimed misogynistic voices (such as Andrew Tate, among others), have risen in following and support. Notably, many of these voices directly target younger audiences, particularly males, through the nature of channels they exist in (e.g. TikTok, Snapchat, WhatsApp). It is noted these channels have not previously been participated in by the National Campaign.

As a result, there are new, influential conversations in which adults and the Australian Government are not participants but, which directly reach young people with compelling conversations.

...but there are hundreds and millions of influencers who are female who are hating on men and it's okay to do that, and there's no statement or debate about that. (Male, 15 -17)

I think it's pretty harsh... Andrew Tate does say some terrible things...but a lot of things he says are true, and women are doing the same thing with men, so why is that not being said? (Male, 15 -17)

3.2.3 The 'cannibalisation' of other issues

In Stages 1-4 (2015-2022), the focus on violence against women – as described by the community - was:

- **Singular.** The topic of violence against women did not appear to be interlinked with other related topics.
- **Supported by the emergence of social movements.** Social movements such as #metoo helped propel the issue into the community narrative and created a broader understanding of its impact on victims and survivors.
- **Supported by high profile cases.** High profile cases were prosecuted and resolved, with perpetrator outcomes 'known' and reported in the media.
- **Associated with prosecution for 'violence'.** Media reported cases focussed on the violence perpetrated.

In stage 5 (2023), the focus on violence against women – as described by the community - appears:

- **Multi-dimensional.** When referencing disrespect and violence against women, there are multiple associations with topics which the community consider related. These includes topics such as gender equality, LGBTQIA+ rights, re-writing children's books, gender pay gaps etc. This reduces the ability for the topic of violence against women to stand alone as a singular topic of focus.
- **Detrimental impacts of social media movements.** While social movements such as #metoo had an initial positive influence (during stages 1-4), community conversations around their merit and impact have since divided. Many now associate such movements with perceptions of 'false accusations' and being divisive, rather than unifying.
- **High profile cases with inconclusive, 'regressive' or 'reversed' outcomes.** While there remain cases where there are known outcomes for perpetrators of domestic violence in Australia, some focus more on a small number of high profile cases for which there are considered less obvious outcomes, or even outcomes which appear to suggest that the issue has become disadvantageous, or even detrimental, for females. These cases include those such as Depp v. Heard, Higgins v. Lehrmann and Roe v. Wade.
- **Prosecution for 'opinions'.** For some, there is a perception that people can be prosecuted for opinions (rather than violent behaviours) and / or, extrapolated to other areas such as tax evasion and bans from social media. When this occurs, there is a sense that this topic enables people to be 'punished' for a thought or opinion, rather than a physical act.

The cannibalisation that exists results in a perceived reduction in legitimacy and scale of the issue. As a result, the focus on victims and victim impacts is eroded, and the topic becomes one that can be associated with 'punishment' as opposed to 'prevention'.

I don't know if it's appropriate to say this, but the #metoo movement, people needed to be able to say what was happening to them, but then it was like 'someone looked at me in the grocery store and I didn't feel ok with that, so here let me go on TikTok and have my #metoo'. Everyone became a victim almost ...it became so watered down. (Female, Indigenous, 18-24)

3.2.4 The 'system' deflection

In Stages 1-4 (2015-2022):

- **The first National Plan signalled nation-wide leadership and commitment to change.** The National Plan cemented the Government's commitment to addressing the issue of violence against women and introducing necessary systemic change. Its focus ran alongside the community desire for change.

In Stage 5 (2023) there are perceptions that:

- **Changes have 'resolved' some systemic issues.** For some, a perception exists that changes made indicate that sufficient support is available to those experiencing violence against women. When this perception is present, it is believed that failure to seek support is an individual's 'choice', rather than an inability to seek support because of system resourcing and/or other issues associated with disclosure and help-seeking behaviour.
- **The Government's focus has stagnated.** For others, there is a perception that commitment to system-level changes has reduced – particularly in relation to protections for victims and Police responses. When this perception is present, it is believed that the burden for change is placed on the community rather than being jointly owned by Government and the community.

If the Government were speaking out on domestic violence, are they putting their money where their mouth is? Are they just sprouting a message, or do they actually feel they want to make a difference...because everybody can say whatever they want, but can you show you support that as well? (Mixed gender session, parent)

Resources are more readily available without going so far out of your way. Women aren't scared to go get help because it's not such a big thing to do anymore. (Female, Indigenous, 18-24)

Either of these perceptions (that the system has 'resolved' the issue, or that the Government's commitment has lessened) results in a deflected community ownership of the issue and, impedes people's willingness to seek further change.

3.2.5 Desensitisation

In Stages 1-4 (2015-2022), the issue of violence against women was considered new. This is not surprising given it was the first time in more than a decade the Australian Government had communicated via campaign on the topic. It was described as:

- **A 'bright, new light'**. The campaign moved the issue into the public spotlight, generating a new focus on the scale of the issue, prompting readiness to change and 'inability to avoid' the issue.

In stage 5 (2023), the topic is considered:

- **An 'old light'**. Many are aware of an ongoing narrative about the topic being driven by media reporting at a 'story', or headlines, level rather than conversations occurring at a broader 'issue' or awareness-raising level. When this occurs, there are perceptions that the issue is simply one that is 'reported as fact' rather than being positioned as something to challenge attitudes.
- **A 'weaponisable spotlight'**. For others, there is a perception that the motivation behind any / all conversations (not government communications) about disrespect and violence against women is to generate division, rather than to unite against a common goal to reduce prevalence.
- **A 'faded light'**. For others, similar to that mentioned previously, the perceived reduced governmental focus on violence against women has generated a false perception that resources are available to anyone who is in need and, that the problem 'must be fixed'.

I know some cases where women have actually not been in a situation of domestic violence and have said they are but made their partner go to jail which I don't think is cool. It's just hard to know what the situation is if you're not in the situation. (Male, parent)

Defamation... There are a lot of places this is so true. A woman accuses a man of sexual assault or some sort of harassment without clear evidence and it ruins the man's life. It's like women are a lot more fragile than us men and men need to suck it up a lot more. Talking about this kind of stuff with a lot of my mates has been good because they all agree and a couple of my mates have actually been accused of stuff and it has actually messed up their lives. (Male, 15-17)

As a result, there is a level of desensitisation whereby some in the community perceive the issue as 'old news', and/or begin question the legitimacy that further focus will drive positive outcomes.

3.2.6 Normalisation

In Stages 1-4 (2015-2022) there was:

- **Unconsciously normalised disrespect.** While there was universal acceptance that violence against women was wrong, adult influencers did not always recognise the role they played inadvertently perpetuating the cycle of violence by normalising disrespectful attitudes. This was, indeed, the central focus of phase 1 of the strategy

and national campaign (to encourage adults to 'recognise' unconscious heuristics – minimisation, empathy with male positions, victim blaming) and the impact this can have on younger generations. Throughout phases 1 through 4 of the campaign, this unconscious and unintentional normalisation of disrespect was directly addressed.

In stage 5 (2023), there is:

- **Overt minimisation and normalisation of disrespect.** For some, there is a perception that it is 'normal' to be accused of disrespect and, that this minimises the extent to which any accusation is grounded in reality or has a negative impact.

I happened to be standing outside a café the other day and three young males, tradies... their conversation was joking about having a dv complaint yet ...like it's just a rite of passage, like how many girlfriends can you have before you get a dv [accusation]. They thought nothing of it, it was like you haven't had any fun or anything yet if you haven't had a dv. (Indigenous, female, 18-24)

- **Minimisation of disrespect through the mask of debate.** Others minimise unhealthy gendered attitudes and conversations through masking them in the context of 'debate' or 'free thought / speech'. When this occurs, there is a sense that it is ok to think / feel / believe / say anything, and that it does not necessarily equate to disrespect, nor have a link to violence against women.

When minimisation occurs, the ability to empathise with those who may be experiencing disrespect or violence is eroded.

3.2.7 The 'behavioural ask'

There are also changes in the 'behavioural ask'. In Stages 1-4 (2015-2022), the behavioural was grounded in:

- **Role modelling.** Adult influencers were asked to recognise and modify their own behaviour, in order to have a positive influence on younger generations.
- **Experiential empathy.** While the behavioural ask was to recognise previously unconscious responses (/heuristics), they were ultimately 'known' to influencers because they related to their own behaviour.
- **An individual's locus of control.** Because the behavioural ask related to things that were known, the ability for individuals to believe they could change and influence the situation was strong – the ask was within their personal control.

In stage 5 (2023):

- **We are addressing 'newer' behaviours.** As a result of the contextual shift, the behavioural challenge has shifted to address 'newer', unfamiliar conversations.
- **There is lower experiential empathy.** These conversations are not necessarily understood by adult influencers, are often not personally experienced (for example TikTok influencers), which reduces their ability to empathise with the situation and its potential impact.

- **It can feel outside an individual's locus of control.** As a result of the above, many find it challenging to understand how to influence in the context of this new environment which feels 'out of control'.

I think that's very hard to navigate in today's world. Kids are exposed to all these different ideas in social media, and seemingly there's no consequences for somebody who says and does something ridiculous... then 30 seconds is up and the next video starts... nobody gives it another thought but it's still planting seeds. (Female, Parent)

It's a different kind of violence I guess, but it is still violence. It's going to be very hard... you can't stop trolls and idiots on social media who hide behind keyboards. (Mixed gender session, Parent)

As a result of the new conversations and behaviours, there is a heavily felt lack of experience challenging adult influencers efficacy in having these conversations.

3.2.8 'Say' but don't 'feel'

In Stages 1-4 (2015-2022) there was:

- **A similar 'ask' by gender.** The behavioural changes required ('recognise', 'reconcile', 'respond', per the original strategy) were equally about males and females, both with a role to play as positive influencers.
- **An equal focus between genders.** There was acknowledgement that gendered disrespect / beliefs were equally harmful to young males and females, and a sense of joint ownership among adult influencers.

In Stage 5 (2023), it appears there is:

- **An inconsistent 'belief' that new conversations around disrespect are potentially harmful / wrong.** There is a sense that people are aware of the 'expected' external responses when asked questions about social media and other influences such as Andrew Tate, but there may equally be hidden internal narratives. For example:
 - For young males – there appears an externalised agreement with the views of positive adult influencers around disrespect, even when their personally held views are opposing.
 - For young females – there appears a reluctance to disagree with potentially negative attitudes towards respect, considering it safer to remain silent.
- **A non-shared agenda.** There is a perception the issue is being driven primarily by females, and a reduced sense of joint ownership.

