



The Team acknowledges that each figure reflected in this report represents a life lost and enduring devastation for those left behind. In undertaking this work, the Team aims to honour the lives of those killed and share learnings from these tragic deaths to improve the response to domestic violence and thereby prevent future loss of life.



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
DEATH REVIEW TEAM

REPORT

2021 2023

A report of the Domestic Violence Death Review Team

A report of the Domestic Violence Death Review Team pursuant to section 101J(1) of the Coroners Act 2009 (NSW).

The views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the private or professional views of individual Team members or the views of their individual organisations. A decision of the majority is a decision of the Domestic Violence Death Review Team – Schedule 3, clause 11 *Coroners Act 2009 (NSW)*.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

The Domestic Violence Death Review Team acknowledges all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traditional Custodians of Country and recognise their continuing connection to land, sea, culture and community.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and recognise the strength, resilience and diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in this land.

CONTENT WARNING AND SUPPORT

This report contains information that may be distressing to readers. It includes accounts of violence and abuse and references to suicide and self-harming behaviour.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers should be aware that this report contains information about Aboriginal people who have passed away.

If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence, there are a range of services that can provide assistance and support. In an emergency, always call 000.

Service	Location	Phone	Website
1800RESPECT	Nationwide	1800 737 732	www.1800respect.org.au
24/7 helpline that provides counselling, information and support for sexual assault, domestic and family violence.			
Domestic Violence Line NSW	State-wide	1800 656 463	www.dcj.nsw.gov.au
24/7 helpline that provides information, support and assistance about domestic violence.			
Women's Legal Service NSW	State-wide	1800 801 501	www.wlsnsw.org.au
A community legal centre that provides free specialised legal services for women, including domestic violence, sexual assault, family law, victims support and child protection, operating Mon-Fri 9am-1pm and 2pm-4:30pm. See website for legal advice line times.			
Men's Referral Service	Nationwide	1300 766 491	www.ntv.org.au/mrs
24/7 men's telephone counselling, information and referral service for men who use violence and are seeking to change their behaviour.			
Immigration Advice and Rights Centre	State-wide	02 8234 0700	www.iarc.org.au
Provides free legal information, advice and casework services to refugees and financially disadvantaged migrants in NSW, operating Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm.			



Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre	State-wide	1800 686 587	www.wirringabaiya.org.au
Community legal centre for Aboriginal women, children and youth with a focus on issues relating to violence, operating Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm (closed Wed). Legal advice line 10am-4pm.			
Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services	State-wide	1800 938 227	www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au
Provides free information, advocacy and support to women experiencing domestic and family violence, including in relation to the court process. WDVCASs operate in every town and suburb, and at every local court, across the state during business hours, Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm.			
NSW Ageing and Disability Abuse Helpline	State-wide	1800 628 221	www.ageingdisabilitycommission.nsw.gov.au
Provides information, support and referrals for older people and people with disability in NSW, operating Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm.			
Kids Helpline	Nationwide	1800 551 800	www.kidshelpline.com.au
24/7 counselling service for young people aged 5-25 years.			
Link2Home	State-wide	1800 152 152	www.dcj.nsw.gov.au
24/7 information and referral service for people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.			
Beyond Blue	Nationwide	1300 224 636	www.beyondblue.org.au
24/7 counselling, information and referral service for people experiencing anxiety and depression.			

CONVENOR'S MESSAGE



This is the eighth report of the Domestic Violence Death Review Team, and its publication comes at a pivotal juncture, as the national conversation coalesces on the pervasive issue of domestic violence homicide and gender-based violence more broadly.

Since the Team's establishment in 2010 there has been a gradual decline in domestic violence homicides in NSW. More recently, however, this downward trend has stalled, and a number of recent cases have drawn into sharp focus the unacceptably high rates of domestic violence homicide, and in particular the deaths of women, that persist nationwide. The sharp rise in the number of women killed across Australia has seen a groundswell of community-led advocacy demanding urgent action to prevent men's violence against women. This has prompted a renewed commitment from governments to do more to respond to domestic, family and sexual violence, with domestic violence death reviews being recognised as an important part of this response.

The sharp rise in the number of women killed across Australia has seen a groundswell of community-led advocacy demanding urgent action to prevent men's violence against women.

In May this year, national crisis talks convened by the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commissioner, Micaela Cronin, highlighted the depth of analysis undertaken by domestic violence death reviews and emphasised their crucial role in building the evidence base to guide intervention and prevention efforts. As a result, the Commission has committed to working with all governments to strengthen and expand state and territory domestic violence death review processes.

The critical work of the Team is similarly reflected in the NSW Government's recent announcement of a \$230 million emergency package to enhance support for domestic, family and sexual violence victim-survivors and expand programs that reduce the rate of violence against women and children.¹ As part of that package, and as a result of advocacy from Team members, government and sector leaders, the Team has been granted \$2 million over four years to support its work. This much needed funding will hopefully address the resourcing challenges the Team has faced over time as its work has evolved, significantly expanding the role and workload of the Team's two-person Secretariat. As a result of this progressive expansion, it has been increasingly challenging for the Secretariat to support the Team to fulfil its legislative function in relation to both its quantitative and qualitative review processes.

These challenges are reflected in the Team's decision to prioritise publishing its data findings for this report, as resourcing constraints have limited the Team's capacity to develop its quantitative review processes while simultaneously undertaking in-depth case review analyses. The examination of qualitative case reviews is, however, a critical component of the death review process, allowing the Team to leverage its extensive policy and practice expertise to openly and honestly discuss cases and collectively develop targeted intervention and prevention strategies. With the announcement of additional funding, moving forward I am hopeful that the Team will be able to advance both components of its essential research function without compromise.

¹ NSW Government, '\$230 million to improve NSW domestic violence prevention and support' (Media Release, 6 May 2024) <https://www.nsw.gov.au/media-releases/230-million-to-improve-nsw-domestic-violence-prevention-and-support> (accessed 31 May 2024).



The importance of accurate and timely data has emerged as a key issue in the current national dialogue, and this report is the most comprehensive data analyses the Team has undertaken to date, presenting detailed findings from over two decades of domestic violence homicides in NSW.



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The Team's dataset has continued to grow year-on-year, not only in terms of the number of cases—which now includes over 1,800 homicides—but also in relation to the breadth and complexity of the data captured. Initially examining only basic demographic and case characteristics, the dataset has developed significantly over time. As a result, the Team now produces the most detailed and nuanced data findings of any domestic violence death review mechanism operating within Australia or worldwide. And this is work that is continuing to evolve.

In its 2019-21 Report, the Team committed to undertaking an in-depth examination of relative/kin domestic violence homicides, having identified this as an under-researched and poorly understood phenomenon. Accordingly, this report presents the Team's first detailed analysis of this cohort of domestic violence homicides, making an important contribution to an otherwise limited evidence base.

The intimate partner and filicide datasets have been further developed with new variables added, including a longitudinal prevalence analysis and an examination of the co-occurrence of mental health and alcohol or other drug (AOD) issues.

The work of the Team, in examining 'other' domestic violence homicides, highlights that the fatal impact of domestic violence can extend beyond intimate and familiar relationships. Outside the work of the Team, cases involving, for example, the homicides of bystanders and new partners, are not reflected in domestic violence homicide data and this analysis is critical in revealing the true prevalence of domestic violence fatalities in NSW.

Importantly, the analysis in this report identifies a range of key findings and themes to direct the Team's work as it recommences its in-depth case review analyses over the next reporting period.

This report provides crucial insights to guide policymakers, service providers and advocates in preventing, responding to, and aiding recovery from domestic violence. It cannot, however, truly convey the profound loss it represents. The courage, resilience and diversity of the individuals whose lives are considered cannot be reflected in numbers, nor can the grief and trauma for those that loved them.

We can, and must, do better and the Team remains steadfastly committed to contributing to positive change. Only through collective action and unwavering commitment can we hope to prevent further tragedies and support those affected on their journey to healing.

Magistrate Teresa O'Sullivan
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KEY FINDINGS

Set out below are key findings from the Team's analysis of all domestic violence-context homicides in NSW between 1 July 2000 and 30 June 2022. The analysis in the report is, however, both comprehensive and complex, and each of these key findings should be considered and understood in the context of the full report.

Domestic violence-context homicide in NSW

Almost one-third of all homicides in NSW occurred in a context of domestic violence

Between 1 July 2000 and 30 June 2022 in NSW, 1,832 adults and children were killed in homicides, involving 590 females and 1,242 males. Having examined the nature and circumstances of each of these deaths, the Team has identified that 30 per cent (n=550) occurred in a context of domestic violence, meaning that there was an identifiable history of domestic violence prior to the homicide.

While most homicides overall involved the deaths of males, females were far more likely to be killed in a domestic violence-context homicide

The 550 domestic violence-context homicides included the deaths of 331 females (56.1% of all 590 female deceased) and 219 males (17.6% of all 1,242 male deceased).

Over 40% of people killed in a context of domestic violence lived in the most disadvantaged areas of NSW

Of the 550 people killed in a context of domestic violence, over 40 per cent were living in the most disadvantaged areas of NSW (n=230, 41.8%).

Approximately one-third of people killed in a context of domestic violence lived outside a major city

Approximately one-third of the 550 people killed in domestic violence-context homicides were living outside a major city, residing in inner/outer regional, remote and very remote areas of NSW (n=185, 33.6%).

Over 25% of people killed in a context of domestic violence were born outside of Australia

Over one-quarter of the 550 people killed in domestic violence-context homicides were born outside of Australia (n=149, 27.1%). Of the 149 people born outside of Australia, 19 (12.8%) were on a temporary visa at the time they were killed.

Almost 19% of people killed in the context of domestic violence identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

Of the 550 domestic violence-context homicides, the person killed identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in almost 19 per cent of cases (n=102, 18.6%), including 55 females and 47 males.

While acknowledging these high rates, it is important to recognise that domestic violence is not a part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, and there is a complex range of interrelated factors associated with the disproportionate incidence and severity of family violence in Community (see *Key Themes* for further discussion).

Intimate partner violence homicide

Over half of all domestic violence-context homicides were within intimate partner relationships

Over half of the 550 domestic violence-context homicides in NSW involved a person killing their current or former intimate partner (n=308, 56%).

Approximately 80% of intimate partner violence homicides involved men killing women

Almost 80 per cent of the 308 intimate partner violence homicides involved a man killing his current or former female intimate partner (n=244, 79.2%), with a smaller proportion of cases involving a woman killing her male intimate partner (n=56, 18.2%). Eight cases involved domestic violence homicides in same-sex relationships.²

Almost two-thirds of women were killed by either their ex-partner or at the point of separating from their male partner

Approximately two-thirds of the 244 domestic violence-context homicides that involved a man killing his female intimate partner occurred in the context of separation, with the relationship having either recently ended or one or both parties indicating the intention to separate (n=160, 65.6%). In 11 cases where a woman was killed by her former male partner, the couple were still residing in the same house, living 'separated under one roof.'

When there were children in the family, almost 90% of those children also experienced domestic violence before the homicide

In approximately two-thirds of the 300 intimate partner violence homicides involving male-female relationships there were children in the family (n=192, 64%). In almost 90 per cent of these cases, the children experienced domestic violence prior to the homicide, either by being directly abused (including physical and non-physical abuse), and/or experiencing the domestic violence between their parents (n=170 out of 192 relationships with children, 88.5%).

The homicide offenders and persons killed were parents (either together or separately) to at least 370 surviving children who were under the age of 18 at the time of the homicide.

Over 25% of men who killed their female partner were experiencing a co-occurrence of mental health and AOD issues

Approximately half of the 244 men who killed a female intimate partner had a history of alcohol and drug (AOD) issues (n=123, 50.4%), and just over half had a history of experiencing mental health issues³ (n=132, 54.1%). When considered together the Team's analysis reveals that over 25 per cent of men who killed a female intimate partner had a co-occurrence of both mental health and AOD issues (n=68, 27.9%).

Men who killed their female intimate partner were almost always the domestic violence abuser in the relationship, while women who killed men were almost always the victim of their partner's violence

² This included seven cases where a man killed his male intimate partner, and one case where a woman killed her female intimate partner.

³ Across the Team's datasets, 'mental health issues' includes diagnosed mental illnesses and anecdotal accounts from witness statements detailing concerns about a person's mental well-being and/or behaviours consistent with psychological distress. See *Limitations* section for further discussion.



The Team examined the history of domestic violence in the relationship prior to the homicide and found that all but four of the 244 men who killed a female intimate partner were the predominant domestic violence abuser in the relationship (n=240, 98.4%). For the comparatively small number of cases that involved a woman killing her male intimate partner (n=56), most women were the predominant domestic violence victim in the relationship, and the case involved the woman killing her abuser (n=46, 82.1%).⁴

To better understand the nature of the violence prior to the homicide, the Team has undertaken a focused analysis of the 286 cases involving a male predominant abuser and female predominant victim.

Almost 75% of men had used at least three types of domestic violence against their female partner during the relationship

The Team examined the various types of violence used by the 286 male predominant abusers against their female partner prior to the homicide, including: emotional/psychological violence; physical violence; sexual violence; economic violence; and stalking. Almost three-quarters of these men used three or more types of abusive behaviour against their female intimate partner prior to the homicide (n=206, 72%).

In approximately 25% of intimate partner violence homicides there was no history of the man using physical violence prior to the homicide

In approximately 75 per cent of the 286 cases involving a male predominant abuser and female predominant victim, there was a history of recorded or anecdotal physical violence by the man against the woman prior to the homicide (n=209, 73.1%). Accordingly, in approximately 25 percent of cases the man's history of abusive behaviour against his female partner involved non-physical violence only (n=77, 26.9%).

Almost 75% of men stalked their former partner after the relationship had ended

In almost 75 per cent of the intimate partner violence homicides that occurred after the relationship had ended, the male predominant abuser had stalked their former female partner prior to the homicide (n=73 out of 98 cases where the relationship had ended, 74.5%).

In almost 50% of cases, the man's history of violence against his partner had not been reported to police

In almost half of the 286 cases involving a male predominant abuser and a female predominant victim, the man's history of violent behaviour had never been reported to police prior to the homicide (n=133, 46.5%).

Of the men who had prior relationships, over half were repeat domestic violence abusers

Over half of the male predominant abusers who had prior intimate partners were known to have perpetrated domestic violence against at least one other female partner (n=121 out of the 217 men who had prior partners, 55.8%).

