



Rante-rante ampe Marle and Urreye: *Implications for policy and practice*

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ANROWS

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ANROWS research contributes to the six *National Outcomes of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022*. This research addresses National Plan Outcome 3 – Indigenous communities are strengthened and National Plan Outcome 2 – Relationships are respectful.

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.

Acknowledgement of lived experiences of violence

ANROWS acknowledges the lives and experiences of the women and children affected by domestic, family and sexual violence who are represented in this report. We recognise the individual stories of courage, hope and resilience that form the basis of ANROWS research.

Caution: Some people may find parts of this content confronting or distressing. Recommended support services include Sexual Assault Referral Centres in:

Alice Springs: 08 8955 4500 | Darwin: 08 8922 6472 | Katherine: 08 8973 8524 | Tennant Creek: 08 8962 4361

Other local services can be found here: <https://www.ntcoss.org.au/directory>

National helplines are also available: 1800RESPECT (1800 737 732) and Lifeline (13 11 14).

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ANROWS Research to policy and practice papers are concise papers that summarise key findings of research on violence against women and their children, including research produced under ANROWS's research program, and provide advice on the implications for policy and practice.

This is an edited summary of key findings from the ANROWS research project "*Rante-rante ampe Marle and Urreye: 'Safe, Respected and Free from Violence': An evaluation of primary prevention projects*". Please consult the ANROWS website for more information on this project and the full project report: Brown, C., Homan, S., Simpson, C., & Leung, L. (2021). *Rante-rante ampe Marle and Urreye: "Safe, Respected and Free from Violence" projects evaluation* (Research report, 05/2021). ANROWS.

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It is our hope that this research can provide inspiration and further drive the amazing work already underway. It is our hope that we can be a contributor in creating a strong future for women, children and men in the Northern Territory and across Australia.

Women in the Northern Territory experience high rates of violence

Violence against women occurs across all communities and societies globally. The Northern Territory has extremely high rates of violence against women (VAW), of which the most common forms are domestic, family and sexual violence (DFSV; Northern Territory Government, 2018). Aboriginal women are overrepresented as victims of DFSV (Northern Territory Government, 2018). To date, very little research has been conducted on prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. Moreover, research designed specifically for remote contexts and program evaluations is needed to better inform our understanding of what works to prevent VAW (Cripps et al., 2019; Guthrie et al., 2020).

Community-led and culturally informed primary prevention projects

The Girls Can Boys Can (GCBC) project was developed by the Tangentyere Family Violence Prevention Program (TFVPP) in partnership with the Larapinta Child and Family Centre (LCFC). The GCBC project used a community development approach to create gender-equitable early childhood messaging, increase positive representation of Aboriginal children and produce resources for distribution across the Mparntwe/Alice Springs community.

The Old Ways are Strong (OWS) project was developed in partnership between Tangentyere Council and italk Studios. The OWS project aimed to challenge colonial narratives around Aboriginal relationships and gender roles, specifically the idea that violence against Aboriginal women is “just their culture”.

Both primary prevention projects are governed by the Tangentyere Women’s Family Safety Group (TWSFG), who are a group of senior Aboriginal women campaigning against family violence.

THE ANROWS RESEARCH PROJECT

Rante-rante ampe Marle and Urreye: “Safe, Respected and Free from Violence” projects evaluation by Chay Brown, Sarah Homan, Carmel Simpson and Loksee Leung

With funding from Australia’s National Research Organisation for Women’s Safety (ANROWS), the Equality Institute (EQI) undertook an evaluation of the two primary prevention projects in partnership with Tangentyere Council, LCFC and italk Studios. Through the evaluation, project staff were trained as researchers: they carried out the surveys, conducted the analysis and contributed to the report writing. This was possible due to the long-term partnerships between the authors and these organisations.

The Safe, Respected and Free from Violence (SRFV) evaluation is the first formal evaluation of primary prevention projects in the Northern Territory and has been conducted with a focus on primary prevention with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The report was named by the TWFSG. “Rante rante ampe Marle and Urreye” is Arrernte, which roughly translates to “girls and boys are equal”.

