



# **Domestic Violence in South Australia: prevention versus crisis management policies, legislation and service delivery:**

What policies, legislation and services are needed to decrease the prevalence of DV in South Australia?

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## Acronyms

AVOs	Apprehended Violence Orders
DV	Domestic Violence
DVRO	Domestic Violence Restraining Order
SA	South Australia
SAAP	Supported Accommodation Assistance Program
VIP	Violence Intervention Program

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## Introduction

Domestic violence (DV) is a gendered form of abuse that may be emotional, mental, financial or physical. It is perpetuated by gender and power inequalities with the great majority of victims as female. The rates of DV in South Australia (SA) are high; in 2015 there were nearly 8,000 reported family and domestic violence assaults, with women and girls constituting 77% of victims (Attorney-General's Department 2016, 4). This research paper aims to: define key terms and concepts surrounding DV, indicate several causes and factors that contribute to its prevalence, review and analyse both preventative and crisis management strategies within policy, legislation and service delivery, and make recommendations to increase preventative services in SA. A purposeful literature review and the outcomes of the Shelter SA DV Prevention workshop inform this study.

One way to view the prevention of DV is stopping the reoccurrence of a physical assault and providing safety for the victim. This paper will refer to this type of prevention as 'secondary prevention'. This research project defines the primary prevention of DV as stopping the assault/incident from occurring in the first place. Preventing DV through legislation and associated punishment has its challenges, as there are difficulties in identifying perpetrators before physical violence occurs. The prevention of the physical assault of women has to start on a community level to change attitudes towards gender and violence. Secondary prevention will be discussed with crisis management approaches, as both deal with circumstances after an assault has taken place; the terms may sometimes be used interchangeably.

The findings of this study confirm that there is a lack of primary prevention in SA. Primary prevention is complex as it addresses DV before it occurs and focuses on educating and changing community attitudes towards violence and gender. There are several DV programs for school-aged students, but there is no State-wide implementation of the education programs. The National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children lacks adequate methods to measure the success of its DV prevention efforts, which do not accurately reflect what is occurring in the community. There is a lack of education programs for male DV perpetrators with Apprehended Violence Orders (AVOs) in SA; this means that many perpetrators are not being educated or supported to change their attitudes towards women and violence. Appropriate service delivery in homelessness shelters is another issue as more than one third of DV victims fleeing their abusive partner seek help from non-specialist DV services for homelessness (Attorney-General's Department 2016, 64). With a large number of homeless DV victims receiving housing without specialist help and services, they may struggle to achieve independence from their abusive partner. There is also a critical lack of social housing available across the State to provide a safe and affordable home for women fleeing DV.

## Aims

This research paper aims to address five issues related to DV in South Australia:

1. Define key terms and concepts including DV and gender construction with reference to gender theory;
2. Identify the causes of DV and the factors that may affect its prevalence;
3. Review and analyse the policy and legislative context of DV;
4. Review and analyse primary prevention and crisis management services in SA, including National and State policy and legislation.

## Methods

- A purposeful literature review to clarify key terms and concepts and identify current reasons behind the high rates of gendered violence;
- A review of National and State policy, legislation and reports to determine current preventative and crisis management strategies in South Australia;
- Attendance at a DV Prevention workshop in collaboration with Shelter SA to test the findings of this research with representatives from a range of sectors;
- An analysis of information gathered from above sources;
- Recommendations to increase primary prevention services and lowering the prevalence of DV in SA.

## Background

### Definitions of DV

DV is a pervasive social issue that affects multiple lives across a range of cultures and communities. In Australia, one of the most common forms of physical violence experienced by women is caused by a family member or an intimate partner (Department of Parliamentary Services 2014, 4); one woman a week is killed in Australia as a result of DV (Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety 2017). In 2015 there were nearly 8,000 reported family and domestic violence assaults in South Australia, with women and girls constituting 77% of victims (Attorney-General's Department 2016, 4). DV discourse is predominantly focused on women as victims and men as perpetrators; DV is treated as a gendered issue as a result of power imbalance between the genders. Men and the LGBTQI community are not exempt from experiencing DV, however this research paper will focus on heterosexual relationships as male on female violence is more prevalent in today's society. The Australian Government recognises DV as including: "physical violence, sexual assault and other sexually abusive behavior, economic (financial) abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, stalking, kidnapping or deprivation of liberty [and] serious neglect where there is a relationship of dependence" (Australian Department of Human Services 2016, 3).