In a lot of health classes, we did talk a lot about gender equality, but the teacher was female, and she didn't understand the point of the guys and she was more biased, taking one side of the story because she is a girl. I think it should not just be so much girls for equality but also men. (Male, 15 - 17)

It's the women who have really driven this more than the men in my opinion. (Mixed gender session, Parent)

There's a lot of protests and stuff for women to get equality but some of them [females] are not willing to put in the work. (Male, 15 - 17)

3.2.9 Fear of Equality

As noted previously (Section 3.2.3), the topic of disrespect and violence against women has been cannibalised by other topics – and one of these topics is equality.

In Stages 1-4 (2015-2022), equality was considered:

- **A non-related topic.** Gender equality and equity were not in the minds of adults linked to disrespect and violence against women. This allowed the topic of violence against women to 'stand-alone' in the community and facilitated a 'clear space' for the national campaign to exist.

In stage 5 (2023), equality is considered:

- **A closely related topic which is ultimately about 'loss'.** Conversations around respect and violence against women move quickly (for males and females) to conversations of equality signaling loss of power for males (rather than equalising of power for females).
- **Weakening boys/men.** For some, there is a fear that equality threatens masculinity. When this is perceived, there is often a stated preference to return to 'traditional' roles such that the power balance remains with males. This view is more often expressed by males than females.
- **Having potential to unintentionally create a 'homogenous' generation.** For others, there is concern that a focus on equality seeks to 'normalise' everyone, eliminating positive differences between genders.
- **Driven solely by women.** While previously, conversations around equality were considered shared, the current perception is that equality arguments are agenda-based, non-related to violence against women, and driven solely by females.

Every child is going to be brought up in a different way ...they'll go to either spectrum, and what we really want to try and do is get them all in the middle somewhere ...but, at the same time, we don't want to create one human. (Mixed gender session, parents)

The cannibalisation of the topic equality, when it comes to violence against women, results in a more complex pathway to talk about gendered issues such as disrespect and violence against women as people deflect the issue towards the topic of equality.

3.1.10 Fear of the issue

There is an increasing gendered divide in how the issue is being felt and experienced by both men/boys and women/girls, both leading to fear and avoidance.

In Stages 1-4 (2015-2022), disrespect and violence against women was considered:

- **Challenging, but a shared issue.** There was a general acceptance that although the topic was challenging, change could, and should, be driven by both males and females. For many, this created a sense of connectedness in the way conversations could be approached, as well as a sense of shared desired outcomes.

In stage 5 (2023) the topic is attached to some trepidation and:

- **Among males, there is an underlying perception that ‘everything i do could be wrong’.** Many males express concern for potential to all / any actions to be open to criticism. When this occurs, there is a tendency to ‘push back’ against any / all criticism, and/or to actively deflect blame to the actions of females (for example, “all women are on OnlyFans”) – a “fight” response.
- **Among females, there is an underlying perception that- ‘everything I say could be wrong’.** For many females (younger and older), there is a perception that it is safer to be silent, because having conversations on the topic could result in negative labelling (for example, as an “angry feminist”). When this occurs, there is a tendency to ignore or accept without comment – a “flight” response.

Guys have a fear now, unfortunately there are a few guys who do these horrible things, but that does kind of get put onto men in general. There’s certainly an element of fear of getting caught doing something wrong even when there’s nothing actually to worry about. (Males, 15-17)

Fundamentally, there is a level of resistance to engage in the topic (among males and females) as a result of the fear of potential repercussions from the opposite gender and community.

4. The emerging impact of the contextual shift

4.1 The generational divide

As noted previously (Section 3.2.2), the recently emerging conversations about disrespect and violence against women appear to have higher reach among younger cohorts. While it is not asserted this is necessarily an intentional strategy on behalf of content creators and amplifiers, it does occur as a function of the channels these messages and influencers are present (e.g. TikTok and snapchat) – which have a higher reach among younger audiences. For example:

- Among Australian TikTok users, 52.7% are aged 18-24 years, and 62.9% are male¹.
- Nine in ten (92%) young men are aware of Andrew Tate².
- One third (35%) consider Andrew Tate 'relatable', and one quarter (25%) 'look up to Andrew Tate'⁴.
- One third of young men are yet to make up their mind (33% are neutral in terms of whether he is 'relatable' and, 31% are neutral in terms of agreement they 'look up to Andrew Tate')⁴.

You can disagree a little bit with some of the things he says but a lot of the things he does say are pretty accurate and it's just the uncomfortable truth that people don't want to hear.
(Male, 15-17)

This has resulted in a considerable 'knowledge gap' in the conversations occurring about respect and disrespect between young people and adult influencers, particularly adult influencers over 30 years. In turn, these knowledge gaps have driven new differences in understanding and attitudes regarding disrespect and violence supportive attitudes.

I don't really talk to my parents about a lot of the issues happening in my generation. Parents are just not as up to date as a kid would be and the way they talk about it could be pretty ancient. (Male, 15-17)

These differences are perhaps best illustrated through the lens of the 'generational chain' sessions, whereby each generation observed the conversations of the preceding generation and, were then asked to discuss what they had observed, how it made them feel, and whether / how it aligned with their own experiences.

When older generations observed younger generations and their perspectives on how far Australian society had come on the topic of gender equality, there was a degree of disbelief on the perspectives. For example, **15-17 year old males** articulated a perception that:

- Fundamentally, respect and equality are the right thing and violence against women is wrong.

¹ <https://www.start.io/audience/tiktok-users-in-australia>

² <https://themancave.life/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Man-Cave-Andrew-Tate-Research-Paper-March.pdf> (quantitative survey of n=1,374 males aged Year 7 through Year 12 in Victoria and New South Wales)

- However, the topics were not necessarily an ongoing significant problem – with things between boys/girls and men/ women appearing equal.
- The beliefs of individuals such as Andrew Tate were considered 'interesting', but there was an element of uncertainty in articulating their true support.

Not everyone in society supports that certain things need to be fixed. (Male, 15-17)

From parents, it's just their perspective. On YouTube and on social media people have time to gather clear evidence about the things that are happening. Parents are just not up to date... Influencers are really into their stuff and they will probably be researching all of it and have a lot of evidence behind proving their perspectives, situations and everything that is actually happening on this stuff today. (Male, 15-17)

A group of **18-24 year old males** viewed the conversation of 15-17 year olds, and strongly believed the younger males may have been withholding their true perspectives, and would be more likely to hold attitudes and beliefs more similar to theirs, in that:

- Respect and equality are the right thing and violence against women is wrong.
 - However, this is only the case if it does not impinge on male 'status quo'.
- Traditional gender roles are preferred, and true equality was described as being potentially dangerous or limiting.
- The beliefs of individuals such as Andrew Tate were considered representative of the views of many males, and largely appropriate.

It's on the way to going too far, but it never will, because someone will stand up for us like Tate. (Male sibling, 18-24)

[Men] have less of a voice in society now. It's like opposite of what history was. **Males had more but now women have more ...will they** [younger males] **have to succumb to what other people believe in?** Will they even have their own thoughts? (Male sibling, 18-24)

A group of **adult influencers (female parents)** viewed the conversation of 18-24 year olds, and expressed a desire to deny the conversations observed as ones that were not representative of young males (noting that no individuals were recruited based on attitudinal state, and are considered a broad representation of society).

I don't believe these guys represent the normal guy their age. (Female, parent)

In doing so, they actively avoided any judgement of opinions, and expressed that:

- Respect and equality are the right thing and violence against women is wrong.
 - However, they can be dangerous and loaded topics.
- While traditional gender roles were not necessarily preferred by females, there was a degree of sympathy to the preference of young males for this.
- There was no understanding of who individuals such as Andrew Tate were, and the narratives they subscribe to.

A similar pattern of generational disconnect was observed in the female chain sessions. Among **15-17 year old females**:

- Fundamentally, respect and equality are known to be the right thing and violence against women is wrong.
- However, this was not always considered the reality of their situations. There was a perception that males hold the power, a sense of feeling defeated, and having to accept the world in front of them which they felt often included implicit and explicit disrespect for females.
- The beliefs of individuals such as Andrew Tate were known, and there was a belief that many young males were aware of, and subscribed to, the rhetoric. Some described that some young males would articulate these new narratives – that is, they were not solely 'hidden' conversations.

Boys have all the power ...you just accept it. (Female, 15-17)

A group of **18-24 year old females** viewed the conversation of 15-17 year olds, and generally expressed a sense of disheartenment that younger cohorts were already subject to the influence of disrespectful and gendered views. Overall, they described that:

- Respect and equality are known to be the right thing and violence against women is wrong.
 - However, there was a perception that in recent times, community progress had been eroded.
- Similar to younger females, there was a perception that males now hold a position of power in conversations about respect and violence against women and that any conversations were considered a 'battle', where females were likely to feel powerless and passive.
- The beliefs of individuals such as Andrew Tate were known, and there was a strong belief that many males subscribed to the rhetoric and openly talked about it.

*It's disheartening how passive and resigned they seem.
(Female sibling, 18-24)*

*I feel insulted that the younger girls would think that we think the problem is closer to fixed than they do. Shocking. **We are at the other end – that it's gone backwards.** (Female sibling, 18-24)*

A group of **adult influencers (male parents)** viewed the conversation of 18-24 year olds, and (similar to the female parents) expressed a desire to deny the conversations observed as ones that were not representative of young females (noting that no individuals were recruited based on attitudinal state, and are considered a broad representation of society).

Their hopes are fanciful ...almost like they've all just got out of really bad relationships. (Male parent)

In doing so, they actively avoided any judgement of opinions, and expressed that:

- Respect and equality are the right thing and violence against women is wrong.
 - However, they can be weaponised conversations, and ones that do not recognise the degree of progress made.
- Females who continue to focus on equality and respect being 'problems' were unrealistic.
- There was no understanding of who individuals such as Andrew Tate were, and the narratives they subscribe to.

They [young females] should be more appreciate of how much things have changed ...not saying all these negative things.
(Male parent)

The generational observations illustrate that:

- Knowledge gaps between generations are an impediment to positive conversations about respect and violence against women as adult influencers are largely unaware of the current narratives.
- The new narratives, when left unnoticed and unaddressed by adult influencers, appear to have high potential to erode positive attitudes among younger cohorts.
- The need for primary prevention, encouraging adults to be a positive influence on younger males and females in order to generationally change the cycle of violence against women remains paramount.

