



Australian Government

Australia – Response to Letter from the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its Causes and Consequences

Australia is committed to developing the national evidence base to gain a better understanding of the circumstances surrounding violence against women and their children. Under the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022*,¹ all Australian governments are committed to the development of a National Data Collection and Reporting Framework, led by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

Australia provides the following data in response to the letter from the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its Causes and Consequences, dated 30 October 2018, in six requested areas. The data comes from the following datasets:

- Australian Bureau of Statistics (Attachment A):
 - 4519.0 - Recorded Crime – Offenders, 2016-17 (<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4519.0>)
 - 4510.0 – Recorded Crime – Victims, 2017 (<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4510.0>)
 - 4510.0 – Recorded Crime – Victims, 2016 (<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4510.0Main+Features12016?OpenDocument>)
- Australian Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Network, 2018 Data Report (Attachment B)

1. Administrative data on gender-related killings of women for 2016-2018

In Australia, *Homicides*² are not identified as ‘gender-related’ in administrative data.

Statistics:

- In 2016, there were 80 female *Murder* victims in Australia.³
- In 2017, there were 61 female *Murder* victims in Australia.⁴
- The total number of *Homicide* victims across Australia decreased from 453 victims in 2016 to 414 victims in 2017.⁵
- The ABS does not currently have 2018 *Homicide* data.

Please note: The data referenced in these publications does not identify unique persons or organisations. Therefore, the same victim may be counted more than once where they have been a victim of multiple offence types, or where victimisation has been reported on more than one occasion during the reference period. The data are meaningful only when interpreted within an offence category.

Please see Attachment A for ABS tables that present more detailed data.

¹ *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022*, <https://www.dss.gov.au/women/programs-services/reducing-violence/the-national-plan-to-reduce-violence-against-women-and-their-children-2010-2022>

² The term *Homicide* includes *Murder*, *Attempted Murder* and *Manslaughter*, but excludes *Driving causing death* and *Conspiracy to murder*.

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *4510.0, Victims of Crime, Australia, 2016*.

⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *4510.0, Victims of Crime, Australia, 2017*.

⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *4510.0, Victims of Crime, Australia, 2016* and Australian Bureau of Statistics, *4510.0, Victims of Crime, Australia, 2017*.

2. The number of women killed by their partners (intimate partner killings) or by family members or other killings by unrelated persons but gender-related

The ABS collects data on Family and Domestic Violence (FDV).⁶ The data derives from two variables:

1. Relationship of the offender to the victim;⁷ and/or
2. An FDV flag⁸

Statistics:

- In 2017, 37% of *Murders* recorded nationally were FDV-related (75 victims).
- Female victims of FDV-related *Murder* accounted for 71% of all female victims of *Murder* recorded during 2017 (43 victims).⁹
- Female victims of FDV-related *Murder* accounted for 65% of all female victims of *Murder* recorded during 2016 (52 victims).¹⁰

Please see [Attachment A](#) for ABS tables that contain more detailed data.

In addition to the administrative data collected by the ABS, the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Network produced its inaugural *2018 Data Report* ([Attachment B](#)).

3. Number of killings of children, disaggregated by sex, in the context of gender-related violence against women

- In total, 30 children (aged 0 – 19) were victims of *FDV-related Homicide* in 2016.¹¹
- In total, 20 children were victims of *FDV-related Homicide* in 2017.¹²

Please note: The data collected on children (0-19) who are killed as a direct result of *FDV-related Homicide* is not disaggregated by sex.

Please see [Attachment A](#) for ABS tables that present more detailed data. Please also see the section titled IPV homicide and children in the *2018 Data Report* ([Attachment B](#), page 26)

4. Existence of, or progress in, the creation of a national femicide watch and/or observatory on violence against women

The Australian Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Network produced its inaugural *2018 Data Report* (referred to in the response to question 2). The Network has developed a National Minimum Dataset of domestic and family violence related deaths and the *2018 Data Report* presents the key findings from this specialised dataset.

The methodology of the *2018 Data Report* is outlined at pages 6-7.

Under the Third Action Plan (2016-2019) of the National Plan, Australia examined its system of domestic violence death review processes and associated data and reporting mechanisms.

⁶ FDV is defined as: "An offence involving at least two persons who were in a specified family or domestic relationship at the time of the offence; or where the offence was determined by a police officer to be family and/or domestic violence related as part of their investigation."

⁷ Ensuring it falls within a specified family or domestic relationship.

⁸ Police officers record the FDV flag when they have determined an offence or incident to be FDV-related as defined by the relevant state or territory legislation under which they operate. This differs across the states and territories (in areas such as legislation, policy, screening tools, risk assessment frameworks, professional judgment).

⁹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *4510.0, Victims of Crime, Australia, 2017*.

¹⁰ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *4510.0, Victims of Crime, Australia, 2016*.

¹¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *4510.0, Victims of Crime, Australia, 2016*.