### Cultural and Social Norms

Cultural and social norms are "rules or expectations of behaviour within a specific cultural or social group... often unspoken, these norms offer social standards of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour, governing what is (and is not) acceptable and coordinating our interactions with others" (World Health Organisation 2009, 4). Norms can either encourage or deter a tolerance of violence within a culture, society or community. The traditional belief that women are inferior to men is a starting point for violence against women. Outdated gender concepts have had a dramatic impact on the gendered implications of violence; "traditional beliefs that men have a right to control or discipline women through physical means makes women vulnerable to violence by intimate partners and places girls at risk of sexual abuse" (World Health Organisation 2009, 4).

Australia has greater gender equality than many third world countries, but there are still assumptions around gender that covertly encourage DV in our society. Many men face the "social pressures of masculinity that equate male power and status with violence" (World Health Organisation 2009, 6). This creates an environment where men affirm their masculinity through violence against both men and women. By changing the attitudes of South Australians towards gender and violence, the prevalence of DV would decrease significantly.

## **The effect of gender and cultural background on DV**

The role of gender is crucial in understanding the prevalence of DV across multiple societies. The widespread existence of DV indicates that it is not an issue exclusive to a particular culture. Instead, looking at the problem of DV from a gendered lens helps explain the high levels of male on female violence in relationships. The social construction of gender is a theory first introduced in sociological discourse, and explains why men and women are held to different cultural norms and standards. Many people perceive the “social world as an objective reality rather than as a product of human interaction and interpretation that is institutionalised and transformed over time” (Berkowitz et al. 2010, 132). Sex is the biological determinant of male and female, while gender is fluid and “constructed and reconstructed in interaction” (Berkowitz et al. 2010, 133). Historically, masculine identities have been associated with power and physical force while feminine identities have been presented as passive and submissive; this forms the gender hierarchy and perpetuates inequality between the two genders. The social construction of gender “brings together the collective interplay of identities, interactions, and institutions in shaping the gendered distribution of power, privilege and resources” between men and women (Berkowitz et al. 2010, 133). The power imbalance between the two genders perpetuates the concept of the dominant male and the passive female; DV is influenced by traditional gender roles that present a (heterosexual) female as being the property of her male partner.

The high rates of DV in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across the country indicate that something more than gender is influencing DV. Intersectionality explores the concept that an individual is not only affected by gender, but by a multitude of social categories such as cultural background, mental capability, or cultural background. Stemming from the historical oppression and enslavement of people of colour, Aboriginal Australians find themselves facing: “shorter life expectancy; higher rates of infant mortality; poorer health; and lower levels of education and employment” (The Gap: Indigenous Disadvantage in Australia 2008). As a result, Aboriginal women find themselves at more of a disadvantage than white women. Aboriginal women and girls are “35 times more likely to be hospitalised due to family [domestic] violence related assaults than other women and girls” (Department of Social Services 2010, 1). This data shows that while DV is primarily a gendered issue, it is also affected by cultural background. Both Federal and State governments have made DV a primary social policy issue and have recognised both gender and cultural background as factors in the prevalence of DV. More needs to be done in order to close the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities.

## **Hegemonic Masculinity**

While the power imbalance between the genders has been addressed above, special attention needs to be drawn to the particular type of masculinity that perpetuates the existence of DV in society. The term ‘hegemonic masculinity’ was coined in a study of social inequality in Australian high schools (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005, 830). The paper argues



that not only is there a gender order, but there is also a hierarchy of masculinities; hegemonic masculinity is often awarded the most power and privilege in society. Values such as “courage, inner direction, certain forms of autonomy, mastery, technological skill, group solidarity [and] considerable amounts of toughness” (Donaldson 1993, 644) are more likely to be recognised and celebrated by fellow men and even women. Hegemonic masculinity is, in western societies, commonly known as the ‘macho’ masculinity, in which “women exist as potential sexual objects for men while men are negated as sexual objects for men” (Donaldson 1993, 645); this framework of gender encourages the use of violence in order to assert men’s dominance over women. In the cultural context of Australia, hegemonic masculinity is often represented through physical capability. For example, (male) AFL sports stars are idolised within the community; currently, the AFL club Port Power is making efforts to reduce the rates of violence in our communities through school education. This program will be discussed under primary preventative programs.

