

Migrant and Refugee Women in Australia: The Safety and Security Study



HARMONY ALLIANCE
MIGRANT & REFUGEE WOMEN FOR CHANGE

MONASH
MIGRATION
AND INCLUSION
CENTRE



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The authors also acknowledge with thanks the support of their colleagues. In particular, colleagues across the Monash Migration and Inclusion Centre and the Monash Gender and Family Violence Prevention Centre have played a critical role in supporting the research and the research team. The Harmony Alliance Council also contributed their views and support for the research, which was invaluable to the development of the survey and the distribution process.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

In the spirit of reconciliation, Harmony Alliance, together with Monash University's Migration and Inclusion Centre and Monash Gender and Family Violence Prevention Centre, acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their continuing connections to land, sea, community and culture. We collectively pay our respects to their elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF LIVED EXPERIENCES OF VIOLENCE

Together Harmony Alliance and Monash University acknowledge the lives and experiences of migrant and refugee women and children affected by domestic violence and sexual assault.

Please note: parts of this report may be confronting or distressing where the focus is on family and domestic violence. Support is available at all hours, every day, via 1800 RESPECT – 1800 737 732 and Lifeline – 13 11 14.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AIC	Australian Institute of Criminology
DFV	Domestic and family violence
HA	Harmony Alliance: Migrant and Refugee Women for Change
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex
MMIC	Monash Migration and Inclusion Centre
NCAS	National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey
PSS	Personal Safety Survey
SEIFA	Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas
TAFE	Technical and Further Education

NOTE REGARDING PRESENTATION

Unless otherwise specified, all percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number for ease of reading in this report. Due to rounding, numbers presented throughout this document may not add up precisely to the totals provided and percentages may not precisely reflect the absolute figures.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2019, Harmony Alliance: Migrant and Refugee Women for Change approached Monash University to build their 2018 inaugural Migrant and Refugee Women's Voices survey into a larger survey of migrant and refugee women across Australia. The research team met in Canberra in February 2020 to plan this, with no anticipation of the impact of COVID-19. The original focus of this survey was women's safety, with a spotlight on domestic and family violence. However, given the disruption, impact and hardships caused by the global pandemic, the survey shifted to accommodate the rupture of 2020 and questions were included to examine life and safety before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. While this is not a survey dedicated to identifying the depth and breadth of the repercussions of COVID-19, we amended the survey to capture key data on how stay-at-home directives and other policy measures related to the pandemic impacted women's experiences of domestic and family violence, employment, and financial security. The survey findings provide a foundation for important knowledge regarding the experiences and needs of women across Australia's diverse migrant and refugee communities as we look towards a post-COVID-19 future.

This report draws on survey responses from 1392 migrant and refugee women across Australia. While the survey is not a representative sample, and cannot provide a comprehensive account of the experiences of all women from migrant and refugee backgrounds, it offers a unique snapshot of a sample of women from across Australia who were willing to share their experiences with us. It offers key insights to build a more nuanced understanding of the diversity of migrant and refugee women's experiences and its findings can be used to inform policy and other measures that may best support migrant and refugee women into the future.

The report is organised into three parts: Domestic and Family Violence (DFV); Victimization, Help-Seeking and Trust in Institutions; and Employment. Across DFV and Employment we consider 2019 (that is, prior to COVID-19) and the period from March 2020 until September–November 2020, when the survey was available.

Overall, the findings affirm the need to ask specific questions about migrant and refugee women's experiences, and to consider the diversity of identity and circumstances of this broad group. Across residency/visa status, religious affiliation and age group, we need to carefully explore these women's experiences and perspectives, and tailor efforts to improve their lives. Below, we highlight the key findings and implications, before presenting the detailed report.

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

This is the first national study that captures the diversity of migrant and refugee women, including residency/visa status. It is also the first national study to ask specific questions about controlling behaviours related to the visa and migration status of women.

- In our sample, 1 in 3, that is, 33% of respondents had experienced some form of DFV. This was the most common form of victimisation experienced by participants. Of those who experienced DFV, we examined three broad forms of DFV harm and abuse and found that controlling behaviours (91%) were most prevalent, followed by violence towards others and/or property (47%) and physical or sexual violence (42%).
- Domestic and family violence during COVID-19: We found that between March-November 2020, of those who had experienced DFV: 17% reported that this happened for the first time, 23% reported that the behaviour increased in frequency, 15% reported that the behaviour increased in severity.
- Co-occurrence of forms of violence: of those who reported experiencing any of the forms of abuse that were identified across the three forms of DFV (controlling behaviours, violence towards others and/or property and physical or sexual violence), 46% (n=204) had experienced one type of harm, 32% (n=142) had experienced two types of harm, and 22% (n=97) had experienced all three types of harm. That is, more than half of the sample had experienced at least two types of harm. We note in the analysis the complexity of establishing evidence of coercive control as a pattern of violence in this study, but it is clear that the majority of women in our sample who had experienced DFV had experienced more than one form of harm on multiple occasions.
- Perpetrators. We asked who the perpetrator was in relation to each specific form of DFV captured in this study. Consistently the perpetrator was most often the current or former partner. Where participants indicated that there had been more than one perpetrator, we asked our participants who the main perpetrator of harm or abuse had been in the last five years. Thirty-five percent indicated that the main perpetrator was a family member, while 23% reported that it was a member of their family in-law.
- Temporary visa holders consistently reported proportionately higher levels of DFV, including controlling behaviours.
- This is the first national survey to capture migration-related controlling behaviours. The overwhelming majority of temporary visa holders reported much higher levels of migration-related abuse and threats, though importantly this form of harm was not exclusive to this group.
- Help-seeking and disclosure of experiences of violence: just over half (52%) of those who had experienced DFV told someone, most often family and friends. Notably, while our sample was largely religious, and reported that religion was important in their daily life, very few participants identified a religious leader as someone they confided in regarding domestic and family violence. When we asked those who did not disclose or report why

they had chosen not to share their experience, the most common reason given was that it was a family matter, and that they feared making the situation worse.

Implications

Recognition that domestic and family violence is perpetrated by family members beyond former and current intimate partners has important implications for help-seeking and support provisions, including the definition of what constitutes abuse. Our findings highlight the need for the inclusion of migration status and other forms of harm, such as financial abuse linked to a marriage-related payment, to inform more expansive understandings of how power can be leveraged by perpetrators, including via migration law and policy. The higher reported levels of DFV among temporary visa holders in this study also attests to this. Understanding where and how power is exerted is key to establishing a more holistic view of where reform for women's safety is needed, and where safety nets and systems can be redeveloped to protect women and disempower perpetrators. Similar to women in other broader population studies of experiences of domestic and family violence, many women who had experienced DFV in this study had not reported this to police, and many did not tell anyone: we must recognise that while DFV is a national issue, effective responses must be tailored to the diverse needs of women in our community.

VICTIMISATION, HELP-SEEKING AND TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS

This survey is among a handful of surveys in the world to comprehensively focus on migrant and refugee women's experiences with victimisation, perceptions of policing, and trust in communities and institutions.

- Experiences of crime and motivation for such crime: Nearly 40% of the migrant and refugee women in this study reported that they believed their victimisation as a result of theft, burglary, threatening behaviour or property damage was motivated by bias and/or prejudice. Those who reported bias-motivated victimisation were more likely to live in areas characterised by greater advantage, to be aged between 30 and 44, to be born in North Africa and the Middle East or South-East Asia, and to be of either Christian or Muslim faith.
- Perceptions of police: We asked about perceptions of police as just and fair, and as legitimate. The majority of women in this sample perceived police to be just and fair. Positive perceptions of police were prominent among older participants and those from North Africa and the Middle East and less likely among those with tertiary education qualifications. However, the women in our sample who had experienced DFV and general victimisation viewed the police as less procedurally just and fair than the rest of the sample. The majority of women viewed police as legitimate. However, across the age groups, older people reported higher levels of perceived police legitimacy compared to younger participants; and in relation to educational attainment, those with higher levels of education reported lower levels of police legitimacy compared to those with high school or trade/TAFE qualifications. Women in this study were willing to cooperate with the police across a range of circumstances, with limited variation across different socio-demographic categories.

- Trust in institutions: While there was generally a high level of trust in all of the institutions included in this study, religious institutions consistently attracted low levels of trust for this sample. Compared to other institutions, participants reported higher levels of trust in Australia's healthcare system and state education systems.

Implications

These findings highlight that victimisation and race-related crime continue to be experienced by migrant and refugee women. Critically, the reliance on religious leaders as community touchstones and key figures to provide information and/or as a resource for support requires careful rethinking: our findings point to very low levels of trust in religious institutions. These findings also highlight that police are, for the most part, trusted by migrant women who have not experienced victimisation. This suggests that the victimisation experience diminishes the potential for developing strong, trusting relationships with police, and this is true for victims of both DFV and non-DFV crime. This problem is not specific to migrant and refugee women, as other studies demonstrate the 'revictimisation' of victims of crime; however, our findings do illustrate the importance of considering revictimisation for this group.

EMPLOYMENT AND HARDSHIP

This survey was conducted in late 2020 and so the impact of COVID-19 was a consideration in the survey when asking about employment and financial hardship.

- Of those who were employed in 2019, 10% lost their job due to COVID-19.
- Following the outbreak of COVID-19, there was an increase in reliance on government payments as the participants' main source of income.
- In this sample, temporary visa holders experienced an increase in hardship as a result of COVID-19, more so than permanent visa holders and Australian citizens.

Implications

As Australia moves towards a vaccination strategy and a post-COVID-19 national recovery, it has been recognised that women have been impacted the hardest. Our findings also demonstrate that we need to attend to those most impacted such as young people and temporary visa holders.

AGE AND GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES

Across the survey we analysed differences according to a range of factors and age was identified as a key area where there was differentiation across the sample.

- Attitudes to DFV: Across the whole sample, there was general agreement regarding attitudes to violence against women, with the exception of responses to whether a woman who does not leave a situation of family violence is partly responsible for the abuse continuing. In our sample, women under the age of 30 years old were least likely to agree with this.
- Victimization: In terms of participant experiences of DFV, this was reported most commonly by women aged between 30 and 44, in line with previous studies (ABS, 2020). In relation to those who had experienced non-DFV-related victimisation, participants who were younger than 30 years old had experienced more general victimisation than those in the older age categories. Approximately 40% of participants reported that their most recent victimisation had been motivated by bias.
- Attitudes towards police and cooperation: Older women, on average, saw police as more procedurally just than did those under 30 years of age. This same group reported the highest levels of police legitimacy, while the youngest cohort (18–29) reported the lowest levels of police legitimacy. Nearly half of the youngest cohort indicated that they had low levels of trust in police. With regard to cooperation, we found that the older participants were more likely to fall into the category of being ‘extremely likely’ (80%) to cooperate with the police compared to younger participants (51% extremely likely).
- Trust in institutions: Younger people tended to have lower levels of trust in all institutions when compared to older people. The difference was most stark in relation to religious community leadership. Nearly a third of participants aged under 44 years reported no trust in religious leadership.
- Employment and hardship: While in this sample the experience of hardship was not high overall, younger respondents reported higher levels of hardship after the pandemic occurred when compared to older respondents. Those who lived in areas with high disadvantage reported the highest levels of hardship.

Implications

Awareness of intergenerational differences is critical for understanding how to address women’s safety and security in targeted ways. The experiences, expectations and views revealed in this survey point to specific differences, most often between the youngest cohort and the middle- to older-age cohorts. This finding is important for future policy and advocacy: migrant and refugee women are not a homogenous group, but have specific needs and experiences. Awareness of diverse needs and catering to them appropriately is critical to building safer and more secure livelihoods for migrant and refugee women in Australia.

We share this report in the spirit with which it was designed, as a collaboration and a conversation: to embrace and celebrate the diversity of Australia and to recognise that in working towards enhancing women’s safety and security across all aspects of life, we must pay attention to the needs of migrant and refugee women.

INTRODUCTION

Harmony Alliance (HA) is one of the six National Women's Alliances supported by the Australian Government to promote the views of all Australian women, to ensure their voices are heard in decision-making processes. HA is a national inclusive and informed voice on the multiplicity of issues impacting the experiences and outcomes of migrant and refugee women. HA provides women from migrant and refugee backgrounds with the opportunity, and the platform, to directly engage in driving positive change.

The Monash Migration and Inclusion Centre (MMIC) is an interdisciplinary research centre based in the Faculty of Arts, Monash University, and established in 2018. The Centre brings together expertise from across Monash to generate practical solutions, inform policy and engage with industry and community groups on migration, inclusion, settlement and irregular migration issues.

This report presents the key findings from the second HA Migrant and Refugee Women's Voices Survey, the first in an MMIC–HA partnership, which was conducted over eight weeks between September and November 2020.

METHOD

This section of the report offers a broad overview of the research design and methodological approach for a general audience. A full Technical Report, which includes the survey, its development and refinement, is available at the DOI link: [10.26180/14794677](https://doi.org/10.26180/14794677).

SURVEY DESIGN

The survey instrument was co-designed by MMIC and HA, with input from members of the HA Board, key stakeholders and bi- and multi-lingual experts who assisted with both the translation and the refinement of the questions and responses to ensure consistency of meaning and to amend phrasing and terminology to reflect conventions in different languages. The instrument drew on a number of existing survey instruments, with some modifications including the redevelopment of questions and responses to reflect and incorporate feedback from language and translation experts and community and practitioner experts.

The existing survey instruments that were drawn on directly or adapted included:

- Australian Community Capacity Survey, Australia
- Australian Social Cohesion Survey, Australia
- Building a New Life in Australia (Wave 5), Australia
- Crime Survey for England and Wales, UK
- Canadian General Social Survey, Canada
- National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS), Australia.

The survey had a total of 76 questions, including skip questions based on responses to various questions. It was not likely or anticipated that any participant would answer every question and follow-up question. The survey was originally made available in 9 languages (Arabic, Thai, Vietnamese, Farsi, Nepali, Simplified Chinese, Korean, Punjabi and English), but based on the feedback provided by stakeholders when the survey went live, 2 more languages were added after the survey had been in the field for four weeks (Dari and Swahili), bringing the total to 11 languages. We note that 25% of participants completed the survey in a language other than English (though our final sample shared a high level of English-language proficiency), indicating the importance of making survey instruments available in multiple languages.

Language selected for survey participation

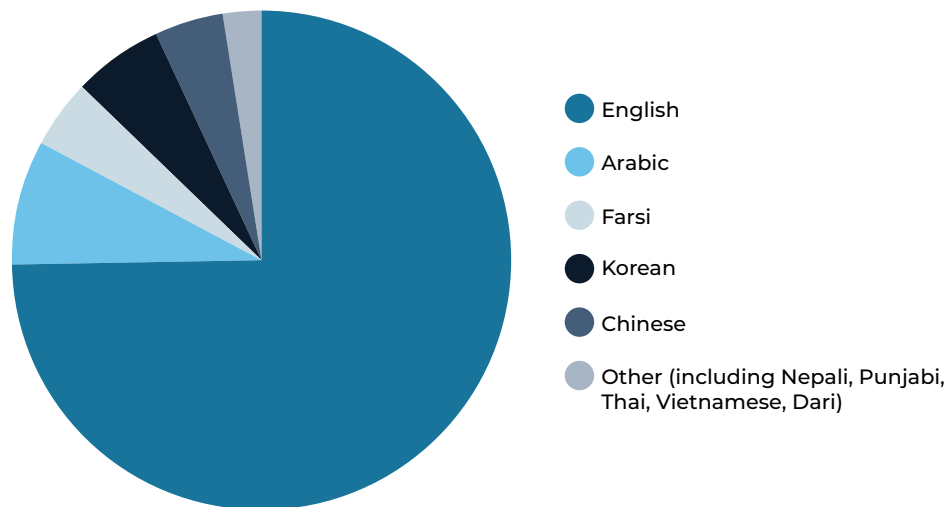


Figure 1: Language chosen for survey completion

DISTRIBUTION

The survey was launched on Tuesday 22 September 2020 and closed on Friday 20 November 2020. This survey was distributed and conducted online. Utilising Qualtrics software (licensed to Monash University) to create the survey, the link to the survey was shared via emails to professional networks (including HA members, MMIC's subscription members and the National Advocacy Group on Temporary Visa Holders Experiencing Domestic and Family Violence) and via social networking across Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.

SAMPLE

At the closing of the survey, there were a total of 2574 participants who had entered some data. However, there was a significant number of non-responses and non-valid responses, as we identify in Table 1. Therefore, for the purposes of analysis, we proceeded with a final sample of 1392 participants.

Table 1: Exclusion rationale for invalid responses

Invalid response type	Number of responses	Justification for exclusion
Gender: The respondent identified as a man.	35	This survey was focused on women and excluded any participant who identified as a man.
Limited responses: The respondent did not answer at least one of the questions indicating the following: citizenship, residency status, visa status or year of arrival; and/or The respondent did not complete at least 60% of the survey.	1,147	This survey was focused on migrant and refugee women. The data and analysis, which is key to informing advocacy, required knowledge about the participant’s status in Australia as a citizen or otherwise. This survey was designed so that participants were not forced to move to the next question. Participants who did not address at least 60% of the questions were removed from the final analysis to ensure a more complete picture of the data and that the intersection of the various themes explored in the survey could be assessed.

