

ANROWS Questions on Notice

Senate Hearing on Missing and murdered First Nations women and children

Overall comments

ANROWS appreciated the opportunity to attend and provide evidence at the Brisbane Hearing on 20 February 2024 for the inquiry into missing and murdered First Nations women and children. A number of questions were taken “on notice” during the Hearing in order to provide a comprehensive response. These responses are included below.

ANROWS is also developing a literature review to provide insight into the extent and range of Indigenous-led literature on missing, murdered and incarcerated Indigenous women in Australia. The literature review considers determinants for and responses to the experiences of these women. We would be pleased to provide this to the Committee upon publication.

ANROWS commends this Inquiry on the respectful and collaborative conduct we experienced during the Hearing we participated in. Bipartisan collaboration and commitment will be essential to ensuring meaningful government responses to the critical issue of missing and murdered First Nations women and children.

ANROWS notes that the Inquiry provided opportunities for victims and survivors to give evidence *in camera* and that this provides some measure of trauma-responsive process for victims and survivors. ANROWS recommends that future Committee processes give further regard to trauma-informed conduct. For example, ensuring that physical space enables victims and survivors to enter, attend and exit hearings without passing people they are giving evidence about.

We provide the following response to your questions on notice.

Question 1: Men’s Behaviour Change Programs

“I’m interested in your evaluation of the men’s behaviour change programs. Could you perhaps, on notice—if you’ve got something to hand that you’ve already done—provide that to us, because I think that’s a bit of an underserved area that could provide some real benefit.”

In May 2023, ANROWS was commissioned by the Northern Territory Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities (TFHC) to undertake a process evaluation of the two government-funded Men’s Behaviour Change Programs (MBCPs) in the NT. These are the *Perpetrator Intervention Service*, operated by CatholicCare NT in Darwin and Wadeye, and the *Marra’ka Mbarintja Men’s Family Violence Prevention Program*, operated by Tangentyere Council Aboriginal Corporation in Alice Springs. ANROWS, are working alongside MBCP practice expert Rodney Vlasis, First Nations consultants Kowa Collaboration and the RMIT Centre for Innovative Justice (CIJ) (‘the evaluation team’) to design and conduct the evaluation. The process evaluation seeks to answer five high-level key evaluation questions (KEQs) which examine: (1) program implementation; (2) integration with service system and community-led responses;

(3) alignment with relevant elements of quality practice; (4) risk and unintended consequences; and (5) monitoring and evaluation processes.

The evaluation is expected to be completed by June 2024. While the sharing of the final reports is at the discretion of NT TFHC, a Summary Report is expected to be made publicly available.

Question 2: QPS Training

“We heard from the Queensland Police Service this morning, and they said that ANROWS had reviewed their domestic and family violence training. So I'm interested to know—if you're able to disclose to us—how good or bad was it? Did you have to make lots of suggestions? Did they take on board your feedback? What sort of lived experience was involved in creating that training? And do you have any concerns about their train-the-trainer model? I had some concerns about that, because subtleties can get lost. And I'm worried, if those folk who are ontraining people don't have the expertise that you have or that other women's safety organisations might have, that there will be some lost-in-translation issues.”

ANROWS has been involved in the review and delivery of training for the Queensland Police Service (QPS) in different capacities.

Rapid review of 3-day training package (2022)

At the request of QPS, ANROWS performed a rapid review of the three-day training package entitled “DFV The Holistic Approach” in July 2022. Given the time constraints of a fast turnaround, ANROWS limited feedback to considering whether the content addressed DFV in an appropriate and credible manner, was consistent with best practice and informed by relevant research. We also assessed the education and training approach against well-established, good-practice criteria for adult learning and training of trainers.

ANROWS provided feedback identifying opportunities for improvement. Feedback on two critical areas was not actioned: the need to unpack the gendered nature of violence and improving identification of the person most in need of protection (PMINOP).

Delivery of training modules (2022 onwards)

QPS has since engaged ANROWS to design and facilitate training on the gendered nature of violence and identifying the PMINOP. This includes two training modules that run for 2 hours each as part of the QPS's five-day domestic and family violence & vulnerable persons (DFV&VP) Specialist Course Training Package. These are delivered by an ANROWS Senior Project Officer. This training began in Q4 2022 and is contracted to continue to mid-2025.

ANROWS developed a pre- and post-delivery survey to evaluate the effectiveness of the two ANROWS-delivered modules in generating changes to knowledge and attitudes among participants. This survey and data are conducted and held by QPS and are not currently shared with ANROWS.

Evaluation

ANROWS has advocated for police education and training to be monitored and evaluated to assess whether it is effective. It is in the public interest that such evaluation be made publicly available.

Recommendation 96 of the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce *Hear her voice* report 2, volume 1, called for the QPS to develop and implement competency based and ongoing training

to improve responses to women and girls, including First Nations women and girls. The recommendation emphasised that the impacts and outcomes achieved through this training should be measured, monitored, and independently evaluated, and that the impacts and outcomes achieved should be publicly reported. At a minimum, this should be done through the QPS annual report. ANROWS notes that this recommendation is still relevant.

Question 3: Codes of practice

Are you aware of any research, practice or findings looking at specific codes of practice or operating procedures around the differences when we look at cases of missing and murdered women and children and responding to violence? Currently, most police jurisdictions operate on one code of practice, and they don't see any intersectional approach in that. Is that happening in Queensland? Is that something that you're pushing forward with that no-one's listening to? Or, if you hear of any other work in that area, are you able to shed any light on that?

ANROWS is not in a position to answer this specific question as it is beyond our body of research. However, we fundamentally support intersectional approaches that recognise systemic disadvantage and discrimination and are tailored to meet the needs of different individuals and communities.