4.2 A sense of 'loss' among young people

In addition to the changes in context creating a generational divide, it appears to have also contributed to a sense of 'loss' that is now attached to the topic of respect and violence against women.

	Among young females ...current losses	Among young males ...potential future losses
Quotes	<i>...if the guys are walking around believing all this stuff, then the girls might start believing in it too. It could lead to women thinking less of themselves ...to not having a voice because there are so many other people against them. (Female, 15-17)</i>	<i>...I'm concerned about the next ten years...I don't like the change that's happening, it's not the life I want to live. 100 years ago, men were masculine, and women accepted their role as submissive ...I hope we get back there. (Male sibling, 18-24)</i>
Dominant elements of the conversations	The dominant elements of the conversation revolve around the need to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect oneself (for example, via nail polishes that detect drugs, key chains that have duress alarms etc); • Decode what the outcomes of high profile trials (such as Higgins, Heard) mean for females; • Understand the impact of global decisions on females (for example, Taliban bans on female education, Roe v Wade, dominance of males in politics). 	The dominant elements of the conversation revolve around: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals such as Andrew Tate, and how their beliefs appear to have driven success (wealth, notoriety etc); • New phenomena such as OnlyFans and a misperception that the majority of women make significant financial gains from the platform, creating inequality for males; • The impact of focusing on gender equality on elements such as employment gender quotas, making it more difficult for males to build financial status.

4.3 Fear of 'judgement'

In addition to contributing to a sense of loss among both genders, the change in context has also contributed to a **fear of judgement from 'others'** which drives a disconnect between younger males and females when it comes to the topic of disrespect.

Among **females**, there is concern that any conversation relating to respect, equality and violence against women risks an incorrect judgement being passed that:

- All females believe 'all men' have the potential to be perpetrators, when this is not their fundamental belief.

...nobody is saying it's every guy ...we're just saying it should be talked about so stuff can change. I've never heard a girl say 'every guy' is like that, but they have got that thought in their head.

(Female sibling, 18-24)

- Accusations of domestic violence are very often false when this is not their fundamental belief.

... [men criticise women of false accusations] ...it's not all women though, right ...it's a minority. (Female sibling, 18-24)

Among **males**, there appears the belief that:

- All females believe 'all men' have the potential to be perpetrators.

...guys have a fear now, unfortunately there are a few guys who do these horrible things but that does kind of get put onto men in general. (Male sibling, 18-24)

- A majority of females participate in platforms such as OnlyFans.

...a large majority of girls do OnlyFans...if you're a woman, you can pay for your HECS debt in one second...they can make in one day what it would make me three years to earn. (Male sibling, 18-24)

4.4 Changes in heuristics / unconscious biases

Phase 1 formative research revealed that while 96% of Australians condemn domestic violence, the **automatic defences (heuristics/ default responses) which impede likelihood to influence, and be influenced, were powerful**. These heuristics were consistent between young males, young females, adult influencers, LGBTQIA+ people, people with disability, CALD and Indigenous peoples. They related to the automation of:

- Victim blaming;
- Minimisation of behaviour; and
- Empathy with, and protection of, males.

The result of these heuristics was the unknowing wide perpetuation of a pattern of gender disrespectful and aggressive behaviour that could be a precursor to proliferation of gender inequality, and domestic violence in adult years – aligning with the premise of the National Campaign's primary prevention focus. These heuristics abdicated the necessity (for influencers, and young people) to challenge gender inequality, disrespectful and aggressive behaviours, and risk validating and propelling a powerful 'norm' of acceptance.

The research strongly suggested that before influencers could be influential on young people, these heuristics needed to be addressed. They were considered as a difficult, but essential part of an influencer strategy and were fundamentally central to the initial Phase 1 communications, and present throughout Phases 2 through 4.

Throughout the life of the campaign, these initial heuristics were directly addressed and evaluation research revealed their progress over time. In Phase 5, the current context has, however, resulted in some shifts in these heuristics (described below).

4.4.1 Changes in heuristics – 'victim blaming'

"She must have done something ..."

Since launch of "Stop It at the Start", the **'victim blaming' heuristic changed in the way it was articulated, and understood, by influencers and young people:**

- In **2015** (Phase 1 formative) and **2016** (Phase 2 formative), 'victim blaming' was articulated consistently and quickly (when responding to scenarios relating to disrespect and aggressive behaviour towards females). It was an unconscious default with minimal self-recognition of its use by those voicing it.
- In **2019** (Phase 3 formative), this heuristic remained, but was often accompanied by personal recognition of its presence and the unconscious / instinctive use of it. Many qualitative participants **consciously self-corrected their response**, having a greater propensity to identify disrespectful and aggressive behaviours as 'wrong', rather than use this heuristic as a valid reason to deflect:

Doesn't think any of these [victim blaming] reasons are acceptable ...she probably understands but, doesn't think it's acceptable. (Female influencer-2019)

- In **2021** (Phase 4 formative), the presence of this heuristic had **reduced considerably across all target audiences**. In its place, there was quick recognition of disrespectful or aggressive behaviours and acknowledgment they are wrong:

It's simply not acceptable, boys, girls ...whoever. (Male influencer-2021)

...funny things happen when frustration comes out ...it's not acceptable, hopefully the boy learns from his mistake. (Male influencer-2021)

Maybe the boy has family difficulties as well ...but, he needs to be corrected too. (Male influencer-2021)

- However, in **2023** (Phase 5 formative), while victim blaming is still widely recognised and understood as wrong when physical violence has taken place, there is an emerging belief among some males that 'females may be inviting this (disrespect)'. It drives a misperception that females hold the balance of power, actively make decisions that invite disrespect and, that continued focus on the issue may be detrimental to males. When this occurs, there is a reduced sense of proximity to the issue which impacts their ability to empathise with the actual experience of victims and survivors.

I feel like for the women [OnlyFans] it can start to cheapen their self-respect and make them feel like they're just a body and something to be given to someone else, not a whole person ...men have to go out and get a job, and they [women] now have that way where women can just do that. It definitely changes the way we see them. (Male, 18-24)

Society is saying that women should have the same rights as men (which they do) so I don't really know what women are fighting for.
(Male, 15-17)

4.4.2 Changes in heuristics – 'minimisation'

"It's not that bad – it's not like he punched her ...if you end up in hospital, with scars all over your face, then it's wrong..." (Female, 10-14 years)

Since the initial 2015 formative research, high levels of minimisation of gender inequality, disrespectful and aggressive behaviours towards females were present among influencers and young people. This impeded the ability of influencers to accurately identify 'when' there was a need to be influential because the frame of reference regarding what is 'acceptable' versus 'unacceptable' was blurred.

Since launch of "Stop It at the Start", however, the **'minimisation' heuristic progressed in the way it is articulated, and understood, by influencers and young people:**

- In **2015** (Phase 1 formative) and **2016** (Phase 2 formative), 'minimisation' of disrespectful or aggressive behaviours occurred consistently and quickly across all target audiences. It was an unconscious default with minimal self-recognition of its use by those voicing it.
- In **2019** (Phase 3 formative), the minimisation heuristic remained, however, there was greater self-recognition that it was being used and a greater ability to internally recognise and challenge (self-correct) it. Influencers had become more aware

(recognising) of their minimisation of behaviours, and were cognitively processing and questioning their frame of reference for what was 'acceptable' versus 'unacceptable':

It's a big deal, but it's normal ...although it shouldn't be ...but, it happens to a lot of people. (Male, 15-17, 2019)

- In **2021** (Phase 4 formative), **the minimisation heuristic had progressed to the point it was almost non-existent**. Influencers consistently indicated that the same scenarios of disrespectful and aggressive behaviours were unacceptable, regardless of any contextual or situational factors that may be present and there was a strong avoidance of minimising behaviours.

...there's no excuse – there's no fault, it is just wrong. (Male influencer, 2021)

I can't see how this would ever be seen as ok, there's nothing that excuses that. (Male, 15-17, 2021)

It doesn't have to be a physical injury, we have mobiles now, and that's all just as bad. (Male influencer, 2021)

- However, in **2023** (Phase 5 formative), the heuristic of minimisation has changed. While there is still widespread acknowledgement and agreement that physical violence is wrong, minimisation is now appearing in different forms:

- **Freedom of speech:** There is a perception that disrespectful language (online and offline) is an exercise of human freedoms to think freely, as well as a mechanism for 'healthy debate' on gendered topics.

...a lot of the things he does say are pretty accurate and it's just the uncomfortable truth that people don't want to hear. (Male, 15-17)

- **Private conversations should not be moderated:** There is a belief that conversations between males occurring private mediums (online and offline - insular friend groups, whatsapp groups, internet forums, etc) do not have the proven ability to negatively impact females. Thus, private conversations are often considered a safe way to explore, learn and test ones belief system.

...it's just good to have a place where you can just talk your shit ...and not be judged. (Male, 18-24)

- **Topic complexity excuses judgement:** The evolving nature of the gender conversations, and the questions people hold regarding the potential for non-physical forms of violence to negatively impact females provides a justification (for some) to minimise the potential impact of such conversations.

...the whole definition has sort of expanded now, you have emotional violence, physical violence and the interpretation of it all has expanded. (Mixed gender session, Parent)

4.4.3 Changes in heuristics – 'empathising'

"You feel conflicted ...you don't want them to be labelled"

Across all stages of this research, there has been evidence of high levels of empathy with the male position – rather than the female – in situations involving gender disrespectful and aggressive behaviour perpetrated by a male. When this occurs, the impact of the behaviour (both on the female, and the male) is absent, because the focus is on empathising with the action as a form of justification, rather than the impact (of the behaviour itself, and on an ‘unchecked’ behaviour).

Since launch of “Stop It at the Start”, however, the **‘empathising’ heuristic progressed in the way it is articulated, and understood, by influencers and young people:**

- In **2015** (Phase 1 formative) and **2016** (Phase 2 formative), ‘empathising’ was an unconscious default with minimal self-recognition of its use by those voicing it. Equally, there was minimal understanding of the impact this heuristic may have on young people.
- In **2019** (Phase 3 formative), the empathising heuristic remained, however, there appeared greater inclusion of both the male and female positions. While empathy with the ‘action’ remained, there was greater recognition this may not be the most effective course of action for influencers. Additionally, there was greater identification of both the male and female positions.