LIMITATIONS

Undertaking a national survey is a significant task and the global COVID-19 pandemic created further challenges. Regardless of the timing, this survey did not have a budget that would have allowed for printed surveys to be distributed and/or for telephone interviews to be undertaken. These methods are preferable in undertaking a large national survey of a significant population. The survey was in the field for eight weeks, but during a period that is acknowledged as having a particularly large impact on women in terms of workload (see Wood, Griffiths & Crowley 2021) and generally being time-poor: reducing potential participants’ ability to find the time to engage with the survey.

Conducting a survey online also necessarily limits access for women who are not easily able to access the internet. The consequence is a large sample, but not a representative sample. We acknowledge this throughout the report: the findings are not a comprehensive account of the experiences of all women from migrant and refugee backgrounds, and we hope that the circumstances underpinning future surveys will allow us to invest more into reaching a wider group.

The final limitation relates broadly to language. This survey sought to include all migrant and refugee women – a broad population ranging from newly arrived non-citizens to second- or third-generation women who might identify in this way. A key reflection as we move forward is to consider whether we need to target our future surveys to key subpopulations and/or adopt a communication plan that ensures the inclusive intent is understood by all future participants.

These limitations and reflections notwithstanding, this report offers an important and unique snapshot of a sample of women from across Australia who were willing to share their experiences with us. It offers key insights to build a more nuanced understanding of the diversity of migrant and refugee women’s experiences and its findings can be used to inform policy and other measures that will better support migrant and refugee women into the future.

PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Nationally, there are indicators of diversity that pertain to culture, language and ethnicity that are used across various studies; for example, the Australian Bureau of Statistics regularly collects information pertaining to ancestry, place of birth and language spoken at home (Webster et al., 2019). There is no single indicator or measure for migrant and refugee communities, and different research approaches capture different information: such as year of arrival, country of birth and language proficiency. In this survey, we captured different types of demographic information about our respondents, to enable us to have a more nuanced picture to contextualise the findings and inform the analysis. Given the absence of any population-level data to compare against our sample population, we draw on ABS and Home Affairs data in addition to large Australian Social Surveys to contextualise our sample.

According to the most recent data, approximately one-third of Australia's population was born overseas (ABS, 2020). Nearly 98% of our sample comprised women who were born overseas, while only 34 participants were born in Australia. Place of birth spanned over 125 countries. The top three countries reported were Iran, South Korea and India (see Figure 2 for the top 10 countries and see Technical Report for the complete list of countries of birth).

Top 10 Countries of Birth

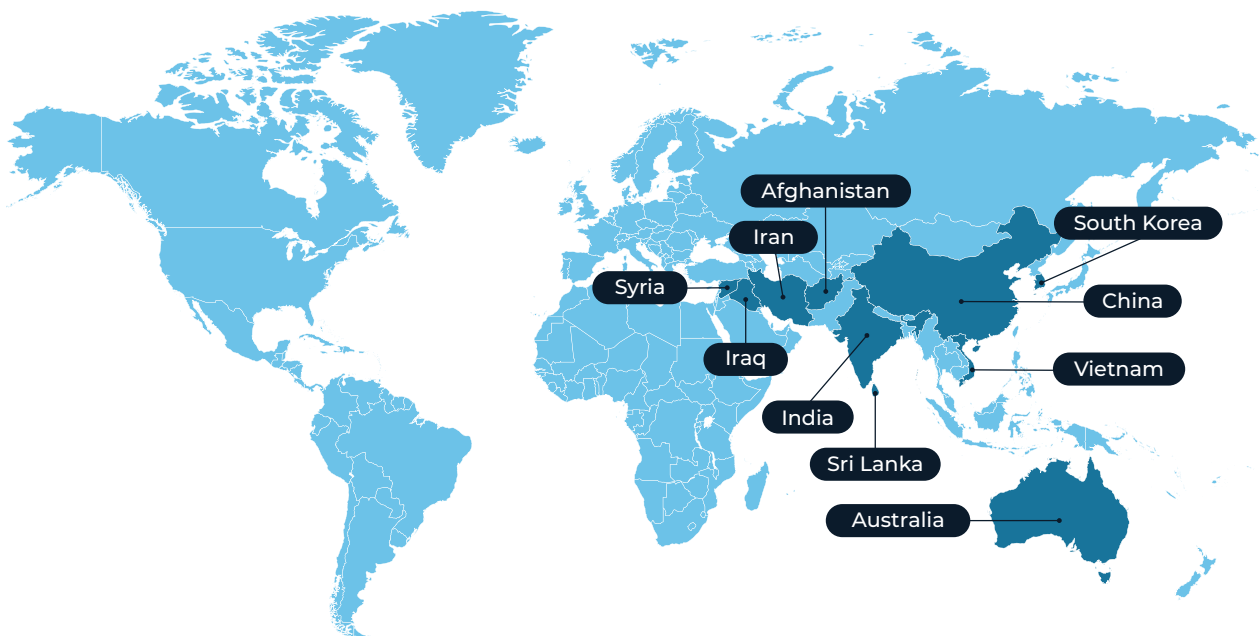


Figure 2: Top 10 countries of birth

TIME IN AUSTRALIA

Of those who were not born in Australia (n=34 born in Australia), most had arrived in Australia within the last 10 years (55%), as shown in Figure 3.



Figure 3: Length of time in Australia

CITIZENS, PERMANENT RESIDENTS AND TEMPORARY VISA HOLDERS

There were 781 (56%) respondents who indicated that they were Australian citizens (including 295 dual citizenship holders). Of the non-citizens, 367 (27%) were permanent residents, while 229 (17%) were temporary visa holders. This proportion of temporary visa holders in our sample is larger than the proportion within the general population (ABS, 2020).

The temporary visa holders were spread across 16 visa categories, and the six most frequent visa types are detailed in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Temporary visa: visa type

Visa category type (general description)	n	%
Student or training visa (primary holder)	54	23
Bridging visa	43	18
Spouse visa	32	14
Skilled working visa	27	12
Student visa (secondary holder)	18	8
Humanitarian/refugee visa	13	6

Other visa types held by respondents included 8 skilled working visas (secondary holder), 7 graduate visas (485), 7 temporary protection visas (of different types), 8 special category visas (44, New Zealand), 3 working holiday visas, 2 seasonal work visas, 1 visitor visa, and 1 person parent/family visa. There were 11 visa holders who were unclear, unsure or indicated a preference not to say.

LANGUAGE AND ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

In this sample, the majority of respondents (68%) rated their English-language proficiency as speaking ‘very well’ or ‘extremely well’. This reflects the broader sample; that is, many of the women who responded were citizens and tertiary-educated, which are both linked to requirements for high levels of English-language proficiency. Very few participants indicated that they spoke English ‘not well at all’ (4%) or ‘slightly well’ (9%).

That said, while proficiency was high, 25% of the sample responded to the survey in a language other than English. There are many reasons for this, but it affirms the high level of proficiency in multiple languages across this sample.



Figure 4: English-language proficiency

In addition to their own proficiency in spoken English, the majority of respondents also indicated that they understood spoken English either ‘extremely well’ (48%) or ‘very well’ (26%).

OTHER DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS

Age

Our sample ranged from 18 years of age to 89. The mean age of the sample was 41 and the median age was 39.

Table 3: Age

Age (years)	N	%
18–29	191	14
30–44	740	53
45–64	393	28
65 and over	68	5
Total	1,392	100

Relationship status

The majority of the participants were married or in a de facto relationship (69%). Approximately 11% were separated or divorced, 16% were single and just under 3% were widowed.

Table 4: Relationship status

Relationship status	Freq.	%
Single	228	16
Married	872	63
Partner/de facto	87	6
Separated	61	4
Divorced	100	7
Widowed	38	3
Other	2	0.4
Total	1,388	100

We asked participants who indicated that they were married whether ‘they gave full consent to’ the marriage: of 1019 responses, 27 (3%) said no. This finding points to larger questions to be explored elsewhere regarding the prevalence of forced marriage as defined under the Commonwealth Criminal Code (see Vidal, 2018).

Sexual identity

Approximately 5% of the sample identified as LGBTQI+ (n=60). However, it is worth noting that 148 (12%) chose ‘prefer not to say’.

Household

Most participants (68%) lived with their spouse (with or without children). Only a minority of participants lived alone (approximately 11%).

Table 5: Whom do you live with?

Whom do you live with?	n=	%
Alone	144	11
With friends or family	105	8
With spouse/partner	623	48
With spouse and children	258	20
With children only	143	11
With spouse and other family members	13	1
With spouse, other family members and children	13	1
Other	5	0.4
Total	1,304	100

Dependants

Of the sample, there was a clear split, with half having no dependants and half having dependants. The largest percentage (41%) had 1 or 2 children.

Dependent children under 18

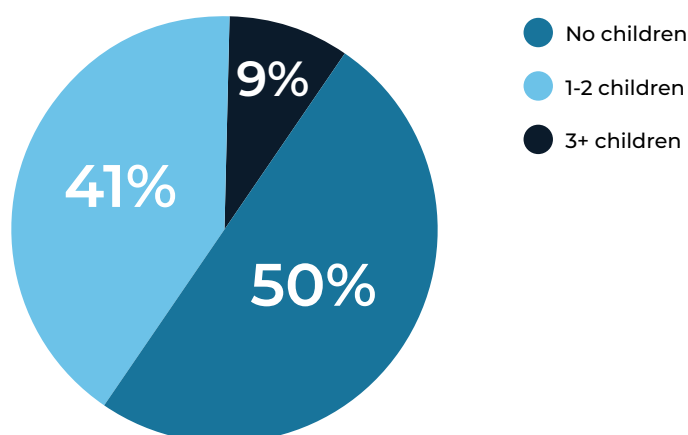


Figure 5: Dependent children under 18

Living with a disability

Just over 6% of participants reported living with a disability, compared to 18% of the general Australian population who live with a disability (ABS, 2019).

Location in Australia

Participants in this survey resided across Australia. Over 85% of the sample resided in urban areas. Participants were largely resident in three states: Victoria (45%) followed by New South Wales (28%) and Queensland (11%)

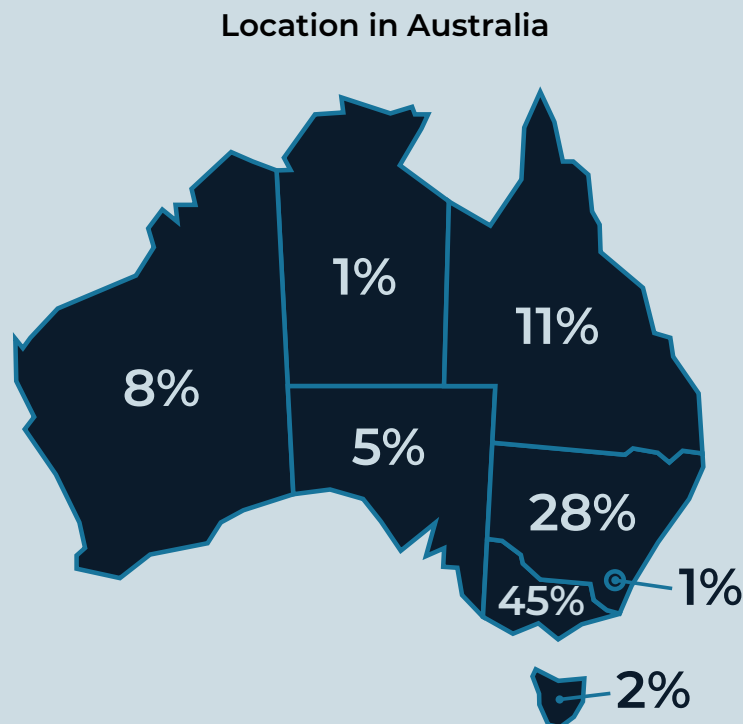


Figure 6: Location in Australia

We utilised the **Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA)** (ABS, 2016) to **examine whether our participants were clustered in disadvantaged areas**. We matched the SEIFA deciles¹ to participants' postcodes. These have been grouped into five quintiles, with the lowest quintile indicating the respondents living in areas with most disadvantage and the highest quintile indicating respondents living in areas with least disadvantage. Approximately 31% of the sample lived in areas with least disadvantage and 15% lived in postcodes with the most disadvantage.

¹ Deciles divide a distribution into 10 equal groups, with the lowest scoring 10% of postcodes given a 1, and so on.

Living in areas with concentrated disadvantage

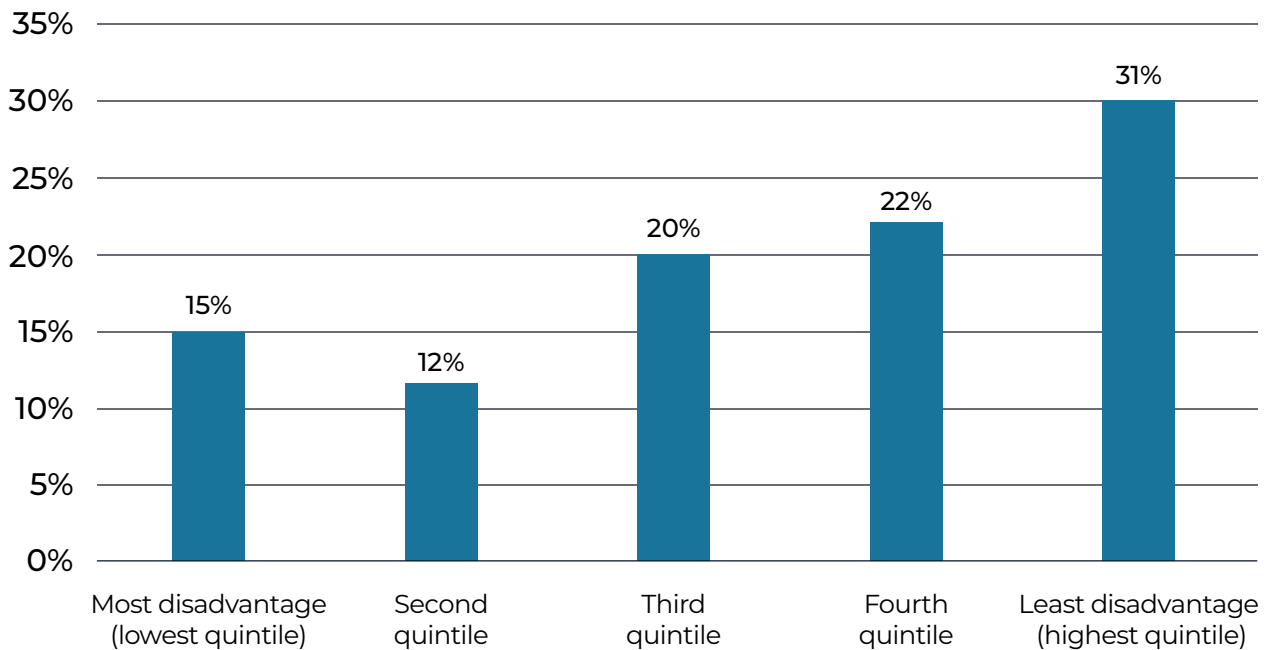


Figure 7: Percentage of the sample living in areas characterised by disadvantage

Educational background

Reflecting the generally low level of disadvantage in our sample, the level of educational attainment of our respondents was predominantly at the tertiary level: 71% of the sample had a bachelor's or postgraduate degree, while only 8% of the sample held high school qualifications only.

Religious affiliation and importance of religion

In our sample, the most commonly reported religious affiliation was with Christianity (43%), followed by Islam (21%). Approximately 9% of the sample were Buddhist, 7% Hindu and 5% comprised other religions², while 15% reported being agnostic.

In addition to asking about religious affiliation, we also asked all participants how important religion was in their daily life. Approximately 59% reported that religion was very important or important in their daily life, while 40% indicated that it was not important.

²'Other' includes Judaism (n=7), Bahai (n=17), Sikh (n=15) and Tao (n=3).

Importance of religion in daily life

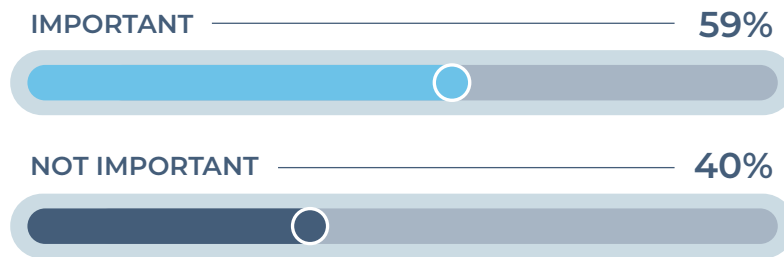


Figure 8: Importance of religion

We also considered responses to the importance of religion in their daily life based on religious affiliation and found that for those who identified as Christian or Islamic religion was more often 'very important', as detailed in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Importance of religion by religious affiliation

Importance of religion in daily life	Very important	Important	Not important
Buddhism (n=110)	16%	45%	38%
Christianity (n=517)	41%	34%	25%
Islam (n=245)	52%	30%	18%
Hinduism (n=82)	34%	38%	28%
Other (n=63)	24%	37%	40%

Life satisfaction

Finally, we also asked participants about their life satisfaction. The majority of participants in this study reported feeling satisfied with their life in general. Nearly 70% provided a score of 7 or higher (based on a ranking of 0–10, with 10 being the most satisfied). Looking across the age categories, we found that the highest life satisfaction was among those aged over 65 years old (95% high satisfaction). Those with Australian citizenship or a permanent visa had higher life satisfaction than those holding temporary visas. In relation to educational attainment, those with postgraduate degrees reported the highest life satisfaction. Participants who were in a relationship (partner, married or de facto) were the most satisfied with their life (72% high satisfaction).