### **DV and Homelessness**

DV is the leading cause of homelessness (Tually et al. 2008, 13) and must be taken into account when developing services. Many victims struggle to leave crisis shelters and live independently due to housing affordability. It is impossible for people living on low incomes to re-establish a home in the private rental market and South Australia cannot meet the need or demand for social housing (Tually et al. 2008, 5). More than one third of DV victims seek help from non-specialist DV services for homelessness (Attorney-General’s Department 2016, 64); with homeless DV victims receiving housing without specialist help and support, they may struggle to achieve independence. While recognising the needs of victims in the aftermath of incidents is crucial, we must focus more on primary prevention to reduce the harms caused by DV and homelessness.

Women who become homeless as a result of violence in the household are from a variety of cultural and economic backgrounds. While many of these victims may not be ‘roofless’, their place of residence would be considered unstable and unsafe as a result of an abusive partner. DV is given as the overwhelming reason why women seek housing assistance in South Australia (Tually et al. 2008, 13). Of those women, Aboriginal Australians are over-represented as being 24% of those escaping DV (Tually et al., 14). It is generally a concern for their safety (and their child’s/childrens’ safety) that leads a large majority of DV victims into a pattern of homelessness. They reach a “crisis point” which is “a point where they fear for their own safety or that of their children and which necessitates them leaving their home for safer accommodation” (Tually et al. 2008, 16). The primary reason that this social issue is explored in the report is the fact that DV related homelessness is different to other forms of homelessness. According to Tually et al., this is a result of “many women in abusive and controlling relationships return to the perpetrator of the violence against them, cycling in and out of homelessness and crisis accommodation as they try to rebuild their relationship with their partner – generally for the benefit of their children” (2008, 16). This

report will address the relationship between DV and homelessness, and critique the services designed to address DV. The rates of homelessness associated with DV would decrease if SA was to 'tip the scales' in order to equally focus on preventative strategies.

## Literature Review

### Preventative Measures

#### Policy Analysis

The National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and Their Children (the Plan) is the current national policy on DV. The Plan includes six National outcomes, with half focusing on preventative measures and half on crisis management, using the definition of prevention provided above. This section of the report focuses on the first three outcomes addressing the prevention of DV, and will discuss what is currently implemented in South Australia in terms of policy.

The Plan features six National outcomes. The first outcome is that “Communities are safe and free from violence” (Department of Social Services 2010, 14), which offers a community-based approach to reiterate the non-tolerance of violence. The measure of success for the outcome is “an increase in the community’s intolerance of violence against women... [with a] National Community Attitudes Survey to be undertaken every four years across the life of the *National Plan*” (Department of Social Services 2010, p.14). However, attitudes towards DV are not always reflected accurately through surveys. In 2009, 98% of Australians recognised that DV was a crime and should not be tolerated (VicHealth 2009,7) yet DV rates continue to rise. The first strategy for the community-based focus is encouraging the promotion of respectful relationships in community organisations, workplaces, sports clubs etc. The creation of a social media campaign was also addressed to help young people develop an understanding of a respectful relationship. The second strategy focuses on the primary prevention of DV, and aims to use “social marketing, school-based programs or work to promote positive and equitable workplace cultures” (Department of Social Services 2010, 14). While there are several programs existing in schools across South Australia (as mentioned in the service delivery section), there is no State-wide implementation of the programs and they remain scarce. The final strategy for prevention of DV at a community level is the advancement of gender equality. The plan recognises that “the unequal distribution of power and resources between women and men and adherence to rigid or narrow gender roles and stereotypes reflects gendered patterns in the prevalence and perpetration of violence” (Department of Social Services 2010, 15). Reducing the level of inequality between the genders will surely result in a decrease in male on female violence in the community; this is done by paid parental leave and superannuation reform to help increase economic security for women. The main idea of this outcome is to educate the community in order to provoke social change; however, the Plan’s method of measuring community change is problematic as examined above. There were also limited plans to monitor the success of social media campaigns as previously mentioned.