Approximately 40% of male abusers experienced trauma or adversity in their childhood

Approximately 40 per cent of the 286 male predominant abusers were known to have experienced significant trauma and/or adversity in their upbringing, including having experienced domestic and family violence as a child, and/or other trauma or adversity (for example, non-familial sexual abuse, poverty and neglect, or experiencing the trauma of war) (n=117, 40.9%).

⁴ There were a small number of cases (n=13) where only limited information was available to the Team and a determination could not be made as to who was the predominant abuser/victim in the relationship (including four cases where a man killed his female intimate partner, and nine cases where a woman killed her male intimate partner). In one case where a woman killed her male intimate partner, the woman was identified as the predominant abuser.

Domestic violence-context filicide

Approximately 18% of all domestic violence-context homicides involved parents killing children

Of the 550 domestic violence-context homicides that occurred in NSW between 1 July 2000 and 30 June 2022, approximately 18 per cent involved a parent killing a child or children under 18 years of age (n=96, 17.5%), resulting in the deaths of 52 boys and 44 girls. For all 96 children killed, there was evidence of a history of domestic violence either directed against the child and/or the child had experienced intimate partner violence between their parents.

Almost 40% of children killed in domestic violence-context filicides were aged one year or less

The 96 children killed by a parent in a context of domestic violence ranged from four weeks to 15 years of age, with almost 40 per cent being aged one year or less (n=38, 39.6%).

Approximately 60% of domestic violence-context filicides were perpetrated by a male parent

The 96 children were killed by 90 offenders, meaning that in some cases a parent killed more than one child. Just over 60 percent of domestic violence-context filicides were perpetrated by a male parent (n=56, 62.2%), including biological fathers (n=33) and non-biological fathers (n=23). Accordingly, just under 40 per cent of filicides were perpetrated by a female parent (n=34, 37.8%) and all but three of these women were the biological mother of the child or children they killed (n=31).

For 90% of children killed there was a history of intimate partner violence between their parents

In 90 per cent of domestic violence-context filicides there was a history of intimate partner violence between the parents of the child that was killed (n=81 out of 90 filicide offenders, including 48 male offenders and 33 female offenders).⁵ The vast majority of these 48 male filicide offenders were the predominant domestic violence abuser against the mother of the child that was killed (n=47, 97.9%). Conversely, the vast majority of these 33 female filicide offenders were the predominant domestic violence victim in their intimate relationship with the child's father (n=32, 97%).

In approximately 50% of cases where there was a history of direct violence against the child that was killed, the violence had been reported to police and/or child protection services

In approximately two-thirds of cases, there was a history of the filicide offender perpetrating domestic violence directly against the child prior to their death (n=62 out of 90 filicide offenders, including 44 male offenders and 18 female offenders, 68.9%). In approximately 50 per cent of these cases, the history of violence against the child had been reported to police and/or child protection services (n=33, 53.2%).

⁵ For the remaining 9 filicide offenders, there was no history of intimate partner violence, and the domestic violence context of the case relates only to the parent's history of abuse towards the child.



Relative/kin domestic violence-context homicide

Approximately 17% of all domestic violence-context homicides were relative/kin homicides

Approximately 17 per cent of the 550 domestic violence-context homicides that occurred in NSW between 1 July 2000 and 30 June 2022, involved a person killing a family member, excluding intimate partner and filicide cases (n=94, 17.1%). The 94 relative/kin homicides resulted in the deaths of 40 females and 54 males.

The 94 relative/kin homicides were perpetrated by 90 offenders, meaning that in some cases more than one family member was killed. The vast majority of relative/kin homicide offenders were male (n=74, 82.2%), with a comparatively small number of cases being perpetrated by a female (n=16, 17.8%).

Almost 50% of relative/kin domestic violence-context homicides involved a son killing a parent or parents

Almost half of the 94 victims of relative/kin domestic violence-context homicides were parents killed by their son (n=44, 46.8%), including the deaths of 25 males and 19 females.

Approximately two-thirds of relative/kin domestic violence-context homicide offenders had AOD issues

Of the 90 relative/kin domestic violence-context homicide offenders, almost two-thirds had a history of AOD issues (n=59, 65.6%).

Over 80% of relative/kin domestic violence-context homicide offenders had a history of experiencing mental health issues

Of the 74 male offenders of relative/kin domestic violence-context homicides, 83.8% were identified as having a history of mental health issues.⁶ Of the 16 female offenders, 68.8% had mental health issues. Accordingly, just over 80 per cent of offenders had a history of experiencing mental health issues (n=73, 81.1%).

Almost one-third of relative/kin domestic violence-context homicide offenders were found to not be criminally responsible for the homicide due to mental health impairment

At trial, almost one-third of the 90 relative/kin domestic violence-context homicide offenders were found by a judge or jury to not be criminally responsible for the homicide due to mental health impairment (n=28, 31.1%), including 25 male offenders and 3 female offenders.

⁶ See n 3.

‘Other’ domestic violence-context homicides

10% of all people killed in a context of domestic violence were not an intimate partner or relative of the person who killed them

Of the 550 domestic violence-context homicides that occurred in NSW between 1 July 2000 and 30 June 2022, 10 per cent were ‘other’ domestic violence-context homicides (n=55), meaning that while the person killed had no intimate or familial relationship with the homicide offender, the death nonetheless occurred in a context of domestic violence. The 55 ‘other’ domestic violence-context homicides resulted in the deaths of 52 males and three females.

Almost 90% of ‘other’ domestic violence-context homicides were related to intimate partner violence, and most often involved a women’s ex-partner killing her new intimate partner

The vast majority of the ‘other’ domestic violence-context homicides were related to intimate partner violence (n=49, 89.1%) and most often involved men killing their former female partner’s new (or perceived new) male intimate partner (n=23, 41.8%).



KEY THEMES

This section discusses a number of key themes arising from the data findings presented in this report. Each of the themes raise highly complex and often interconnected issues, many of which have been reflected across the Team's body of work. While this section does not examine these themes in detail, it demonstrates the insights that can be drawn from the Team's specialised data analyses and the important contribution of this work in continuing to build the evidence base and guide meaningful system reform.

Gendered nature of violence

While each of the four types of domestic violence-context homicides examined in this report demonstrate distinct characteristics and dynamics, the gendered nature of violence emerges as a common thread running through the datasets.

Men were significantly overrepresented as domestic violence homicide offenders, and for most of these men the homicide represented the fatal end point of their long-standing violence behaviours. While this aligns with well understood dynamics of domestic violence in intimate relationships, the Team's findings demonstrate the extent to which this gendered violence extends beyond the intimate partner framework into other family relationship contexts, with men also being overrepresented as the perpetrators of fatal violence against their children, their relatives, and others within the orbit of their intimate and familial relationships.

The Team's findings further demonstrate the complex ways that men's violence against their female partners intersects with their violence in other relationship contexts. This was starkly demonstrated in the 'other' domestic violence homicides, the majority of which involved an abusive man killing his former partner's new male partner. In a number of these cases the woman was also killed, but for the most part the man's history of intimate partner violence culminated in him specifically targeting the new partner, often in circumstances where the woman was present but physically unharmed. These cases are overlooked in other domestic violence homicide counts and the Team's work in framing them as an extension of men's violence against women is important in revealing the true prevalence of homicides that occur in a context of domestic violence.

The extended and fatal impact of intimate partner violence was also evident in the male perpetrated filicide cases, with 20 per cent of men having no history of violence against the child they killed, and the domestic violence context of the death therefore relating only to the man's history of violence against his female partner, the child's mother. It is critical, therefore, that men's violence against women be appropriately recognised as a risk indicator for children.

The gendered nature of violence is clearly demonstrated by the high proportion of women and girls killed in a context of domestic violence. This is drawn into sharp focus in the intimate partner violence cases with women of all ages dying at the hands of their abusive partner, sometimes in the context of short relationships, but more often after experiencing years or even decades of that man's violence. The Team's findings provide critical insights into the types of violence these women experienced and emphasise that any relationship that is characterised by domestic violence, be it physical or non-physical violence, is embedded with a risk of lethality.

The Team's data findings also demonstrate the complex intersection of intimate partner violence with female perpetrated homicide. In the intimate partner violence cases over 80 per cent of women who killed their male partner were the predominant victim of that man's violence in the relationship. In the filicide cases, approximately half of the women had no prior history of abusing the child they killed, but almost all of these women were the victim of intimate partner violence from their male partner. Women who killed a family member were observed to have experienced much higher rates of domestic violence victimisation (including both intimate partner violence and other domestic violence) compared to men who killed a relative.

These patterns of violence victimisation and perpetration demonstrate that women who kill their partner, child, or relative, most often do so in circumstances where they are in fact the victim of violence from a male abuser. This raises questions around the adequacy of supports available to these women to escape the violence they were experiencing, prior to the homicide.

It is important, therefore, when examining the gendered drivers of violence against women, that the focus is not only on the circumstances in which men kill women, but also the context in which women may become homicide offenders.

Separation and stalking

The Team has consistently highlighted that the period leading up to and immediately following separation is particularly dangerous for women with abusive partners and has emphasised the need for systems and services to be cognisant of and responsive to this heightened risk.⁷

The evidentiary basis underpinning separation as a time of high and escalating risk is evident across the Team's intimate partner, filicide and 'other' domestic violence-context homicide datasets. In the intimate partner violence cases, just over a third of women were killed by their male partner after leaving the relationship, and for another third of the women killed, the relationship was breaking down and the woman had indicated an intention to separate. These findings are supported by Australian and international studies on IPV homicide that have similarly identified actual or intended separation as one of the key lethality/high-risk indicators for domestic and family violence homicide.⁸

Importantly, however, the Team's work demonstrates that separation is a risk indicator that extends beyond the intimate partner homicide context. Just over one-third of filicides occurred in the context of parental separation (35%), and the majority of these cases were perpetrated by a male parent. Separation was also identified as a key characteristic in the 'other' domestic violence homicides, with a high proportion of these cases involving a man killing a women's new (or perceived new) partner. Again, this demonstrates the complex ways that men's violence against women can manifest as lethal violence against others and highlights the importance of recognising separation as a risk of harm not only to women, but also to their children and others close to them.

A related finding revealed in the Team's analysis - and one that has markedly increased in prevalence since the Team last reported - is the intersection of separation and stalking in IPV homicides. In almost three-quarters of the cases where the relationship had ended, the male abuser had stalked the female victim prior to the homicide. In the Team's 2019-21 Report, stalking post-separation was evident in half of the cases where the relationship had ended.⁹ The significant increase in the prevalence of post-separation stalking may reflect the greater availability of surveillance tactics and new technologies that are readily accessible by abusers to extend their power and control and deprive victims of privacy, autonomy and a sense of safety. It may also reflect the general increase in police pursuing charges in relation to domestic violence-context stalking and intimidation offences.¹⁰

These findings reinforce the need to strengthen support and protection for women who intend to separate or

7 NSW Domestic Violence Death Review Team (2022), *Report 2019-21*, pp.135-6; NSW Domestic Violence Death Review Team (2020), *Report 2017-19*, pp.9, 67 and 76; NSW Domestic Violence Death Review Team (2017), *Report 2015-17*, pp.9 and 133.

8 Australian Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Network and Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (2022), Data Report: Intimate partner violence homicides 2010–2018', 2nd ed., *Research report 03/2022*, ANROWS, p. 14 <https://www.anrows.org.au/project/australian-domestic-and-family-violence-death-review-network-national-data-update/> (accessed 31 May 2024); New Zealand Family Violence Death Review Committee (2017), 'Fifth Report Data: January 2009 to December 2015', Wellington: Health Quality & Safety Commission, p. 10, <https://www.hqsc.govt.nz/resources/resource-library/family-violence-death-review-committee-fifth-report-data/> (accessed 31 May 2024); See Toivonen, C., and Backhouse, C. (2018) 'National Risk Assessment Principles for domestic and family violence', *ANROWS Insights 07/2018*, p.5, https://20ian81kynqg38bl3i3eh8bf-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/ANROWS_NRAP_National-Risk-Assessment-Principles.1.pdf (accessed 16 May 2024).

9 DVDRT Report 2019-21 (n 7), p.31.

10 Ramsey, S. et al (2022). *Trends in domestic violence-related stalking and intimidation offences in the criminal justice system: 2021 to 2021* (Bureau Brief No. 159). Sydney: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, https://www.bocsr.nsw.gov.au/Pages/bocsr_publication/Pub_Summary/BB/BB159-DV-related-stalking.aspx (accessed 31 May 2024).



have recently separated from their abusive partner. It also highlights the importance of ensuring consistent approaches to risk assessment which adequately recognise the heightened risk around separation and stalking and supporting services to work with women in relation to the ever-evolving forms of technology-facilitated abuse.

The co-occurrence of domestic violence, AOD, and mental health issues

Across the homicide datasets considered in this report, a significant proportion of both victims and abusers had mental health and/or alcohol and drug (AOD) issues. This ranged from one-quarter for some cohorts, to over three-quarters for other cohorts, with the highest rates identified for the homicide offenders who killed a relative/kin.

For the first time the Team has also presented data findings on the co-occurrence of mental health and AOD issues, which provides an evidentiary basis to support holistic and integrated responses for people at the complex intersection of mental health, AOD use, and domestic violence.

While the Team recognises that mental health and AOD issues do not cause domestic violence, these issues may create particular barriers to accessing services and impact victims' experiences of violence and risk. In the absence of qualitative case reviews, the data findings presented in this report do not allow further examination of the nature and quality of service engagement and the unique challenges that may present for victims and abusers with a co-occurrence of mental health and AOD issues. This is, however, an issue that has been explored in the Team's previous reports.

The Team has highlighted, for instance, the cumulative impact of victimisation which can erode a domestic violence victim's self-esteem and mental well-being, as well as giving rise to trauma-coping responses such as AOD use. The Team's in-depth case reviews have also revealed the way abusers can weaponise the victim's mental health and AOD use, exploiting the systemic discrimination and stigma associated with these issues to undermine or manipulate a victim's access to supports and services.

As the Team recommences its in-depth case review analysis over the next reporting period, it will continue to interrogate this issue, including to work with health practitioners to revise its quantitative and qualitative processes to build in greater nuance around the complex intersection of mental health, AOD use, and domestic violence.