Life satisfaction (n=1277)

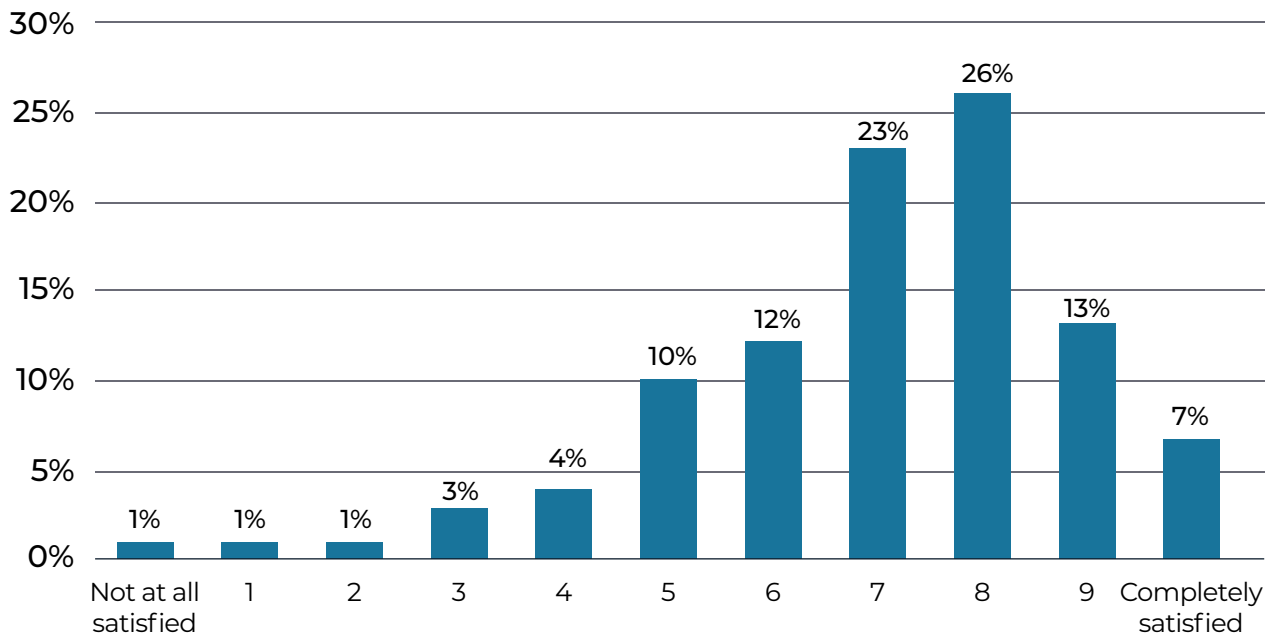


Figure 9: Life satisfaction

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE: ATTITUDES, EXPERIENCES AND THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

Across Australia the commitment to addressing domestic and family violence has been significant over the past decade, and is increasingly driven by a recognition of the need for a diverse understanding of the experience of DFV as well as nuanced responses that capture the needs and experiences of different populations. Major investigations, including the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence (2016) and Queensland's Not Now, Not Ever report (Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland 2015), have identified that migrant and refugee women have specific experiences and needs in the context of experiencing domestic and family violence. The National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010 – 2022 has also made specific commitments to migrant and refugee women, reflected in specific areas of action for implementation of the plan over the past decade. That said, it remains the case that there is limited evidence regarding the experiences of domestic and family violence for migrant and refugee women. In this survey, we sought to capture both the attitudes towards and the experiences of domestic and family violence among this cohort of women.

Capturing attitudes is important for a range of reasons: it offers important insights into views of forms of violence against women and dominant beliefs regarding who may be responsible, what course of action is expected and where lines may be drawn in relation to acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

This survey was also conducted at a time when Australia, and the world at large, was in the grip of COVID-19 and stay-at-home orders were in place in Victoria, and other restrictions remained in place across other states and territories to varying degrees. At the onset of COVID-19 the United Nations identified that, while responding to the pandemic was a priority, there was a clear and present threat that stay-at-home orders were fuelling an emerging shadow pandemic in the form of increased frequency and severity of domestic and family violence across the globe. This has been borne out in research in complex ways, and is particularly evident in the self-report data that is emerging and in the service support system data on help-seeking, rather than in formal reports to police (Boxall, Morgan & Brown, 2020; Pfitzner, Fitz-Gibbon & True, 2020). Emerging recorded-crime data has shown a 9% increase in family violence incidents, making this the highest on record in Victoria (CSA, 2021).³ In the analysis of experiences of DFV we also capture 2020 experiences in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

³Other available Australian crime data is limited on DFV for the period since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. BOS-CAR is limited to March and April 2020, but annual data is due to be released in June 2021.

ATTITUDES TO DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

There is ample evidence of the importance of understanding attitudes towards violence against women for the development of effective responses. This includes understanding the attitudes of migrant and refugee men and women in order to identify key barriers and issues that may need to be addressed in supporting women and working towards the reduction of violence against women (Webster et al., 2019). The recent research on community attitudes towards violence against women, the National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey [NCAS] (see Webster et al., 2019), was analysed with a focus on the views of a subset of the total sample: men and women from non-English-speaking countries (referred to as N-MESCs). This analysis identified that people born in non-English-speaking countries 'are exposed to many of the same factors contributing to negative attitudes towards gender equality and violence against women as people born in Australia' (Webster et al., 2019: 11; see also VicHealth, 2014; Webster et al., 2014, 2018). However, research has also shown that there are variations in attitudes between countries (see, for example, Pierotti, 2013; Pradubmook-Sherer & Sherer, 2011; Vandello et al., 2009; Waltermaurer, 2012). Given our spotlight on DFV, in this survey we included four questions that sought to capture attitudes towards DFV selected and adapted from the NCAS. These four attitudinal questions captured the four broad categories of attitudes that support violence against women: excusing perpetrators and holding women responsible; minimising violence against women; disregarding the need to gain consent; and mistrusting women's reports of violence (Webster et al., 2019: 12). In light of the scope of this survey, these questions were chosen to offer some insights into attitudes as a proxy measure against the broader NCAS study.

We explore attitudes in relation to the NCAS findings, and then based on age, religion and reported experience of DFV. Notably, there was a consistent intolerance for the absence of consent in sexual intercourse: of respondents who answered this question only 3% agreed (strongly agree or agree) that 'it is a man's right to have sex with his wife when he wants, even if she does not want to'. Where we saw higher frequencies of attitudes that support violence against women was in response to whether a woman who does not leave a situation of family violence is partly responsible for the abuse continuing. This was consistently the prompt most often agreed to, reflecting the NCAS findings for non-Australian *and* Australian-born men and women.

Generally, the findings shown in Table 7 point to an attitudinal position that sits between that of the Australian-born and non-main English-speaking countries (N-MESCs) samples of the most recent NCAS (Webster et al., 2019), though a key difference is that this survey was exclusively conducted with migrant and refugee women compared to the NCAS, which includes men and women.

Table 7: Attitudes to DFV

Attitudinal question/measure	% agree (SA/A)	NCAS 2017 (non-Aus.-born/n-MESCA women)	NCAS Aus.-born (men and women)
Domestic and family violence can be excused if, afterwards, the violent person genuinely regrets what they have done.	20	24	11
A lot of what is called domestic and family violence is really just a normal reaction to day-to-day stress and frustration.	16	24	18
A female victim who does not leave a situation of domestic or family violence is partly responsible for the abuse continuing.	34	47	28
It is a man's right to have sex with his wife when he wants, even if she does not want to.	3	N/A Adapted and not same question.	N/A Adapted and not same question.

Other research has found differently held views regarding consent based on country of birth, as reported by Webster et al. (2019) in relation to the NCAS 2017 findings. Importantly, here we do not examine attitudes based on factors such as region of birth, time spent in Australia or other factors that may indicate cultural influence or variability: such analyses are both methodologically complex and raise concerns regarding attribution for what may inform a response (see also Webster et al., 2019).

When examining attitudes according to age groups, we found limited differences, with the exception that the under 30 age group was least likely to agree that 'A female victim who does not leave a situation of domestic or family violence is partly responsible for the abuse continuing'.

In relation to attitudes based on religious affiliation, it is notable that those who identified as having no religion (including agnostic, atheist, none) were least likely to agree with any statement: that is, they consistently demonstrated an intolerance to excuses or justifications for domestic and family violence. And the women in our sample who identified as Muslim were consistently more likely to agree or strongly agree with statements that demonstrate a tolerance or justification for DFV, with 5% more women who identified as of Islamic faith agreeing with the statement that 'A female victim who does not leave a situation of domestic or family violence is partly responsible for the abuse continuing' (43% strongly agreed/agreed, compared to 38% of Hindu women, 30% of Christian women and 20% of those who identified as Buddhist).

We also considered whether attitudinal differences existed between those who reported an experience of DFV and those who did not, but there was no clear difference in attitudes between these two groups.

EXPERIENCES OF DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

Internationally, data on the prevalence of domestic and family violence demonstrates that this is a global phenomenon: 'Around one third of women worldwide have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner; and 18% have experienced such violence in the past 12 months' (UN Statistics Division, 2016).

It is well documented that domestic and family violence remains prevalent across Australia, notwithstanding the significant efforts and commitments made to reduce violence against women. The 2012 and 2016 ABS Public Safety Surveys, which captured data based on lifetime experiences and the 12 months preceding the survey, highlight the persistence of DFV. There is no clear data on prevalence for migrant and refugee women, which in part reflects the issues pertaining to who is included in this broad definition, as studies often use English-language proficiency as a measure of distinction. For example, the recent Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) study on domestic and family violence during COVID-19 undertook an analysis that focused on women who speak a language other than English at home – yet this is a limited measure that excludes many migrant and refugee women. Webster et al. (2019) and Vaughan et al. (2016) have noted that there is no quality or consistent data on the prevalence of violence within individual birthplace groups. Attributing an increased risk of domestic and family violence to women from non-English-speaking backgrounds requires care (Boxall, Morgan & Brown, 2020: 2; see also Kulwicksi et al., 2010; Maher & Segrave, 2018). There is, however, evidence from rigorous qualitative research demonstrating the particular issues that migrant and refugee women face, which must also be considered in efforts around the prevention of violence against women (Fisher, 2009; Ghafournia, 2011; Rees & Pease, 2006; Satyen et al., 2018; Vaughan et al., 2016; Zannettino, 2012). The current survey sought to explore experiences of domestic and family violence and to capture the full range of these experiences across a number of variables.

In this survey we adopt a slightly different categorisation of domestic and family violence behaviours from those used in other surveys. In Australia, the Personal Safety Survey (PSS) includes a whole range of behaviours as 'emotional abuse' (social control, financial abuse, verbal abuse, lying to one's family, threats to children, threats to pets, and damage or theft of property) (ABS, 2020a). In this vein, we adopted a categorisation that recognises behaviours that are threats to or hurt or damage someone or something other than the respondent (children, pets and property) and other controlling behaviours (such as social control) as controlling behaviours. Controlling behaviours, generally, are less likely to be criminalised actions. They may form part of a pattern of coercive control. However, our survey findings do not adequately capture the consistency or frequency of these behaviours as part of a pattern of abuse (see Elliot, 2017). Importantly, for the first time in a national study, we extend the definition of controlling behaviours to ask about controlling behaviours that specifically relate to migration – including visa status and the use of deception in border crossings, as discussed below.

General trends: experiences of DFV across the total sample

In our sample, 33% of respondents had experienced some form of DFV.

We examine three distinct components of DFV, as detailed below. Of those who had experienced any form of DFV, controlling behaviours was the most common:

- controlling behaviours (91%)
- violence towards others and/or property (47%)
- physical/sexual violence (42%).

Looking across the forms of DFV, of those who reported experiencing DFV, 46% (n=204) had experienced one type of harm, 32% (n=142) had experienced two types of harm and 22% (n=97) had experienced all three types of harm.

Half of the women in our sample with a DFV experience were aged between 30-44 years old (see Figure 10).

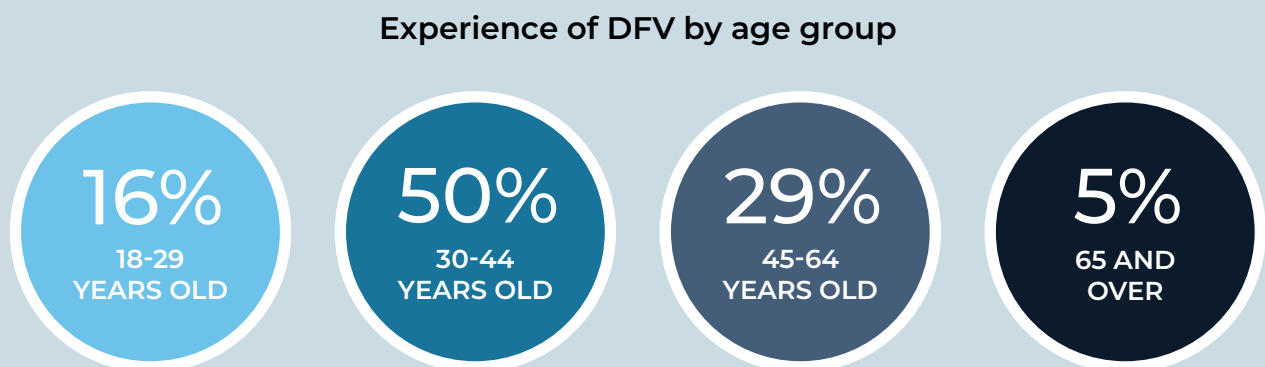


Figure 10: Experience of DFV by age group

Overall, women who lived in areas with the most disadvantage had experienced the highest concentration of DFV. 39% of those who lived in areas with the most socioeconomic disadvantage had experienced DFV (as defined by the SEIFA scale⁴), while 26% of those who lived in areas with the least socioeconomic disadvantage had experienced DFV. These findings are consistent with the ABS PSS (2020), which found that women who live in the lowest quintile were the most likely to experience DFV.

⁴Refer to page 23 for further explanation on the use of SEIFA.

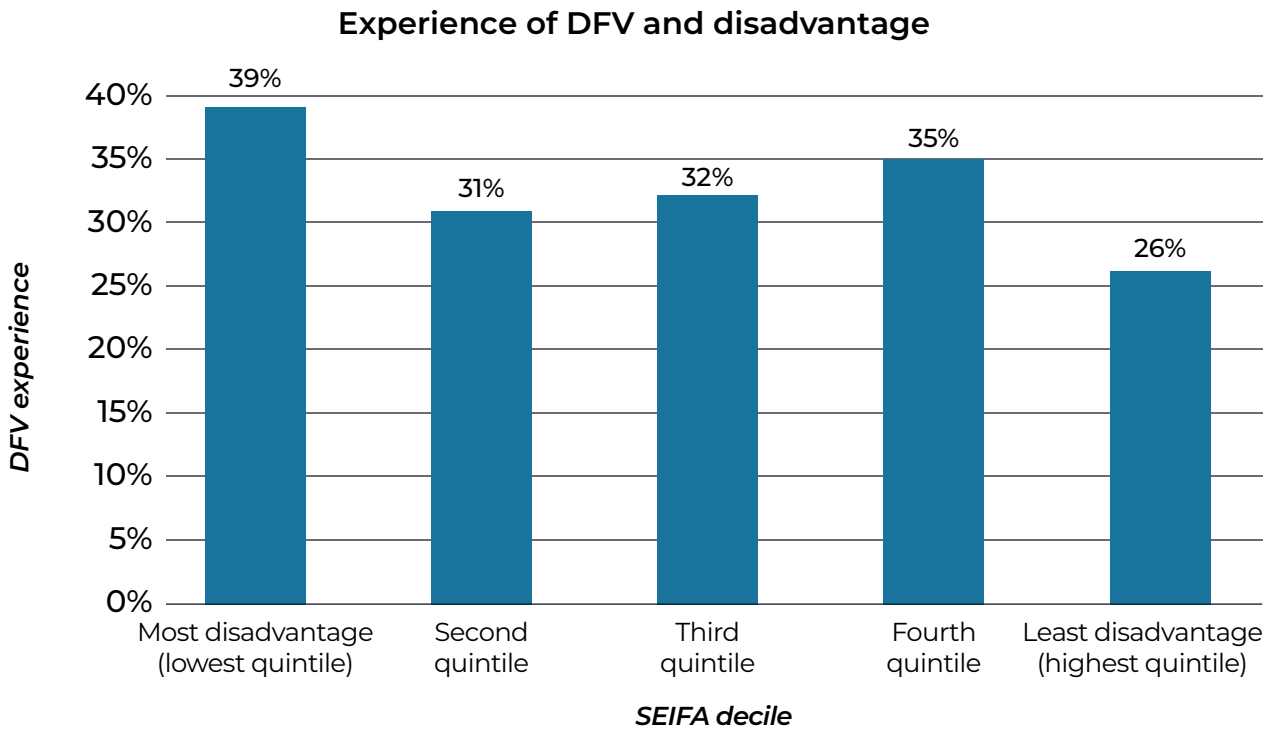


Figure 11: Experience of DFV by level of disadvantage

When we examined the residency status of our sample, 40% of temporary visa holders had experienced DFV, 32% of Australian citizens had experienced DFV and 28% of permanent visa holders had experienced DFV.