The evaluation was underpinned by Indigenist¹ research methodology and made use of a mixed-method approach to assess participants’ attitudes and beliefs about gender, violence and Aboriginal cultures, and whether participants’ engagement with the project impacted their knowledge, attitudes and beliefs. Respondents included project participants (i.e. participants of GCBC and OWS), project staff, social media users and animation audience members. The evaluation project sought to assess the different types of project impacts on different types of participants/respondents. The workforce (project staff) was a key target group in the evaluation project, as one of the aims of the evaluation was to assess the extent to which the projects were able to build primary prevention workforce capacity.

The evaluation aimed to answer the central evaluation questions:

1. To what extent do participants report that the partnership projects changed their attitudes about gender, violence and Aboriginal cultures?
2. What are the impacts of the partnership projects on the participants/target groups? (This could include any impacts on participants’ knowledge, capacity, confidence, attitudes etc.)

The evaluation further aimed to answer the secondary evaluation questions:

3. To what extent have the resources and media developed by the partnership projects communicated and disseminated key anti-violence, anti-racist and gender-equitable messages to their audiences?
4. To what extent has local primary prevention workforce capacity been developed through the project partnership?

The research team employed a range of methods that were selected by the project partnership, and developed in an iterative process drawing upon the knowledge and

¹ Indigenist research methodology is not a set of defined methods. Rather, it argues that research methods should be selected in consultation with Indigenous people and conducted in culturally sensitive ways (Rigney, 2006; Smith, 1999). For more information about Indigenist research methodology, please refer to the full report at www.anrows.org.au

guidance of the project staff and community members, including Town Campers.² This flexible and adaptive approach ensured the evaluation was conducted in a way that was most appropriate and comfortable for Aboriginal people. The methods included a range of survey types conducted both in person and online, in a variety of accessible formats. Additionally, interviews were conducted before (baseline) and after (endline) with project partnership staff. These were done in person.

The evaluation project commenced in October 2020 and concluded in June 2021.

See www.anrows.org.au for the full report.

² "Town Campers" refers to the residents of Town Camps in Alice Springs. Town Camps are small Aboriginal communities on the geographical and social fringes of Alice Springs. Town Camps are places of strong history, culture and community, and Town Campers have a strong, proud and unique identity.

Key findings

A high proportion of respondents in the baseline and endline surveys believed violence was sometimes justifiable

Despite respondents reporting highly gender-equitable attitudes towards traditional gender roles, both the baseline (44%) and endline (52%) surveys revealed that a significant proportion of respondents found violence to be justifiable in one situation or another.

Specific findings included:

- Respondents were unlikely to justify violence based on non-conformity to traditional gender roles.
- Respondents were more likely to justify violence in cases or situations associated with “jealousing”.³

Explicit messaging worked and could help prevent VAW

Among the cohort who completed both baseline and endline surveys, the impact of explicit and direct gender-equity messaging was reflected in 25 individual responses demonstrating a positive shift towards more gender-equitable attitudes. The evaluation project demonstrated that respondents understood that the resources used in the projects were challenging gender stereotypes and valued them for their positive representations of Indigenous children and families. The majority of respondents thought the material was important and could help prevent VAW.

Workforce capacity was built

Before and after interviews showed that workforce capacity had been developed through participation in the two projects, including increased knowledge about primary prevention and understanding of the drivers and causes of VAW. Participants also reported increased research and social media communication skills.

Workforce support needs remain high

The evaluation found that the workforce was under-resourced and feel unsupported in their primary prevention roles. Key findings include the following:

- Key informants identified the need for greater funding and training for primary prevention and the entire DFSV sector and related agencies in the Northern Territory.
- Key informants were unable to identify any dedicated primary prevention

³ In some Central Australian contexts, jealousing is a verb used to describe controlling behaviours that are often performed publicly to sanction real or imagined sexually inappropriate behaviour (Brown et al., 2021).

workforce in the Northern Territory and identified the need for dedicated primary prevention roles to be created and funded in the Northern Territory.

- Key informants who work in primary prevention are doing this work in addition to their other roles; because of the prevalence of VAW in the Northern Territory, all job types were affected by DFSV.
- Cultural awareness and trauma were both identified as training needs.

Implications for practitioners and policymakers

Effective primary prevention requires a community development approach informed by communities directly involved

The GCBC and OWS projects held cultural authority, legitimacy and appropriateness because they had been developed with the community. All aspects of the projects were constructed and then repeatedly vetted with the community before being released. This approach enabled the creation of ownership and investment from community members who fully embraced the initiatives.