Overrepresentation of Aboriginal people

Since the Team began its homicide surveillance function in 2011, it has consistently identified the overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in domestic violence homicides.

While acknowledging these high rates, the Team has always sought to emphasise that domestic violence is not an inherent part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and practice. Prior to colonisation, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples successfully managed interpersonal, family and community relationships for over 60,000 years and many aspects of traditional culture and customary law were respectful and protective of women.¹¹ There is a highly complex range of interrelated factors associated with the disproportionate incidence and severity of domestic violence in these communities today, including:

- the cumulative impact of colonisation,
- dispossession of tribal lands,

¹¹ Our Watch (2018) *Changing the picture: Background paper – Understanding violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women*, p.21 <https://mediacdn.ourwatch.org.au/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/09/20231756/Changing-the-picture-Part1-AA.pdf> (accessed 31 May 2024).

- loss of cultural identity and connections,
- economic and social disenfranchisement,
- loss of traditional protective roles and support within families and communities,
- historical and current child removal practices,
- institutional and structural racism, and
- limited access to culturally safe services.

For many First Nations communities, in Australia and abroad, these multiple and intersecting harms and injustices, both contemporary and historical, continue to contribute to experiences of domestic violence evident today.

While the past decade has seen a gradual decline in the rate of domestic violence homicides generally in NSW, the proportion of people killed who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander has steadily increased across the Team's datasets. It is noted, however, the proportion of homicide offenders who identify as First Nations peoples has not increased at the same rate, which suggests that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are increasingly being killed by non-Indigenous homicide offenders. This is particularly evident in the intimate partner violence cases involving the homicide of Aboriginal women, a finding that rejects the myth that First Nations women are always killed by First Nations men.¹²

Across numerous reports, the Team has sought to highlight the range of complex issues that impede the effective intervention and prevention of violence in First Nations families and communities, including:

- poor or discriminatory practices by frontline responders resulting in distrust in and/or disengagement with support services;¹³
- barriers to accessing appropriate and culturally safe support services, particularly in regional and remote areas;¹⁴
- misidentification of Aboriginal women as domestic violence abusers and problematic racist attitudes by responders regarding how 'real' victims should behave;¹⁵
- failure to recognise or respond to the profound intergenerational and personal trauma for First Nations peoples who use or experience violence;¹⁶ and
- the devastating, radiating and long-lasting impact that domestic violence homicides have on First Nations communities.

Undertaking this work has also caused the Team to critically reflect on its own review processes for cases involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including to consider how to embed greater cultural safety in its work and issues around data sovereignty. The Team is also considering the potential to engage directly with family, friends and community, to counteract the underlying bias and privilege of agency perspectives in the

¹² Ibid p.20.

¹³ DVDRT Report 2019-21 (n 7), p.44; SNAICC National Voice for Our Children, National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Forum, & National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (2017) *Strong families, safe kids: Family violence response and prevention for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families*, https://www.snaicc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Strong_Families_Safe_Kids-Sep_2017.pdf (accessed 31 May 2024)

¹⁴ DVDRT Report 2019-21 (n 7), p.44; Langton, M. et al (2020) 'Improving family violence legal and support services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women', *ANROWS*, <https://www.anrows.org.au/project/improving-family-violence-legal-and-support-services-for-indigenous-women/> (accessed 31 May 2024)

¹⁵ DVDRT Report 2019-21 (n 7), pp.37 and 57-58; Douglas, H. and Fitzgerald, R. (2018) 'The Domestic Violence Protection Order system as entry to the criminal justice system for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people' *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy*, vol. 7(3) pp.41-57, <https://doi:10.5204/ijcsd.v7i3.499> (accessed 5 May 2024); Nancarrow, H. et al (2020), 'Accurately identifying the "person most in need of protection" in domestic and family violence law', *ANROWS Research report 23/2020*, <https://20ian81kynqg38bl3l3eh8bf-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Nancarrow-PMINOP-RR.3.pdf> (accessed 4 May 2024).

¹⁶ DVDRT Report 2019-21 (n 7), p.XXV; Dudgeon, P. et al (2017), 'Trauma in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Population', *Australian Clinical Psychologist*, vol.3(1), pp. 19-30.



service records relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (see *Limitations: Incorporating the voices of family, friends and community* for further discussion).

Having regard to these highly complex issues and recognising the urgent need to better understand and respond to the increasing overrepresentation evident in the data findings, the Team has committed to prioritising focused research on homicides involving First Nations peoples. Over the next reporting period, a co-led, co-designed research project will be scoped in partnership with the Office of the Women's Safety Commissioner and the outcomes of this important work will be reflected in the Team's future reports.

In its 2019-21 Report, the Team also signalled its concern in relation to the disproportionate impact the new offence of coercive control may have on Aboriginal communities and (having regard to the issue of misidentification) in particular for Aboriginal women.¹⁷ It is noted that the statutory review of the coercive control legislation will specifically consider the impact of the new offence on Aboriginal people¹⁸ as well as the issue of misidentification more broadly.¹⁹ The first review is to be undertaken two years after the commencement of the new offence²⁰ and the report tabled in the NSW Parliament within three years of commencement (i.e., July 2027).²¹ Again, the outcomes of this critical review will be reflected in the Team's future work.

Domestic violence in regional or remote communities

The proportion of people from regional or remote areas who were killed in domestic violence homicides is reasonably consistent across the datasets (approximately one-third), and reveals a slight overrepresentation, noting that around 28 per cent of the general population in Australia live in rural areas.²² This finding is consistent with a number of studies which suggest that living in regional and remote areas can heighten the frequency and severity of domestic violence more generally.²³

The highest cohort of domestic violence homicides occurring outside a major city were those perpetrated by a woman killing her male intimate partner (approximately 40%), and these women were almost always the domestic violence victim in the relationship. This provides an important evidentiary basis for the widely accepted notion that there are greater barriers to help-seeking for women living in regional and remote areas, than women in urban communities.²⁴

The vastness of Australia's landscape and the physical distance that often separates neighbours, communities, and towns, creates geographical isolation - which can in turn lead to social isolation, particularly for victims of domestic violence.²⁵ Geographical distance also impacts the availability and accessibility of services. There are fewer (if any) specialised support services, meaning that victims may have to join a waitlist or travel to another area to access support.

17 DVDRT Report 2019-21 (n 7), pp.229-230; Nancarrow, H. et al (2020), 'Accurately identifying the "person most in need of protection" in domestic and family violence law', ANROWS Research report, 23/2020, <https://www.anrows.org.au/publication/accurately-identifying-the-person-most-in-need-of-protection-in-domestic-and-family-violence-law/> (accessed 4 March 2024).

18 *Crimes Legislation Amendment (Coercive Control) Act 2022* (NSW) s54J(2)(c).

19 *Ibid* s 54J(2)(d).

20 *Ibid* s 54J(4)(a).

21 *Ibid* s 54J(5)(a).

22 Australian Bureau of Statistics (2023) in Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2024), *Rural and remote health*, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/rural-remote-australians/rural-and-remote-health> (accessed 4 May 2024).

23 Campo, M. and Tayton, S. (2015) 'Domestic and family violence in regional, rural and remote communities: An overview of key issues', *Child Family Community Australia Practitioner Resource*, <https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/domestic-and-family-violence-regional-rural-and-remote-communities> (accessed 23 May 2024); George, A., & Harris, B. (2014), 'Landscapes of violence: Women surviving family violence in regional and rural Victoria', *Deakin University*, <https://eprints.qut.edu.au/104420/> (accessed 23 May 2024); Strand, S. and Storey, J. (2019), 'Intimate partner violence in urban, rural, and remote areas: An investigation of offense severity and risk factors', *Violence Against Women*, 25(2), pp.188-207, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801218766611> (accessed 23 May 2024); Mishara, G. et al. (2014), *Health and wellbeing of women aged 18-23 in 2013 and 1996: Findings from the Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health*, Report prepared for the Australian Government Department of Health, <https://alswh.org.au/post-outcomes/2014-major-report-health-and-wellbeing-of-womenaged-18-to-23-in-2013-and-1996-findings-from-the-australian-longitudinal-study-on-womens-health/> (accessed 23 May 2024).

24 Campo and Tayton (2015) (n 23).

25 McLachlan, F. (2024). The Rurality of Intimate Partner Femicide: Examining Risk Factors in Queensland. *Violence Against Women*, 30(6-7), pp.1683-1707. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10778012231158105> (accessed 23 May 2024).

Other challenges may arise in relation to privacy and a lack of anonymity in close-knit regional communities whereby many residents know each other, and this can compromise discreet contact with service providers. Beyond these barriers, other issues that the Team and other researchers have previously identified include complex financial arrangements (for example in farming communities); high rates of gun ownership; and particular attitudes around masculinity and more narrowly defined traditional gender norms.²⁶ Each town, like each person, is unique in the challenges that may be relevant, and rural communities should not be considered as a homogenous group. Instead, tailored service responses should be informed and led by those within the community, who are best positioned to understand and overcome those distinct challenges.

The intersection of domestic violence and socio-economic disadvantage

The findings presented in this report demonstrate that domestic violence homicides occur across all socio-economic areas in NSW, and this similarly supports an understanding that domestic violence itself occurs across all demographic groups, regardless of socio-economic status. It would appear, however, that people living in the most disadvantaged areas of NSW are overrepresented as victims of domestic violence homicide, with 40 per cent of people killed living in the lowest quintile of socio-economic advantage.²⁷ This finding aligns with results from the ABS Personal Safety Survey which revealed that women living in the lowest quintile of socio-economic advantage were most likely to have experienced intimate partner violence in the last two years, and those in the highest quintile were the least likely.²⁸

The financial impact of domestic violence can disrupt all aspects of a victim's life, including their ability to leave the abuser. Concerns over their ability to provide financially for themselves and their children is recognised as a key reason victims are unable to leave abusers or may return to the relationship after leaving.²⁹ There are direct costs associated with separation such as moving and legal fees, as well as healthcare costs to restore the victim's physical and mental wellbeing.³⁰ There are also indirect costs which are far-reaching, longer-lasting, and much more difficult to quantify.³¹ Recent Australian studies revealed that children who experienced domestic violence reported poorer educational, economic, and employment outcomes.³² In 2015-16 the total cost of violence against women and their children in Australia was estimated to be \$22 billion, with victims bearing \$11.3 billion (52%) of that total cost themselves.³³

The prevalence of economic abuse in the IPV Homicide Dataset adds further insight into the economic challenges that victims of domestic violence may face, with over one-third of female victims experiencing economic abuse prior to the homicide.

26 DVDRT Report 2019-21 (n 7); Campo and Tayton (2015) (n 24).

27 Australian Bureau of Statistics (2018) 'Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD) Interactive Map', Census of Population and Housing: Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA), Australia, 2016, <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/2033.0.55.001~2016-Main%20Features-IRSD%20Interactive%20Map-15> (accessed 21 October 2023).

28 Commonwealth of Australia Department of Social Services (2018), 'PSS Analytical Paper #3 – Demographics of partner violence', paper analysing data from the *Australian Bureau of Statistics' Personal Safety Survey*, <https://plan4womenssafety.dss.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/pss-analytical-paper-3-demographics-partner-violence.pdf> (accessed 23 May 2024).

29 Junseok, K. and Gray, K. (2008) 'Leave or Stay? Battered Women's Decision after Intimate Partner Violence', *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, vol. 23(10) pp.1465-1482, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260508314307> (accessed 3 June 2024).

30 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2024), Family, domestic and sexual violence: Economic and financial Impacts, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/family-domestic-and-sexual-violence/responses-and-outcomes/economic-financial-impacts> (accessed 3 June 2024).

31 Summers, A. (2022), 'The choice: Violence or poverty', *University of Technology Sydney*, https://assets.website-files.com/62b998c0c9af9f65bba26051/63228540ce74a60866ee4e98_TheChoice-violence-or-poverty-web.pdf (accessed 3 June 2024).

32 Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (2018), 'Research summary: The impacts of domestic and family violence on children', 2nd ed., *ANROWS Insights 11/2018*, <https://www.anrows.org.au/publication/research-summary-the-impacts-of-domestic-and-family-violence-on-children/> (accessed 3 June 2024).

33 KPMG (2016), 'The cost of violence against women and their children in Australia: Final Report', prepared for the Department of Social Services, https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/08_2016/the_cost_of_violence_against_women_and_their_children_in_australia_-_summary_report_may_2016.pdf (accessed 3 June 2024).



Culturally and linguistically diverse communities

Approximately 27 per cent of people killed in a domestic violence homicide were born outside Australia which would appear to approximately accord with general population statistics, with 30.7 per cent of Australia's population being born overseas.³⁴ However, in an increasingly multicultural world, the place where an individual is born isn't necessarily indicative of whether they share that country's dominant culture, religion, language, or ancestry.³⁵ Accordingly, this finding does not reflect the extent to which a person's cultural and linguistic identity may have effected their experience of domestic violence.

There is no single definition of 'cultural and linguistic diversity' in Australia, which creates challenges around consistently and accurately capturing the diverse experiences of people who use, or experience, domestic violence. There are clear limitations on the Team's current reliance on 'country of birth' and 'visa status' as the only means for signalling the prevalence of culturally and linguistically diverse communities in the Team's domestic violence homicide datasets.

The Team acknowledges these limitations and intends to re-examine how its quantitative and qualitative methodology can more accurately reflect the experiences and diversity of culturally and linguistically diverse communities as part of its future work agenda (see also *Limitations*).

Children's experiences of domestic violence

The experiences of children living with domestic violence are commonly rendered invisible by systems and services, and therefore the Team has endeavoured to continually emphasise the distinct and unique experiences of children, to ensure that they are better recognised, and responded to, in their own right.

The IPV Homicide Dataset reveals that in almost two-thirds of the homicides, children were living with the homicide offender, or the partner they killed, during the course of the relationship and there were at least 370 surviving children (aged less than 18 years) at the time of the homicide.

The filicide dataset highlights histories of direct violence (physical, sexual and emotional) towards children by one or both parents, coupled with low rates of reporting and intervention.

Known childhood trauma history (most commonly experiencing domestic violence as a child) was a feature for a large proportion of abusers and victims of violence across the homicide datasets.