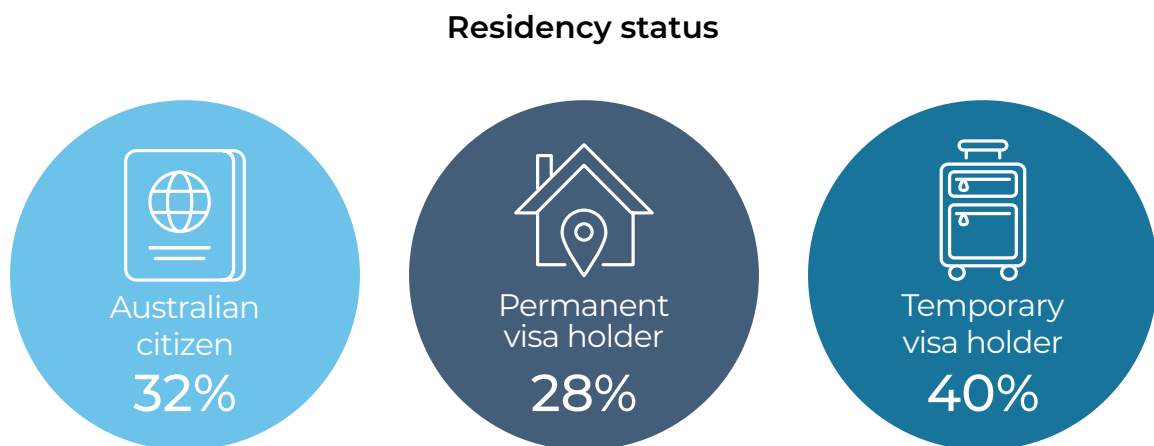


Figure 12: Experience of DFV by residency status

Perpetrators of DFV

We captured the perpetrator of each form of DFV we asked about, across physical and sexual violence, harm to others and property and controlling behaviours. Consistently the main and only perpetrator was a former or current male partner (see Table 8, 11 and 14 below). It is known that some women are abused by more than one perpetrator (Segrave 2017) and so for participants who indicated that more than one perpetrator was involved, we asked who the main perpetrator of harm or abuse had been in the last five years. 35% percent indicated that the main perpetrator was a family member, 23% reported an in-law, 17% reported a former partner, and 7% indicated that it was their current partner. This suggests that in some cases DFV is being perpetrated predominantly by non-intimate or former intimate partners, as has been reported previously (Segrave, 2017; Segrave & Pfitzner, 2020), and highlights the importance of understanding the broad range of violent and controlling behaviours that members of a larger family unit may enact in the context of DFV.

Coercive control

In this study we did not explicitly explore coercive control, which is a concept that highlights the ongoing, routine pattern of abuse in all its forms and has most often been used within the context of an intimate partner relationship (or former relationship) (see Buzawa, Buzawa & Stark, 2017), or Monash Gender and Family Violence Prevention Centre, 2019, for an overview). However, we can establish that there are patterns of violence evident in this study, following the approach of Boxall and Morgan (2021).

We asked participants about the frequency of any forms of DFV reported in the last five years. Of the total, 13% reported that these behaviours occurred frequently, 11% reported that the behaviours occurred often, and the majority of participants reported that these behaviours occurred rarely or sometimes.

Frequency of any form of reported DFV

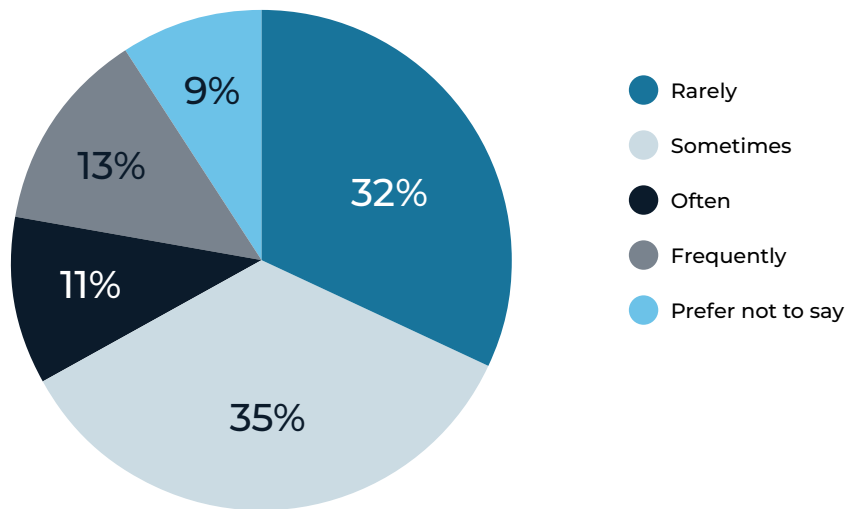


Figure 13: Frequency of DFV

We can establish from these data that, while just over 30% of those who had experienced DFV experienced it only rarely, the majority of the sample were potentially experiencing patterns of DFV to varying degrees.

We offer two important conclusions in relation to this. First, we know that these DFV behaviours and practices, including coercive control, are perpetrated not only by former or current intimate partners, but also by others. This raises important considerations for interventions focused on coercive control. Second, as detailed below in relation to controlling behaviours, we found that a much broader definition of controlling behaviours is critical to understanding the way in which control is exercised and leveraged in different contexts.

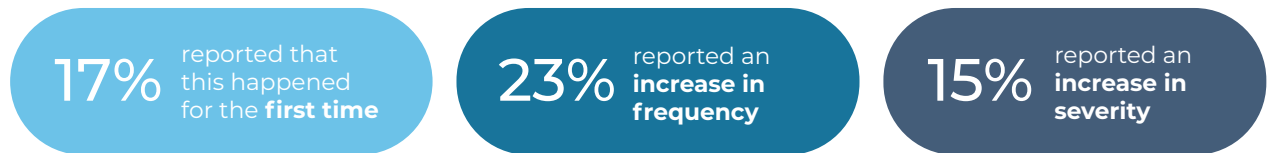
COVID-19 pandemic and DFV

The only national study of DFV during COVID-19, the AIC’s survey (Boxall, Morgan & Brown, 2020) conducted in May 2020, asked about DFV that had occurred in the three months prior to completing the survey (i.e., February to May 2020). The survey findings revealed that, during that period, 5% of women had experienced physical or sexual violence from a current or former cohabiting partner, and 12% reported experiencing at least one form of emotionally abusive, harassing or controlling behaviour.

In our survey, we specifically asked about ‘the period since March 2020 with the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns’, up until the survey was conducted in September–November 2020. Our findings indicated higher rates to those documented by the AIC, though our approach to defining violence was slightly different, and also captured three aspects of change during this time: we asked about first-time experiences, as well as changes to severity and frequency.

Overall, we found that, during the period since March 2020, with the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns, of those who had experienced DFV:

- 17% (n=75) reported that this happened for the first time
- 23% (n=105) reported that the behaviour increased in frequency
- 15% (n=64) reported that the behaviour increased in severity.



DFV: physical and sexual violence

In this survey, 40% of respondents (n=179/443) who had experienced DFV had specifically experienced physical and/or sexual violence, including that someone:

- threatened to hurt you with their fist or anything else that could have hurt you (knife, object, gun or something else)
- hurt you with their fist or anything else that could have hurt you (such as kicking, biting, slapping, pushing, choking, hitting, throwing an object at you, using a knife or another weapon)
- forced you into any unwanted sexual activity, by threatening you, holding you down, hurting you in some way or via some other means (including threatening withdrawal of visa or threatening to report you to Immigration).

Of those who had experienced physical and sexual violence, physical assault was the most frequently reported form of harm (73% of those who reported physical harm were assaulted). Critically, in relation to physical assault (threats to hurt and hurting the respondent physically), family members other than the respondent's spouse were most often the primary perpetrator.

Table 8: Forms of physical and/or sexual violence

Forms of physical and/or sexual violence	Perpetrator:			No experience of physical or sexual violence	Prefer not to say
	Spouse only	Other family members or in-laws	Spouse and family members		
Threatened to hurt you with their fist or anything else that could have hurt you (knife, object, gun or something else).	41%	20%	3%	33%	3%
Hurt you with their fist or anything else that could have hurt you (such as kicking, biting, slapping, pushing, choking, hitting, throwing an object at you, using a knife or another weapon).	48%	22%	3%	21%	6%
Forced you into any unwanted sexual activity, by threatening you, holding you down, hurting you in some way or via some other means (including threatening withdrawal of visa/report you to Immigration).	35%	6%	0%	55%	4%

Of those who had experienced physical and sexual violence, 21% reported that these behaviours occurred frequently, 14% reported that the behaviours occurred often, while the majority of participants reported that these behaviours occurred rarely or sometimes.

Table 9: Frequency of physical and/or sexual violence

Frequency of physical and/or sexual violence	n=	%
Rarely	45	26
Sometimes	58	34
Often	25	15
Frequently	37	21
Prefer not to say	8	5
Total	173	100

There were significant differences in the age distribution of those who had experienced physical and/or sexual violence. Sixteen percent of those under 30 had experienced physical and sexual violence, followed by 14% of 30–44 year olds, 12% of those aged 45–64 years, and 10% of those aged 65 and over.

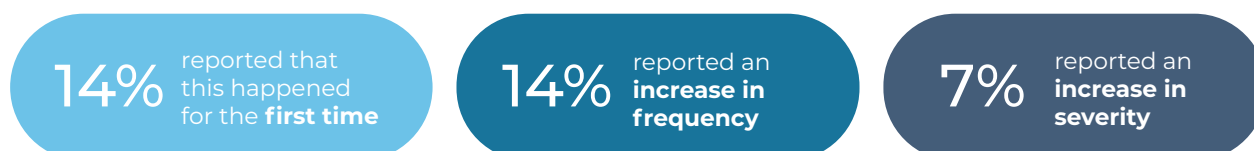
Approximately 20% of temporary visa holders had experienced physical and/or sexual violence, while 14% of Australian citizens and 11% of permanent visa holders reported experiencing physical and/or sexual violence.

Table 10: Physical and/or sexual violence by residency status

Residency status	Australian citizen %	Permanent visa holder %	Temporary visa holder %
Experienced some form of physical and/or sexual violence	14	11	18
Did not experience some form of physical and/or sexual violence	86	89	82

COVID-19 impact on physical/sexual violence

Of those who had experienced physical and/or sexual violence, 14% (n=25) reported that this happened for the first time during the period since March 2020, with the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns, and that such incidents also increased in frequency (14% n=25) and severity (7% n=13).



DFV: harm to others and property

We examined harm that was directed towards others and/or property, as reported by respondents. Of the survey respondents who had experienced some form of DFV, 47% (n= 198) had experienced these additional harms.

As detailed in Table 11, damage or destruction of property was the most frequently reported harm, followed by harm/threatened harm against someone close to the respondent, and harm to or threats to harm a pet.

Importantly, in this category of harm, other family members were reported as the main perpetrator as often as a spouse/former spouse was the main perpetrator, in relation to harming others and harming pets.

Table 11: Forms of harm to others and property

Form of harm to others/property	Perpetrator:			No experience in terms of harm to others and property	Prefer not to say
	Spouse only	Other family members or in-laws	Spouse and family members		
Harms, or threatens to harm, someone close to you.	33%	27%	5%	31%	4%
Harms, or threatens to harm, your pets.	11%	10%	1%	75%	4%
Damages or destroys your possessions or property.	46%	26%	4%	23%	2%

Of those who had an experience of harm towards others, 23% reported that these behaviours occurred frequently, 14% reported that the behaviours occurred often, while the majority of participants reported that these behaviours occurred rarely or sometimes.

Table 12: Frequency of harm towards others

Frequency of harms to others	n=	%
Rarely	45	24
Sometimes	56	30
Often	27	14
Frequently	43	23
Prefer not to say	16	9
Total	187	100

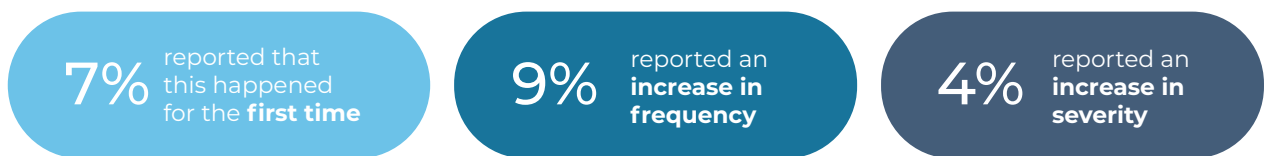
We then turned to explore the residency status of those who had experienced harms towards others and/or property. Similar to physical and sexual violence, 20% of temporary visa holders had experienced violence towards others (i.e., at a slightly higher rate than others, given their proportion of the sample), followed by 17% of Australian citizens and 10% of permanent visa holders.

Table 13: Harm to others and property and residency status

Residency status	Australian citizen %	Permanent visa holder %	Temporary visa holder %
Had experienced violence towards others	17	10	20
Had not experienced violence towards others	83	90	80

COVID-19 impact on harm to others and property

Of those who had experienced harm towards others and/or property, 7% (n=27) reported that this happened for the first time during the period since March 2020. Further, 9% (n=39) reported that this increased in frequency and 4% (n=18) reported that this increased in severity in this same period.



DFV: controlling behaviours

For this aspect of DFV we adopted a broad understanding of controlling behaviours, and expanded existing survey instruments to include, for the first time, key measures of specific forms of control that related directly to the respondents' migration/visa status. As previous reports have indicated (Segrave & Pfitzner, 2020; Segrave, 2017), it is well recognised that temporary visa holders have specific experiences in relation to DFV, including the leveraging of their visa status by perpetrators to exert control over and to abuse women. We offer an analysis of the general forms of controlling behaviours, and then a more detailed account of the migration-related behaviours, as the latter were more likely to be experienced by the temporary visa holders in our study because some (not all) of these actions are specific to someone whose migration status is precarious and/or dependent on the perpetrator of violence and abuse.

The findings raise important considerations concerning the conceptualisation of controlling behaviour, including that it is indicative of a pattern of coercive control.

Overall, the most common DFV harm reported in our sample was controlling behaviours. Of those who reported experiencing DFV, 91% (n=402) had experienced controlling behaviours. The controlling behaviours included in this survey were:

General controlling behaviours

- Tries to limit your contact with family or friends.
- Puts you down or calls you names to make you feel bad.
- Controls finances or uses money to threaten, intimidate or control you in some way.

Migration-related controlling behaviours

- Threatens to report you to Immigration or have you deported.
- Threatens to withdraw sponsorship.
- Threatens to prevent other family members from accessing visas or travelling to Australia.
- Threatens to have you deported while your child/ren would remain in Australia.
- Threatens to send your children to another country to be cared for by extended family.
- Threatens your children in some other way in relation to their visa or your visa and where they will live and grow up.
- Tricks or coerces you to return to your country of origin.

When we examined who was perpetrating controlling behaviour, it was predominantly the current or former spouse of the respondent. Notably, approximately one-third of the participants reported the experience of put-downs and name-calling by other family members and/or in-laws.

Table 14: Forms of general controlling behaviour

Forms of general controlling behaviour	Perpetrator:			No experience of this form of controlling behaviour	Prefer not to say
	Spouse only	Other family members or in-laws	Spouse and family members		
Tries to limit your contact with family or friends.	28%	22%	4%	44%	2%
Puts you down or calls you names to make you feel bad.	48%	28%	8%	13%	3%
Controls finances or uses money to threaten, intimidate or control you in some way.	33%	16%	4%	44%	4%

Of those who had an experience of controlling behaviours, 14% reported that these behaviours occurred frequently, 12% reported that the behaviours occurred often, while the majority of participants reported that these behaviours occurred rarely or sometimes.

Table 15: Frequency of controlling behaviours

Frequency of controlling behaviours	n=	%
Rarely	133	30
Sometimes	134	35
Often	47	12
Frequently	54	14
Prefer not to say	31	8
Total	379	100

In the sample of participants for this survey, temporary visa holders were the most likely to experience controlling types of behaviour:

“36% of TVHs reported at least one controlling behaviour compared to 29% of Australian citizens and 27% of permanent visa holders.”

When examining migration-specific controlling behaviours, 8% of our total sample reported at least one of these behaviours. Again, temporary visa holders were the most likely to experience this, with 13% of temporary visa holders reporting migration-specific controlling behaviours, followed by 9% of permanent visa holders and 5% of Australian citizens.

Details of controlling behaviour

Limiting contact with family and friends & technology-facilitated control

We asked specific questions about the types of behaviours that were being experienced based on the three broad types of controlling behaviours outlined earlier. Of the 402 participants who had experienced controlling behaviours, 54% reported that the perpetrator limited their contact with friends and/or family. The most reported behaviour was the perpetrator making decisions on if/when the participant could attend family events (14%), demanding to know where the participant was at all times (13%) and making decisions regarding travel to see family (10%).

Controlling finances or using money to threaten, intimidate or control you in some way

Previous research on DFV has consistently revealed the prevalence of controlling finances and economic abuse. Of those in our sample who reported controlling behaviours, 56% reported that financial control was a part of their experience. We examined the details of how financial control was exercised, and found that in our sample most common was the denial of or limiting access to money (20%).