The second national outcome on the topic of prevention is that “relationships are respectful” (Department of Social Services 2010, 18). While community-led change in beliefs of gender and violence is crucial, governments are addressing the issue of DV on an individual basis. The three strategies of the program are to: “build on young people’s capacity to develop respectful relationships, support adults to model respectful relationships, [and to] promote positive male attitudes and behaviours” (Department of Social Services 2010, 18). The primary strategy is targeted at changing the Australian Curriculum to include an age-appropriate DV awareness program for school age children. Currently in South Australia, there are no State-wide mandatory school programs implemented (see service delivery section for more information regarding school education). The second strategy deals with adults modelling respectful relationships and positively impacting those around them. This is primarily accomplished by the funding of the Family Support Program, which supports vulnerable and disadvantaged families (Department of Social Services 2010, 19). Other than this additional funding, there is a lack of understanding about how governments will encourage parents to pass down their knowledge of what constitutes a respectful relationship. The final strategy of the respectful relationships National outcome is to engage men in actively stopping the tolerance of DV. This is accomplished by the funding of the White Ribbon Day Campaign, and the National Mensline. However, perpetrators are not likely to seek help or be willing to get educated on the topic of violence if they aren’t being negatively affected by their abuse. Perpetrators usually have total financial control over their partner, which is often why economic abuse is mentioned in DV definitions; if they are not concerned about losing economic stability or becoming homelessness, they are not likely to seek help. The White Ribbon Campaign is a step in the right direction but on its own it is not enough to change societal attitudes. It appears that White Ribbon Ambassadors do not report on a set of identified activities in order to retain their status as Ambassadors.

The final outcome of the Plan for the prevention of DV focuses on the strengthening of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Australian Aboriginal people are affected by DV at a disproportionate rate to the general population. The three strategies for this outcome are to: “foster the leadership of Indigenous women within communities and broader Australian society, build community capacity at the local level, [and to] improve access to appropriate services” (Department of Social Services 2010, 20). The first strategy holds four immediate National initiatives all regarding funding Aboriginal alliances or programs in establishing equality. For example, the funding of the Aboriginal women’s Program aims to enhance “leadership, representation, safety, well-being and economic status” (Department of Social Services 2010, 21). The second strategy addresses community change. The Plan states that it would provide support for community-led programs and solutions, but does not mention a DV program specifically created for and led by Aboriginal people that could be delivered to communities. The final strategy addresses the improvement of services to tackle violence in the Aboriginal community. It would provide

funding that would create better cooperation between police and service providers to manage families that are at risk of violence. The improvement of services and programs in Aboriginal communities is a good start in terms of preventing the violence before it happens, in the communities that need it most. In addition to this, the implementation of programs addressing alcohol abuse and changing attitudes towards violence is crucial in order to decrease the rates of DV. Closing the Gap continues to show poor progress; if we are serious about addressing DV, there must be systemic and societal change to health, education, housing and employment for Aboriginal people.

South Australia has implemented the Plan with preventative strategies particularly focusing on early intervention work and community education in order to raise awareness of the prevalence of DV in society. However, measuring the progress of the Plan is challenging as community attitudes surveys have been proven to be an ineffective measure. Details about the education programs available on DV in South Australia are covered in the service delivery section of this report. In terms of preventative strategies, the Plan has been successful in planning assistance to Aboriginal women, and aims to provide extra assistance to these communities who generally face a higher level of disadvantage than other Australians; increased action is required to support the Aboriginal communities to lower the prevalence of DV across SA.

### **Legislation**

As it is impossible to convict a perpetrator before they have committed a DV offence it is not surprising that there is no South Australian legislation available to prevent DV from happening. However, research suggests that the introduction of harsher punishments and stricter legislation surrounding DV assaults could possibly be a deterrent for potential future DV perpetrators (World Health Organisation 2009, 1). While the primary DV legislation in SA is the Domestic Violence Act, which provides restraining orders against perpetrators and safety for the victims, many offenders do not serve jail time for breaching these orders. The threat of incarceration for future DV offenders could be crucial in deterring a possible attack from happening but it is known that many perpetrators ignore legal orders and without suitable interventions, violence can escalate after each serious assault.