Children living in a household with domestic violence is itself a form of victimisation that can have profound negative impacts on children, even where they are not direct victims of the violence and abuse.³⁶ However, it is also important to recognise that children are not passive and helpless victims, and can demonstrate an incredible capacity to cope, maintain a sense of agency, be resilient, and find ways of resisting violence.³⁷

These data findings reinforce the critical need for effective and timely specialised trauma-informed interventions for children, that maximise the child's safety and reduce ongoing harms to the child (and their family). This should also extend to providing early tailored support and therapeutic spaces for young people (and their families) who are coming into contact with the criminal justice system as a consequence of using violence.

34 Australian Bureau of Statistics (2024), 'Australia's Population by Country of Birth', <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/australias-population-country-birth/latest-release> (accessed 23 May 2024).

35 Mitra-Kahn, T. et al (2016), 'Invisible women, invisible violence: Understanding and improving data on the experiences of domestic and family violence and sexual assault for diverse groups of women: State of knowledge paper', *ANROWS Landscapes, DD01/2016*, https://anrows.intersearch.com.au/anrowsjspui/bitstream/1/19833/1/DiversityData_UPDATED191216.pdf (accessed 23 May 2024).

36 Humphreys, C. et al (2020) 'Safe & Together Addressing ComplexitY for Children (STACY for Children)' *ANROWS Research report*, https://20ian81kynqg38b3l3eh8bf-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/RP.19.01_RR_Humphreys_STACY-for-children.pdf (accessed 27 May 2024).

37 Callaghan, J. and Alexander, J. (2015), 'Understanding agency and resistance strategies (UNARS): children's experiences of domestic violence', <https://doi.org/10.13140/rg.2.1.2509.2324> (accessed 27 May 2024).

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The work of the team

This chapter provides an overview of the underlying principles which guide the operation of domestic violence death review mechanisms and describes the background, establishment, function and methodology of the NSW Domestic Violence Death Review Team.





What is domestic violence?

Domestic violence occurs when one person (the abuser) intentionally and systematically tries to dominate and control another person (the victim) in an intimate, familial, or family-like relationship. Domestic violence is characterised by the abuser's use of behaviours designed to incite fear and maintain control over the victim.

Domestic violence behaviours can include:

- psychological and emotional abuse;
- physical abuse;
- sexual abuse;
- verbal abuse;
- social abuse;
- economic abuse;
- abuse of systems;
- technological abuse;
- stalking;
- spiritual or cultural abuse;
- reproductive coercion;
- forced marriage; and/or
- any other behaviours used by the abuser to control and subjugate the victim.

In Australia, there is no nationally consistent definition of 'domestic violence', and it is often used interchangeably with other terms including 'domestic abuse', 'family violence', 'intimate partner violence' and 'coercive control'. Some jurisdictions (for example Victoria and the federal legislation governing Family Law³⁸) have adopted the term 'family violence' and this language is also preferred by many First Nations people because it is considered to better reflect the broader and intergenerational issues of violence within extended families, kinship networks and community relationships.³⁹

The Team has adopted the language of 'domestic violence' as to-date this has best reflected the terminology in criminal and civil legislation in NSW.⁴⁰ It is noted, however, that recent legislative reform in NSW, including in relation to the introduction of the new offence of coercive control (which came into force on 1 July 2024) will introduce a layer of definitional complexity in NSW.⁴¹

This somewhat fraught definitional landscape can create further barriers for victims both in terms of understanding their experiences of violence and providing equal access to support and justice. Accordingly, the Team reiterates the calls for a nationally consistent definition of domestic violence to support a shared understanding of, and consistent response for victims of violence in Australia.⁴²

38 The *Family Law Act 1975* (Cth).

39 Olsen, A. and Lovett, R. (2016) 'Existing knowledge, practice and responses to violence against women in Australian Indigenous communities: State of knowledge paper', *ANROWS Landscapes*, 02/2016, <https://www.anrows.org.au/publication/existing-knowledge-practice-and-responses-to-violence-against-women-in-australian-indigenous-communities-state-of-knowledge-paper/> (accessed 3 June 2024).

40 *Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007* (NSW) s 5.

41 *Crimes Legislation Amendment (Coercive Control) Act 2022* No 65 (NSW).

42 Commonwealth of Australia Department of Social Services (2022), 'The National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032', <https://www.dss.gov.au/ending-violence> (accessed 14 February 2024).

While men can be victims of domestic violence, the vast majority of this violence is perpetrated by men against women and children.⁴³ This has led to an understanding of domestic violence as a gendered harm, with male abusers motivated by gendered drivers of violence against women.⁴⁴ These drivers of violence are underpinned by entrenched patriarchal social conditions that ignore, excuse, justify, or even promote violence against women, as well as gender inequality more broadly. While these conditions are complex and entrenched, they are alterable – and therefore domestic violence is seen as a preventable social harm.⁴⁵

Despite changing community attitudes regarding the criminality of these behaviours, and decades of policy intervention, domestic violence remains one of the most serious social issues confronting NSW as a state, and Australia as a nation.

Why review domestic violence-context deaths?

Research has highlighted that a high proportion of homicides occur in a context of domestic violence. This is particularly true for women, who are far more likely to be killed by an intimate partner or family member following a history of domestic violence.⁴⁶

Domestic violence-context homicides (DV-context homicides) are considered to ‘exhibit predictable patterns and aetiologies’ and are therefore regarded as preventable.⁴⁷ When a homicide occurs in a context of domestic violence it can be characterised by a history of abusive behaviours that may have been known to service providers, friends and family prior to the homicide. Accordingly, these deaths warrant particular attention and analysis. This has been the impetus for the establishment of domestic violence death review teams worldwide.⁴⁸

Domestic violence death review teams are varied in nature but generally operate as collaborative multi-agency committees which conduct in-depth analyses of DV-context homicides. Such teams undertake a careful examination of the circumstances surrounding these homicides with a view to providing a better understanding of agencies’ roles and constraints in responding to domestic violence, as well as other barriers and limitations (qualitative analysis). Teams can also undertake data collection and analysis with a view to mapping trends and dynamics across domestic violence homicide cases (quantitative analysis).

Examining homicides that occur in a context of domestic violence enables review teams to identify where systems could be improved to better respond to domestic violence victims and abusers, and promote greater awareness and understanding of the broader dynamics and issues around domestic violence more generally.

43 Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016), *Personal Safety Survey, Australia*, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/crime-and-justice/personal-safety-australia/2016> (accessed 7 February 2024); Australian Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Network, & Australia’s National Research Organisation for Women’s Safety, (2022), ‘Australian Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Network Data Report: Intimate partner violence homicides 2010–2018’, 2nd ed., *Research report 03/2022*, <https://www.anrows.org.au/publication/australian-domestic-and-family-violence-death-review-network-data-report-intimate-partner-violence-homicides-2010-2018/#:~:text=In%20Australia%20in%202018%E2%80%939319,the%20Australian%20Institute%20of%20Criminology> (accessed 3 June 2024); NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (2024), ‘Domestic & Family Violence in NSW 2019–2023’ https://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/Documents/Landing_Pages/DV%20assault%20infographic%20Police%20actions%202023.pdf (accessed 3 June 2024).

44 Commonwealth of Australia Department of Social Services (2022) (n 44).

45 Our Watch (2021) *Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia* (second edition) <https://media-cdn.ourwatch.org.au/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/11/23131846/Change-the-story-Our-Watch-AA.pdf> (accessed 16 March 2024).

46 Australian Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Network (2022) (n 45); Toivonen and Backhouse (2018) (n 8); United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (2023), ‘Gender-related killings of women and girls (femicide/feminicide): Global estimates of female intimate partner/family-related homicides in 2022’, <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-11/gender-related-killings-of-women-and-girls-femicide-feminicide-global-estimates-2022-en.pdf> (accessed 3 June 2024).

47 Websdale, N. et al (1999) ‘Domestic Violence Fatality Reviews: From a culture of Blame to a culture of safety’, *Juvenile and Family Court Journal* (Spring), p.61.

48 Dawson, M. (2017) (ed.), *Domestic Homicides and Death Reviews: An International Perspective*, (Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2017).



The NSW Domestic Violence Death Review Team

Background and establishment

Recognising the history of death review processes operating internationally,⁴⁹ from the early 2000s, feminist advocates and other service responders began campaigning for a domestic violence death review process to be established in NSW.⁵⁰

In December 2008, following the murder of Melissa Cook, who was shot and killed at work by her abusive former partner, the NSW Government convened the Domestic Violence Homicide Advisory Panel to consider the establishment of an ongoing domestic violence death review mechanism for NSW. In June 2009 the Panel handed down its report, unanimously recommending that a permanent review mechanism be established and setting out the key features of such a review.

The Team was established in 2010 under Chapter 9A of the Coroners Act 2009, the object of which is to provide for the investigation of the causes of domestic violence deaths in NSW, so as to facilitate improvements in systems and services and, thereby, reduce the incidence of such deaths.⁵¹

The Act provides that the functions of the Team are to:

- review closed cases of domestic violence deaths;
- establish and maintain a database so as to identify patterns and trends relating to such deaths;
- develop recommendations from qualitative and quantitative data; and
- undertake research that aims to help prevent or reduce the likelihood of such deaths.⁵²

The Team's understanding of a 'domestic violence death'

As defined in the Team's legislation, a 'domestic violence death' occurs when one person directly or indirectly causes the death of another person, and the death occurs in a context of domestic violence.⁵³ The Act does not prescribe what a 'context of domestic violence' means however the Team considers this to include cases where there is an identifiable history of domestic violence between the deceased person and the person that caused the death, or the death is otherwise inextricably linked to the domestic violence behaviours of one of the parties (for example, a bystander who is killed intervening in an episode of domestic violence).

The Team's legislative definition of domestic violence death therefore allows for the examination of homicides, suicides and accidents that occur in a context of domestic violence. To date however, excluding a pilot study into domestic violence and suicide undertaken in 2017, the work of the Team has focused on domestic violence context 'homicides.'

The Team's use of the term 'homicide' is broader than the legal definition and includes all cases where an individual's intentional act, or failure to act, resulted in the death of another person, regardless of whether the

49 For example, in the United States and Canada such processes have existed since the 1990s, see David, N. (2007) 'Exploring the Use of Domestic Violence Fatality Review Teams' *Australian Domestic & Family Violence Clearinghouse Issues Paper*.

50 NSW Ombudsman (2006), 'Domestic Violence: Improving Police Practice', *A special report to Parliament under s31 of the Ombudsman Act 1974, pp.81-82*, https://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/125696/Domestic-violence-improving-police-practice-Special-Report-to-Parliament-December-2006-.pdf (accessed 3 June 2024).

51 *Coroners Act 2009* (NSW) s 101A.

52 *Ibid* s 101F(1).

53 *Ibid* s 101B.

circumstances were such as to contravene provisions of the criminal law. The Team adopts this approach to ensure there is sufficient scope to examine a broad range of domestic violence related deaths that may extend beyond the criminal justice system's conceptualisation of homicide, including people who have had their homicide charges withdrawn, or are acquitted following a trial.

Review and Recommendation: Understanding the function of the Team

The functions of the Team closely parallel the function of other investigative bodies and/or persons, including the recommendation function of Coroners, the investigative and reporting function of the Ombudsman, and the function of other death review bodies in Australian states and territories.

The purpose of these reviews is to investigate individual cases or groups of cases to identify issues within systems, including deficiencies in the way systems operate, omissions or oversights, and to consider how systems and approaches may benefit from change. Much like coronial inquests, the operation of the Team is premised on the understanding that the issues arising within individual, or groups of cases can reveal challenges across the system and provide insights into the ways in which systems do, or do not, work.

The domestic violence 'system' in NSW is complex, dynamic and multi-stratum. When a homicide occurs, the Team is afforded a unique opportunity to identify issues that might otherwise be obscured within this complex system. The Team's review process, therefore, acts as a lens into systems and affords a critical analysis of the effectiveness of those systems, where improvements have been made, or where systems and services do not, but should, reach.

Methodology

The Team adopts a three-tier approach to investigating and reporting on domestic violence homicides:

Tier 1: Quantitative analysis of a DV-context homicide dataset.

Tier 2: Critical analysis of in-depth case reviews.

Tier 3: From a synthesis of information derived from Tier 1 and Tier 2, development of findings and recommendations for the biennial reports.

Tier 1 Methodology

To develop and maintain the Team's homicide dataset the Team's Secretariat identifies and examines every homicide, suspected homicide, and suspicious death that occurs in NSW, capturing demographic information and case characteristics for each death. This is achieved through media monitoring, JusticeLink⁵⁴ homicide law part code audits, and JusticeLink reportable death audits.

Once identified, each open case receives a preliminary coding based on the relationship between the deceased person and the alleged homicide offender (where known), and whether the death occurred in a domestic violence context. To determine if a homicide occurred in a domestic violence context, case material is examined to identify any evidence (reported or anecdotal) of domestic violence prior to the fatal episode.

The DV-context homicide dataset is then divided into four categories based on the relationship between the deceased and the homicide offender:

⁵⁴ JusticeLink is the integrated, multi-jurisdictional case management system used by all civil and criminal courts operating in NSW.



- **Intimate partner violence homicide:** where a person is killed by a current or former intimate partner in a context of domestic violence;
- **Domestic violence filicide:** where a parent kills a child under the age of 18 years in a context of domestic violence;
- **Relative/kin domestic violence homicide:** where a person is killed by a non-intimate family member in a context of domestic violence;
- **‘Other’ domestic violence homicide:** where there is no intimate or familial relationship between the homicide offender and deceased, but the homicide nonetheless occurs in a context of domestic violence (for example, cases where a bystander is killed intervening in an episode of domestic violence).

The complete homicide dataset is subject to ongoing monitoring to track cases as criminal/coronial proceedings progress and coding revised where necessary, as further information about a case becomes available.

Once the criminal/coronial proceedings are finalised, the Secretariat prepares an in-depth case review for each DV-context homicide (See Tier 2). Data input is then completed for each case based on information revealed through the qualitative Tier 2 review process.

Year-on-year the Team’s dataset has continued to expand, not only in terms of the number of cases, but also in terms of the nuance and complexity of variables captured. For each of the categories of domestic violence homicides the Team considers, a distinct (but ever evolving) set of data variables have been developed to examine the unique characteristics of each death type, and thereby more effectively guide intervention and prevention efforts.

Tier 2 Methodology

Each in-depth case review is prepared by the Secretariat and is then subject to critical analysis by the Team.