Table 16: Details of forms of financial control

Experience (multiple selection)	% of 402
Demanding money or assets as part of a cultural practice of exchange in marriage (i.e. dowry abuse, bride price etc.).	7%
Demanding assets or money from your family.	6%
Not giving you independent access to money because you are a housewife/homemaker.	20%
Limiting your access to family business income even though you help with the business.	9%
Imposing on you a debt or cost related to immigration processes (e.g. being told you have to pay back visa-related costs).	7%
Other	15%

Migration-related controlling behaviours

When we examined specific migration-related controlling behaviours that had occurred over the past five years, we found that there was a consistent presence of threats and, unsurprisingly, these were most often experienced by temporary visa holders.

Migration-related controlling behaviour

(n=number of participants who gave a yes response to the listed behaviour)



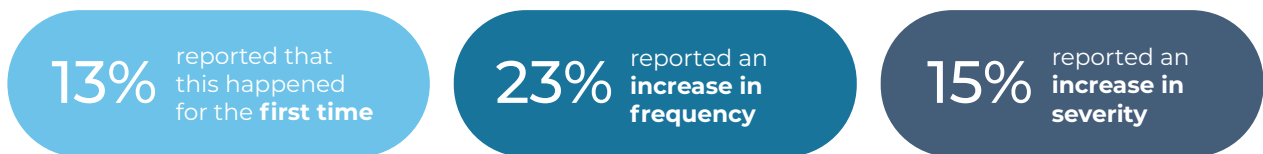
Figure 14: Items in migration-related controlling behaviour

We also asked whether these threats were carried out, and 25% of participants said yes.

Given that we asked about the utilisation of threats pertaining to visa status specifically, we also sought to understand respondents' views on their rights in Australia. We asked all participants who were temporary visa holders and/or who had indicated that they had experienced migration-related controlling behaviours about their confidence in their visa rights in Australia. Notably only 22% were confident in relation to knowing the visa they held and their rights connected to that visa in Australia.

COVID-19 impact on controlling behaviours

Of those who had experienced controlling behaviours, 13% (n=53) reported that this happened for the first time during the period since March 2020, with the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns. Further, 23% (n=90) reported that this increased in frequency and 15% (n=59) reported that this increased in severity.



DFV AND HELP-SEEKING

We did not ask about help-seeking during COVID-19 specifically, but we did capture help-seeking behaviour generally. Boxall, Morgan and Brown (2020: 1) found that 'many women, particularly those experiencing more serious or complex forms of violence and abuse, reported safety concerns were a barrier to help-seeking' during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We asked participants who had experienced any form of DFV whether they had told anyone about the abuse or threats they had experienced, and 52% indicated that they had, while 40% indicated that they had not (the remaining participants indicated that they did not know/preferred not to answer).

In asking this and reporting the findings here, we must note at the outset that we cannot clearly determine from the findings any clear patterns of non-disclosure. For example, while there are some indications regarding controlling behaviour and non-disclosure, there are many other factors to consider in relation to non-reporting or disclosing. These findings highlight the importance of continuing to look closely at the reasons why women may choose not to talk about their experiences and, in particular, whom they choose to disclose to and the impact that may have in relation to securing their safety (see also Boxall, Morgan & Brown, 2020).

We asked those who said that they had told someone about their experience whom they had talked to. Predominantly it was friends or family, followed by a health professional (not a GP), then a GP/doctor, and then police, as detailed in Figure 15.

Whom participants told about their experience of DFV

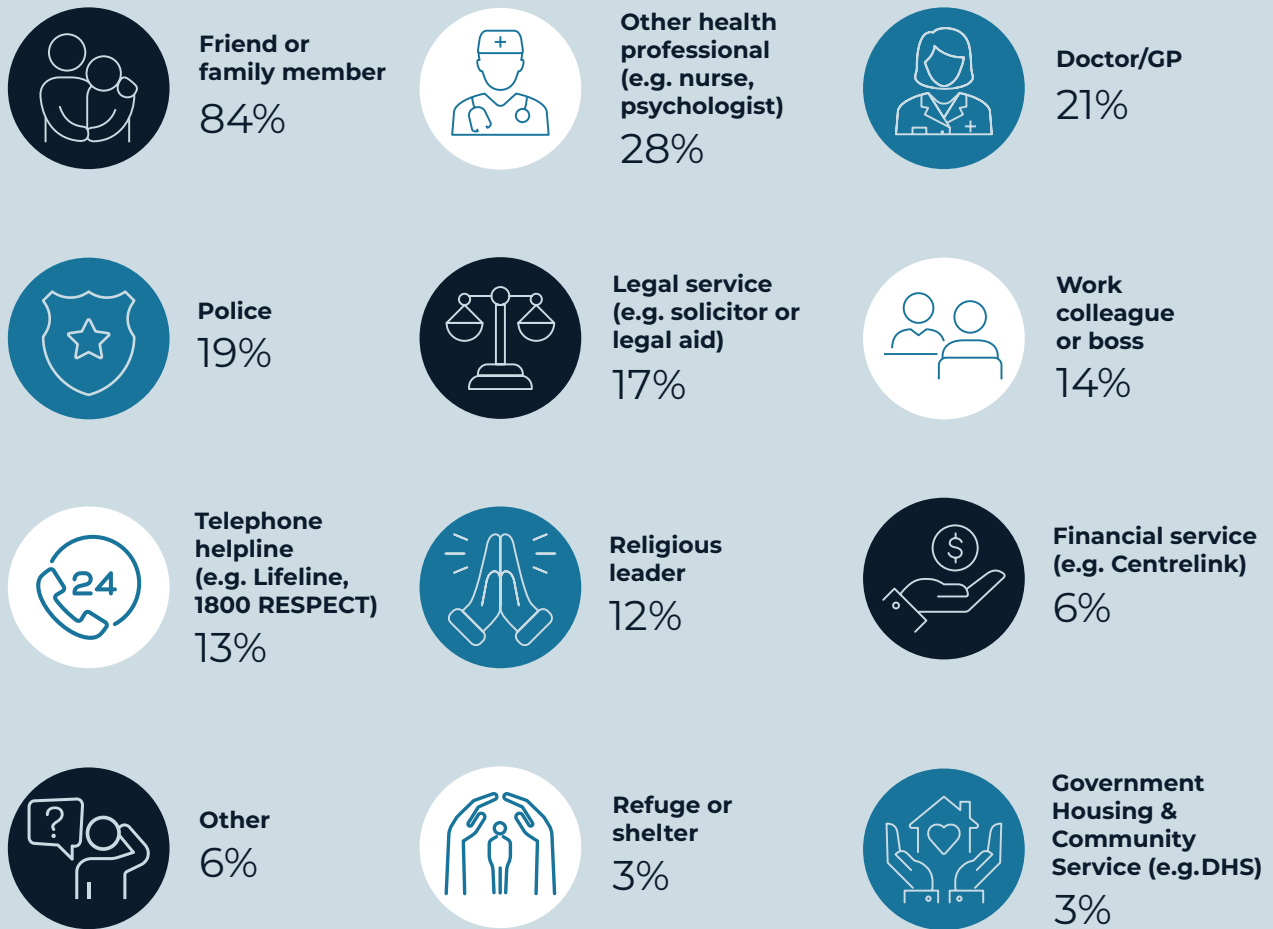


Figure 15: Disclosure to person/s about experience of DFV

These findings highlight the importance of family and friends and trusted health professionals as sources of support and assistance for women experiencing DFV. While a large proportion of the women in this study identified as religious (75%) and many of those stated that religion was important in their daily life, most did not turn to religious leaders to share their experience of DFV.

Approximately 40% who had experienced some form of DFV did not share their experience with anyone. We therefore asked these women to indicate why they had not shared their DFV experience with others.

Reason for not disclosing DFV

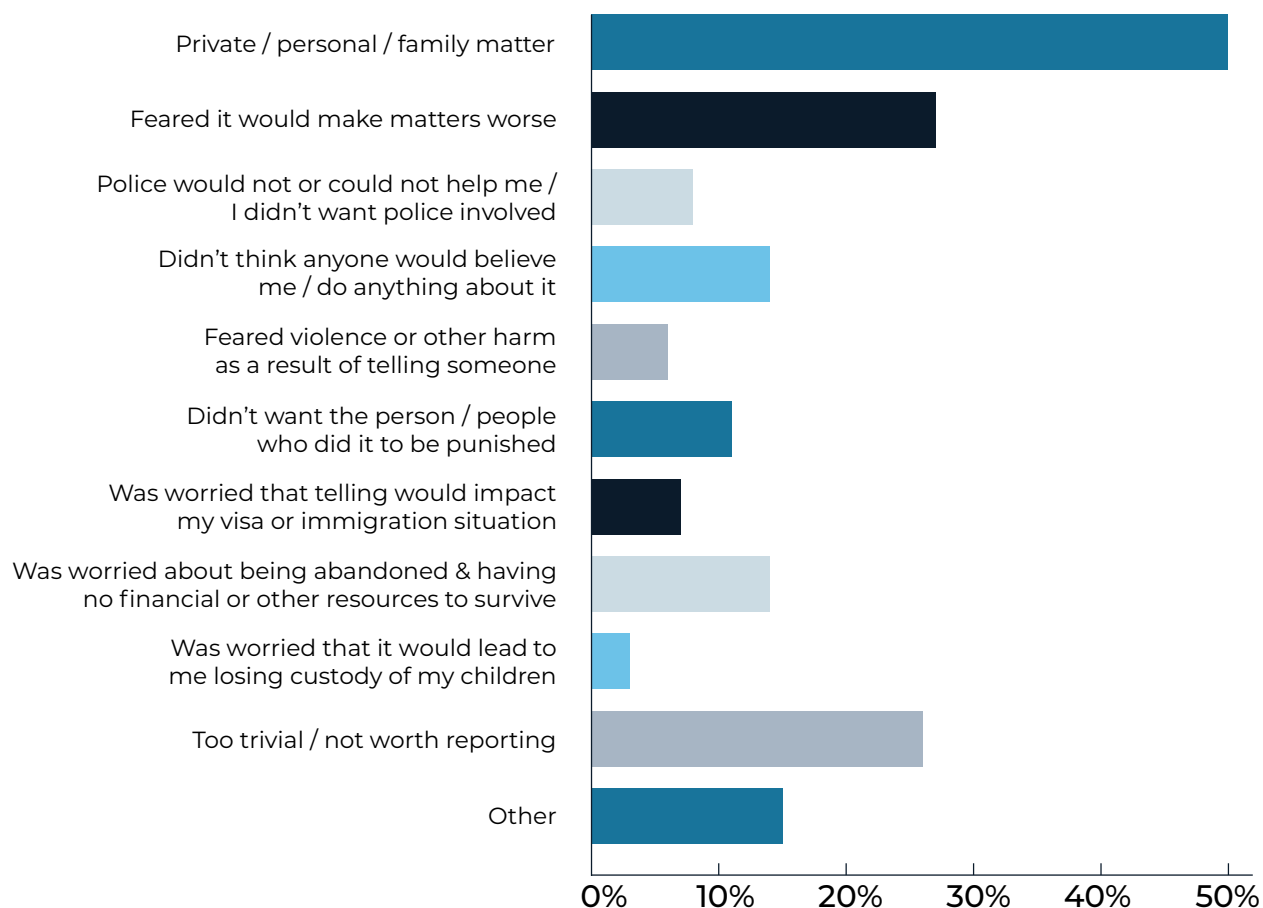


Figure 16: Reasons for not telling anyone about experience/s of DFV

For half of the participants who did not disclose their experience of DFV, the reason they gave for this was that the incident was a personal or private matter. This was followed by 27% of women reporting they feared disclosing their experience of DFV would make things worse.

Another 26% of respondents indicated that they did not report because the experience was 'too trivial or not worth reporting'. When we looked at this group of respondents and the form of DFV they had experienced, the majority of those who believed the experience was too trivial had reported experiencing only controlling behaviour and not the other forms of harm captured in the survey.

We asked the participants who had told someone about the DFV whether doing so led to a change in the perpetrator's behaviour. For 20% the response was that 'things improved and remain much better', while for 40% the disclosure did not change anything in the perpetrator's behaviour, and for 7% it resulted in further harm or abuse. Sharing experiences and disclosing violence is not always done in order to achieve or change something necessarily, but there are important and ongoing lessons to be learned about understanding how best to support women who disclose to friends or family and to provide safety and support in that setting that privileges a woman's needs, priorities and views of what is more likely to keep her safe.

VICTIMISATION, HELP-SEEKING AND TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS

This section of the report covers a broad range of issues related to security and safety: from experiences of victimisation, to attitudes towards police and procedural justice and reported trust in institutions. These findings offer important insights about where the trust in and legitimacy of institutions are high and can be cultivated in positive ways, as well as highlighting areas of concern where trust may be low and/or absent.

EXPERIENCES OF VICTIMISATION

Prior to the collection of incident data on DFV, women's victimisation was notably lower in official statistics than men's. With the recent focus on DFV and the regular reporting of these incidents in police data, the gap between women's and men's reported experiences of victimisation has been significantly reduced (Cooper & Obolenskaya, 2021). The aim of this survey was to understand DFV experiences among migrant women in addition to their experiences of other types of victimisation in order to capture the full extent of harm experienced by this group of women.

There is very little known about migrants' experiences of victimisation in the Australian context (Bowling & Phillips, 2002; Collins, 2007). This is partly due to the absence of annual or even bi-annual victimisation surveys that track victimisation experiences across the population. In the last International Crime Victimization Survey conducted in Australia in 2004, the results indicated that those who speak a language other than English at home were at lower risk of assault and threatening behaviours (Johnson, 2005). Crime statistics in Australia do not regularly provide information on language spoken at home for victims of crime. Thus, although we cannot directly compare migrant and non-migrant experiences of general victimisation types, our current survey demonstrates that migrant women do experience a range of harmful incidents. As we discuss later in this section, a unique feature of these victimisation experiences is that a significant number of participants perceived the incidents as motivated by bias and/or prejudice.

Victimisation experience by crime type

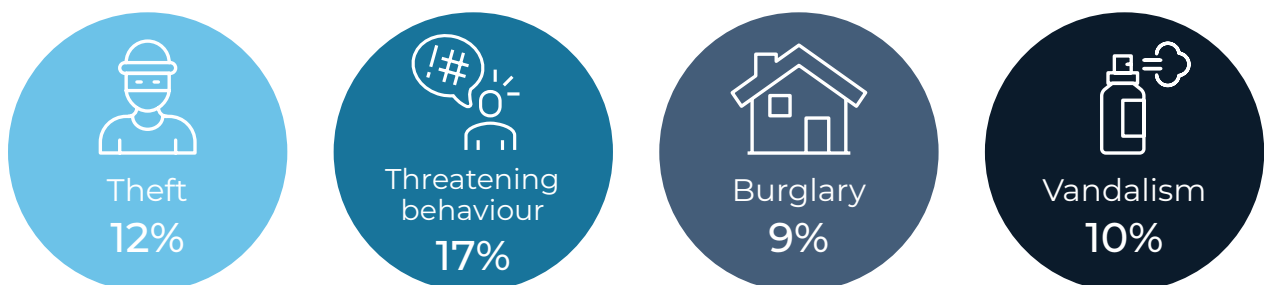


Figure 17: Victimization experience by crime type

Of our sample, 28% (n=385) had experienced some form of victimisation. Of those who had experienced victimisation, 12% (n=166) had experienced more than one type of victimisation.

When those who had experienced victimisation were asked about their most recent experience across four types of crime, threatening behaviour (n=158, 45%) was the most commonly reported, followed by theft (n=72, 21%), burglary (n= 75, 21%) and vandalism (n=46, 13%).

Of those respondents reporting a victimisation experience, 86% (n=321) reported that their most recent experience had occurred in Australia, while 14% (n=53) reported that this had happened outside Australia.

Approximately 14% of participants (n=191) had experienced both DFV victimisation along with other victimisation types (threatening behaviour, theft, burglary and vandalism). Yet looking across DFV and general victimisation, DFV was the most commonly reported experience of victimisation by participants in our sample.

Hate crimes: Crimes motivated by bias and/or discrimination

Approximately 40% of those who had experienced a non-DFV form of victimisation believed this to be a bias-motivated incident, with an additional 20% reporting they were uncertain whether bias was a motivating factor. This figure is higher than previously reported in other studies. For example, the most recent Mapping Social Cohesion survey in Australia found that 18% of the sample reported experiences of discrimination (Markus, 2021) and Wickes and colleagues (2020) found that 17% of their sample reported experiencing bias-motivated crime. This is most likely due to the under-representation of migrant women in these surveys.

The most common type of incident perceived to be motivated by bias or discrimination was the experience of threatening behaviour, with 60% of those who reported threatening behaviour indicating that the incident was motivated by bias or discrimination.

Table 17: Type of crime and motivation by bias and discrimination

Type of crime	Not motivated by bias or discrimination	Motivated by bias or discrimination	Unsure of motivation
Theft (n=149)	45%	33%	22%
Threatening behaviour (n=219)	26%	60%	15%
Burglary (n=116)	57%	21%	22%
Vandalism (n=130)	40%	40%	20%

As found in other national surveys, participants born in North Africa and the Middle East were the most likely to perceive their victimisation to be motivated by bias or discrimination (21%), followed by those from South-East Asia (19%). This aligns with recent national surveys that reveal that the COVID-19 pandemic saw a rise in racism and discrimination (Markus, 2021).