### **Service delivery**

#### Programs

Community-based change is essential to lowering the rates of DV, especially through educating the next generation to take a stand against gendered violence. One example of preventing DV through education is the *Power to End Violence Against Women* program. Power Community, the not for profit arm of the Port Adelaide Football Club has partnered with Centacare Catholic Family Services in order to educate boys about respectful relationships. Educating future men about respectful behaviour is vital in challenging gender norms, and can positively impact their actions towards women later on in life. Port

Adelaide's involvement with DV programs is a significant milestone for DV advocates, as male dominated sports like football are typically an arena in which a certain type of masculinity that promotes DV thrives. Body-contact confrontational sports are seen as an "endlessly renewed symbol of masculinity" (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005, 833) as they reflect the characteristics of a hegemonic male. Given the popularity of 'Aussie rules' football in South Australia, this certain type of masculinity is displayed not only during sports, but resonates with the community as well. What the Port Adelaide Football Club aims to do is eliminate the acceptance of violence that comes with this certain masculinity, and discuss gender equality, respect, healthy relationships and the seriousness of abusive behaviour with young boys (Centacare 2017). The program takes place across 20 schools in South Australia with around 1500 students actively participating and listening to DV advocates. The captain of Port Adelaide Travis Boak states: "We understand that as role models within the community we have an important role to play in encouraging young men to care about the women in their lives, and to treat them respectfully" (Centacare 2017). Changing social and cultural norms by community led programs is crucial in challenging attitudes towards DV. The participants in the program are encouraged to not resort to violent behaviour, giving them the "necessary tools to confront the issue... and make a change in the community," says Ross Wait (Centacare 2017). The program was launched at the end of 2015, and will continue to be funded by Centacare until 2019. However, the program is not widespread in terms of the proportion of schools receiving this education; 20 schools are currently being taught about DV in South Australia and a lack of funding is preventing any widespread implementation of the program. There must be an increase in education programs to educate young people about respectful relationships, gender and violence, more sports codes participating and importantly, more men talking and teaching about gender equality.

While Port Adelaide's *Power to End Violence Against Women* program is predominantly focused on changing the behaviour of boys in order to prevent the acceptance of DV, YWCA Adelaide focuses on building "strong and equitable communities through the development of women's leadership" (YWCA Adelaide 2017). YWCA developed two preventative programs aimed at both genders in schools: *Respect, Communicate, Choose* and *Relationship Things*. RCC is the only respectful relationship program in Australia that is delivered in primary school. It is an "evidence-based 8 week program which aims to give young people aged 9-12 years old the tools and support to develop, promote and perpetuate equal, safe and respectful relationships, with the ultimate goal of preventing violence against women" (YWCA Adelaide 2017). The program encourages young people to discuss gender inequality, respectful non-violent relationships and become active bystanders in their community. While Port Adelaide Football Club engages young boys at a classroom age, the YWCA is primarily concerned with educating both genders, as DV impacts girls and boys. *Relationship Things* is the second program developed by YWCA for schools, and focuses on the older age category of 14-18. The eight-week program covers a

variety of topics that are also covered in RCC, but introduces the topic of consent and safe sex (YWCA Adelaide 2017). While a change in community attitudes is crucial to lowering rates of violence, these programs only reach a limited number of schools and must be increased.

The White Ribbon Campaign is a global effort tackling the broader issue of violence against women that has reached South Australia. White Ribbon Ambassador Malcolm Turnbull states, "Violence against women is one of the great shames of Australia. It is a National disgrace... Let me say this to you, disrespecting women does not always result in violence against women. But all violence against women begins with disrespecting women" (White Ribbon Australia 2016, 3). The White Ribbon Campaign is a "social movement that works through a primary prevention approach understanding that men are central to achieving the social change necessary to prevent men's violence against women" (White Ribbon Australia 2016, 4). Through the campaign men are challenged to speak out and positively influence other men about the issue of violence in their community. White Ribbon is dedicated to "ensuring men are active advocates for changing the social norms, attitudes and behaviours that are at the root of men's abuse of women" (White Ribbon Australia 2016, 4). White Ribbon's values are implemented through a variety of events designed to promote healthy relationships, non-toxic masculinities and gender equality (White Ribbon Australia 2016, 4). While White Ribbon deals with the broader issue of gendered violence and does not specifically focus on DV, it is still crucial in encouraging conversations around gender norms that deeply influence power imbalances relating to DV. White Ribbon recognises the seriousness of DV, stating that "intimate partner violence [otherwise known as domestic violence] is the leading contributor to death, disability and ill-health in Australian women aged 15-44" (White Ribbon Australia 2016, 7). The national campaign is active in South Australia with support from State government even more so since a South Australian woman's public murder by her ex partner in 2014. The public sector partnered with White Ribbon Australia to tackle the issue of violence against women in the workplace across a variety of business units (Attorney General's Department 2016); employees are now trained in violence prevention and also how to manage disclosures of DV by a co-worker. White Ribbon organisations and Ambassadors should be required to produce action plans that they publicly report against, about how they will actively help in reducing gendered violence.