He should talk to the **girls as well** ...because the girls would be emotionally very disturbed by now. (Male influencer, 2019)

If a 5-year-old did that, there'd be more leniency.

Not for a teenager this age. (Female influencer, 2019)

- In **2021** (Phase 4), **empathy** for the disrespectful / aggressive action remained, however, it **had softened**. The narrative around empathy for the situation has shifted to **how to intervene carefully**, rather than how to avoid involvement.

You have to step in – sure, it's hard, and you have to do it sensitively, but doing nothing won't do him any favours. (Female influencer, 2021)

- However, in **2023** (Phase 5 formative), the rise of the ‘right’ to push back has emerged as empathy with the male position appears to have increased.

...more women are trying to go after men, so that it is making men uncomfortable more and more, and **we are being alienated and most of us are probably thinking, where is this going?** (Male, parent)

... I saw on the news where they made every boy, young boys... stand up in a crowd and say sorry to the girl next to them, you know, for domestic violence ...some guys out there are really nice, and I feel like sometimes people judge you: **you're a man you probably do this.** (Male, 15-17)

4.4.3 New heuristic – ‘it’s resolved’

“Why are we still talking about this?”

Since 2021 (Phase 4) there has been an emergence of a new heuristic, which appears primarily evident among males – this is a perception that the problem has been resolved. The misperception that the historical focus on respect and violence against women has

solved the problem limits the degree to which people believe the topic should receive their ongoing focus.

When this heuristic is present, it results in a deflection of the need to talk, think or act on the issue of disrespect and violence against women in three ways in that:

- **The problem feels solved**, because of a sense of high community awareness, governmental support and universal agreement that violence is wrong:

Women aren't scared to go get help because with the online world, technology has also helped with those resources and support groups. There are so many resources that are available and publicised...but maybe people when they do suspect that there's some sort of domestic violence going on, it's like, there's ads on TV and on radio, they'll ask for help if they need it because it's so readily available. Maybe it lessens the close community support. (Male, parent)

- **The problem is now just a healthy debate**, where males should have the opportunity for equal expression of views:

For me personally I've seen a lot of podcasts where they talk about this kind of stuff **with two sides... and it seems like the women always argue with the men over any point they make over this kind of stuff, it seems like they kind of invoke violence** to argue about a valid point that a man would make about something. (Male, 15-17)

- **'Thoughts' and 'conversations' don't necessarily have a negative impact**, with a denial and misunderstanding of the potential generational impact of the new narratives relating to gender – the link between disrespect and violence against women is not necessarily understood in this new context:

You might see some couples abuse each other every day and that might just be their dynamic and that's how they operate. **It's a thing of perception, it's what people perceive as violence, of what violence is and isn't acceptable ...** My limit of to what extent is a normal argument could be different to somebody else's, and that's where **the line gets blurred.** (Male, Parent)

5. Conclusions: The Heart of the Problem

5.1 Progression through the campaign strategy... since 2015

5.1.1 Summary

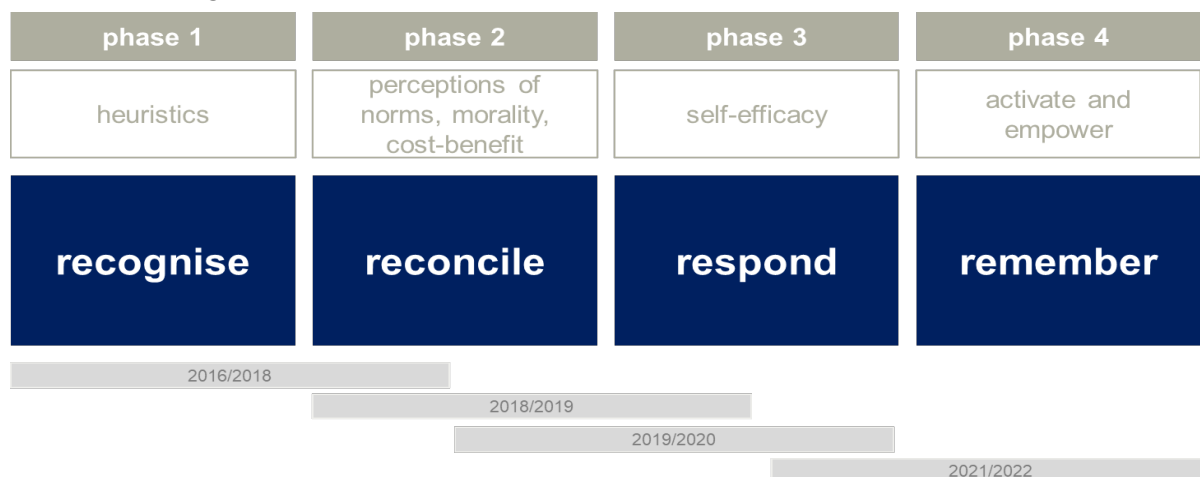
A core objective of the original strategy (Phases 1 through 3 – 2015-2020) was to transition people from inaction to action by addressing unconscious heuristics ('recognise'), the perceived imbalance of costs versus benefits of getting involved ('reconcile'), and to build self-efficacy ('respond').

In Phase 4 (2021-2022), the qualitative and quantitative evidence suggested a positive shift in the way influencers recognised, reconciled and responded. As a result, there were more influencers holding a desire to be a part of a solution (primary prevention) as opposed to simply focusing on the problem. The strategy, therefore, turned to 'reminding' adult influencers to have proactive, preventative conversations with young people (males and females).

In 2023 (Phase 5), the **marked contextual shift** has driven **a significant knowledge and understanding gap** for adults and **a generational divide** in how Australians feel and experience disrespect. **New significant influences** have greater impact on the attitudes and behaviours of young people towards gendered disrespect and **adult influencers are largely absent from the conversation**. This has created a 'new problem' to solve.

While adults retain an underlying desire to be part of the solution, we need to re-establish the problem for adults in the context of these new influences (online and offline) and their impact on gendered disrespect.

5.1.2 Progression through the historical campaign strategy (Phases 1 through 4)



(Source of Stop it at the Start Phases 1 through 4 communication strategy)

In **Phase 1**, the primary objective was to encourage adult influencers to '**recognise**' the issue as a community-problem, for which all adults played a role – even though it may be inadvertent. In doing this, the campaign communicated three widely evident unconscious heuristics of 'victim blaming', 'minimisation of disrespect' and 'empathy with male positions'.

By **Phase 2**, these heuristics were understood and many adult influencers had progressed in their understanding of their personal role. The focus therefore shifted to '**reconciling**' the personal costs of getting involved, and directly challenged the target audience that not getting involved had more negative consequences for young people and the community, than of getting involved ("That's not what I meant" creative).

By **Phase 3**, the community understood that the benefits outweighed the cost, and the focus shifted towards how to build self-efficacy and encourage more adult influencers to '**respond**'. These responses were, at this phase of the campaign, largely positioned as 'in the moment' responses ("Unmute" creative).

By **Phase 4**, community attitudes had shifted such that the 'recognise-reconcile-respond' elements of the communications strategy were broadly understood. There was a community appetite for messages that encouraged people to remember the progress made and to shift towards encouraging proactive conversations (not necessarily linked to an observable moment of disrespect). This aligned with the National Campaign's primary prevention focus ("Jack and Ava" creative).

Things like this [disrespect / aggressive behaviour] have happened in my school before. People nowadays won't stand it. It isn't right if people are being abused or a physical action against someone isn't right, regardless of the scenario. (Male, 15-17, 2021 Phase 4)

You need to set an example for your son...and for other dads. (Male influencer, 2021 Phase 4)

The reasons to have the conversation would outweigh the reasons not to ...unless she was putting her daughter in danger. (Female influencer, 2021 Phase 4)

We need to talk about it [with young people] because it's so important. (Female influencer, 2021 Phase 4)

5.1.3 The nature of the problem has shifted in Phase 5

In 2023 (*Phases 5 and 6*), adult influencers continue to recognise the impact of their own behaviour, reconcile the costs of not getting involved, and express a desire to respond.

However, this recognition is founded in an **understanding of the issue that is without full context**. As described fully through this report, there is a notable and significant shift in the external context in which the topic of disrespect and violence against women currently exists. Noting these contextual factors were not present during the 2021 exploratory research (Phase 4), they appear to have occurred, and **impacted, at-speed**.

At the heart of these contextual shifts appears to be the rhetoric of **social media influencers** (such as, but not limited to, Andrew Tate), the **dilution of positive movement influences** (such as #metoo), and other **external events** (such as high-profile cases of disrespect and violence against women). This rhetoric has:

- Challenged the appetite for further focus and change;

- Placed greater prominence on negatively charged 'voices' / rhetoric which directly target young audiences;
- Confused and cannibalised the topic of disrespect and violence against women with other topics (such as equality, LGBTQIA+, gender pay gaps etc.);
- Alluded that the system's historical focus has already solved the issue, and there is less requirement for additional focus;
- Desensitised some to the topic;
- Normalised disrespectful conversations as mechanism for exploration and debate, rather than to cause harm;
- Changed the behaviour we need to target – from one that is 'known' by influencers (their own behaviour) to one that is unknown;
- Created an environment where some young people are comfortable with disrespectful conversations being 'hidden' from adult influencers in order to mask any potential negative impact; and,
- Generated some aversion to thinking about the topic.

It is important to note that many of these contextual changes – but, in particular, those associated with social media influencers – appear to have **occurred in a vacuum that is significantly impacting young people (males and females)**. They exist in channels and conversations where 'positive voices' are not present and, they exist in channels and conversations where adult influencers are not present.

...'I'm concerned about the next ten years...I don't like the change that's happening, it's not the life I want to live. One hundred years ago, men were masculine, and women accepted their role as submissive ...I hope we get back there. (Male sibling, 18-24)

...if the guys are walking around believing all this stuff, then the girls might start believing in it too. It could lead to women thinking less of themselves ...to not having a voice because there are so many other people against them. (Female, 15-17)

As a result, adult influencers appear to believe the problem of disrespect and violence against women may be resolved (because of progress achieved to date), because they are **not aware of the current, powerful and negative influences on young people**.