Bias-motivated crime by region of birth

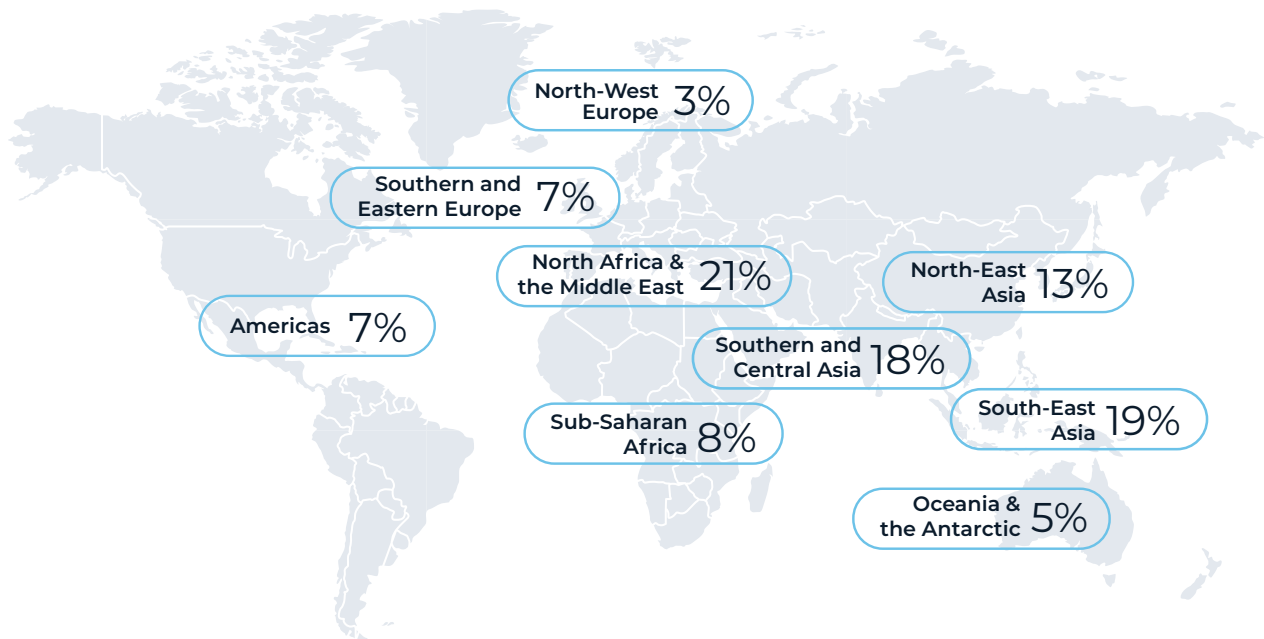


Figure 18: Participants who had experienced bias-motivated crime by region of birth

Of those who reported bias or discrimination as a motive, 37% were Christian, 20% were Muslim and 15% were agnostic/atheist/not religious.

Those who reported bias or discrimination as a motive behind their victimisation were likely to be women between the ages of 30 and 44 years. Over half (56%) of the women in this age category reported their most recent victimisation was motivated by bias.

Approximately 10% of those reporting a bias-motivated crime (n=14) identified as LGBTQI+. Further, those who reported victimisation motivated by bias were more likely to live in areas characterised by greater advantage.

Table 18: Bias-motivated crime and level of disadvantage

	Most disadvantage ----- Least disadvantage					Total
	First quintile	Second quintile	Third quintile	Fourth quintile	Fifth quintile	
Experienced a bias-motivated crime (n=138)	17%	11%	20%	25%	27%	100
Had not experienced a bias-motivated crime (n=142)	12%	11%	23%	23%	32%	100
Unsure (n=69)	23%	7%	26%	17%	26%	100

ATTITUDES TOWARDS POLICE

Residents' engagement with police is a critical component of crime prevention. When residents hold positive attitudes towards the police this can reduce their concern about crime and increase residents' willingness to intervene when they observe problems in their neighbourhood. Studies show that people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds often have different views about the role and legitimacy of the police from those views held by others (Murphy & Cherney, 2012). These perceptions may be shaped by previous experiences of authoritative policing in their country of origin and/or biased and discriminatory behaviour from police in the country in which they currently reside (Weber, 2013). In this survey, we provide insights into the perceptions of and attitudes towards police and policing among migrant women. We focus on perceived procedural justice, police legitimacy, police–community engagement and willingness to cooperate with the police.

PROCEDURAL JUSTICE

When individuals perceive the practices of police to be fair and just they perceive the police more positively. Perceptions of procedural justice reflect an individual's views on how people are treated by the police and how police make decisions. These perceptions can be informed by personal experiences, but also by vicarious experiences through others in the community. It has been argued that procedural justice is particularly important for the relationship between police and marginalised groups (Murphy & Mazerolle, 2018; Murphy, 2013). In this survey, we drew on the seven items listed below to capture procedural justice. Likert scale response categories ranged from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

- Police try to be fair when making decisions.
- Police treat people fairly.
- Police treat people with dignity and respect.
- Police are always polite when dealing with people.
- Police listen to people before making decisions.
- Police make decisions based upon facts, not personal biases or opinions.
- Police respect people's rights when decisions are made.

The majority of respondents in this survey agreed or strongly agreed with all seven items. However, a sizable minority of respondents (approximately 20%) disagreed that police treat people fairly, are polite and make decisions based on facts.

Looking across the sample, we found that 48% of women under the age of 30 viewed the police as less procedurally just compared to 26% of those over 65 years old. Similarly, 43% of those with a bachelor's or postgraduate degree viewed the police as less just, fair and unbiased compared to 21% of those who had only completed high school.

Procedural justice and age

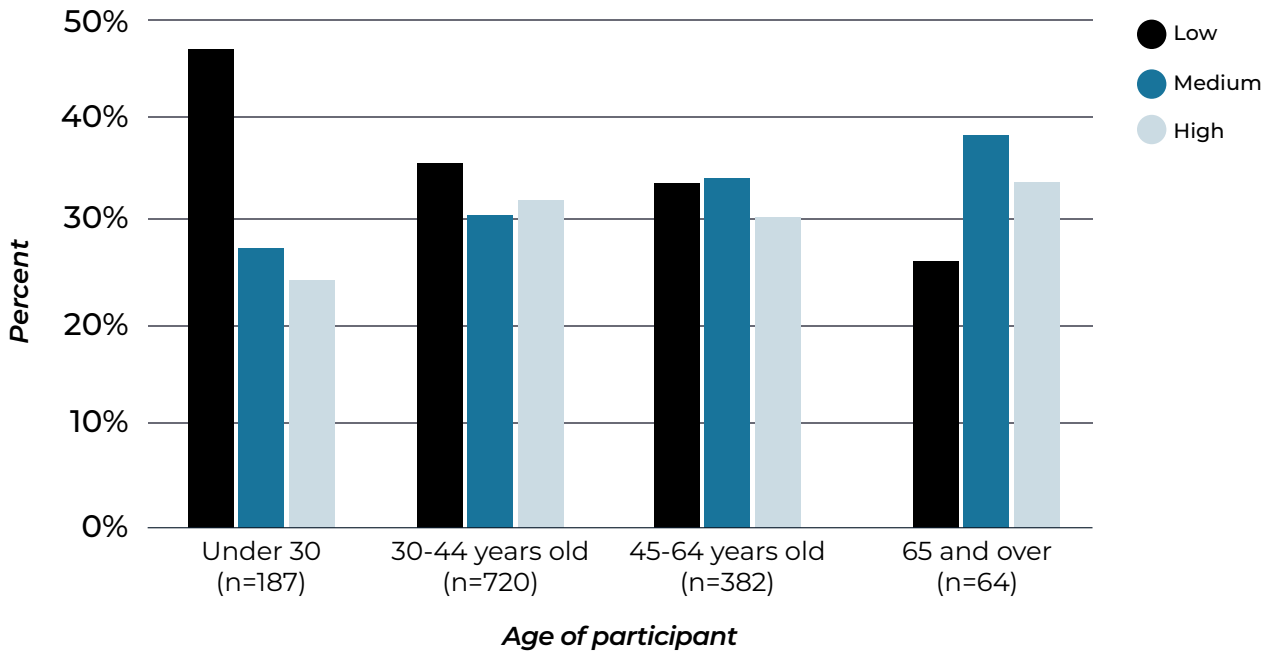


Figure 19: Procedural justice and age

In our sample, 42% of women who spoke English extremely/very well reported lower levels of procedural justice compared to 23% of those who did not speak English well at all. Participants who were agnostic, atheist or those with no religion reported the lowest perceptions of procedural justice, while those who affiliated with Hinduism perceived the highest levels of procedural justice.

Procedural justice and spoken English proficiency

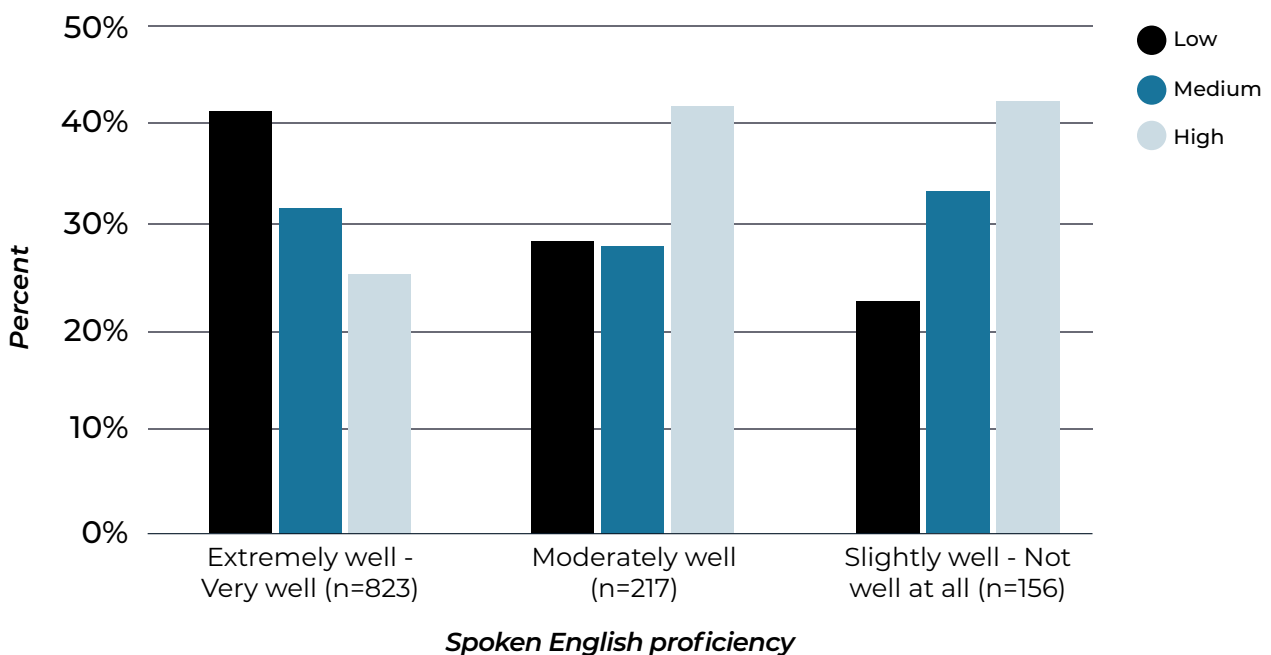


Figure 20: Procedural justice and spoken English proficiency

In line with other research, we found that women who had experienced non-DFV victimisation reported low levels of procedural justice (45%) compared with those who had not experienced non-DFV victimisation (33%). There was no difference in the levels of reported procedural justice between women who had experienced DFV and those who had experienced no victimisation. In contrast, almost half of those who had experienced both DFV and non-DFV victimisation reported low levels of procedural justice.

POLICE LEGITIMACY

Police legitimacy refers to the right of the police to enforce the law, which only exists in contexts where residents perceive the police to be entitled to act and that their directions ought to be followed (Sunshine & Tylor, 2003; Mazerolle et al., 2014). The legitimacy of the police depends on public confidence and trust in the police (Tyler, 2005; Jackson & Bradford, 2009).

The majority of women in this sample viewed the police as legitimate, with over 60% reporting that they strongly agreed or somewhat agreed with all three items listed in Table 19 below.

Table 19: Perceptions of police legitimacy

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Overall, I think that the police are doing a good job in my community. (n=1340)	32%	36%	21%	7%	4%
I trust the police in my community. (n=1341)	33%	35%	19%	8%	5%
I have confidence in the police in my community. (n=1342)	33%	34%	20%	9%	4%

As was the case with our scale of procedural justice, younger people (those under 30 years of age) reported the lowest levels of police legitimacy, while those over 65 years of age reported the highest levels of police legitimacy (see Figure 21).

Police legitimacy and age

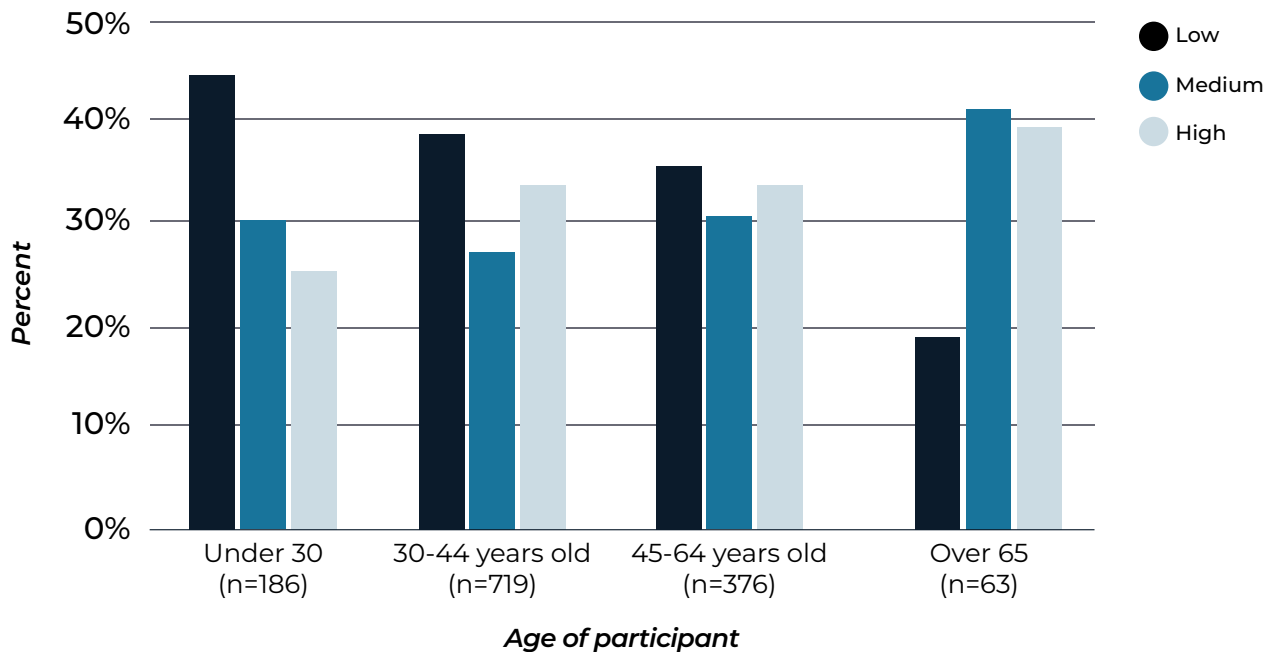


Figure 21: Perceptions of police legitimacy by age

Those with lower levels of educational attainment reported higher levels of perceived police legitimacy. For example, 53% of those with a high school level of educational attainment reported a high level of police legitimacy compared to 27% of those with a postgraduate degree. As was the case with procedural justice, those who did not speak English very well (40%) reported higher levels of police legitimacy compared to those with high levels of spoken English proficiency (29%).

Participants who did not have a religious affiliation reported the lowest levels of perceived police legitimacy (21% – high levels of police legitimacy), in contrast to the Hindu (39% – high levels of police legitimacy) and Muslim (46% – high levels of police legitimacy) participants, who reported the highest levels of police legitimacy.

Victimisation experiences varied the extent to which police were viewed as legitimate. Over a third of women with no victimisation experience perceived police as legitimate. In contrast, just over 20% of women who experienced DFV victimisation and another form of victimisation perceived police as legitimate.