In terms of primary preventative measures in the case of programs/active organisations fighting DV, South Australia has understood the need to educate and change community attitudes towards violence but lacks the widespread availability and mandatory implementation of these programs in the education system.

### Services

Similar to the findings for primary prevention legislation, the services available to women before an assault occurs are scarce in South Australia. Services for DV are often thought of as emergency accommodation or perpetrator programs, which are examples of secondary prevention and crisis management, respectively.



## Secondary Prevention and Crisis Management

Secondary prevention is defined as the prevention of a reoccurring assault. It is not included in the preventative summary above as it does not protect victims from the first DV assault, but rather prevents another incident from occurring. Crisis Management of DV covers the experiences of victims after a DV incident takes place. Secondary prevention refers mostly to the programs or legislation surrounding DV, while crisis management focuses predominantly on the services that may be provided to the victims in times of need. The purpose of the two terms is closely linked, and will therefore be jointly discussed in this section.

### Policy Analysis

The National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children has three out of six National outcomes that address the crisis management of DV victims and perpetrators. The outcomes are that “services meet the needs of women and their children experiencing violence, justice responses are effective, [and] perpetrators stop their violence and are held to account” (Department of Social Services 2010, 28). The strategies for each outcome were noticeably more detailed than the outcomes that covered preventative measures, as it is more tangible to resolve something that has already occurred.

To ensure that the first crisis management outcome is met, three strategies were established as immediate National initiatives:

1. The expansion of the 1800 RESPECT: Domestic and Sexual Violence National Counselling Service to provide for more communication with local services;
2. The support of specialist DV services (service delivery for children, Aboriginal people and disabled women etc.);
3. The support of mainstream services such as homelessness and social work services, as well as assisting medical professionals in identifying DV victims in the health system.

The second National outcome focusing on crisis management of DV was the monitoring of justice systems. The strategies surrounding this are the:

1. Improvement of access to justice systems for both women and children through the funding of legal assistance programs;
2. Strengthening of leadership across justice systems, including the implementation of training for DV across disciplines dealing with the justice system ex. Counsellors, police, and lawyers;
3. Cooperation between justice systems through the development of a national scheme for DV orders.

The first two National outcomes focusing on crisis management are more developed than those of prevention. SA must equally focus on prevention as these outcomes are focused on after the first incident of violence.

The third outcome is ambitious in that it aims to have perpetrators stop their violence and be held accountable. The strategies are as follows:

1. Perpetrators are to be held accountable by implementing strong legislative responses;
2. Recidivism rates to be addressed through the integration of police, court, corrections, and community services;
3. Conduct research into perpetrator interventions (Department of Social Services 2010, 30).

Much like the policy surrounding preventative strategies, the third outcome for crisis management of DV does not directly address a palpable aim for perpetrators' accountability in DV cases. While it is mentioned that the perpetrators will be affected by "strong legislative responses," (Department of Social Services 2010, 30) it did not cover what steps would be taken next. Additionally, DV and gendered violence will always exist in society, but managing and reducing those rates is crucial. Simply aiming to 'stop the violence' of the perpetrator will not have positive outcomes; aiming to change perceptions of violence in society is far more beneficial as it has the potential to prevent perpetrators from escalating their violence.

### **Legislation**

The primary legislation regarding DV is the Domestic Violence Act of 1994 (Department of Social Services 2009, 51). The main purpose of the Act is so "provide for restraining orders in cases of domestic violence" (Department of Social Services 2009, 51). This is both a secondary prevention and a crisis management strategy, as it aims to prevent the reoccurrence of another attack but also provides safety for the victim after the attack. An AVO is made when there is a "reasonable apprehension that the defendant may commit 'domestic violence'" (Department of Social Services 2009, 51). AVOs are issued based on there being a "reasonable apprehension that the defendant may, unless restrained, cause personal injury or damage to property or behave in an intimidating or offensive manner towards the person for whose benefit the order would be made, and the court being satisfied that the making of the order is appropriate in the circumstances" (Department of Social Services 2009, 51). While restraining orders sound as though they would be primary prevention for an attack, substantial evidence for a restraining order to be made is generally after a victim has already sustained injuries from the defendant, or has evidence of abuse or intimidation in the past. Legislation surrounding DV is always focused on the aftermath of an attack or assault, as the incarceration of future DV perpetrators before an incident of abuse is impossible.

