



# Call for grant applications

2021–2024 ANROWS Sexual Harassment Research Program

07/09/2021–11/10/2021

**ANROWS**

AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL RESEARCH  
ORGANISATION FOR WOMEN'S SAFETY  
*to Reduce Violence against Women & their Children*

# Introduction

[ANROWS](#) is a not-for-profit independent national research organisation established in 2013 under Australia's [National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022](#) (the National Plan). It was established to lead national efforts to enhance the research base in the areas of domestic, family and sexual violence, and to translate evidence to policy and practice to support the National Plan.

Accordingly, on behalf of the Commonwealth, state and territory governments of Australia, in 2020 ANROWS produced [Australia's National Research Agenda to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children \(ANRA\) 2020–2022](#). ANRA provides a framework for, and guidance on, priority areas of research and research topics for academics, researchers, research funding bodies and governments across Australia. Its aim is to encourage the production of evidence needed for national policy and systems-level practice design in preventing and responding to violence against women (VAW) and their children. Research priorities in ANRA were developed and prioritised in consultation with Commonwealth, state and territory government officials in response to the current policy context.

Sexual violence, which includes sexual harassment, is a priority topic identified in ANRA, and was highlighted by the [National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces](#) in its [Respect@Work: Sexual Harassment National Inquiry Report](#) (Respect@Work report). The 2021–2024 Sexual Harassment Research Program responds to the sexual harassment research gaps identified in both ANRA and the findings of the Respect@Work report.

The ANROWS research priorities and the schedule for commissioning research under this grants round are provided in the next section. Further details are provided in [Information for applicants](#).

# ANROWS Sexual Harassment Research Program 2021–2024 grants round

Funding is available for high-quality research projects that provide a robust evidence base for policy decisions in areas of national interest. Specifically, ANROWS is seeking grant applications for research projects that will inform policy and practice design decisions in regard to sexual harassment, with a focus on sexual harassment in the workplace.

## Research priorities

### Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is a form of sexual violence that can offend, humiliate and intimidate victims. It is characterised by perpetrators making unwelcome sexual advances and requests for sexual favours, and engaging in other non-consensual conduct of a sexual nature.<sup>1</sup> Sexual harassment can occur in public spaces, in the workplace, online and at home, and the statistics paint a concerning picture.

The Australian Human Rights Commission's *Everyone's business: Fourth national survey on sexual harassment in Australian Workplaces* (2018 National Survey) indicated that 33 per cent of people who had been in the workforce in the previous five years had experienced workplace sexual harassment. Women (39%) were more likely than men (26%) to have experienced workplace sexual harassment in this period. In addition to gender, other factors may increase the likelihood that a person may experience workplace sexual harassment. Workers with a higher likelihood include young workers (aged under 30 years), LGBTQ+ and intersex workers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers, workers with disability,<sup>2</sup> workers from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, migrant workers or workers holding temporary visas, and people in working arrangements described as "precarious" or "insecure".<sup>3</sup>

In Australia, the findings from the Australian Bureau of Statistics' 2016 *Personal Safety Survey* provide another source of data to help understand the prevalence of sexual harassment more broadly. The survey showed:

- Two in five people (39% or 7.2 million) aged 18 years and over have experienced sexual harassment during their lifetime.
- One in two women (53% or 5 million) and one in four men (25% or 2.2 million) have experienced sexual harassment during their lifetime.
- Between 2012 and 2016 the proportion of women who experienced sexual harassment in the last 12 months increased from 15 per cent to 17 per cent, and the proportion of men who experienced sexual harassment increased from 6.6 per cent to 9.3 per cent.<sup>4</sup>

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1 Australian Government. Department of Social Services. (2019). *Fourth Action Plan: National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2010-2022: Turning the corner*. DSS.

2 Australian Human Rights Commission. (2018). *Everyone's business: Fourth national survey on sexual harassment in Australian workplaces*. AHRC.

3 Australian Human Rights Commission. (2020). *Respect@Work: National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces*. AHRC.

4 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2017). *Personal safety survey 2016*. ABS.

This grants round sits within the context of existing and emerging national policy initiatives related to sexual harassment. In 2018 and 2019, the Australian Human Rights Commission (the Commission) led the [National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces](#) (the Inquiry). The Inquiry resulted in 55 targeted recommendations presented in the Commission's Respect@Work report, tabled in the Australian Parliament on 5 March 2020. On 8 April 2021, the Australian Government released [A Roadmap for Respect: Preventing and Addressing Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces](#) (Roadmap for Respect) which responded to all 55 recommendations and provided a path forward for Australia to prevent and address sexual harassment and support meaningful cultural change in Australian workplaces.

In Australia, a coordinated national policy approach to addressing violence against women is currently provided by the National Plan, endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG). The National Plan is supported by a series of four three-year action plans. The [Fourth Action Plan of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022](#) was endorsed in August 2019 and specifically includes the following actions which address sexual harassment:

- prevent sexual violence and sexual harassment before it happens through national and targeted initiatives that promote informed consent, bodily autonomy and respectful relationships
- deliver client-centred, trauma-informed, specialised and consistent support to victims and survivors of sexual violence
- strengthen the capacity of all sectors to address sexual harassment to ensure women are safe at work, while studying, in public and online.