Continue to educate about, raise awareness and increase understanding of VAW

There is a strong need for education about the drivers of VAW, and promoting gender equality as a means to prevent VAW, while acknowledging that awareness-raising on its own is not enough to end VAW. Training should include how to identify, respond to and support DFSV victims and survivors and should be delivered to workers in the DFSV sector and the broader community services sector, including police, health and education. Additionally, training on trauma-informed responses should also be developed and delivered to workers in the DFSV sector as well as other actors, departments and agencies, such as schools, hospitals and police.

Increase the use of explicit and accessible messaging

Use explicit and accessible messaging to target and challenge entrenched attitudes and beliefs about violence, jealousy and the misconception that Aboriginal cultures are inherently gender inequitable and/or condone VAW. Resources and materials should be in accessible language and disseminated using a range of platforms including social media, print media and digital media.

Recommendations for policymakers

Projects like Girls Can Boys Can and Old Ways are Strong, that are operating with limited funding and relatively short timeframes, cannot in isolation prevent VAW in the community. These projects must be supported by other interventions at different levels within an integrated, system-wide response. To enhance and support primary prevention programs and to prevent VAW, the following recommendations are made.

Workforce support and training

1. Dedicated primary prevention positions should receive sustained funding and support, to align with the long-term goal of growing the primary prevention workforce in the Northern Territory.
2. Primary prevention programs need to be supported by long-term and adequate funding.
3. Comprehensive ongoing training programs on the drivers of VAW; how to identify, respond to and support DFSV victims and survivors; and trauma-informed responses should be developed and delivered to workers in the DFSV sector as well as other actors, departments and agencies impacted by DFSV, such as schools, hospitals and police.
4. Multiple studies and levels of government have called for programs to be evaluated to better inform our understanding of what works to prevent VAW – therefore, evaluations must be supported with research funding and training and a recognition that project staff on the ground do not always have the time, experience and resources to conduct evaluation research. Evaluations should be appropriately funded on top of the project costs.

Targeted and tailored prevention initiatives

5. Prevention initiatives should have accessibility requirements that consider the translations of language and complex concepts, meeting the needs of people with disability and people in remote areas.
6. Programs and responses to prevent and address VAW should both focus on and ensure accountability for men who use violence, and support women who have experienced violence.
7. Primary prevention initiatives should be locally designed and context-specific, and developed in partnership with the communities they are to be implemented in.
8. Primary prevention initiatives for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities should be developed using a community development approach, and must be community-driven and governed by members from those communities.

Awareness-raising and transforming attitudes, behaviours and norms

9. Primary prevention initiatives should educate and raise awareness in the general public about the causes and drivers of VAW in accessible formats and with explicit messaging.
10. There should be an acknowledgement that awareness-raising efforts (such as one-off anti-violence campaigns) alone are not enough to shift harmful attitudes, behaviours and norms. Instead, in order to prevent VAW, there is the continued need to fund and support long-term, evidence-based prevention initiatives that are appropriate for the Northern Territory and remote community contexts.

Engagement and collaboration

11. Primary prevention initiatives should be developed in partnership with government departments in order to embed and “mainstream” these initiatives and campaigns, including health, education, business and commerce, as well as the criminal justice system.
12. All national-, state- and territory-level initiatives to address and prevent VAW must involve and collaborate with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.
13. Primary prevention initiatives should engage with men and boys and involve them in the development of messaging, content and materials to prevent VAW.

Recommendations for practitioners and service providers

The following recommendations emerged from the evaluation and are targeted at the projects that were studied. They also have potential broader application for similar, community-led primary prevention programs.

1. Use more explicit and accessible messaging to target and challenge highly entrenched attitudes and beliefs, such as the justification of violence, jealousy, and the misconception that traditional Aboriginal cultures are inherently gender inequitable and/or condone VAW.
2. Increase the accessibility of resources and materials and ensure they are disseminated using a range of platforms (social media, print media, digital media).
3. Educate, raise awareness and increase understanding of VAW in the community, especially regarding the drivers of VAW and the promotion of gender equality as a means to prevent VAW.

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