## **Service Delivery**

### Programs

There is a wide range of programs for both victims and perpetrators available in South Australia after a DV assault has taken place but the great majority are provided for women victims. The perpetrator-based programs are extremely beneficial however in that they can prevent another attack from happening by challenging the perpetrator's views of violence and gender. Victim-based programs are essential in providing support after an attack. Programs offered for perpetrators are generally a secondary prevention method and not a crisis management method, as it potentially prevents a second attack however they are very valuable. Crisis management services would include crisis accommodation, which will be discussed in the next section.

The most common and widespread program for DV secondary prevention is run by the Magistrates Court, and aims to benefit the victim and their family as well as the perpetrator. It is mandatory for male offenders who have been issued with an intervention order and are facing charges for DV to take part in the Abuse Prevention Program, which is a program aimed at changing their abusive behaviour towards their intimate female partner. The Abuse Prevention Program specifically targets abusive men who have assaulted a woman; the program is not for women offenders or men who have assaulted another man/family member. It was established "as part of an intergovernmental response model to enhance and ensure the safety and protection of women and children from domestic violence and is therefore only available for men issued with an intervention order" (Courts Administration Authority of South Australia 2012). The program is only responsible for assessing and supervising the men, while the program itself is carried out by two non-government organisations called OARS-Community Transitions and Kornar Winmil Yunti (KWY), who deliver the "Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programs" or "Men's Behaviour Change Programs" (Courts Administration Authority of South Australia 2012). KWY is the only culturally appropriate service available for Aboriginal men, women and families. As DV is more prevalent amongst Aboriginal families, this service is critical in South Australia and should be expanded.

There are a range of Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programs available in South Australia designed to suit men from a range of backgrounds; approximately 120 men are involved in some form of DV prevention program at any time in South Australia (Courts Administration Authority of South Australia 2012). There are also around 300 places available every 12 month period (Courts Administration Authority of South Australia 2012), which suggests that there are not enough services to accommodate for the high number of South Australian men who commit DV offences; in 2015 there were nearly 8,000 reported family and domestic violence assaults in South Australia (Attorney-General's Department 2016, 4). It is critical that the availability of services working with men is dramatically increased to work with *all* men who come to the attention of the law.

Individual counselling is provided for perpetrators who have limited English or literacy skills. Programs specifically designed for Aboriginal men are also available in metropolitan Adelaide. The culturally sensitive program provided by KWY is: “used to address Aboriginal men’s experiences and the expectations of the Aboriginal community with regard to men engaging in appropriate non-violent behaviour” (Courts Administration Authority of South Australia 2012). The programs address to change men’s behaviours and ideally reduce the risk of them committing another offence against their former or current partner. By engaging with culturally diverse men, the disproportionate rates of violence in Aboriginal communities will be addressed.

An evaluation of Intervention Response Model (meaning the response given to recognised DV assaults) found that the programs assigned to offenders were associated with a “positive change” (Courts Administration Authority of South Australia 2012) however, as stated above there is a huge shortfall in the number of clients that can be engaged.

Government- run programs are also put in place for perpetrators of DV that have been incarcerated for DV related offences. There is a “specialised risk/needs assessment process” which “is used to target the case management and interventions required for certain categories of prisoners and offenders” (Department for Correctional Services 2010). To prevent prisoners from re-offending, there are several programs addressing different areas of DV: Violence Prevention Program, the Sexual Behaviours Clinic, and the Making Changes Program (Department for Correctional Services 2010) and all are valuable programs.

