

Promoting Gender Equality and Respect

Australian society is founded on fairness, opportunity and choice for all. We value equality between men and women, and everyone has the right to live free from violence.

Achieving gender equality can prevent violence against women. Australia has made significant progress towards achieving gender equality in recent decades.

Gender equality in Australia

The Australian and South Australian Governments work in partnership with individuals, families, communities, workplaces, businesses, and religious groups to build cultures of respect and equality to help prevent domestic, family and sexual violence (DFSV).

South Australia was the first place in Australia and fourth in the world to give women the right to vote. It was also the first place in the world to provide the opportunity for women to stand for Parliament and participate in shaping our society as leaders and decision-makers.

Australian and South Australian laws promote equality of opportunity, prevent discrimination, discourage prejudice, and enable people to participate in our public, economic and social life. They have also given women legal protection from sex discrimination and sexual harassment.

These laws mean that women have the right to:

- be financially independent by earning and controlling their own income;
- work in any job;
- balance work with caring responsibilities, through entitlements such as paid parental leave; and
- live free from sex discrimination and harassment.

In Australia everyone has the right to contribute and participate equally. Women participate in all areas of the workforce, inspiring other women and girls to achieve economic empowerment.

Enabling women to reach their potential as leaders and decision makers is also critical to achieving gender equality. The South Australian Government leads by example, maintaining 50 per cent representation of women on its boards and committees.

Women's sporting achievements are celebrated throughout Australia and the popularity of women's sport continues to rise, especially since the introduction of the elite AFLW, Australian rules football league for women players.

These rights and expectations apply to everyone living in Australia.

Gender Inequality and Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence (DFSV)

Research shows that several discriminatory and harmful beliefs contribute to DFSV:

- Inequality between men and women;
- Expectations and fixed ideas about men's and women's roles; and
- Social attitudes that excuse men's violence toward women.

These beliefs can lead to women being treated with less respect and dignity in their relationships and in society.

Challenging these beliefs and changing the associated behaviours is the key to achieving gender equality and reducing DFSV.

What can I do?

Attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that support violence against women are learned but must be challenged and can be changed.

Individuals and communities are challenging harmful beliefs and taking action to prevent inappropriate and abusive behaviour by:

- Engaging in initiatives that promote respect between men and women;
- Taking action to encourage equality and respect;
- Creating awareness of DFSV;
- Having discussions about DFSV; and
- Building partnerships and advocating for change to strengthen their work to prevent DFSV.

Every one of us has a role to play. Together we can help to prevent DFSV.

This is one of 4 Fact Sheets on DFSV. To find out more about promoting gender equality and respect see Fact Sheet 4. Further information on identifying and responding to DFSV is available in Fact Sheets 1 and 2.



Government
of South Australia



MCCSA
Multicultural Communities Council of South Australia



Women's Safety Services SA

**BREAK
THE
CYCLE**
OF DOMESTIC ABUSE