## Research gaps

To develop tailored primary prevention and early intervention strategies, it is critical to build on existing evidence to better understand the context of sexual harassment, as well as particular risk factors that create an environment in which sexual harassment is more likely to occur. To ensure responses to sexual harassment meet the needs of victims and survivors, it is critical to gain a better understanding of the experience and impact of sexual harassment.<sup>5</sup> As such, ANROWS is inviting applications for projects that advance the evidence base in relation to:

- the risk and protective factors associated with sexual harassment in different contexts and settings, and for different populations
- the nature of perpetration of sexual harassment, including the behaviours, characteristics and trends that can be observed in perpetrators of sexual harassment
- the nature of victimisation of sexual harassment, particularly for groups vulnerable to sexual harassment, such as school-aged workers
- the appropriateness of responses available to women who experience sexual harassment in workplace settings, and women's experiences accessing these

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<sup>5</sup> Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety. (2020). *National Research Agenda to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children: ANRA 2020–2022*. ANROWS.

- the impacts (especially long-term) of workplace sexual harassment on individuals, businesses and society, including economic costs
- the effectiveness of strategies to prevent and respond to sexual harassment in the workplace as well as other settings, including evaluations of current reforms, regulations, and industry and workplace initiatives.

### **Examples of priority research questions include:**

- What are the specific drivers of sexual harassment, and how are these similar to and different from drivers of other forms of violence against women?
- What are the risk factors and protective factors that create an environment in which sexual harassment is more or less likely to occur in particular workplace settings, industries and sectors, including work arrangements described as “precarious” or “insecure”?
- What are the behaviours, characteristics and trends that can be observed in perpetrators of sexual harassment?
- What are the factors associated with a higher risk of victimisation of sexual harassment for priority population groups, including young workers, LGBTQ+ and intersex workers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers, workers with disability, workers from CALD backgrounds, migrant workers or workers on temporary visas? What works to prevent victimisation of these groups?
- What is the nature of workplace sexual harassment experienced by women from priority population groups, and what works in preventing and responding to sexual harassment experienced by these populations?
- What are the impacts (particularly long-term) of workplace sexual harassment on individuals, businesses and society more broadly, including the economic costs?
- What are the responses, systems and processes available for victims and perpetrators of sexual harassment in the workplace, and how are these experienced and utilised? What are the barriers to reporting and how can they be overcome?
- What is the effectiveness of interventions or strategies that aim to prevent or respond to sexual harassment, including perpetrator-focused interventions, current reforms, industry initiatives, legislative changes or workplace strategies (e.g. strategies to engage men and boys or change workplace culture)?
- How can technology providers effectively prevent, detect and respond to technology-facilitated sexual harassment?

### **Priority populations**

Applicants are encouraged to include a focus on one or more priority populations, *where appropriate to the study aim*:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- people with disability
- LGBTQ+ and intersex communities

- culturally and linguistically diverse communities
- young people
- migrant workers or workers on temporary visas
- other workers who experience a higher risk of sexual harassment.

Where appropriate to the aim, funded studies should adopt an intersectional approach and be grounded in the context, needs and voices of marginalised populations who experience intersecting forms of inequality and disadvantage. When working with priority population groups, applicants are encouraged to engage with relevant peak alliances or bodies representing those groups.

### Methodological considerations

Successful projects will use methodologies that are *most likely to result in an evidence base sufficiently robust to guide policy and practice design decisions*. The timeline for commissioning and completion of projects (see below) and the continuing uncertainty related to the COVID-19 pandemic will also be important considerations in research design. While a wide range of study approaches and methods will be considered, the following methods will be considered favourably:

- mixed-method studies (e.g. to allow for data triangulation or adopt a sequential design)
- large-scale quantitative studies to provide national data, including breakdown by jurisdictions (where possible)
- analyses of existing data including administrative datasets or secondary analyses of previously collected data
- evaluations of evidence-based responses or prevention efforts
- studies that incorporate a co-design approach
- studies that incorporate feminist intersectional approaches (intersectionality) as the framework.

### Expected outcomes and impact

Funded research projects will deliver high-quality, innovative, relevant and translatable evidence that drives policy and practice and is of national interest.

Applicants are expected to demonstrate the relevance of proposed research for policy owners, in particular in relation to the evidence gaps and recommendations set out in [Respect@Work: Sexual Harassment National Inquiry Report](#), the findings of [Everyone's Business: Fourth National Survey on Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces](#) and the Australian Government's response to the Inquiry, [A Roadmap for Respect: Preventing and Addressing Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces](#).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Please note: in line with the evidence gaps, research into sexual harassment in non-workplace settings is not excluded, provided policy relevance can be demonstrated.

## Timeline for commissioning and completion of projects

The schedule for commissioning research for this period is as follows.

<b>2021</b>	
<b>7 Sep</b>	Applications open
<b>11 Oct</b>	Applications close
<b>October</b>	ANROWS assessment of application eligibility
<b>November</b>	Peer assessments and ranking of eligible applications
<b>December</b>	Confidential contract negotiations commence
<b>2022</b>	
<b>January</b>	Unsuccessful applicants notified
<b>January</b>	2021-2024 ANROWS Sexual Harassment Research Program announced

All funded researchers will be required to:

- demonstrate engagement with policy owners and practice designers and an appetite for the proposed research project
- engage with relevant policy owners and practice design decision-makers throughout the life of the project
- deliver draft report(s) for peer review no later than December 2023, with final report(s) incorporating feedback from peer review due no later than **February 2024**. While projects with a completion date of February 2024 may be accepted, ANROWS has a preference for projects that have earlier completion dates and/or allow for the publication of multiple smaller reports that build on each other and are released throughout the duration of the project.

This timeline allows for the production of report(s) and for an embargoed copy to be provided to Commonwealth, state and territory governments at least three weeks in advance of publication, as required under the ANROWS Research Management System.

Further details are provided in [Information for applicants](#).

### **ANROWS acknowledgement**

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### **Acknowledgement of Country**

ANROWS acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land across Australia on which we work and live. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past, present, and future, and we value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures, and knowledge. We are committed to standing and working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, honouring the truths set out in the [Warawarni-gu Guma Statement](#).

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### **Published by**

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