To prepare the reviews, the Secretariat undertakes a comprehensive examination and analysis of all available material, including:

- police reports to the Coroner;
- the brief of evidence (prosecutorial or coronial) including witness statements;
- information on the NSW Police Force Computerised Operational Policing System (COPS);
- post-mortem and toxicology reports;
- remarks on sentence;
- coronial findings;
- media reports; and
- any additional information called for by the Team such as: health, child protection, education, corrective services, housing, specialist domestic violence or other service provider records.⁵⁵

The Secretariat then prepares a case review report which sets out, in as much detail as possible, information including:

⁵⁵ *Coroners Act 2009* (NSW) s 101L.

- *deceased/homicide offender profiles* – including demographic information (such as age, sex, ethnicity, family history, education, relationship status, housing status, employment history, and criminal history);
- *chronology of events* – including any relevant events, both proximal and distal, to the death;
- *domestic violence ‘status’ of the deceased/homicide offender* – i.e. whether they were the predominant domestic violence victim or abuser in the relationship;
- *relationship history* – including the nature, duration and history of the relationship between the deceased and homicide offender, and any former intimate relationships;
- *details of the death*;
- *criminal justice outcome*; and
- *service contact and response history* – including the availability and effectiveness of any services and systems, and any failures that may have contributed to, or failed to prevent, the death.

In preparing the case review, the Secretariat also articulates relevant issues for discussion, and any reoccurring themes that are apparent across the Team’s body of work.

The Secretariat approaches each in-depth qualitative case review through a domestic violence lens and with a victim-focused orientation. This method is adopted to counterbalance the dominant narratives of domestic violence abusers, who may have successfully concealed their violence and avoided responsibility until the homicide. Post-homicide the abuser frequently continues to dominate the narrative through court processes and the media, with the victim’s experiences often rendered invisible.

With much of the violence obscured from service providers, responders and social networks, it is only through a holistic examination of patterns of behaviour over the life course of the victim and abuser that the complex dynamics of domestic violence become apparent. The Secretariat endeavours to uncover these patterns to ensure the victim’s experience of violence is represented in the case reviews in its most complete and contextual form, while also acknowledging that the true extent of violence may never be known. This work also seeks to highlight that victims may conceal or minimise the violence they experience in an effort to increase their safety and maintain maximum control of their circumstances.

Each case review report is then examined by the Team in a series of workshops to discuss the issues and themes arising from the case, highlight areas where policy or law has shifted, and develop areas for recommendation.

The development and analyses of these cases is what lies at the heart of the death review function – bringing together a multidisciplinary Team with a breadth of policy and practice expertise to openly discuss cases, and develop targeted, meaningful and workable intervention and prevention strategies. As described in the previous section, the process of undertaking in-depth reviews also provides the richness and depth of the Team’s quantitative research.



Tier 3 Methodology

To develop the Team's reports the Secretariat synthesises the Team's discussions from the case review workshops to develop the key themes and issues for commentary, as well as scoping potential areas for recommendation. The Team's DV-context homicide dataset then provides a further layer of insights into the trends and dynamics across the cases, which also inform the Team's findings and recommendations.

The Team makes recommendations across multiple areas including changes to legislation, policies, practices and services for implementation by government and non-government organisations which aim to facilitate improvements in systems and services and promote better outcomes for victims more broadly. Recommendations are developed by Team members in consultation with agencies to ensure that any proposed reform is informed by current practice and policies.

Once the report is finalised, it is tabled in Parliament and published online on the Coroner's Court website.

Limitations and challenges in the Team's work

The development of the datasets in this report have been informed by the expertise of the Team, drawing from a diverse and comprehensive range of primary source material. The findings reveal important understandings in relation to the prevalence and case characteristics of DV-context homicides, as well as unique insights into the nature of violence preceding the homicide.

While these critical understandings and insights set the findings in this report apart from many other studies exploring homicide, the Team acknowledges that there are a number of limitations and challenges that may impact the accuracy of the data presented.

Identifying homicides and homicide offenders

The Team's homicide dataset includes the deaths of over 150 men, women and children where the homicide offender has not been identified. This includes unsolved homicides, missing person cases that have been ruled a homicide, and suspected homicides that are still under investigation. With no identifiable homicide offender, these cases have been excluded from the DV-context homicide dataset, even though a history of domestic violence may have been evident prior to the person's disappearance or death. Accordingly, the Team's findings likely represent an undercount of the true prevalence of DV-context homicides in NSW.

Identifying histories of domestic violence

Despite the comprehensive primary source material analysed in the development of the Team's datasets, it is acknowledged that in some cases the history of domestic violence preceding a homicide may never have been disclosed and was not otherwise observed (or recognised) by bystanders. Similarly, it is acknowledged that while a history of domestic violence may be identified in a case, the complete nature of that abuse may not be evident from the material reviewed. For example, the Team has recognised that intimate partner sexual violence is likely to be underrepresented in this dataset due to the many barriers victims may experience in disclosing and reporting this form of violence. Again, therefore, the findings presented in this report may represent an undercount of the true prevalence of DV-context homicides and may not fully reflect the prevalence or nature of domestic violence that preceded the homicide.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status

This report draws on service data, such as government records, health records, police reports and support services records, to identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in this dataset. The consistency and quality of this administrative data as a means of identifying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status can be compromised by structural issues – such as services not explicitly asking the client or making assumptions about their identity – and by a client’s choice not to self-identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.⁵⁶ Accordingly, there is the potential for underreporting of DV-context homicides involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Culturally and linguistically diverse communities

There is no single definition of ‘cultural and linguistic diversity’ in Australia, which creates challenges around consistently and accurately capturing the diverse experiences of people who use, or experience, domestic violence. There are clear limitations on the Team’s current reliance on ‘country of birth’ and ‘visa status’ as the only means for signalling the prevalence of culturally and linguistically diverse communities in the Team’s DV-context homicide datasets.

In an increasingly multicultural world, the place where an individual is born isn’t necessarily indicative of whether they share that country’s dominant culture, religion, language, or ancestry.⁵⁷ The Team acknowledges these limitations, and intends to re-examine how its quantitative and qualitative methodology can more accurately reflect the experiences and diversity of culturally and linguistically diverse communities as part of its future work agenda.

People with disability

It is widely acknowledged that there are gaps and inconsistencies in data collection around disability in Australia.⁵⁸ Many service providers do not identify disability, and for those that do, there are stark variations in the definitions of disability. These issues are inevitably reflected in the service data examined by the Team and has likely resulted in an underreporting of people with disability in the Team’s DV-context homicide datasets.

It is recognised that people with disability are more likely to be victims of domestic and sexual violence than people without disability and may experience additional barriers to seeking help and support.⁵⁹ Both the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence and the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability identified the need to improve data collection in relation to disability so that governments can better understand and respond to violence and abuse against people with disability.⁶⁰ Accordingly, the Team is committed to re-thinking its approach and analysis around disability data capture as part of its future work agenda.

56 Limitations in the data capture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity, as well as barriers to Aboriginal identification are discussed in DVDRT Report 2017-19 (n 7), p.94; See also NSW Aboriginal Affairs (2015), *Aboriginal identification in NSW: the way forward, An Aboriginal peoples’ perspective*, <https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2015-10/apo-nid308575.pdf> (accessed 19 January 2024).

57 Mitra-Kahn et al (2016) (n 35).

58 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2024), ‘Family, domestic and sexual violence: People with disability’, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/family-domestic-and-sexual-violence/population-groups/people-with-disability#:~:text=Key%20findings,-About%201%20in&text=People%20with%20disability%20are%20more,additional%20barriers%20to%20getting%20help>. (accessed 3 June 2024).

59 People with Disability Australia and Domestic Violence NSW (2021), ‘Women with Disability and Domestic and Family Violence: A Guide for Policy and Practice’, <https://pwd.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Women-with-Disability-and-Domestic-and-Family-Violence-A-Guide-for-Policy-and-Practice.pdf> (accessed 3 June 2024); Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021), ‘Disability and Violence – in Focus: Crime and Justice Statistics, Australian Bureau of Statistics’, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/crime-and-justice/focus-crime-and-justicestatistics/april-2021>. (accessed 3 June 2024).

60 Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (2021) ‘Research Report: Nature and extent of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation against people with disability in Australia’, *Centre of Research Excellence in Disability and Health (CRE-DH)*. <https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/system/files/2021-11/Research%20Report%20-%20Nature%20and%20extent%20of%20violence%2C%20abuse%2C%20neglect%20and%20exploitation%20against%20people%20with%20disability%20in%20Australia.pdf> (accessed 19 January 2024); Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence (2016), *Vol V: Report and Recommendations*, p.67, <http://rcfv.archive.royalcommission.vic.gov.au/MediaLibraries/RCFamilyViolence/Reports/Final/RCFV-Vol-V.pdf> (accessed 19 January 2024).



Mental health

Like many of the variables in the Team's DV-context homicide datasets, information regarding mental health status is drawn from both official service records (such as medical records) as well as witness statements and other anecdotal evidence. Accordingly, the findings in relation to mental health reflect a broad range of circumstances, ranging from a person having been diagnosed by a health professional as having a mental illness, to friends and family reporting concerns about a person's mental well-being and/or behaviours consistent with psychological distress.

This approach is consistent with the Team's methodology which recognises that in addition to information drawn from formal service engagement, friends and family provide critical insights into the lives of victims and abusers prior to the homicide. This approach also recognises that there can be many complex barriers to accessing mental health services, including: stigma, shame, the availability or cost of services, concerns about confidentiality or the impact that a diagnosis may have on parental or other legal rights, as well as difficulties in identifying and communicating distress.⁶¹ These known barriers are further compounded for victims of domestic violence who may be actively prevented by the abuser from seeking help and accessing services.

The Team acknowledges, however, that there are limitations and risks in adopting this approach in relation to mental health, including that the findings may be misinterpreted as an overrepresentation of the proportion of people with mental illness being involved in a domestic violence homicide, thereby adding to the stigma of an already highly vulnerable and stigmatised population. Accordingly, the Team intends to work with mental health practitioners to revise its data capture to build in greater nuance around the complex intersection of mental health and domestic violence.

LGBTIQ+ communities

While understanding the gendered nature of domestic violence, the Team also recognises that domestic violence includes violence perpetrated by both heterosexual and LGBTIQ+ intimate partners. It is recognised that there is an overlap between the drivers of domestic violence and violence in LGBTIQ+ communities which reflect rigid gender roles, homophobia, heteronormativity and cisnormativity – attitudes, norms and behaviours that value heterosexuality as the ideal sexual orientation, and cisgender as the ideal gender identity.⁶² Moreover, traditional notions of 'family' for LGBTIQ+ people may be redefined as the 'chosen family' sometimes created in the context of rejection by biological families.⁶³

As described above, the work of the Team draws on service data from police, judicial and coronial systems to identify DV-context homicides. It is possible that cases where the relationship between the homicide offender and the deceased person was not disclosed or was otherwise not evident to those external to the relationship are misclassified as other forms of homicide. For example, a couple may be identified as housemates rather than intimate partners and absent other information (for example, from family or friends) the relationship is not acknowledged or recognised in system data. Accordingly, the figures represented in this report may represent an undercount of DV-context homicides in LGBTIQ+ relationships.

61 Salaheddin, K., and Mason, B. (2016) 'Identifying barriers to mental health help-seeking among young adults in the UK: a cross-sectional survey' *The British journal of general practice: the journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners*, vol. 66(651) pp.686–692. <https://doi.org/10.3399/bjgp16X687313> (accessed 13 March 2024).

62 Our Watch (2021) (n 45).

63 Rainbow Health Victoria (2020) *Pride in Prevention Evidence Guide*, <https://rainbowhealthaustralia.org.au/news/launch-pride-in-prevention-evidence-guide> (accessed 27 May 2024).

Incorporating the voices of family, friends and community

The Team's review methodology (as described above) relies on government service records and data which detail the interactions of the victim and the abuser with a range of services (e.g., police, health professionals, teachers, case workers etc) from the perspective of the service provider. The Team also draws on witness statements from family, friends, colleagues and community to better understand the victim's context (i.e., decision-making, help-seeking, coping strategies and resistance) and to counteract the underlying bias and privilege of agency perspectives in the service records. The number of witness statements included on the brief of evidence does, however, vary significantly between cases. Further, these witness statements are prepared for the specific purpose of the criminal/coronial investigation and are often limited to the period immediately preceding the homicide, and do not provide the more longitudinal and in-depth insights the Team seeks to uncover.

Recognising the inherent limitations of a desktop review, the Team is considering the potential to engage directly with family, friends and community as part of the in-depth case review process. This kind of engagement, which is routine in many overseas death reviews,⁶⁴ is understood to significantly enhance the review process with nuanced contextual information and insights beyond that found in system data.⁶⁵ Moreover, it can be of therapeutic benefit to friends, family and community as it provides the opportunity for people to tell their story, contribute to a process that aims to prevent future homicides, and may counterbalance negative experiences of the formal processes that follow a homicide.⁶⁶ It is important to acknowledge that there are potential risks inherent in such engagement, most notably the potential for re-traumatisation through the review process,⁶⁷ however much has been learned in other jurisdictions about best practice engagement.⁶⁸

As the Team's work continues to evolve and become more nuanced (and as lived experience becomes more authentically embedded in government systems) it is anticipated that engagement with families will become a central feature of the Team's death review process. This evolution is particularly critical for rebalancing the dominant perspective in reviews involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the voice of the statutory authority has been privileged and unchallenged for generations.

64 For example: Domestic Homicide Reviews in England and Wales; Montana Domestic Violence Fatality Review Commission; New Zealand Family Violence Death Review Committee; and Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

65 Rowlands, J. and Cook, E. (2022) 'Navigating Family Involvement in Domestic Violence Fatality Review: Conceptualising Prospects for Systems and Relational Repair', *J Fam Viol* 37, pp.559–572, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-021-00309-x> (accessed 7 June 2024).

66 Ibid.

67 Jaffe, P. et al (2013) 'Developing a national collaborative approach to prevent domestic homicides: Domestic homicide review committees,' *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 55(1), pp.137–155, <https://doi.org/10.3138/cjccj.2011.E.53> (accessed 7 June 2024).