Thus, **the role for primary prevention remains omnipresent** for the National Campaign – to ensure that adult influencers play a role in the prevention of disrespect and violence-supportive attitudes among young people to continue to generationally impact the prevalence of violence against women.

5.2 The heart of the problem

While the need for primary prevention remains, in 2023 (Phase 5), the heart of the problem has shifted, and can be summarised as:

Australian adults **agree that violence against women and their children is wrong**, and over the years ...as our attitudes have been challenged and changed, we have modified our behaviours (heuristic responses), and held proactive, preventative conversations with young people.

However, it is undeniable that the last 18 months has seen **considerable contextual change**. Powerful social media influencers, who speak directly to young people, have created an echo chamber of voices which threatens to unravel the progress made. As adults, **we're not always keeping up with these conversations**, and we don't know how to influence them.

While we remain connected to the broader issue, we have become **disconnected and distant** from these new influences over young people.

For some of us, we **default to what it is "easiest to believe" so we don't have to "start again"** ...we may think the young people we're closest to wouldn't be influenced by these voices ...or, we might ignore it, hoping its "just a phase". We might feel concern that continuing to focus on the issue will 'tip the scale' ...question whether these new voices are simply a 'correction' ...or, feel challenged by whether continuing to focus on the issue is actually a good thing.

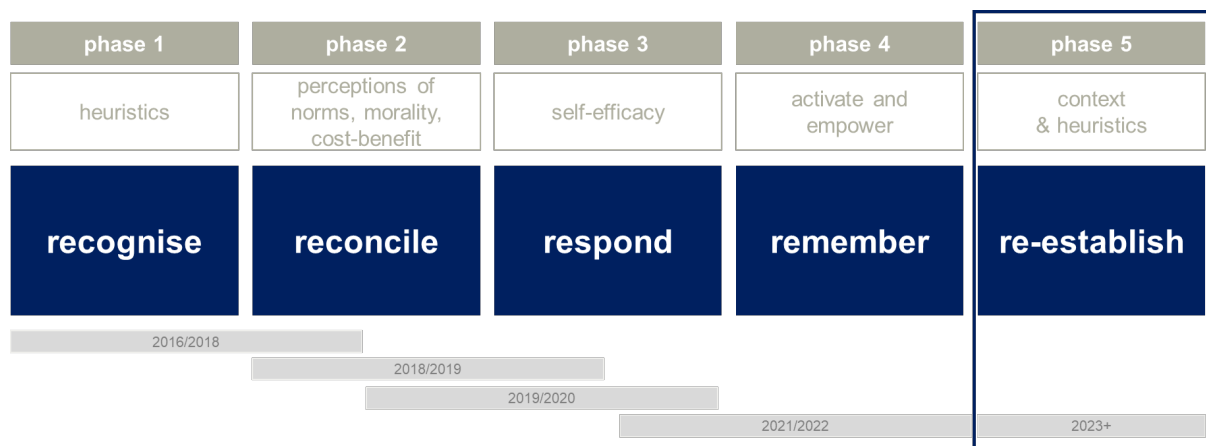
But ultimately, the **echo chamber of voices is having an impact on young people** – males and females. They are **changing the definition** of what is respect / disrespect without us ...they are **creating fertile ground for generationally violence supportive attitudes** to grow.

We **struggle** to talk about, and influence, something we don't understand.

But the longer the **void** remains, the **bigger the challenge** may become.

6. Strategic recommendation Phase 5 ... 'Re-establish'

To address the aforementioned heart of the problem, it is recommended the strategic focus remains one of primary prevention, targeting adult influencers. However, Phase 5 should seek to re-establish the problem through the lens of the recent and prominent contextual shifts. On this basis, **the recommended campaign strategy is to RE-ESTABLISH the problem (as outlined in the image below and throughout this chapter).**



(Source of Stop it at the Start Phases 1 through 5 communication strategy)

6.2 Recommended campaign territory (Phase 5)

Re-establishing the problem involves articulating to adult influencers that:

- The fundamental issue of violence against women remains and there is a need to better understand or, **re-establish the current reality** of the situation for women and children in Australia.
- The way young Australians are being influenced has changed, which can feel less proximate to the issues around domestic and family violence for adult influencers. This phase needs to **re-establish** the link between new influences of disrespect and the potential for this to grow into violence supportive attitudes and behaviours.
- While the link between physical disrespect and physical violence has been successfully drawn, it is important to **re-establish** the link between non-physical forms of violence and gendered disrespect and physical violence.

Fundamentally, the topic needs to be re-established within the current context, such that adult influencers understand the potential risks of conversations happening without positive voices (of adult influencers).

The recommended strategy (based on the qualitative evidence described previously, as well as testing of territories in this research – described in separate appendix to this report: 'learnings' for this territory) is therefore as follows:

Current situation

(Recognise progress) We've made huge strides in gender equality and gendered disrespect over the last generation, it can be easy to feel like the problem isn't as real anymore...**to feel like the progress we've made has solved it.**

(Recognise reality) But still today ...in Australia ...1 in 3 women has experienced violence since the age of 15. And one woman is killed by their (current or former) partner every 10 days.

Context shift

(Re-establish the problem) It can be easy to stop at the questions of 'why' this is still happening ...but we can't lose sight of preventing it from happening in the future. There are new, powerful influences on young people which have gained pace in the last 18 months and are happening without us ...in places we don't see them. Being hidden makes them even more dangerous.

Behaviour

(Reinforcing behaviours) It's the conversations we don't have, and don't know about, that allow disrespect and violence to grow. We need to understand and unveil these (online and offline) hidden conversations, to give young people a different voice ...to fill the void about respect and disrespect before its filled by someone else.

6.3 Detailed Communications Strategy (Phase 5)

6.3.1 Key Principles for message delivery

In communicating and developing creative expressions against this territory, there are several key principles for delivery, including:

- **Making adults feel (rather than be 'told') through implicit messaging:** It is important, as it was in Phase 1 of this campaign, that implicit messaging is used over explicit messaging. When adults and influencers are told directly about this issue, they can rationalise and deflect the message, ultimately risking reduced effectiveness of a campaign. Adult influencers need to feel a sense of deep urgency and discomfort with the reality. They need to **feel, and not be told**, they are missing out on big important parts of the respect/disrespect conversation and the potential for this to shape violence supportive attitudes and behaviours.
- **Framing as a human problem, not a gendered one:** Due to the contextual shifts, greater gender divides have emerged, leaving some males (younger and older) feeling blamed and/or defensive. Communications should not lean too heavily on the gendered divides, nor focus explicitly or implicitly on masculinity and males as the cause of the issue. Rather, this is an issue of influence over young people of both genders, although it is being felt in different ways by these genders. Ultimately, communications needs to position the issue as a 'human' problem, not one that is the fault of any gender or up to any gender to resolve.
- **Avoiding stereotypes:** Conversations with victim survivors strongly recommended that communications avoid depicting victims as helpless or weak in the situations of coercion or violence. This is a damaging stereotype as the opposite is felt by victim survivors and the reality of their character is one of strength to get through their lived experiences. Victims depicted as weak, helpless or without power can re-emphasise the fear among current victims to speak out, seek help and could also risk re-traumatisation. It is also

recommended that further consultation with victim survivors is undertaken in the concept testing phases to ensure positive outcomes and representation of these important people.

- **Language and talent:** The nature of this topic is complex and sensitive, hence it is critical that all communication is tested thoroughly through the eyes of victim survivors. There are risks that language can both trigger or re-traumatise victim survivors, may not accurately represent lived experiences but also risks that certain language used in communications, if implemented improperly, can be used by perpetrators in matters of coercion or violence. It is again, highly recommended that further consultation with victim survivors is undertaken in the concept testing phases to ensure the language used in communications does not have unintended consequences. (More detail in section 7.1)
- **Representation of different influencer types:** While our primary audience is adult parents as the closest influencers of young people, the campaign should be inclusive of broader family influencers, setting-based influencers, as well as communicate directly to older siblings (18-24 year olds).

6.3.2 Target Audience

'Stop it at the Start' Phase 5 is recommended to proceed as a primary prevention strategy targeting parents and adult influencers of young people. Therefore we continue to recommend that the prioritised target audiences for Phase 5 of this campaign follow the previous phases. In order of priority:

- **Parents** as the closest influencers of young people
- **Other family members** to reinforce change (such as older siblings, aunts and uncles, grandparents etc.).
- **Setting-based influencers** as a secondary audience to ensure consistency (such as teachers, sporting coaches, cultural leaders and other community role models).

It is important to note, while we are not recommending specifically targeting young males (aged 18-30) directly through an intervention strategy, **this audience will be reached through the communications strategy**. The strategy, previously outlined in this report, has been tested thoroughly with this cohort and had the same intended outcomes as it does for all other adult influencers. The key difference with the older sibling cohort is that many do not need to bridge their knowledge gap on the new context, as many are exposed and aware of the new rhetoric around gendered disrespect.

6.3.4 Tone

There are several juxtapositions which could be explored tonally, and these relate to:

	Acknowledging context and new sources of influence and the lack of recognition:
Juxtaposition	<p>current position: to avoid / perpetuate is 'comfortable'</p> <p>redirection to: to avoid / perpetuate is 'uncomfortable' – make adults feel like the conversation is happening without them</p>

	Acknowledging the lack of reconciling influencer roles:
Juxtaposition	<p>current position: you think you are standing 'against' gendered disrespect and violence towards women</p> <p>redirection to: you may be standing 'for' gender inequality and violence against women through inaction to new influences on children</p>

	Acknowledging lack of proximity as a reason not to respond:
Juxtaposition	<p>current position: I can't see what they see online and when they talk to friends, so I can't do anything</p> <p>redirection to: it's about building non-acceptance and bridging the knowledge gap</p>

	Acknowledging the need for adult influencers to continue to respond:
Juxtaposition	<p>current position: I have already done my part, this issue 'feels' resolved</p> <p>redirection to: it's about continuing to show and teach positive attitudes and behaviours that are relevant given the contextual shift</p>

Overall, this research suggests there are four central elements to the tone of the communications strategy:

- **Implicit**, rather than explicit messaging to start the cognitive process is essential. Explicit messaging that attempts to deliver information directly via rational processing is unlikely to be effective. Rather, messaging should be able to be interpreted through 'experiencing' and 'feeling' the message. **This should be considered essential in order to address the strong heuristics and lack of proximity to emerging contextual factors that will impede processing of messaging related to this topic.**
- The style of this phase of communications will need to be **novel** and **disruptive**, such that it is able to actively engage the target audiences. While the campaign should utilise the

Stop it at the Start branding, to leverage recognition and quickly 're-establish' the link between the new contextual influences and violence against women and their children, the positive tonality of Phase 4 is not recommended in Phase 5.