### Services

There are a variety of services available to the victims of DV assaults. The majority of services are housing based in providing emergency shelter, as many women that have been in abusive relationships have often been financially dependent on their spouse or partner and have fled their accommodation. Perpetrators will often use financial means to control their partner; this is the main reason why DV is the leading cause of homelessness as victims are left without financial support upon leaving their partner. A lot of crisis accommodation services are for general housing and open to anyone at risk of homelessness, and do not specifically focus on those experiencing violence or abuse. As previously mentioned, DV affects Aboriginal women and girls at a disproportionate rate to white females. Nunga Miminar is an emergency accommodation service offered only to Aboriginal women, which delivers culturally appropriate support in order to prevent further abuse. While there is a strong relationship between DV and homelessness, South Australia lacks the services specifically catered to DV victims; crisis managing the situation of immediate homelessness is not enough if it is proven that many DV victims cycle in and out of homelessness in their abuse relationships. Over one third of DV victims fleeing their abusive partner seek help from non-specialist DV services for homelessness (Attorney-General’s Department 2016, 64), which will not provide appropriate specialised aid. In addition, one in two women who

approached housing agencies were unable to obtain immediate accommodation through SAAP (Supported Accommodation Assistance Program) on an average day (Tually et al. 2008, 13) as a result of insufficient accommodation available. There is not enough emergency accommodation in South Australia that deals specifically with DV victims nor enough social housing to provide long-term affordable housing.

## Shelter SA DV Workshop

On June 1<sup>st</sup> 2017, Shelter SA facilitated a DV workshop with five speakers and an audience comprised of a variety of sectors. The findings of this workshop were presented to participants. The workshop was designed to address the importance of preventative measures for DV. As a group, the forum created a list of recommendations that confirmed the findings of this research and expanded upon them.

Participants at the workshop agreed there was a need for more government support of preventative strategies, including: an increase in education programs in schools covering gender, violence and sexuality, and a change in community attitudes towards minorities. They also concurred that there was a need for specialised and targeted services for minorities and DV victims. There was also a call for an intersectional approach to DV, meaning that services regarding disability, gender and cultural background were needed. It was established that there was also a significant lack of men working within the DV sector itself, and that the shared responsibility of men and women would aid in reducing the rates of DV. The full report on the Shelter SA workshop is available on their website [www.sheltersa.asn.au](http://www.sheltersa.asn.au).

## Conclusion

This research paper concludes that there is a larger focus on crisis managing DV victims (and perpetrators) than primary prevention in South Australia. This approach is not exclusive to South Australia; solving a tangible social issue after abuse has occurred is easier than predicting and preventing it. The National Plan does focus on both prevention and crisis management through six National outcomes but the preventative strategies are unrealistic in their method of measuring success and appear to be ineffective, with reports of DV on the increase. A community attitudes survey was to be taken every few years to measure progress in the community; as previously stated, this is an ineffective method as a large majority of Australians have reported through such surveys that they believe DV is wrong, yet there are high rates regardless. As expected, there was nothing in terms of preventative legislation, as potential perpetrators cannot be punished without evidence of abuse and before the case of abuse has taken place. For preventative service delivery, there were a number of educational programs targeting a variety of school ages. While community-based change is essential to lowering the rates of DV, the programs were not implemented State-wide. As for the crisis management of DV, National policy outcomes were clearly defined and had effective methods of measuring success. The Domestic Violence Act of 1994, providing restraining orders for perpetrators, mainly covers legislation for the aftermath of a DV case.

Services that work towards preventing DV from taking place challenge existing ideas of gender relations and respectful relationships. This research paper investigated the existing programs in place, and found a small number of DV education programs aimed at school-age children and National policy encouraging community involvement. While challenging gender norms at a young age is extremely beneficial in the fight against DV, the implementation of these programs is not widespread in SA. There needs to be State Government recognition that education targeting the refusal to accept violence and the seriousness of DV to school age children is crucial in preventing assaults from being carried out in the future.

## Recommendations

1	An increase in emergency accommodation specifically for DV victims
2	An increase in social housing to provide long-term affordable housing for vulnerable people
3	An expansion of perpetrator based programs to accommodate for the high number of people with AVOs
4	An increase in culturally sensitive programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally diverse people
5	A State-wide implementation of DV education programs for school aged children
6	A systemic and societal change to health, education, housing and employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to thus reduce the rates of DV
7	A critical effort to focus equally on preventative strategies concerning DV, which will in turn lower the rates of homelessness
8	A clearer set of outcomes and improved methods of measuring success in regards to preventing DV in the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children
9	Offering increased specialist services in homeless shelters so that DV victims improve their chances of gaining economic independence



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