Police legitimacy and victimisation

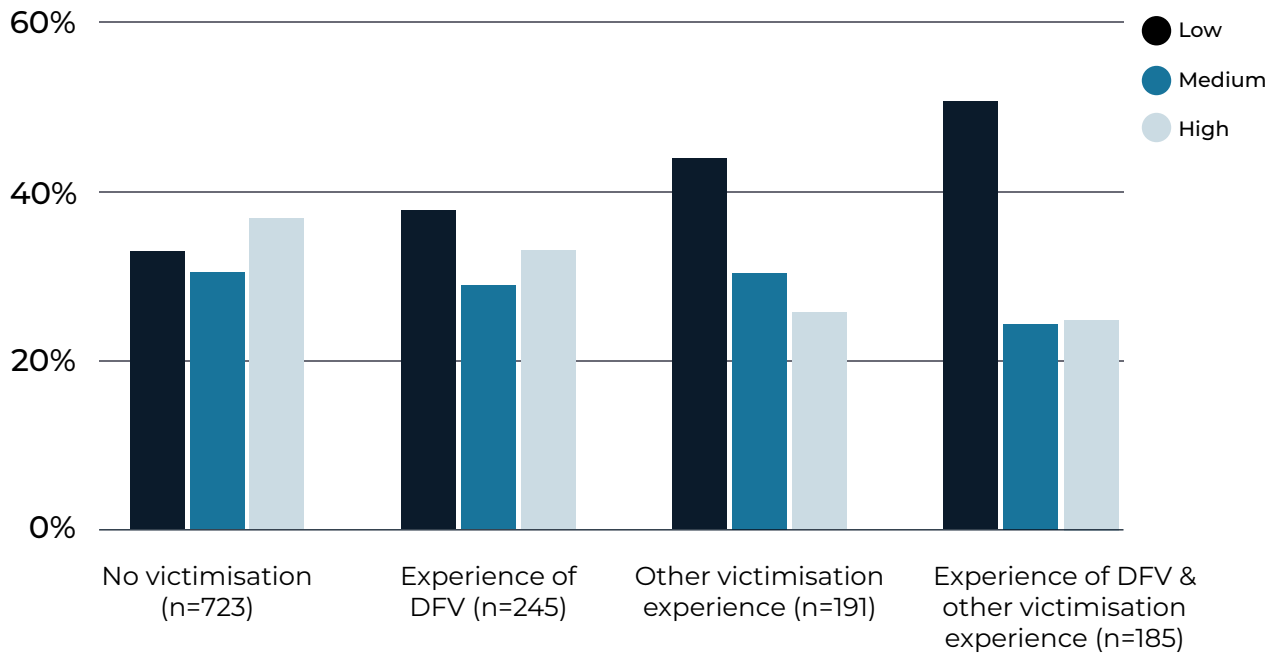


Figure 22: Perceptions of police legitimacy by victimisation

POLICE-COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Police-community engagement is an essential element of community crime prevention as local residents are important sources of information about the community (Mackenzie & Henry, 2009; Mazerolle et al., 2017). We captured police-community engagement through the following two items (1 strongly disagree – 5 strongly agree).

Table 20: Perceptions of police-community engagement

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Police are accessible to the people in this community. (n=1337)	32%	35%	21%	8%	3%
Police make an effort to get to know people in this community. (n=1338)	18%	24%	32%	17%	8%

Overall, respondents reported that the police were accessible to people in their community. This was fairly consistent across age categories. Approximately 78% of respondents from North Africa and the Middle East agreed that the police were accessible compared to 53% of respondents from the Americas and Southern and Eastern Europe. Participants who had finished high school or below had the highest levels of agreement (84%), while those with a postgraduate degree reported the lowest levels of police accessibility (64%). A higher proportion of respondents with lower levels of spoken English proficiency (72%) agreed that the police were accessible to the community than those with higher levels of spoken English proficiency (64%). Respondents affiliated with Islam (75%) and Hinduism (72%) reported the highest levels of agreement. Those with no religious affiliation reported the lowest levels of agreement (57%). There are no other studies with which these results can be compared in Australia. However, in looking at a general population study, which included 233 migrants (both men and women), our sample has more positive perceptions of police (Murphy & Cherney, 2012).

Those with no victimisation experience perceived the police as the most accessible to the community (71% agreed), followed by those with an experience of DFV (68% agreed), and then those with a general victimisation experience (60% agreed). Respondents with both an experience of DFV and a general victimisation experience reported the lowest level of perceived police accessibility to the community (57% agreed).

Police are accessible to the people in this community and participant age

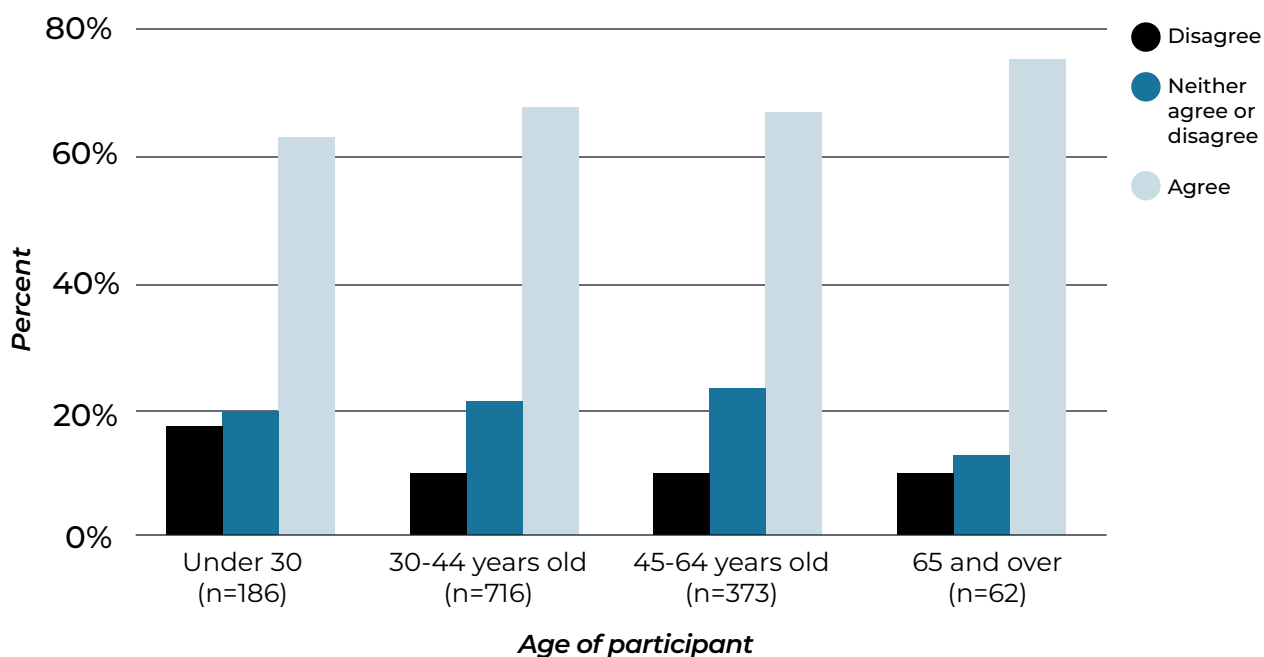


Figure 23: Perceptions of police accessibility

Looking to whether police try to get to know people in the community, older respondents were more likely to report that the police made an effort to get to know people (51%) compared to younger people (37%). Over half of the respondents from North Africa and the Middle East (57%) agreed that the police made an effort to get to know people in the community, in contrast to just under a quarter of respondents from the Americas. Sixty-three percent of respondents with a high school level of educational attainment agreed that police made an effort to get to know people in their communities, whereas approximately one-third of the respondents with a postgraduate degree agreed with this statement. Over half of the respondents who did not speak English well reported that police made an effort to know people in their communities. Approximately half of the participants who reported a religious affiliation agreed that the police made an effort to get to know people in their community compared to only 22% of those without a religious affiliation. Just under half of respondents with no victimisation experience (46%) agreed that the police made an effort with people in their community compared to 35% of those who reported a general victimisation experience or a combination of both general victimisation and DFV experience.

COOPERATION WITH POLICE

The willingness of residents to cooperate with the police is driven by their perceptions of police, particularly the perceived legitimacy of the police and their effectiveness. Police rely on community members' cooperation to control crime (Lyons, 2002). Previous scholarship has found that migrants are less likely to report victimisation or to contact the police than are native-born citizens (Bird, 1992). Prior research into cooperation with the police is inconclusive in regards to gender, although Sargeant, Murphy and Cherney's (2014) examination of perceptions of police found that migrant women were more likely than migrant men to cooperate with and trust the police (Sargeant, Murphy & Cherney, 2014). Yet, other studies have found no gender differences (Murphy et al., 2018) or that women are less likely to report a crime (Murphy & Barkworth, 2014). We found that the majority of migrant women in our sample were willing to cooperate with the police. Indeed, nearly 90% of the sample reported that they were extremely or somewhat likely to cooperate with the police. Based on past scholarship on cooperation with the police, the high level of trust in institutions appears to be the explanatory factor in our findings, not that our sample were all female.

We employ four items to capture residents' cooperation with the police, as detailed in Table 21.

Table 21: Willingness to cooperate with police

	Extremely likely	Somewhat likely	Neither likely nor unlikely	Somewhat unlikely	Extremely unlikely
...call police to report a crime? (n=1353)	63	26	7	3	2
...help police find someone suspected of committing a crime by providing them with information? (n=1343)	60	28	8	3	2
...report dangerous or suspicious activities to police? (n=1339)	61	26	8	4	2
...willingly assist police if asked? (n=1335)	68	24	5	2	1

We then looked at differences between those who were extremely likely and those who were somewhat likely to cooperate with the police. We found that older participants were more likely to fall into the category of 'extremely likely' to cooperate with the police compared to younger participants, who were only 'somewhat likely' to cooperate (see Figure 24). Cooperation did not differ across education levels or religious affiliation and there was only a slight difference in whether someone was extremely willing or somewhat willing to cooperate with the police between those who spoke English very well and those who did not.

Cooperation with police by participant age

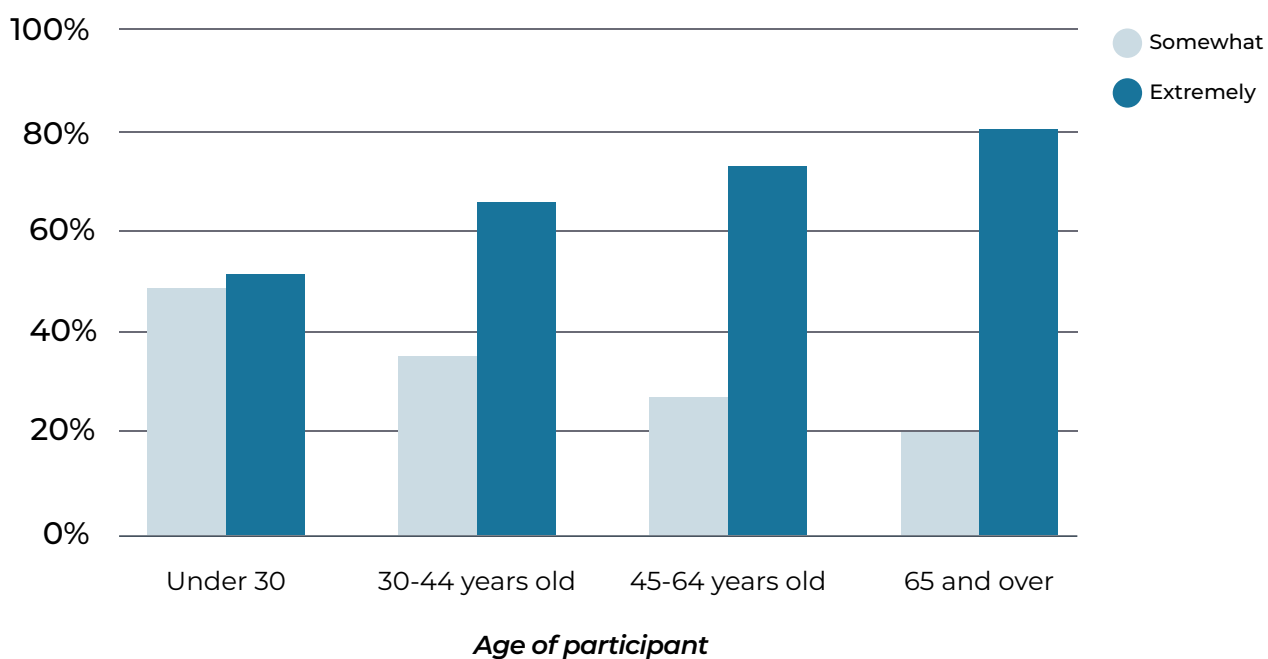


Figure 24: Cooperation with police by participant age

Looking at the relationship between prior victimisation and cooperation with police, we found that women who had experienced both DFV and general victimisation were less likely to be in the 'extremely willing to cooperate' category (55%) than those who had either experienced DFV (63%) or general victimisation (69%) and those who had experienced no victimisation (69%). This aligns with the findings on the relationships between victimisation, procedural justice and police legitimacy presented above.

GENERAL TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS AND COMMUNITY

The results from the most recent Scanlon Foundation Mapping Social Cohesion survey 2020 revealed that trust in the government increased in 2020 compared to previous years. Yet trust in the government was still quite low, with only 54% reporting that they had trust in the government.

Our survey sought to understand general trust in a number of institutions and communities. As per Figure 25, participants reported relatively high levels of trust in the Australian healthcare system (58% reported a great deal or a lot of trust) and state/territory education systems (54% reported a great deal or a lot of trust). The most noteworthy finding was the lack of trust in religious leaders, with 28% of our sample reporting no trust in religious community leadership and only 23% reporting a great deal or a lot of trust in the same.

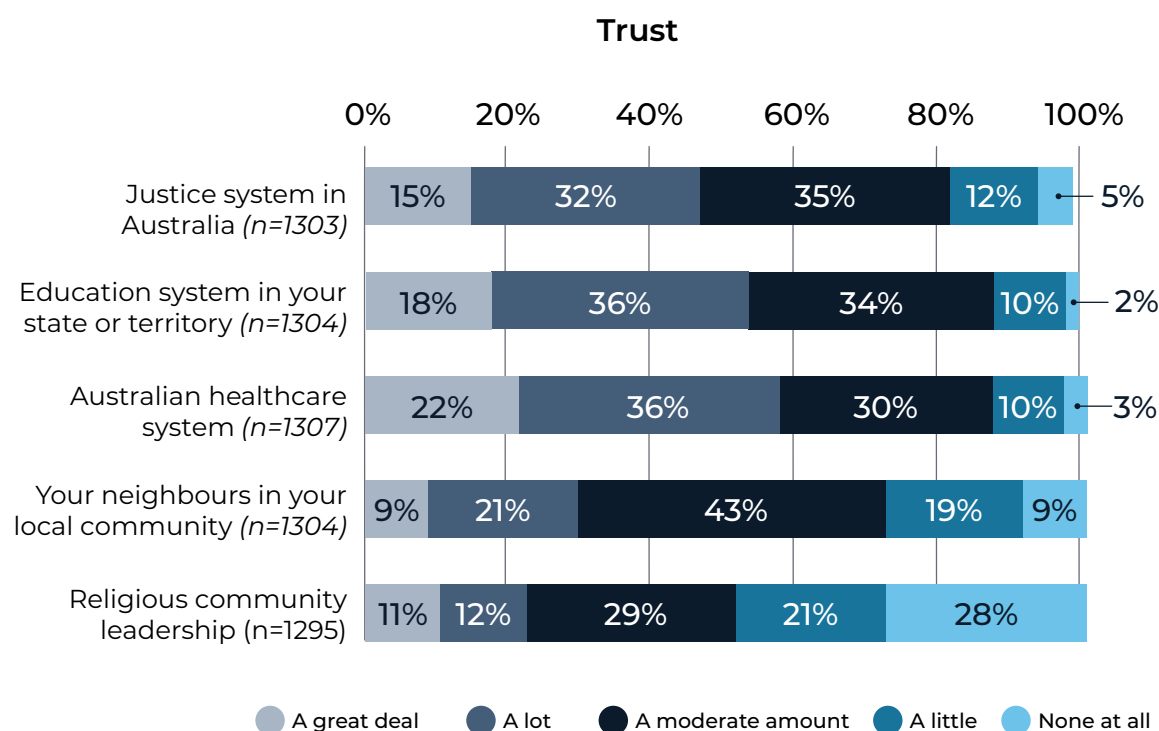


Figure 25: Trust in institutions and community

On average, younger people reported lower levels of trust when compared to older people. This was most notable for religious leadership, where just under a third of participants aged under 44 years old reported no trust in religious leadership compared to 17% of those over 65 years of age. Across most regions of birth, a sizable minority (25–30%) reported no trust in religious community leadership. Participants from South and North America reported the lowest levels of trust in religious community leadership, with 46% of the sample from this region reporting no trust.

Participants who had higher educational attainment had less trust in religious leaders (30% of those with a bachelor’s degree and 32% of those with a postgraduate qualification reported no trust in religious community leadership) compared to those with a high school certificate (14%). Those who reported lower levels of proficiency in spoken English were less likely to report lower levels of trust in religious community leadership (16%) compared to those who spoke English well or very well (30%).

Distrust in religious community leaders was fairly consistent across religious affiliations. Unsurprisingly, the agnostic or atheist participants had the lowest levels of trust in religious community leaders (65% reported none at all) (see Figure 26).