- Talk to the 'head' **through the 'heart'** – a rational call to action, through emotional interpretation. Purely rational messaging is unlikely to result in attitudinal or behavioural change because the majority of Australians already rationally condemn violence against women.
- **Personal** and **affective** interpretation is critical. The messaging must be personally motivating and **provide a 'resolution'** – a clear desired behavioural response – in order to minimise the impact of low self-efficacy in processing of the campaign messaging.
- Creating a '**collective**' and '**consistency**' will be important to succeed in influencing young people. This means the tone should embody a **positive discomfort to make parents feel the impact of the contextual shift** while also providing a resolution through an **empowering** and self-motivating tone.

6.3.5 Message hierarchy & call to action

This Phase of the campaign requires a message hierarchy to deliver a specific call to action that will lead adult influencers to re-establish the problem in their own minds, before having conversations with young people. While driving further conversations is behaviourally important and is still an intended behavioural outcome, bridging the knowledge gap and re-establishing the link to violence is important for the majority of adults in this Phase:

- **Bridge their gaps in knowledge** by understanding the scale and impact of new powerful influences on children (online and offline).
- **Re-establish the link** between these new influences, gendered disrespect and violence (including non-physical violence).
- **Reinforce positive behaviours** by talking to young people – directly addressing the new contextual influences - and giving them a different voice.

This call to action will likely require additional resources and educational information via the campaign website <respect.gov.au>. This information needs to include:

- Information on the **new influences** which young people are exposed to, and their potential impact on violence supportive attitudes.
- How social media/ algorithms can influence people's behaviour and attitudes by creating an echo-chamber.
- Information on the link between the new rhetoric and violence towards women and girls.
- How to have proactive and productive conversations with other influencers and children about these new influences, including how to answer specific questions.

It is noted that this campaign, and additional resources, could receive some negativity from communities particularly connected with the new contextual influences. In this regard, it is important to note that the influences are positioned as 'conversations' that are online and offline, and not targeting specific social media influencers per se.

6.3.6 Multiple Channels

Multiple channels are recommended.

- A strategy launch should **include television** in order to generate sufficient breadth of the 'call to action'. The enormity of the issue means that the use of television is considered particularly important to engage influencers and challenge the previously described engrained heuristics. Without television, it is likely that minimal attitudinal and behavioural change will be achieved.
- The strategy should include content that is able to be '**shared**' on social media by multiple different audiences – *both* younger people and adults. Consideration should be given to the inclusion of Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, Twitter (X), TikTok, etc.
- The strategy could include, but should not be reliant on, a **sharable component** (such as a #), in order to enable those who wish to passively show support for the issue the option to participate in this way.
- The use of QR codes, should be used where applicable (such as through outdoor, social and digital channels) to aid accessibility to campaign materials, website and hotline 1800Respect.
- The strategy will benefit strongly from the ability of the message to be **adapted by organisations and industries (i.e. education, disability, commercial industries, etc.)** to inspire broader and visible support for community change - **reinforcement**.

6.4 Campaign territory – directional (Phase 6)

The intention of the Phase 5 strategy is to feed directly into Phase 6. However, it is noted that the nature of the fast-paced change in context means it will remain important to retain some flexibility in designing a strategy Phase 6.

Below we have provided initial thoughts on how the strategic territory for Phase 6 could link with Phase 5, however, this is based on an assumption that 'all other things remain equal' ...that, once the campaign **re-establishes** the problem and the link to violence through Phase 5, adult influencers will be in a position to reinforce positive attitudes and behaviours and expand their repertoires of conversations.

Due to the strength of Phases 1-4, once the problem is re-established, adult influencers should feel more proximate to the issue with a sense of urgency to embody and amplify their behaviour through conversations more frequently with young people. Thus, potential strategic options for consideration in Phase 6 (building on Phase 5) could include (for example):

- A continued focus on **reinforcing the link between non-physical, and subvert messages** (e.g. via private conversations) on the topic of disrespect and violence against women.
- Targeted messaging to **reposition specific elements** of the contextual change / new rhetoric (for example, 'traditional roles', 'that disrespect or control of females can lead to positive outcomes / power', 'toxic masculinity' etc.)
- Create a **ripple of multiple positive voices / role-models**, offering alternative perspectives compared to negative voices.

7. Victim survivors

Bespoke sessions with victim survivors and broader conversations with the Australian community, which did not exclude victim survivors, highlighted some key principles for the campaign that should be considered moving forward. These are outlined below.

Fundamentally, **the recommended strategic direction for Phase 5 is considered appropriate for progression among victim survivors.**

7.1 There remains strong support for the National Campaign and its strategic direction

Among victim survivors, there remains **continued, strong support for a primary prevention strategy targeting parents and influencers of children.**

Act on it, don't sit back, stop it from happening in the first place. Start pre-birth – when couples are planning to have children, or from when pregnant, raise the human with equality and respect. Needs to be consistent through lifetime as this is the only way this would change." (Victim survivor)

I wish we had respectful relationships in schools, talk about things, don't brush under carpet. Needs to start in child care, gender equality needs to start early." (Victim survivor)

It shows in our generation of women, and men, that we didn't have this education. Not all men might be perpetrators but it's all men that need to call it out, and all women. A campaign can't just fall onto all the women to call out." (Victim survivor)

Victim survivors see and understand the problem has not been resolved, and that the lower proximity of the issue among community may impede a broader understanding of the issue. **Re-establishing that the problem still exists, and is closer to home than people may think, was a supported message** of the campaign, but the tone needed to support the gravity of the situation.

Haven't made the progress that people think – for people to be able to digest it, they have to be able to relate it back to personal experience and real life... we need to ground it in reality... your daughter may be one of the statistics" (Victim survivor)

We may need to spell it out for parents... a lot of parents don't know how to talk to kids and if they don't they won't... if you're going to do stop it at the start, you need to spell it out to parents." (Victim survivor)

Victim survivors support that the campaign's primary target audience remain as parents, but equally recognise the importance of all other adult influencers. Broadly, it is felt to be a responsibility of **parents and adult influencers to be more involved and bridge their knowledge gap** on the new forms and influences around gendered disrespect.

Be more aware of what is going on around you. People are in such a bubble, on social media, only shows the happy stuff.

Listen to the undercurrent, don't take things as face value. Don't be afraid to ask questions. Have the skills to know what to do. (Victim survivor)

It's happening without us" sentence and I like the concept of the TikTok, Snapchat thing [refer to stimulus], making it about the kids as ultimately what is going to impact the parents, is the impact on the kids. We have missed our generation, so it needs to focus on our kids generations so they don't make the same mistake. (Victim survivor)

Both unprompted, and when presented with the recommended campaign territory, there was support that **the previously described new influences (online and offline) around gendered disrespect were among the primary issues currently facing young people**, and society as a whole, to address through Phase 5 (and, 6) of 'Stop It At The Start'. There was also support for the campaign to re-establish the link between these new influences and violence.

Young adult men, can think its ok to have very traditional gender roles... yes it will have huge impacts and huge risks... they will re-considering basic human rights of women... this happens when one person abuses the power differential. (Victim survivor)

Whilst your kid is on Snapchat and it all looks happy, in 10 years she could be dead as the man harms her as she tries to leave. Have a kid on Snapshot playing and then show what could happen in the future. (Victim survivor)

On the Andrew Tate stuff, children are chanting songs about sexual assault, such a negative form of masculinity. These kids need leadership – mentoring programs and stronger parents and stronger leaders they get along with and respect. (Victim survivor)

(Regarding Andrew Tate) Yeah it has a definite impact on violence as well as in the culture for young men and teenage boys... the main thing kids are influenced by is peers – what they are experiencing from their friends is you have to commit this crime to be part of this group, this is how you have to talk to girls to be part of our group. (Victim survivor)

7.2 Depiction of victim survivors in creative

If victim survivors were to be depicted in the campaign, consideration should be given that their portrayal **empowers, rather than disempowers, women**. The portrayal of victim survivors as 'weak' or as purely a 'victim' is seen by some as misrepresentation that reinforces biases towards people who are victim survivors.

Ultimately the unintended consequences of this are:

- Risking reinforcing trauma or re-traumatisation for victim survivors.

Women shown as victims reinforces trauma and reinforces bias that women who have experienced violence are fragile and are on the edge and can't handle anything... but it is the opposite. (Victim survivor)

- Victim survivors not coming forward because of the reinforced stigma and false perception of weakness – ultimately causing some people to stay in abusive relationships.

Stigma is big thing – a lot of people would say to me why don't you go live with your family when they don't know my dad was abusive... people assume the victim has done the wrong thing if you speak out... still lots of victim blaming and assumptions and stereotypes who they think the victim is which makes it harder for people who want to seek help. (Victim survivor)

- Reinforcing societal lack of empathy with victim survivors around the ability to leave abusive environments or situations.

Fear of guilt shame, fear of being killed, you stay to keep an eye on perpetrator and kids.... people who leave spend time thinking I should have stayed... not understood by society. (Victim survivor)

The country as a whole don't understand the many layers of why women don't leave. (Victim survivor)

7.3 Depiction of males in creative

Given the nature of the topic, victim survivors anticipate the inclusion of **men and boys in the campaign is likely**. In relation to this, from their perspective, there is desire to potentially include positive male role models (noting this is not necessarily at the exclusion of all else).

I've noticed it in other campaigns where men are always portrayed negatively. We want men to be portrayed as the positive male role models because we don't want men to feel attacked... we need to focus on the positives and have women supporting that. (Victim survivor)

Throughout the creative development and testing stages, it will remain important to include victim survivors to minimise risk of any adverse events from the use of male talent and scripting elements. For victim survivors, the unintended outcomes can include, but are not limited to, perpetrators using the message of the campaign to commit further abuse (physical and non-physical), further victim blaming, minimization and incorrect stereotyping of women as people who falsely accuse.