68 Roguski, M. et al (2024) 'Te Pou: An Indigenous Framework to Evaluate the Inclusion of Family Voice in Family Violence Homicide Reviews' *J Fam Viol* 39, pp.325–337. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-022-00459-6> (accessed 7 June 2024).

Domestic violence- context homicide in NSW, 2000-2022

This chapter provides an overview of all homicides occurring in NSW between 1 July 2000 and 30 June 2022, and examines the proportion of homicides that occurred in a context of domestic violence. This section also considers the overall trend for DV-context homicides across the 22-year reporting period.



Homicide overview

Between 1 July 2000 and 30 June 2022 in NSW a total of 1,832 people were killed in a homicide. This included the deaths of 1,242 males and 590 females.

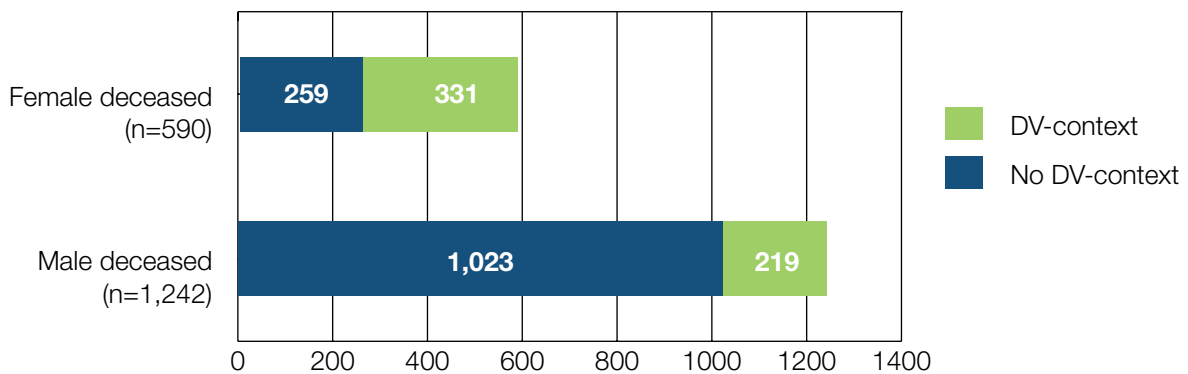
The terms ‘male’ and ‘female’ are used in this report to indicate a person’s gender identity notwithstanding their biological sex classification. The Team acknowledges that a person’s biological sex may differ from their gender identity.

Domestic violence-context homicides

Of the 1,832 individuals who died as a result of homicide, almost one-third were killed in a context of domestic violence (n=550, 30%), including 331 females (56% of all female deceased) and 219 males (18% of all male deceased). Accordingly, this data demonstrates that while most homicides involve the death of a male (81%), females are far more likely to be killed in a DV-context homicide (Fig. 2.1).

These figures include the deaths of both domestic violence victims and abusers (for example, cases where a domestic violence victim kills their abuser) and also includes both adult and child deceased persons.

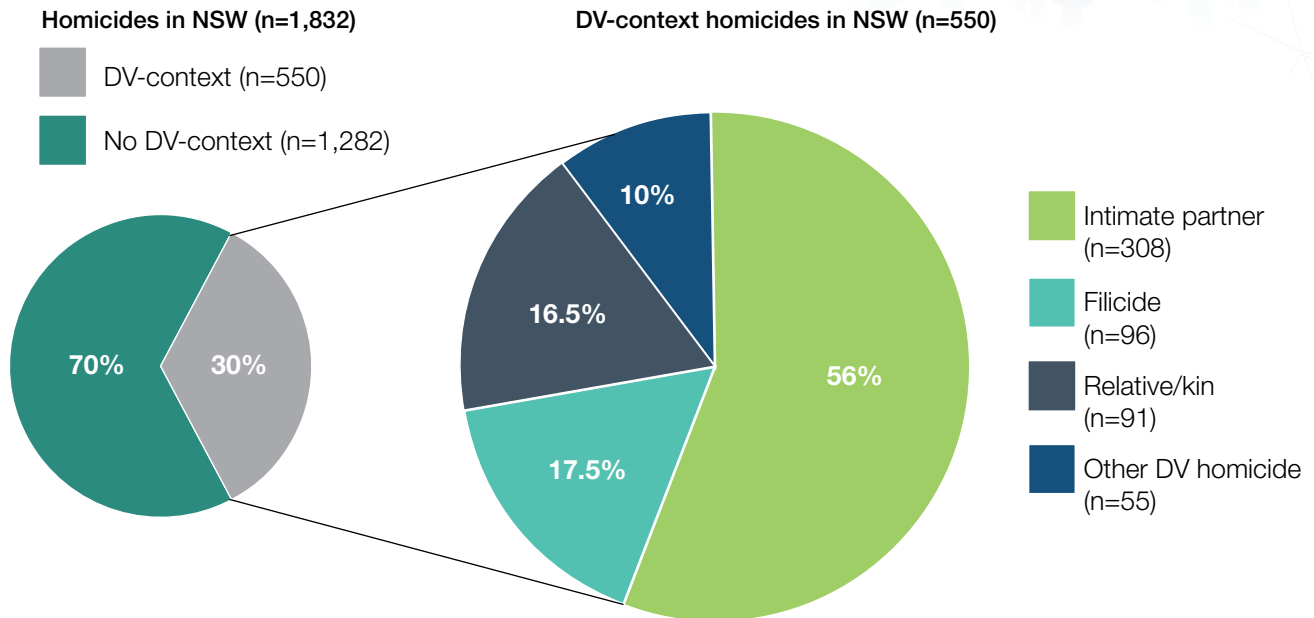
Figure 2.1: Homicide overview by DV-context and gender of deceased (n=1,832)



Every homicide occurring in a DV-context in the 22-year reporting period has been examined, and the data is considered below in four distinct groups: intimate partner homicides; filicides; relative/kin homicides; and ‘other’ domestic violence homicides (for example, where a person is killed intervening in an episode of domestic violence) (Fig. 2.2).



Figure 2.2: Homicide overview by DV-context and case type (n=1,832)

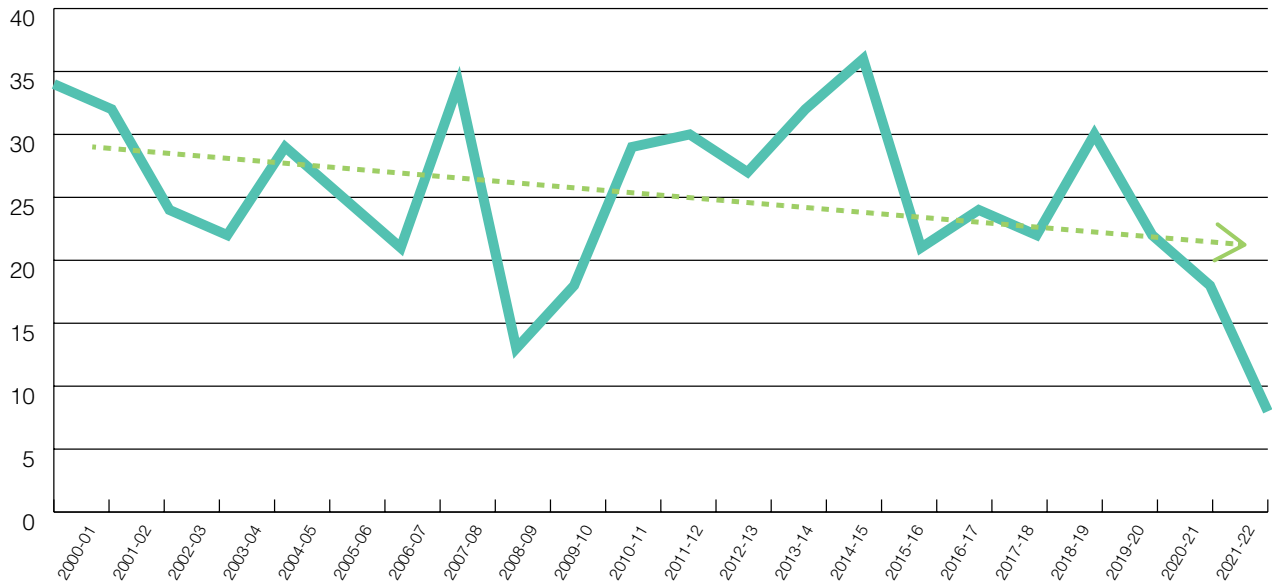


DV-context homicide trends over time

This is the first time the Team has presented data on DV-context homicides over time. The significant variances year-on-year can be partly explained by the statistically small number of cases, however it appears that there is a general downward trend. It should be noted that several more recent DV-context homicides (from 2021 and 2022 in particular) are still under investigation or awaiting formal judicial ruling and are therefore not yet included in this dataset (Fig. 2.3).

While a general downward trend appears evident from this data, the Team is acutely aware of the recent increase in the numbers of DV-context homicides in NSW, particularly those involving the deaths of women. Accordingly, the Team remains cautious in drawing any conclusions as to what may be driving this apparent downward trend and, indeed, the longevity of this trending.

Figure 2.3: DV-context homicides in NSW, July 2000 to June 2022 (n=550)



Intimate partner violence homicide in NSW, 2000-2022

This chapter presents a comprehensive analysis of the 308 intimate partner violence homicides that occurred in NSW between 1 July 2000 and 30 June 2022.



Introduction

Intimate partner violence describes a spectrum of physical and non-physical abusive behaviours used by one person to frighten, dominate and control a person they are in, or have been in, an intimate relationship with.

Research demonstrates that the vast majority of intimate partner violence is perpetrated by men against women.⁶⁹ This has led to an understanding that intimate partner violence is a gendered harm. Research into intimate partner violence homicide (IPV homicide) plays a vital role in better understanding the gendered nature of intimate partner violence more broadly and accordingly, the Team has continued to expand its dataset which now spans over two decades of IPV homicides.

This chapter provides in-depth analyses of the 308 IPV homicides that occurred in NSW between 1 July 2000 and 30 June 2022. This data draws on a rich repository of primary source material that offers detailed information about the life course and relationship histories of the homicide offender and the deceased person, as well as the nature of the violence they used or experienced. It presents data findings relating to a range of factors, including: IPV homicide characteristics, types of violence, Apprehended Domestic Violence Orders (ADVOs), criminal history, trauma history, separation or intention to separate, service contact, family law proceedings and reported and anecdotal issues around mental health and drug and alcohol use.

Importantly, some of the data is framed in terms of the predominant domestic violence abuser/victim relationship (rather than only focusing on the homicide offender/deceased). This enables a more accurate framing of the gendered patterns of these behaviours, highlighting that most men who killed an intimate partner, and most men who were killed by an intimate partner, were the predominant domestic violence abuser in the relationship.

Inclusion criteria

For this analysis, IPV homicides are those in which a person is killed:

- **by their current or former intimate partner;**
- **in a DV-context** – there was evidence (reported or anecdotal) of a history of domestic violence between the homicide offender and the deceased person prior to the homicide;
- **within the data reporting period** – 1 July 2000 and 30 June 2022; and
- **the deceased person was ordinarily a resident in NSW** – the deceased person permanently resided in NSW, notwithstanding that they may have been killed in another state or territory.

Data findings

Overview

Between 1 July 2000 and 30 June 2022 there were 356 intimate partner homicides in NSW. Of these 356 intimate partner homicides, 308 (86.5%) were identified as having occurred in a context of domestic violence and included the deaths of 245 women and 63 men.

⁶⁹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2023), 'Personal Safety, Australia', <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/crime-and-justice/personal-safety-australia/2021-22> (accessed 19 January 2024).



The 48 intimate partner homicides that did not occur in a context of domestic violence (and were therefore not included in the IPV homicide data analysis below) occurred in a range of non-domestic violence related circumstances, including: suicide pacts where, by agreement, one person kills their intimate partner and then suicides; accidents; financially motivated homicides; or mental health episodes (absent any identifiable history of domestic violence).

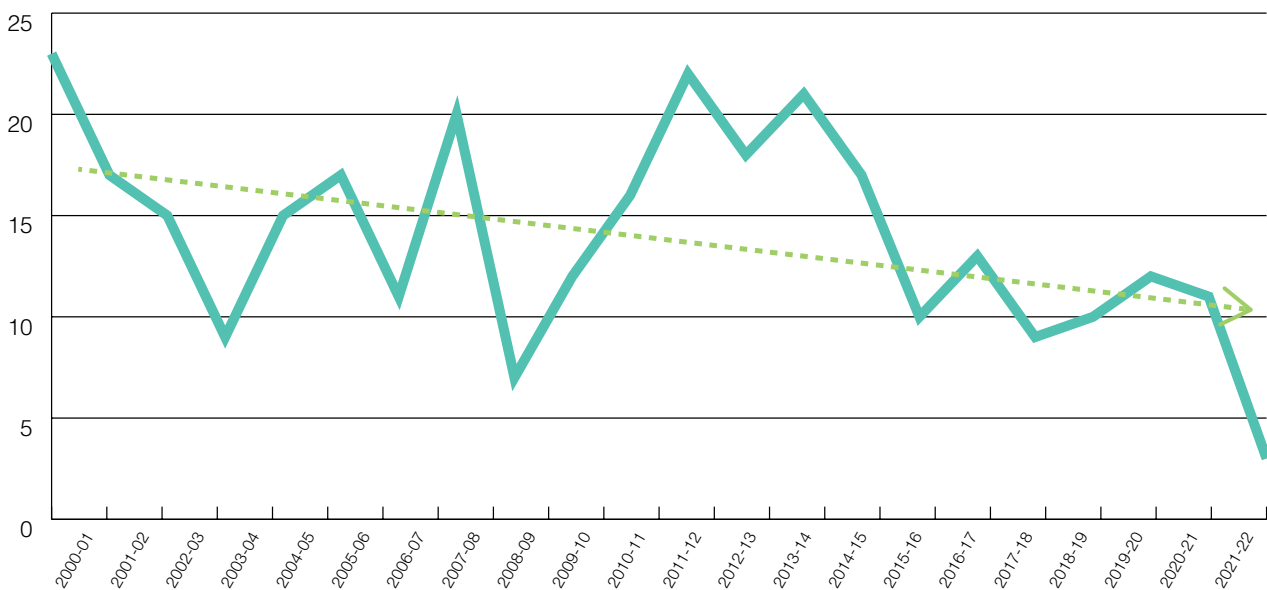
The findings presented in this chapter relate to the 308 IPV homicides only.