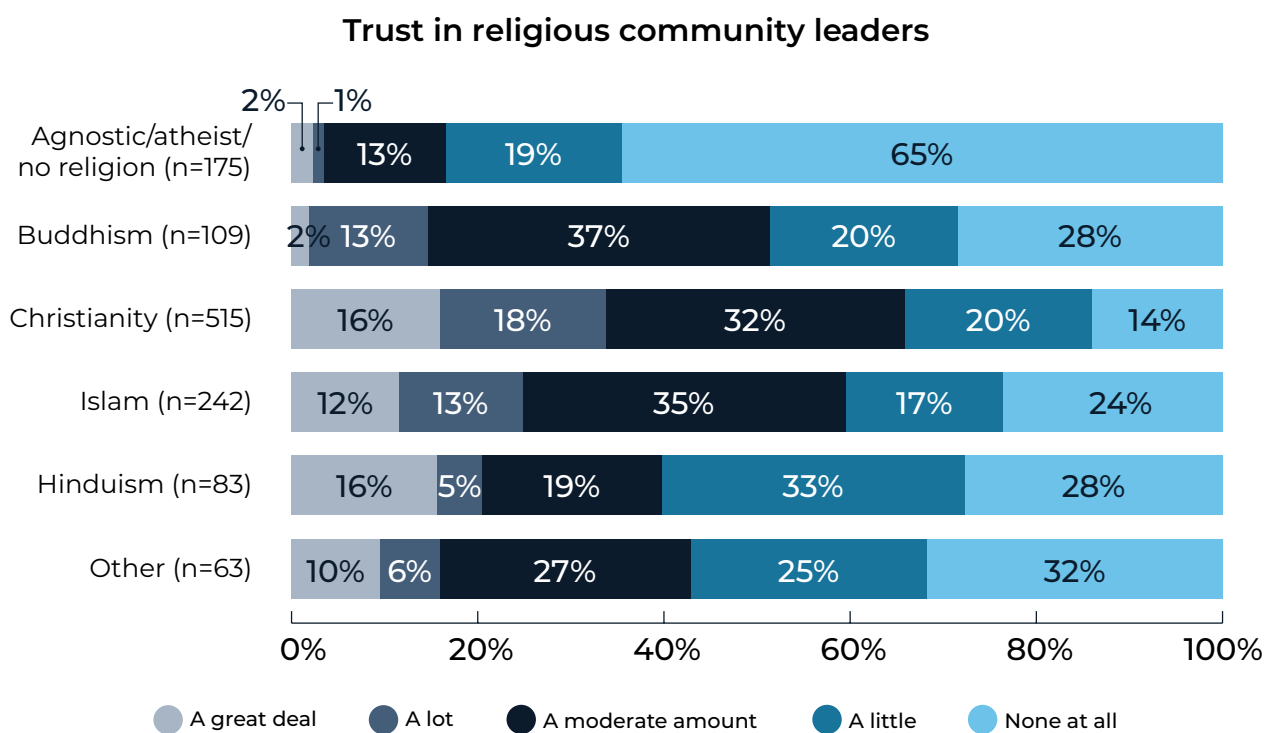


Figure 26: Trust in religious leaders by religious affiliation

People were more likely to trust religious leadership if they also reported that religion was an important part of their daily lives.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS AND IMPACT OF COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic is associated with an increase in economic inequality in Australia, which has disproportionately impacted women (Davidson et al., 2020). Despite a lack of disaggregated national data on migrant and refugee women's job losses and unemployment rates during the pandemic, there has been evidence to suggest that they are among the worst affected in Australia (Harmony Alliance, 2021). However, in this study the sample is more reflective of the general observation that, prior to COVID-19, migrants tended to have a higher employment rate than those born in Australia, especially among those migrants who have been in Australia for more than 10 years (Home Affairs, 2021). We asked participants about their employment status in 2019 and in the period since March 2020.⁵

EMPLOYMENT PRIOR TO COVID-19 (2019)

We asked about individuals' employment situation prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Approximately two-thirds of the sample were employed in paid work, while 18% had no paid work but had caring responsibilities and 15% had no paid work or caring responsibilities. These caring responsibilities and unpaid labour included caring for their own child (12%), caring for others' children (1%), pregnancy (1%), caring for ill/disabled/elderly persons (2%), home duties (10%), working in a family business unpaid (1%) and volunteering (5%).

Paid employment status 2019

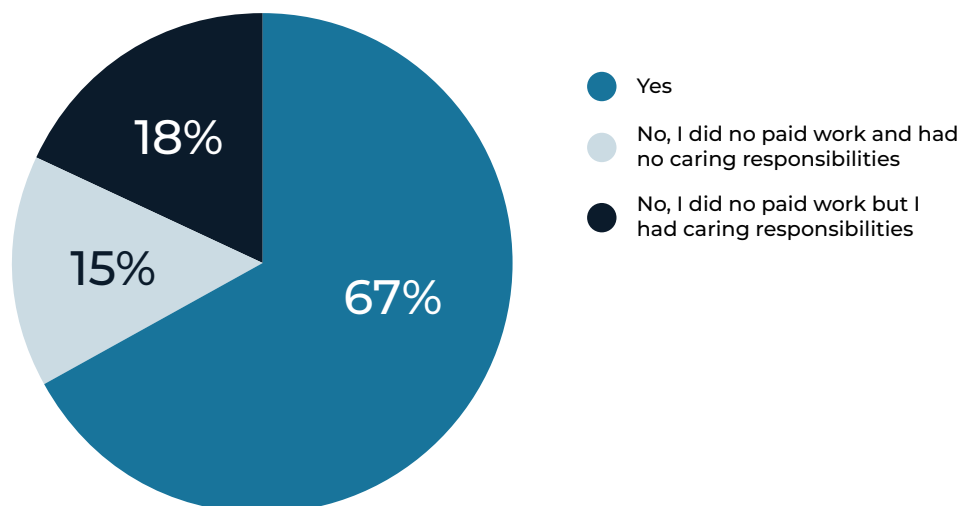


Figure 27: Employment status

⁵We recognise the differences in lockdown duration across the states and territories in Australia for the national stay-at-home period, which may have differentially influenced individuals in these areas. We are not able to examine these differences comprehensively as this survey was not designed to effectively compare across states at this level of detail.

Just under a half of those employed were employed on a permanent or ongoing basis while approximately one-quarter were casually employed.

Table 22: Type of employment

Type of employment	n=	%
Self-employed	76	8
Fixed-term contract	164	18
Casual	220	24
Permanent/ongoing basis	427	47
Other – please specify	19	2
Total	906	100

Forty percent of those who were employed in 2019 worked 38 hours or more. Of those who did unpaid caring work, 17% spent full-time hours on this caring work.

The majority of those who were employed were satisfied with their employment, as per Figure 28.

Employment satisfaction level

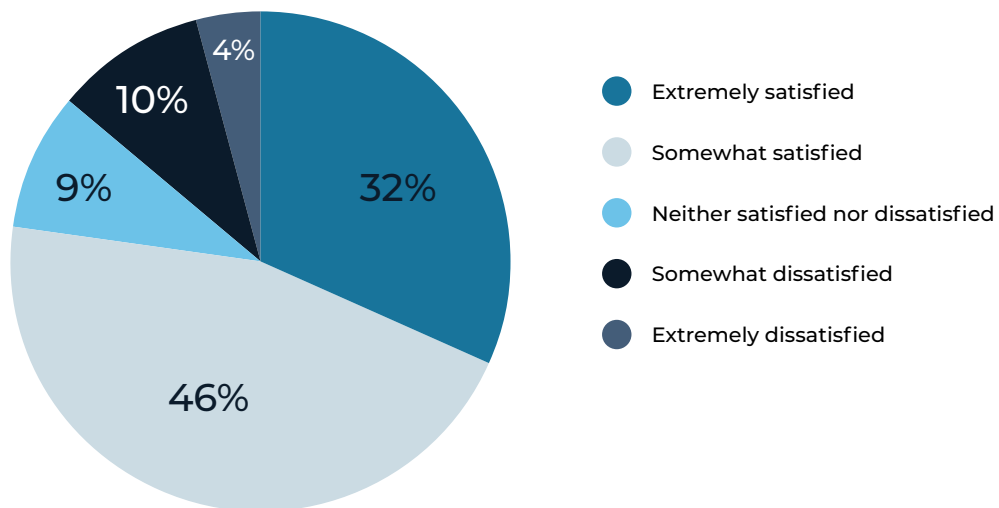


Figure 28: Satisfaction with job or paid work in year before COVID-19

Of the 13% who indicated that they were dissatisfied with their work (somewhat/extremely), the most common reasons included:

- Job does not use my skills/experience (n= 55)
- Job does not pay enough (n=53)
- I feel discriminated against (n=42)
- Job is not at the level of responsibility I had overseas (n=41)
- Not enough hours (n=27)
- I have to work too many hours (n=23)
- Workplace is too far to travel (n=16)
- I do not understand/speak English well enough for this job (n=5)

Of those not in paid employment, 41% looked for paid work during 2019. Over half of those who were unemployed reported finding it hard to get a job.



Figure 29: Difficulty finding job in 2019

The reasons people found it hard to find a job included (noting that participants could select more than one response):

- Don't have Australian work experience (n=70)
- My English isn't good enough yet (n=48)
- Couldn't get a job in the same occupation I had overseas (n=35)
- Don't have the necessary skills or qualifications (n=32)
- I look after my family (e.g. home duties/caring duties) (n=31)
- I am studying/training (n=30)
- There were no suitable jobs (n=26)
- Discrimination (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity) (n=22)
- Health reasons (physical or emotional) (n=15)
- Transport difficulties (n=13)
- My visa prevents me from getting work/more work (n=11)
- Hard to find a job that fits with my cultural or ethnic beliefs (n=4)

Key source of income

In 2019, 33% of respondents earned their family's main source of income, for 37% the main source of income was their partner's wages, 14% relied on government payments, and 4% relied on their parents' salary.

EMPLOYMENT DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC (SEPTEMBER–NOVEMBER 2020)

This sample of migrant and refugee women, as reflected by their socioeconomic status, their educational attainment and the fact that most were living in areas with low levels of disadvantage, were not the group most highly impacted by the effects of COVID-19 in terms of job loss: over 50% remained employed and had the same or higher number of hours of work than in the pre-COVID-19 period.

Of those who had paid employment prior to COVID-19, 36% remained employed with the same workload, 21% remained employed with an increased workload and 17% remained employed with a decreased workload. JobKeeper kept 5% employed, while 16% were no longer employed.

Impact of COVID-19 restrictions and lockdowns on employment



Figure 30: Impact of COVID-19 restrictions and lockdowns on employment

Key source of income and financial security in the midst of COVID-19

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was an increase in reliance on government payments as a source of family or household income for the women who participated in this study. There was a 5% increase in reliance on government payments for permanent visa holders, a 3% increase for Australian citizens and a 1% increase for temporary visa holders, though it is worth noting that many temporary visa holders were not eligible for government payments. There was a 2% increase in temporary visa holders' reliance on a spouse or partner's wages, while there was no change for Australian citizens and a 2% decrease for permanent visa holders.

In 2020, sources of additional financial support included:

- Centrelink payments (n=183)
- JobSeeker (n=91)
- family overseas (n=36)
- partner's income (n=83)
- emergency support (e.g. food, other goods) from non-government organisations (n=29)
- JobKeeper (n=16)
- emergency support from state or territory government (n=15)
- friends (n=14)
- family in Australia (n=13)
- emergency money from non-government organisations (n=13)

We also mapped the impact of COVID-19 on financial security via several measures of hardship (drawn from the Building New Life in Australia [BLNA] study undertaken by the Australian Institute of Family Studies, as detailed in the Technical Report), comparing experiences in 2019 and the time of the survey (September–November 2020, in the midst of COVID-19). Echoing the finding above in relation to employment generally and how that is reflective of our sample, during the post-March COVID-19 period our sample reported similar levels of hardship to those they had experienced in 2019.

Table 23: Comparison of hardship measures: 2019 and 2020

Hardship measure	2019	March 2020-onwards (COVID-19)
Could not pay gas, electricity or telephone bills on time (2019 n= 1268; during COVID-19 n= 1263)	13%	14%
Could not pay the rent or mortgage payments on time (2019 n= 1267 ; during COVID-19 n=1258)	9%	11%
Went without meals (2019 n=1263; during COVID-19 n=1250)	6%	6%
Unable to heat or cool your home (2019 n=1268; during COVID-19 n=1255)	12%	11%
Pawned or sold something because you needed cash (2019 n=1279; during COVID-19 n=1261)	12%	11%
Needed help from a welfare or community organisation (2019 n=1263; during COVID-19 n=1255)	13%	15%
Unable to (could not) send your child/children to kindergarten/preschool/childcare/school for as much time as you wanted (2019 n=1241; during COVID-19 n=1229)	7%	8%
Unable to (could not) send your child/children to extracurricular activities/tutoring for as much time as you wanted (2019 n=1246; during COVID-19 n=1235)	17%	16%

The consistency between the two years is also evidenced in Table 24 below.

Table 24: Presence and co-occurrence of hardship: 2019 and 2020

	Hardship in 2019 (n=1392)	Hardship during COVID-19 (n=1392)
No hardship	69%	69%
One type of hardship	10%	9%
Two types of hardship	9%	8%
Three types of hardship	5%	5%
Four or more types of hardship	8%	8%

While this sample did not experience high levels of hardship overall, we examined in more detail the respondents who had experienced hardship. We found that younger respondents reported higher levels of hardship after the pandemic (a 3% increase in experiencing four or more types of hardship for those under 30 years old), in contrast to older respondents, who saw a 4% increase in experiencing no hardship for those over 65 years old. Those women who lived in areas with the most disadvantage (measured using SEIFA) reported the highest levels of hardship across both periods. Further, in 2019, 15% of those living in the areas with the most socioeconomic disadvantage had experienced four or more types of hardship compared to 7% of those living in postcodes with the least socioeconomic disadvantage. There was relatively little change between 2019 and the September–November 2020 COVID-19 period in relation to concentrated socioeconomic disadvantage and hardship. That is, those who lived in areas with the most disadvantage consistently reported more hardship across both periods. This may be because the government support offered at the time made up for these differences.

In 2019, temporary visa holders reported the highest levels of hardship, with 37% reporting experiencing one or more forms of hardship. In comparison, 32% of permanent visa holders and 29% of Australian citizens reported experiencing more than one form of hardship in 2019. In 2020, hardship remained relatively stable for Australian citizens, while permanent visa holders experienced less hardship during the COVID-19 pandemic; yet those on temporary visas reported experiencing a 6% increase in hardship during the COVID-19 pandemic.

CONCLUSION

This report has presented the findings from the first national study of migrant and refugee women focused on women's safety and security. The findings point to specific and important new knowledge around domestic and family violence, victimisation, help-seeking and trust in institutions, and employment. The research was conducted in the midst of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic and identifies some of the impacts of the pandemic and of the associated policies pertaining to stay-at-home orders and systems of income support in place across Australia. It also offers critical insights into how we might best rebuild our social and economic systems, nationally and globally, in a post-COVID-19 world. The survey prioritises safety and security, broadly defined, and the key findings point to implications that can inform future policy infrastructure.

The key findings identify that domestic and family violence is an important and pressing issue for migrant and refugee women, impacting this group in specific ways. Over a third of our sample had experienced some form of DFV, and of those nearly half had experienced at least two forms of DFV. Many women had experienced DFV perpetrated by someone other than their former or current intimate partner. Temporary visa holders consistently reported proportionately higher levels of DFV, including controlling behaviours generally and migration-related controlling behaviours. As Australia continues to grapple broadly with violence against women in all its forms, these findings contribute to the many voices calling for recognition of the nuance and specificity of women's experiences of violence and the need to develop comprehensive and inclusive responses.

As this study is one of the few surveys of its kind conducted internationally to date, the findings are particularly significant in highlighting the importance of focusing on migrant and refugee women's experiences of victimisation, perceptions of policing, and trust in communities and institutions. Among our participants, nearly 40% reported that they believed that their victimisation as a result of theft, burglary, threatening behaviour or property damage was motivated by bias and/or prejudice. While the majority of women in this sample perceived police as just and fair, the women in our sample who had experienced DFV and general victimisation viewed the police as less procedurally just and fair than did the rest of the sample. When the survey asked about institutions and trust, it was revealing that while there was generally a high level of trust in the institutions included in this study, religious institutions consistently attracted low levels of trust across this sample.

This survey was conducted at a key historical moment: when asking questions about employment and financial survival and hardship, we were able to consider and compare the situation prior to COVID-19 with that in the final quarter of 2020, a year beset by the challenges of COVID-19. While our sample was well educated and generally living in areas of limited disadvantage, 10% lost their job due to COVID-19, there was an increased reliance on government support, and temporary visa holders experienced an increase in hardship, in contrast to permanent visa holders and Australian citizens.

What is most important about this study, in many ways, is that it is a national first in terms of the scope and detail of data it has gathered. It has built on the first iteration of a national study of migrant and refugee women conducted by HA in 2019, to develop an ambitious program of research that asks women throughout Australia important questions about their safety and security across a range of measures. National data generally does not inform analysis that moves beyond English proficiency or the language women speak at home as a singular variable for culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Yet, while many of the women in our sample were bilingual, around one-quarter chose to complete the survey in a language other than English. In this regard, this research points, for example, to the importance of asking about visa status and undertaking analysis that considers differences based on this. What is also clear is that we need more work like this to be carried out and a much greater commitment to funding large-scale research that diversifies beyond the reliance on online survey platforms, to access those who are less well connected to their community and to the internet. We celebrate and acknowledge the significance of this landmark survey, and we acknowledge the importance of its findings: these are the experiences of migrant and refugee women across Australia, whose voices must be heard.

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