They (perpetrators) will use the language present to their own advantage... if a campaign is all about physical violence, they will use it to minimise non-physical violence and coercive control behaviours. (Victim survivor)

Manipulated is a word that could be problematic for a man to say. It could be taken as she has made something up to get back at him. If men are in the campaign, you need to get someone with lived experience to dissect the campaign word by word. If you have one word out of whack, it could set off a perpetrator. (Victim survivor)

Aligned with the stated desire for potential inclusion of positive male influencers in creative, there is a perceived **potential risk if the campaign overly targets men** as the cause of the problem which is noted. Some victim survivors described the risks as driving further gendered division within society due to a backlash from some male and 'manosphere' communities.

This aligns with feedback from mainstream audiences where there is a heightened awareness of an 'us versus them' mentality.

Steer clear of 'us and them' mindset that people have right now. The campaign should position as we instead of us vs them ... we want healthy generations to come and this isn't the way we are. (Victim survivor)

The government doesn't want to get into battle because they (manosphere communities) want attention... they will see it as a win... we are not going to win in this conversation if we blame men and quote Tate – we need to show what the effect is. Then they can act like victims and rebel against getting cancelled. (Victim survivor)

We need to be mindful that we have problem not they have a problem. (Victim survivor)

We need to make it personal and about the reality for people you know and love... how would you want your family to be treated and the women in your life... (Victim survivor)

7.4 Inclusion of other influencers in creative

While the primary target audience of the campaign is parents as influencers, there is a desire among victim survivors to include (or at least, not exclude) **influencers outside of the immediate parental unit and family unit**. Some victim survivors raised concern over the pure use of parents as the source of healthy education on respect and relationships as this immediate parental unit, or a party of the parental unit, could be a source of domestic abuse and family abuse.

You never listen to your parents. My parents said trust your gut, but I never listened to them. Perhaps community leaders e.g., youth group, church group, sporting organisations. As part of the campaign, identify the mentors and leaders in your community. Get them to open up the conversations, develop the trust with someone you know, who is part of your tribe. (Victim survivor)

7.5 Additional findings on language

There were **additional language findings** raised by some victim survivors which could be considered for Phase 5 of the campaign:

- **Exclusive use of the word violence** is considered to have the potential to minimise non-physical violence. While it is understood by victim survivors that this is not the intention of the wording 'domestic violence', a potential solution was suggested that words such as 'abuse' are also considered for inclusion.

On the term family violence – we know child abuse is not ok... but why not use the word abuse. If there is only coercion then it's not treated seriously. Violence is not the right word. Violence, physical or non-physical is abuse... and abuse anywhere is not ok. (Victim survivor)

We have to think about what every term actually means. Same with family violence. People don't understand that family violence is many things and often there isn't violence. Abuse is

the word I would pick... we don't need it to be palatable we need things to shake things up and create change. (Victim survivor)

- It was also noted that there is a preference for the **use of everyday language**, that those sitting outside the sector would understand. One example was the use of terms such as 'gendered disrespect', as terms like this were perceived to potentially disengage people from the message.

Be careful of the language, so that it's not jargon. Avoid 'gendered disrespect' as would go over their heads or they would get switched off by jargon. (Victim survivor)

8. LGBTQIA+

Specific LGBTQIA+ sessions and broader interviews with LGBTQIA+ people in the general population, have outlined some insights that may have both campaign and program/implementation implications.

Overarching, it is noted that the topic of 'violence against women and their children' is unlikely to be fully addressed among LGBTQIA+ communities via a solus primary prevention communications targeting adult influencers (the National Campaign). Rather, program and policy intervention strategies for influencers will also be required to inspire individual and community change.

This aside, the insights described throughout this report were consistent among LGBTQIA+ communities, with some exceptions noted below.

The recommended strategic direction for Phase 5 is considered appropriate for progression among LGBTQIA+.

8.1 There is support for the National Campaign and its strategic direction

At an overall level, disrespect is still the root cause of violence and there is support that the National Campaign will reach audiences from the LGBTQIA+ communities when talking about gendered disrespect and its link to violence.

Throughout discussions, it was clear that the new narratives around disrespect are present, and potentially impacting, those in LGBTQIA+ communities. While it is recognised that the drivers of domestic violence are not always gendered and, conversations for prevention are also not gendered for LGBTQIA+ communities, testing the proposed strategy among LGBTQIA+ audiences confirmed making adults feel the impact of the contextual shift and re-establishing the problem and link to potential violence was an effective strategic pathway.

It made me think that, it's not out of the realm of possibility that this is something that my 10 almost 11-year-old could plausibly see on TikTok or something she's watching not even searching it out, just being taken there by the algorithm. Children don't have the experience or nuance that maybe adults have, that I read that and think that's nonsense and that's crazy but impressionable children could read that and listen to that type of thing and actually believe it and I think that's what part of the messaging is, is that you need to set the foundations of values and that type of thing before this insidious sight kind of creeps in. (LGBTQIA+)

Based on this qualitative research, it is not yet clear whether these new contextual impacts are more or less significant among LGBTQIA+, however, some specific impact examples were cited among this cohort:

My partner got attacked by their dog and he kept making the remark good dog because of my how partner looked, non-binary, and they were celebrating the dog attack, and this is from a 14-year-old because of what they watch on TikTok and

what they watch from so many people like Andrew Tate, and that's teaching them that disrespect because of who they're watching. (LGBTQIA+)

8.2 The use of gendered disrespect terminology

Within LGBTQIA+ communities, where relationships can be single sex or include/ are between non-binary people, the root causes of violence are not always due to gendered disrespect, but instead disrespect within relationships more generally.

Disrespect doesn't always look like disrespect. My son was the recipient of some violence that was potentially about me being trans. Sometimes the disrespect is not actually overt and because of your gender, but instead your lack of gender identity. (LGBTQIA+)

I think they do, from my experience, I have experienced an element of domestic violence in a previous relationship.... When I spoke out about it or tried to seek help, I was told to stop being silly, you're the man, you can deal with this, that's not happening, or joking, friends of mine who would say that must be a bit of fun, and just joke about it and devalue what I was saying and I didn't really feel heard at all... (LGBTQIA+)

While the need for a specific campaign relating to violence against women is both understood and supported by LGBTQIA+, it is noted that **specific resources and supports tailored to those in non-heterosexual relationships should be considered**, in order to ensure the community.

It's often tricky in our community to get the assistance because men's programs are designed for men with violence against women and women's program are designed for women who are the victim of violence from men, so where do you sit in if your person has been affecting you is of the same gender of you, it's very difficult to walk into these spaces and say it was another woman who did this to me, and it was another man who did this to me, and I'm the victim and I'm valid... (LGBTQIA+)

We are extremely fortunate here in Ballarat that there is an organisation... they do have some understanding of LGBTQI domestic violence situations because they are rainbow tick approved. But it's highly unachievable for most NGO's because they don't have the funding, and most don't know their demographic. I had a domestic violence situation which resulted in a housing crisis and there I was going I need money from this *** organisation, do I dare tell them I'm queer and not get the assistance I need, and I didn't dare tell them. (LGBTQIA+)

8.3 Potential considerations for resources

Among LGBTQIA+, the causes of disrespect can fall outside the traditional lens of gender. Therefore, as noted previously, consideration should be given to the development of specific

information and resources which directly addresses LGBTQIA+ on the campaign website. Such materials could include:

- Information and supports for those experiencing violence or abuse (or, direction to specific LGBTQIA+ support agencies) to ensure tailored support can be accessed.

As a queer person I never feel represented in ads – I'm not skinny, not straight – but family violence very much happens in our community, it's a power and control issue, not a gender one. (Victim Survivor, identifies as LGBTQIA+)

- Information for adult influencers talking to young people who identify as LGBTQIA+.

9. People with Disability

Specific sessions with people with disability, including people with physical or mobility disability, sensory disability and intellectual, cognitive, neurological or mental disability, and broader interviews with people with disability in the general population, have outlined some insights for consideration within the context of the National Campaign.

It is important to note that the topic of 'violence against women and their children' is unlikely to be fully addressed among people with disability via a solus primary prevention communications targeting influencers. Rather, program and policy intervention strategies for influencers will also be required in order to inspire individual and community change.

This aside, the insights described throughout this report were consistent among those with disability, with some exceptions noted below.

The recommended strategic direction for Phase 5 is considered appropriate for progression among people with disability.

9.1 There is support for the National Campaign and its strategic direction

At an overall level, while the risks, situations and context of violence can vary among people with disability, disrespect and gendered disrespect remains a key cause of domestic and family violence among this cohort. On this basis, there is ongoing support among those with disability for the National Campaign and its recommended strategic direction.

I'm a human being – not a person with disability. (Person with Disability)

I have recently been diagnosed with autism but apparently I've had it my whole life. To be honest, I don't really feel like I have a disability so I'm not sure I have a different perspective. (Person with Disability)

9.2 Specific experiences of those with physical disability

For some, it was felt that the potential for domestic violence can be elevated either as a victim or as a perpetrator as a function of having a disability. Thus, the conversation around people with disability was inclusive of the desire for both **victim and perpetrator-specific information, resources and supports**.

One potential influence of this was in reference to physical disabilities acquired in later life. It was described that loss of mobility and autonomy could lead to pressures in loss of income, as well as feelings of loss, frustration, isolation etc. While it was widely accepted among people with disability that this was no excuse for violence, it was considered a unique driver of domestic violence in relationships where one or both people have a disability. It was felt to lead to higher risk of perpetration, as well as the potential to experience violence due to the risk of entrapment, control and loss of autonomy.

People with acquired disability have actually lost something.... they get angry and emotions that they struggle with... that could lead to people being angry or upset. That adjustment period is where you're going to be very angry with the world. (Person with Disability)

On my bad days I can get snappy, but it makes me wonder about loss of income, loss of function, and they [people with acquired disability] might lash out. It doesn't excuse it, but that could be the cause. (Person with Disability)

Physical disability and entrapment, this happens a lot. It happens more than people realise, and it's not always physical, it's about coercive control and financial domination and social isolation – those sorts of things are more prevalent for physical disability. (Person with Disability)

Disability brings on abuse – it's not the way they were but they are frustrated and feel trapped this causes violence from either party – it comes on a lot in older age when these disabilities form – it is a misconception that it is only younger couples or parents – especially for people with developed disabilities late on in their life. (Person with Disability)

9.3 Specific experiences of those with sensory, intellectual, cognitive, neurological or mental disability

It is noted that among some people with sensory or intellectual, cognitive, neurological or mental disability, the topic of domestic and family violence can be felt and experienced differently. While it was acknowledged that any violence will always be anchored in disrespect, there were situational elements that made the **risks, experiences and impacts of domestic violence different**, for example:

- Among some in this cohort, it was described that **non-physical violence** (e.g. gas lighting and coercive control) are more prevalent as a form of violence due to the ability of a perpetrator to mentally control someone who has a mental or sensory disability.