IPV homicide trends over time

This is the first time the Team has presented data on IPV homicides over time. As with the DV-context homicide overview described in the previous chapter, the variances year-on-year can be attributed to the statistically small number of homicides. It should also be noted that more recent IPV homicides (from 2021 and 2022) are still under investigation/awaiting judgement and are therefore not yet reflected in the dataset (Fig. 3.1).

Again, while a general downward trend appears evident from this data, the Team remains cautious in drawing any conclusions as to what may be driving this apparent downward trend and the longevity of this trending.

Figure 3.1: IPV homicides in NSW, July 2000 to June 2022 (n=308)



IPV homicide and gender

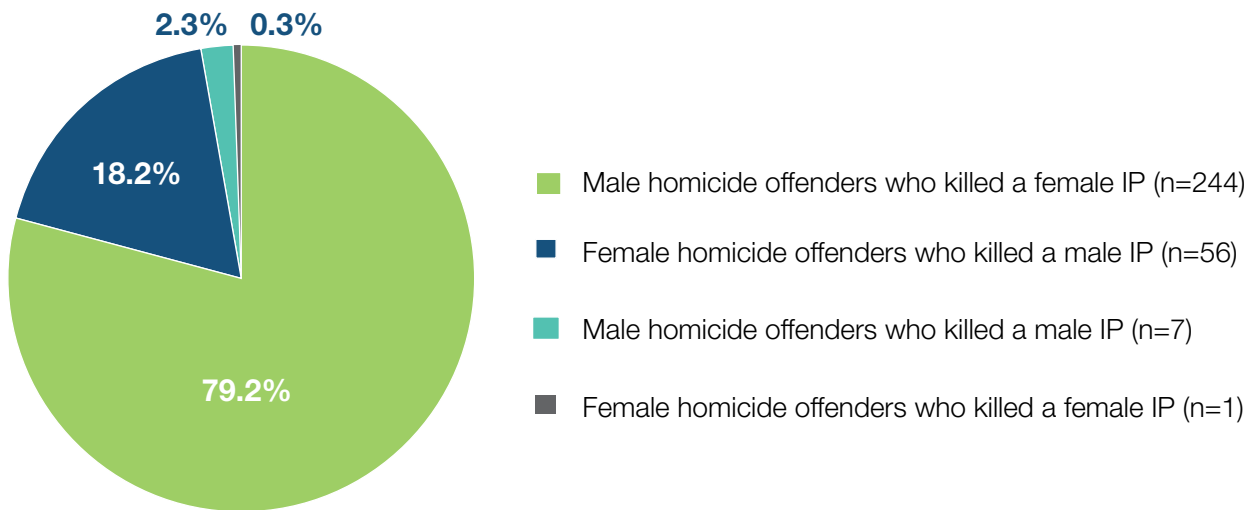
As described in the previous chapter, the term gender is used in this report to indicate a person’s gender identity notwithstanding their biological sex classification. The Team acknowledges that a person’s biological sex may differ from their gender identity.

Of the 308 IPV homicides in the dataset:

- **244** involved a **man killing a female intimate partner** (79.2%);
- **56** involved a **woman killing a male intimate partner** (18.2%);

- 7 cases involved a **man killing a male intimate partner** (2.3%); and
- 1 case involved a **woman killing a female intimate partner** (0.3%) (Fig.3.2).

Figure 3.2: IPV homicides by gender (n=308)



Predominant abuser/victim classification

The Team’s IPV Homicide Dataset individually codes the homicide offender and the person they killed by their role in the history of domestic violence in the relationship, namely the predominant domestic violence abuser or the predominant domestic violence victim. The predominant abuser refers to the partner who is the main user of domestic violence towards the other person, and the predominant victim is the partner who has experienced the greatest harm from these behaviours.⁷⁰ This distinction acknowledges that victims of domestic violence are rarely passive and may resist abuse in many different ways. This may include using retaliatory violence as a defence mechanism to protect themselves, their children, their dignity, or as a consequence of their victimisation and trauma.⁷¹

In a small number of cases the Team has not been able to identify (based on the available evidence) who was the predominant abuser and who was the predominant victim and there were indicators that both parties used abusive behaviours against the other. However, this does not mean that both parties engaged in mutual violence against each other in equal measure, but rather these cases lacked the sufficient contextual information required to make a definitive assessment about predominant abuser/victim status.

The Team considers that the existence of genuine mutual violence between men and women is extremely rare, if it exists at all, noting that some experts regard the concept of mutual violence to be a ‘myth’.⁷² Women’s use of violence in intimate relationships is not symmetrical with men’s and must be understood through the lens

70 No to Violence (2019), ‘Discussion Paper: Predominant Aggressor Identification and Victim Misidentification’ <https://ntv.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/20191121-NTV-Discussion-Paper-Predominant-Aggressor-FINAL.pdf> (accessed 1 June 2024).

71 Swan, S. and Sullivan, T. (2009) ‘The Resource Utilization of Women Who Use Violence in Intimate Relationships’, *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, vol. 24(6), pp.940-958. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260508319365> (accessed 19 January 2024); Johnson, M. (2008), ‘A Typology of Domestic Violence Intimate Terrorism, Violent Resistance, and Situational Couple Violence’, Northeastern University Press, Boston.

72 Ulbrick, M. (2020), ‘Officer she’s psychotic and I need protection’: Police misidentification of the ‘primary aggressor’ in family violence incidents in Victoria’, *Women’s Legal Service Victoria*, Policy Brief, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340646781_Officer_she’s_psychotic_and_I_need_protection_Police_misidentification_of_the_primary_aggressor_in_family_violence_incidents_in_Victoria_-_Women’s_Legal_Service_Victoria_Policy_Brief (accessed 19 January 2024).



of their own victimisation.⁷³ The Team acknowledges that widespread misunderstanding of the ways in which women use violence against their abusive intimate partners has contributed to the misidentification of women as predominant abusers.⁷⁴

Almost all of the 244 male homicide offenders who killed a female intimate partner were identified as the predominant abuser against the female partner they killed (n=240, 98.4%).

Of the 56 women who killed a male intimate partner, the majority were identified as the predominant victim of violence from the male partner they killed (n=46, 82.1%).

Of the seven cases where a male homicide offender killed a male intimate partner most involved the predominant abuser in the relationship killing the predominant victim (n=5, 71.4%).

In the single case involving a female homicide offender who killed a female intimate partner, the homicide offender was the predominant abuser in the relationship (Table 3.1, Fig. 3.3).

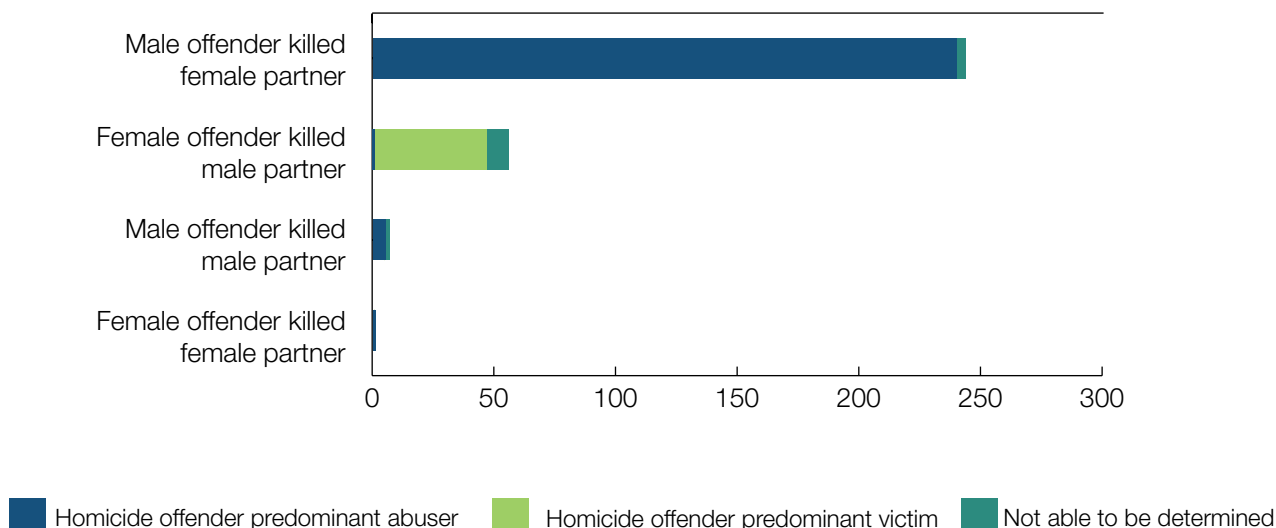
Table 3.1: IPV homicide offender predominant abuser/victim classification (n=308)

Predominant abuser/victim classification	Homicide offender was predominant abuser	Homicide offender was predominant victim	Predominant abuser/victim not able to be determined	TOTAL
Male homicide offenders who killed a female intimate partner	240	0	4	244
Female homicide offenders who killed a male intimate partner	1	46	9	56
Male homicide offenders who killed a male intimate partner	5	0	2	7
Female homicide offenders who killed a female intimate partner	1	0	0	1
TOTAL	247	46	15	308

73 Wangmann, J. (2009), “‘She said...’ ‘He said...’: Cross applications in NSW apprehended domestic violence order proceedings’, The University of Sydney, p.229 <http://hdl.handle.net/2123/5819> (accessed 19 January 2024); Warren, A., et al (2020) ‘Women who use force: Final Report Volume 2’, *International Literature Review*, University of Melbourne, <https://vawc.com.au/women-who-use-force-evaluation-of-positive-shift/> (accessed 19 January 2024).

74 Reeves, E. (2021), ‘I’m Not at All Protected and I Think Other Women Should Know That, That They’re Not Protected Either’: Victim–Survivors’ Experiences of ‘Misidentification’ in Victoria’s Family Violence System,’ *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy*, vol. 10(4), pp. 39-51. <https://doi.org/10.5204/ijcsd.1992> (accessed 19 January 2024).

Figure 3.3: IPV homicide offender predominant abuser/victim classification (n=308)



Domestic violence behaviours and histories of violence: Male predominant abusers/female predominant victims

Domestic violence death review teams are uniquely positioned to conduct in-depth analyses that identify discrete characteristics present within a relationship prior to an IPV homicide. This section explores the range of different abusive behaviours used by the predominant abuser that preceded the IPV homicide, including reported and unreported histories of violence.

The Team's findings in relation to the history of violence are oriented in terms of the predominant abuser/predominant victim in the relationship (as opposed to the homicide offender/deceased person) as this enables a more accurate framing of the gendered patterns of domestic violence behaviours preceding the homicide.

Accordingly, the analysis that follows focuses on the 286 homicides where the male partner was the predominant abuser, and the female partner was the predominant victim in the relationship (i.e., 240 cases where a man killed his female intimate partner and 46 where a female killed her male intimate partner). The remaining 22 outlier homicides are excluded on the basis that the sample sizes are too small to conduct meaningful analysis.⁷⁵

Domestic violence behaviours

The data presented in this section draws on both reported and anecdotal accounts of domestic violence in the relationship prior to the homicide, deriving such accounts from the broad range of sources described earlier in the Team's methodology.

Types of violence considered included: emotional/psychological, physical, sexual, social, and economic violence; stalking during the relationship; and, where the relationship was not ongoing, stalking after the relationship ended (Table 3.2, Fig. 3.4).

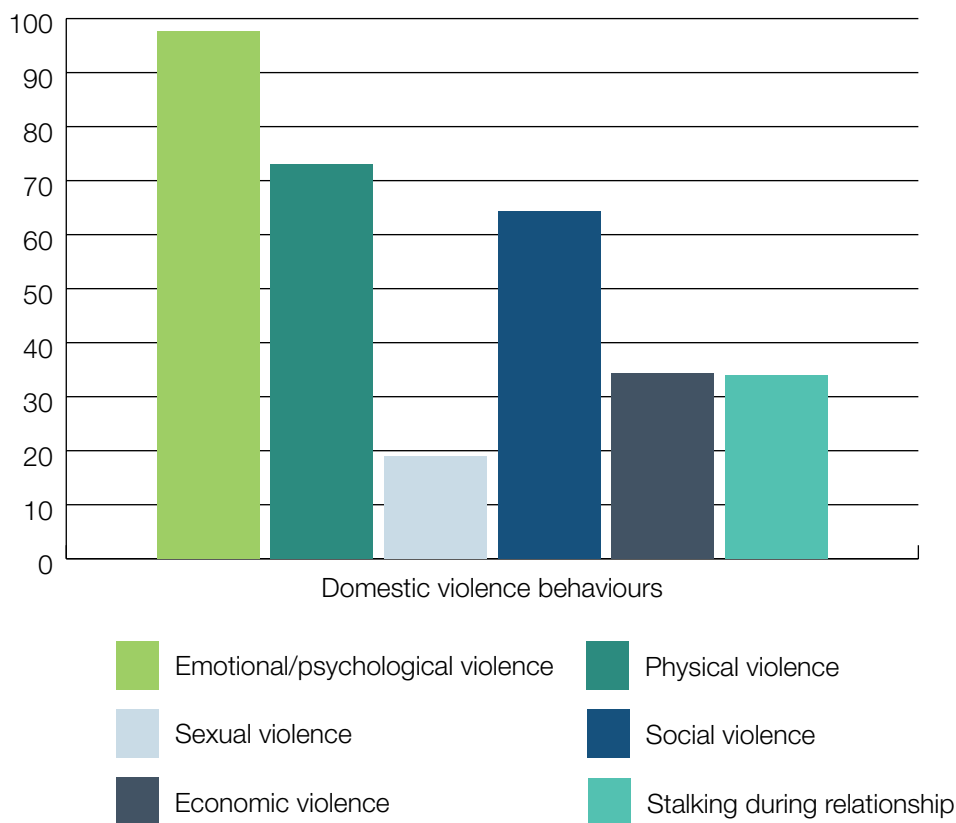
⁷⁵ This includes: 13 cases where it was not possible to identify a predominant abuser or predominant victim; seven cases where a man killed a male intimate partner; one case where a woman killed her female intimate partner; and one case involving a predominant female abuser killing a male victim.