¹² Australian Bureau of Statistics, *4510.0, Victims of Crime, Australia, 2017*.

5. Analysis of cases and actions undertaken in this respect

Please refer to the response to question 6.

6. Related investigations, prosecution and convictions of all cases of gender-related killing

The *2018 Data Report (Attachment B)* contains statistics about criminal court outcomes for male perpetrated IPV homicides. Figure 11 (on page 16) illustrates the Criminal court outcomes in male perpetrated IPV homicides.

Statistics:

- Of the 95 males who killed a female intimate partner where a criminal investigation was completed (in other words, when the offender did not suicide), the most common outcome was a murder conviction (58 of the 95 cases, 61.1%).
- Over one-quarter of offenders were convicted of manslaughter (28 of the 95 cases, 29.5%).
- Just over 5% of male IPV homicide offenders who killed a female were found not guilty by reason of mental illness (5 of the 95 cases, 5.3%).
- Four male offenders pleaded guilty to lesser charges (4.2%).

Please note: Although published in 2018, the data available relates to the period between 1 July 2010 and 30 June 2014 and is therefore outside of the requested 2016-18 period.

Case Study:

Australian National Minimum Dataset of domestic and family violence related deaths

The *Third National Action Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children (2016-2019)* identified the development of a national database of domestic and family violence deaths as a priority.

All Australian jurisdictions have been working towards this over the past nine years. The introduction of the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022*¹³ (National Plan) in 2011 saw all Australian governments commit to the development of a National Data Collection and Reporting Framework.

All Australian jurisdictions (with the exception of Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory) have now implemented a permanent domestic and family violence death review function into their governance frameworks. Following this, in 2011 **the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Network** (the Network) was established.

The Network is a unique collaboration between domestic and family violence death review mechanisms across Australia and enables each jurisdiction's death review entity (usually with only the capacity to report on domestic and family violence within their own jurisdiction) to collaborate and develop a **national minimum dataset of domestic and family violence related deaths**.

The Network comprises permanent representatives from each of the established Australian domestic and family violence death review teams:

- Victorian Systemic Review of Family Violence Deaths (Vic);
- Domestic Violence Death Review Team (NSW);
- Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Unit (Qld);
- Domestic Violence Unit (SA);
- Reviews Team (WA); and
- Family Violence Death Review Unit (NT).

(Representatives from Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory are standing members of the Network whilst trialling the implementation of death review mechanisms within their jurisdictions.)

A key role of the Network is to identify, collect, analyse and report data on domestic and family violence related deaths across Australia with a view to identify the limitations and potential areas for improvement in systemic responses to domestic and family violence in Australia.

The establishment of the Network aligns with Strategy 5.2 of the National Plan, which mandates that states and territories work together to *drive continuous improvement through sharing outcomes of reviews into deaths and homicides related to domestic violence*. It also responds to Action Area 19 of the Second Action Plan (2013-2016) of the National Plan that recommends that jurisdictions:

share information and good practice from domestic homicide and child death reviews, and other review mechanisms' to 'enhance review processes and drive improvements to Commonwealth, state and territory systems [so that they can] work together to identify and respond to women experiencing violence and, ultimately, prevent domestic violence homicides.

Statistics related to the 2018 Data Report by the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Network:

¹³ *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022*, <https://www.dss.gov.au/women/programs-services/reducing-violence/the-national-plan-to-reduce-violence-against-women-and-their-children-2010-2022>

- Between 1 July 2010 and 30 June 2014 there were a total of 152 intimate partner homicides in Australia that followed an identifiable history of domestic violence¹⁴ (*IPV Homicides*)
- The majority of *IPV Homicides* involved a male killing their current or former female intimate partner (121 female victims, 79.6%)
- The remaining *IPV Homicides* involved 28 cases where a female killed a male intimate (current or former) partner. Of these 28 cases, most of the female homicide offenders were primary victims of violence who killed a male abuser (17 of the 28 cases, 60.7%). There were three cases where a male killed a male intimate partner (3 victims of 152 IPV homicides, 2%)
- Of the 121 male IPV homicide offenders who killed a female partner, 13 killed a partner they had been in a relationship with for less than a year (10.7%)

For more detailed information and statistics, please refer to the *2018 Data Report* at [Attachment B](#). Note:

- **Figure 1 (p.9):** illustrates the number of *IPV Homicides* in Australia broken down by jurisdiction
- **Figure 2 (p.10):** illustrates *IPV Homicide* offenders by gender
- **Figure 5 (p.12):** details the length of relationship in male perpetrated *IPV Homicides*
- **Figure 6 (p.13):** details the relationship status at the time of the *IPV Homicide*
- **Figure 12 (p.17)** details the country of birth of the female *IPV Homicide* victims

Please note: Although published in 2018, the data available relates to the period between 1 July 2010 and 30 June 2014 and is therefore outside of the requested 2016-18 period.

¹⁴ All homicides were identified as being preceded by either police reported and/or anecdotal histories of domestic violence.