Coercive control is a lot bigger than you think it is. The idea of it is terrifying – for someone with multiple disability including mental disability. It's an invisible issue for someone with an invisible disability. Coercive control as a method is far more prevalent than people realise and far more manipulative especially when it comes to the disabled. (Person with Disability)

- Some with mental disability can **feel minimised in their experiences** of disrespect and violence due to a perception that others in society can attribute the psychological effects (i.e. depression, fear, anxiety or other mental health issues) to be the cause of their disability and not the abuse they have suffered.

If you have invisible disability it's disparaging for a lot of people when people write of their stance to just being depressed or having a bad day when really it's gas lighting and violence. (Person with disability)

Coming from disability community – it is ignored by everybody. A lot of people who care are the perpetrators of violence but

they come across as carers. It's not talked about because they can't successfully escape violence and the police don't believe disabled people because they don't believe in their credibility. (Victim survivor with disability)

9.4 Potential considerations for resources

Among people with disability, disrespect and gendered disrespect remains a key contributor to domestic and family violence. However, as noted above, the experiences can be different. Therefore, consideration should be given to the development of specific information and resources that are tailored to people with disability on the campaign website. Such materials could include:

- Information and supports for those experiencing violence or abuse (or, direction to specific disability support agencies) to ensure tailored support can be accessed.
- Information and supports that are tailored to specific disability cohorts, acknowledging that people with disability are not a homogenous audience.

It really depends on what the disability is – intellectual/physical and how you communicate will be so different. (Person with disability)

- Information for adult influencers talking to young people with disability.

How you talk to kids with disability would also be different – loads of kids have disability now – we need assistance with that. It's not just adults. (Person with disability)

10. Culturally and linguistically diverse influencers (CALD)

As has been noted in all previous stages of formative research, the topic of 'violence against women and their children' is unlikely to be fully addressed among CALD communities via a solus primary prevention communications targeting influencers. Rather, program and policy intervention strategies for influencers will also be required in order to inspire individual and community change.

The reasons for this remain unchanged since 2015, and relate to elevated cultural sensitivities of the issue, the often greater extremity of behaviours that are considered acceptable in some cultures, a heightened sense of shame and desire for concealment of the issue, and also the higher prevalence of violence against women.

This aside, the insights described throughout this report were consistent among those of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, with the following exceptions described below.

The recommended strategic direction for Phase 5 is considered appropriate for progression among CALD audiences.

10.1 There is support for the National Campaign and its strategic direction

At an overall level, the topic of disrespect and gendered disrespect remains a key cause of domestic and family violence among this cohort. On this basis, there is ongoing support among CALD audiences for the National Campaign and its recommended strategic direction.

As stated previously, while there is much about the experience of disrespect and violence against women that is the same, regardless of cultural background, there are some differences.

10.2 A desire for educational resources for leaders

The first relates to **practices like divorce, which can be more frowned upon** and impede the ability for 'legal escape' for victim survivors. There is a perceived greater shame attached to divorce and the by-products of it (family court, etc.) for some CALD communities. This resulted in suggestions for specifically targeted education for cultural leaders, in addition to the broader National Campaign.

For some cultures, divorce is still taboo. It might not be acknowledged in the research and campaign but from an education point of view this needs to be addressed. It is also used in coercive control methods. One of the ways this could be resolved is through leadership through religious leaders. If you go to the leadership and can get this education and

messaging across it will be more successful for these people needing to leave relationships than a national campaign. (CALD, victim survivor)

10.3 Recognition of non-physical forms of violence

In some CALD communities, issues around **non-physical forms of violence** are considered to be handled differently. For some, non-physical forms of violence are more strongly attributed to traditional gender roles and are thereby not associated with disrespect. For example, there are **cultural nuances around financial control** for some CALD communities where traditional gender roles are stronger. Noting this, this is also true for any culture or family that hold traditional values where the men in relationships have control of financial decision-making. This can ultimately impact the ability of victim survivors of domestic abuse to leave abusive relationships.

There are cultural issues around power and financial power – people don't want to rock the boat because they can't afford to... from a cultural perspective you are seen as rebellious and speaking back, not as a victim. Also, culturally going through family court is not something people would do because they don't want to accept that their kids have issues. (CALD participant)

10.4 The importance of close influencers and privacy

There is also a **stronger desire for involvement of close-influencers, and privacy**. While the role of educators (schools) was considered important, it was also noted that discussions relating to disrespect were often felt to be ones that were more appropriate to be conducted in private, and specifically between adults and children and/or close setting or community-based influencers. While the desire for private, or intimate, conversations on the topic was also expressed by non-CALD audiences, it was amplified in the context of cultural sensitivities and potential differences by gender.

Kids trust their parents ...it needs to **come from people that kids look up to**. (CALD, mother)

You **can't just rely on schools** ...it stems from what comes in their households ...how mums and dads treat each other ...**how they role model** it for them. (CALD, mother)

10.5 Awareness of contextual influences among adult influencers

For some CALD influencers (specifically those with lower English proficiency), their **exposure to contextual influences around gendered disrespect is limited**. Among these cohorts, there may be even more limited exposure to the new English based rhetoric on social media. However, it is noted that these new contextual influences have the ability to reach young people regardless of their cultural background.

10.6 Potential consideration for resources

Overall, there continues to be **a strong desire for change** among CALD influencers. Consistent with previous phases, there was a desire for stimulation and support for community-driven solutions that are sensitive, inclusive of males and females, and positively framed conversations to engage and drive positive outcomes for families.

Therefore, consideration should be given to the development of specific information and resources that are tailored to people of culturally diverse backgrounds on the campaign website. Such materials could include:

- Information and supports for specific cultural groups those experiencing violence or abuse (or, direction to specific culturally appropriate support agencies) to ensure tailored support can be accessed.
- Information on how to understand the new context and have proactive conversations with young people. It is noted that multiple formats should be considered, including those which are shorter in form or, in 'bite-size' resources which can be consumed progressively rather than in one sitting.
- Grass-roots community-led activations, to ensure a groundswell of community support.
- Information for broader setting-based influencers about how to talk to young people who are of a CALD background, to assist in their understanding of specific cultural nuances in relation to topics such as divorce, financial control etc. (as described above).

11. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander audiences

As has been noted in all previous phases of this research, the issue of 'violence against women and their children' is unlikely to be fully addressed among Indigenous communities via a solus focus on primary prevention communications targeting influencers. Rather, program and policy intervention strategies for influencers will also be required in order to inspire individual and community change.

The reasons for this remain unchanged since the initial 2015 report, and relate to elevated cultural sensitivities of the issue, the often greater extremity of behaviours that are considered acceptable, a heightened sense of shame and desire for concealment of the issue, and also the higher prevalence of violence against women.

The recommended strategic direction for Phase 5 is considered appropriate for progression among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander audiences.

11.1 There is support for the National Campaign and its strategic direction

At an overall level, the topic of disrespect and gendered disrespect remains a key cause of domestic and family violence among this cohort. On this basis, there is ongoing support among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander audiences for the National Campaign and its recommended strategic direction.

*If we talk more about it people can move forward together.
(Male, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander)*

As stated previously, while there is much about the experience of disrespect and violence against women that is the same, regardless of cultural background, there are some differences.

11.2 The new contextual influences are present

This research highlighted that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, like other communities in Australia, are being impacted by the contextual shift in gendered disrespect.

For some Indigenous females, this impact is felt the same way as the wider community with conversations around gender being weaponised against them, heuristics changing and developing, the experience of the generational divide and, their experiences of gendered disrespect.

I happened to be standing outside a café the other day and three young males, tradies... their conversation was joking about having a dv complaint yet ...like it's just a rite of passage, like how many girlfriends can you have before you get a DV [accusation]. They thought nothing of it, it was like

you haven't had any fun or anything yet if you haven't had a DV. (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, female, 18-24)

For some Indigenous males, as with the wider community, the impact on young people across communities is evident as they describe first-hand experience of gendered 'banter' increasing in their communities. For their young people (even in more regional and remote areas where access to internet is lower), peer group influence is described as a significant driver of the increase in gendered disrespect.

Everyone has firsthand experience with banter getting worse. (Male, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander)

11.3 A focus on cultural identity

There remains a strong desire for a "community problem" to have a "family and community solution", rather than for a solution to be reliant on individuals as influencers. This is often extended to a desire for culturally specific educational elements that centre on 'being on country' and, are grounded in 'teaching respect'. Such programs are considered to be designed and delivered by communities, for communities and are therefore not necessarily considered a part of this National Campaign.

11.4 A focus on community pride

Linked to the importance of community and respect, there is a consistent desire for communication and programs relating to violence against women that instil a sense of community pride and empowerment to respond differently, and positively influence the issue. This aligns strongly with the new desire for proactive and preventative conversations, to mitigate problem behaviours before they occur.

11.5 The importance of female voices

Consistent with previous phases of research, female influencers (sisters, mothers, aunts, grandmothers) are considered important and persuasive within Indigenous communities. As influencers, females often describe their role as one that extends to both protection and education of young males and females as a trusted confidant.

11.6 Lower relevance of digital video content

It is noted that video content continues to hold potentially lower relevance among older adult Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander peoples, particularly in regional and remote locations.

11.7 Potential consideration for resources

Overall, there continues to be **a strong desire for change** among Indigenous influencers. There is an ongoing desire for stimulation and support for community-driven solutions that are sensitive, inclusive of males and females, and positively framed conversations to engage and drive positive outcomes for families.

Consideration should be given to the development of specific information and resources that are tailored to First Nations peoples on the campaign website. Such materials could include:

- Information and supports for specific cultural groups for those experiencing violence or abuse (or, direction to specific culturally appropriate support agencies) to ensure tailored support can be accessed.
- Information on how to understand the new context and have proactive conversations with young people. It is noted that multiple formats should be considered, including those which are shorter in form or, in 'bite-size' resources which can be consumed progressively rather than in one sitting.
- Resources that specifically feature female voices.
- Resources that specifically feature male voices.
- Grass-roots community-led activations, to ensure a groundswell of community support.