Table 3.2: DV behaviours of predominant male abuser in IPV homicide (n=286)

Domestic violence behaviours	IPV homicide with predominant abuser/victim	%
Emotional/psychological violence	279	97.6%
Physical violence	209	73.1%
Sexual violence	54	18.9%
Social violence	184	64.3%
Economic violence	98	34.3%
Stalking during relationship	97	33.9%

Figure 3.4: DV behaviours of predominant male abuser in IPV homicide (n=286)



Emotional violence

Almost all of the men used emotional/psychological violence against the woman prior to the homicide (n=279, 97.6%).

Emotional and psychological abuse refers to a broad spectrum of non-physical behaviours used by abusers to frighten, belittle, humiliate or undermine the victim’s sense of self-worth. This type of violence is used by abusers to erode the emotional and psychological well-being of the victim.⁷⁶

76 Karakurt, G. & Silver, K. (2013). ‘Emotional abuse in intimate relationships: the role of gender and age’ *Violence and victims*, vol. 28(5), pp.804–821, <https://doi.org/10.1891/0886-6708.vv-d-12-00041> (accessed 19 January 2024).

In the Team's cases this included the male abusers:

- verbally denigrating the woman;
- making threats regarding custody of children;
- criticising the woman's parenting abilities;
- blaming the woman for all adverse events;
- gaslighting the woman, making her doubt her memories, perceptions and experiences;
- making unfounded accusations of infidelity; and
- making threats of self-harm or suicide if the woman attempted to leave, or to otherwise control her.

Physical violence

Over one-quarter of the men did not use any physical violence against the woman prior to the homicide (n=77, 26.9%).

In the Team's cases where the male abuser used physical violence (n=209, 73.1%) this included:

- physically assaulting the woman without a weapon (e.g., punching, slapping, shoving, kicking, biting);
- suffocating or strangling the woman prior to the homicide;
- assaulting the woman with weapons (e.g., household objects, tools, boiling water);
- physically assaulting the woman's children, family, friends or pets;
- making threats of physical violence towards the woman, her children, family, friends or pets; and
- damaging the woman's property (e.g., breaking her phone, cutting up her clothes, smashing furniture/ windows and punching walls).

Sexual violence

Sexual violence was used by approximately 19 per cent of men against the woman prior to the homicide (n=54, 18.9%). This is a significantly lower figure than other total population estimates which suggest that between 40-45 per cent of women who are physically abused are also sexually abused by their intimate partner.⁷⁷ The Team has highlighted in previous reports that particular barriers exist for victims in disclosing and reporting sexual violence and that there is a need for sustained efforts to support disclosure and better understand the perpetration of sexual violence as part of intimate partner violence. It is therefore strongly suspected that the findings here do not reflect the true prevalence of sexual violence in these relationships.

Sexual violence refers to any unwanted, painful or humiliating sexual act obtained through physical force or psychological/emotional coercion.

In the Team's cases this presented as male abusers:

- forcing the woman to engage in sexual acts against her will using actual or threatened violence;
- forcing the woman to watch pornography;

⁷⁷ Wall, L. (2012) 'Asking women about intimate partner sexual violence', *Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault: Australian Institute of Family Studies*, https://apo.org.au/node/29710?utm_source=APO-view&utm_medium=more-like-this&utm_campaign=resource-mlt (accessed 30 September 2023).



- recording sexual acts without the woman's consent;
- sharing recordings of sexual acts without her consent, or threatening to do so; and
- engaging in reproductive coercion (e.g., pressuring the woman into pregnancy; controlling the woman's access to and use of contraception; forcing her into undergoing an abortion or forcing her to continue with a pregnancy).

Social violence

Almost two-thirds of the men used social violence against the woman prior to the homicide (n=184, 64.3%).

Social violence refers to a range of abusive behaviours designed to limit or prevent a victim from engaging with family and friends and participating in social activities. Socially violent behaviours isolate victims and limit their ability to build connections.

In the Team's cases, this included the male abuser:

- controlling the extent to which the woman could see family or friends;
- being abusive, threatening or rude to the woman's friends or family;
- intentionally relocating the woman away from family, friends and other support networks;
- restricting the woman's access to transport; and
- controlling the woman's appearance (e.g., only allowing her to wear certain clothes or hair styles).

These behaviours were used by the male abuser to erode the woman's sense of autonomy and break down her support networks, making it more difficult to seek help.

Economic violence

Approximately one-third of the men were identified as using economic violence prior to the homicide (n=98, 34.3%).

Economic violence involves an abuser interfering with a victim's ability to acquire, use or maintain economic resources in a way that undermines the victim's potential for economic security and self-sufficiency.⁷⁸

In the Team's cases this included the male abuser:

- withholding and controlling the woman's access to bank cards, cash and other forms of money;
- scrutinising the woman's spending and setting unrealistic expectations/budgets for day-to-day living and other necessary household expenditure;
- preventing the woman from working or disrupting her employment;
- taking control of the woman's wages; and
- forcing the woman to borrow money from third parties (also referred to as 'coerced debt').

This form of abuse can result in a range of poor economic circumstances for women, including compounding debt, bad credit, and poor tenancy records. Women's concerns over their ability to provide financially for

78 Adam, A. (2008) in Centre for Women's Economic Safety, *What is Economic Abuse?* (undated) <https://cwes.org.au/what-is-economic-abuse/> (accessed 7 September 2023).

themselves and their children is recognised as a key reason victims are unable to leave an abuser or may return to the relationship after leaving.⁷⁹

Stalking during the relationship

One-third of the men stalked their female partner during the relationship (n=97, 33.9%).

Stalking involves a diverse range of tactics whereby an abuser frightens, intimidates or otherwise controls a victim through intentionally and persistently pursuing them or by monitoring their activities. Abusers use stalking to extend their reach of power and control and deprive victims of privacy, autonomy and a sense of safety.⁸⁰

In the Team's cases this included the male abuser:

- physically following the woman;
- hiring a private investigator to surveil the woman;
- loitering around or breaking into the woman's home or work; and
- reading the woman's diary.

Stalking also includes an abuser using technology to harass or monitor the victim (also known as technology-facilitated abuse) and in the Team's cases this included the male abuser:

- using a GPS or other device to track the woman's location;
- persistently messaging the woman's phone or social media accounts;
- maintaining surveillance over the woman's phone, email or other online accounts;
- covertly recording the woman's activities; and
- engaging with the woman on social media/dating sites under a false identity.

Stalking after the relationship had ended

In over one-third of the homicides, the woman was killed after the relationship had ended (n=98, 34.3%).

In almost three-quarters of the 98 cases where the relationship had ended, the man's ongoing abuse included stalking his former partner after the relationship had ended (n=73, 74.5%).

Multiple abuse behaviours

Of the six types of domestic violence behaviours, the man was most likely to have used at least three different abusive behaviours against his partner (Table 3.3).

79 Junseok and Gray (2008) (n 30).

80 Douglas, H. et al (2021) National Domestic and Family Violence Bench Book, Brisbane: Australian Institute of Judicial Administration, at 3.1.6, <https://dfvbenchbook.aija.org.au/> (accessed 4 February 2024).



Table 3.3: Number of DV behaviours used by male predominant abuser (n=286)

No. of DV behaviours used	Male predominant abusers	%
1	13	4.5%
2	67	23.4%
3	78	27.3%
4	61	21.3%
5	42	14.7%
6	25	8.7%

These findings demonstrate that most abusers used a diverse range of abuse tactics against their victims. This reinforces the understanding of domestic violence as a pattern of behaviours that are used intentionally and systematically by an abuser to gain and maintain power and dominance over their intimate partner.

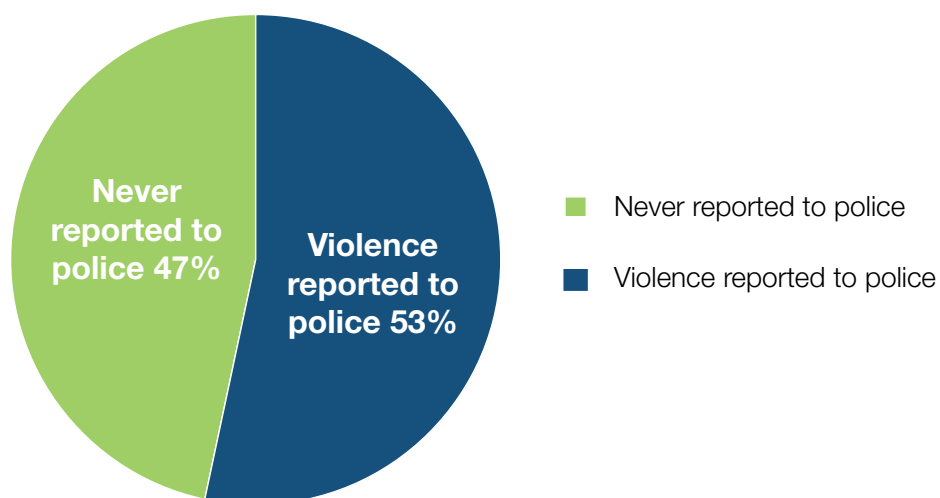
Police recorded history of domestic violence

In just over half of the 286 IPV homicides there was a police-recorded history of domestic violence between the intimate partners prior to the homicide (n=153, 53.5%) (Fig. 3.5).

This included cases where domestic violence was reported to police regardless of whether police took action in response to that report (for instance, charging the alleged offender, or applying for an ADVO to protect the victim).

Accordingly, in just under half of the cases, the history of domestic violence had never been reported to police (n=133, 46.5%).

Figure 3.5: Police recorded history of DV in IPV homicide with predominant abuser/victim (n=286)



Apprehended Domestic Violence Orders (ADVOs)

Current ADVO between predominant abuser and victim

In almost one-quarter of the 286 IPV homicides involving a predominant abuser and predominant victim there was a current ADVO in place at the time of the homicide (n=64, 22.4%), and in most cases the female predominant victim was named as the person in need of protection from the male abuser (n=60).

For the remaining ADVOs, in three cases there were cross-ADVOs protecting the female victim and the male abuser from each other at the time of the homicide and in one case, the male abuser had been misidentified as the domestic violence victim in the ADVO (Table 3.4).

Table 3.4: Current ADVOs between predominant abuser/victim (n=286)

Current ADVO at time of homicide	IPV homicide with predominant abuser/victim	%
No ADVO at time of homicide	222	77.6%
ADVO at time of homicide	64	22.4%
Female predominant victim protected	(60) ⁸¹	(21%)
Male predominant abuser protected	(1)	(0.3%)
Cross-ADVO	(3)	(1%)
TOTAL	286	100%

Over 40 per cent of the current ADVOs in place at the time of the homicide involved interim/provisional orders (n=27 of 64, 42.2%) (Table 3.5).

Table 3.5: Duration of current ADVOs between predominant abuser/victim (n=64)

Type/Duration of current ADVO	No.	%
Interim/Provisional	27	42.2%
Final Orders – 6 months	1	1.6%
Final Orders – 12 months	18	28.1%
Final Orders – 18 months	1	1.6%
Final Orders – 2 years	14	21.9%
Final Orders – 3 years	2	3.1%
Final Orders – 5 years	1	1.6%
TOTAL	64	100%

Note: figures may not add to 100 due to rounding

⁸¹ Including 55 cases where the female predominant victim was killed by the male abuser, and five cases where the female predominant victim killed her abusive male partner.



Historical ADVO between predominant abuser and victim

In almost 16 per cent of the 286 IPV homicides there had been a prior ADVO/s between the couple that had expired at the time of the homicide (n=45, 15.7%).

In the vast majority of these cases the female victim had been named as the person in need of protection from the male abuser (n=40) (Table 3.6).

Table 3.6: Historical ADVOs between predominant abuser/victim (n=286)

Historical ADVOs	No.	%
No historical ADVO between predominant abuser/victim	241	84.3%
Historical ADVO between predominant abuser/victim	45	15.7%
Female predominant victim protected	(40)	(14%)
Male predominant abuser protected	(0)	(0%)
Cross-ADVO	(5)	(1.7%)
TOTAL	286	100%

Criminal history – domestic violence-related

Male predominant abuser DV criminal history

Approximately 20 per cent of the 286 male abusers had been convicted of a domestic violence offence against the female victim prior to the homicide (n=55, 19.2%).

Female predominant victim DV criminal history

Three of the 286 female victims had been convicted of a domestic violence offence against the male abuser prior to the homicide (1%).

Repeat domestic violence perpetration

Male predominant abuser - prior partners

Almost one-quarter of the 286 male abusers had no prior intimate partners, i.e., the man’s relationship with the female victim was his first and only intimate relationship (n=69, 24.1%) (Table 3.7).

Table 3.7: Male predominant abuser – prior intimate partners (n=286)

Relationship history	Male predominant abuser	%
No prior intimate partner	69	24.1%
Prior intimate partner	217	75.9%
TOTAL	286	100%

Male predominant abuser - repeat domestic violence perpetration

Of the 217 male abusers who had prior intimate partners, over half were identified as having also perpetrated domestic violence against a prior partner (n=121, 55.8%) (Table 3.8).

Table 3.8: Male predominant abuser – repeat domestic violence perpetration (n=217)

Repeat domestic violence perpetration	Male predominant abuser with prior partner	%
Identified history of DV perpetration	121	55.8%
No identified history of DV perpetration	96	44.2%
TOTAL	217	100%

Male predominant abuser - ADVOs with prior partners

Of the 217 men who had prior intimate partners, almost one-third had an ADVO/s with a prior partner (n=70, 32.3%). In almost all of these cases, the male abuser was named as the defendant in the ADVO protecting their prior partner (n=67) (Table 3.9).

Table 3.9: Male predominant abuser – ADVOs with prior intimate partners (n=217)

ADVO with prior partner	Male predominant abuser with prior partner	%
No ADVO with prior partner	147	67.7%
ADVO with prior partner	70	32.3%
Male predominant abuser protected	(1)	(0.5%)
Prior partner protected	(67)	(30.9%)
Cross-ADVO	(2)	(0.9%)
TOTAL	217	100%

Male predominant abuser - DV criminal history with prior partners

Of the 217 men who had prior intimate partners, almost 30 per cent had been convicted of a domestic violence offence against a prior partner (n=64, 29.5%).

Custodial sentences – male predominant abusers**Male predominant abuser - custodial sentence for DV offending**

As detailed above, there were 101 male abusers who had been convicted of a domestic violence offence, either against the female victim, a prior partner, or both (35.3%).

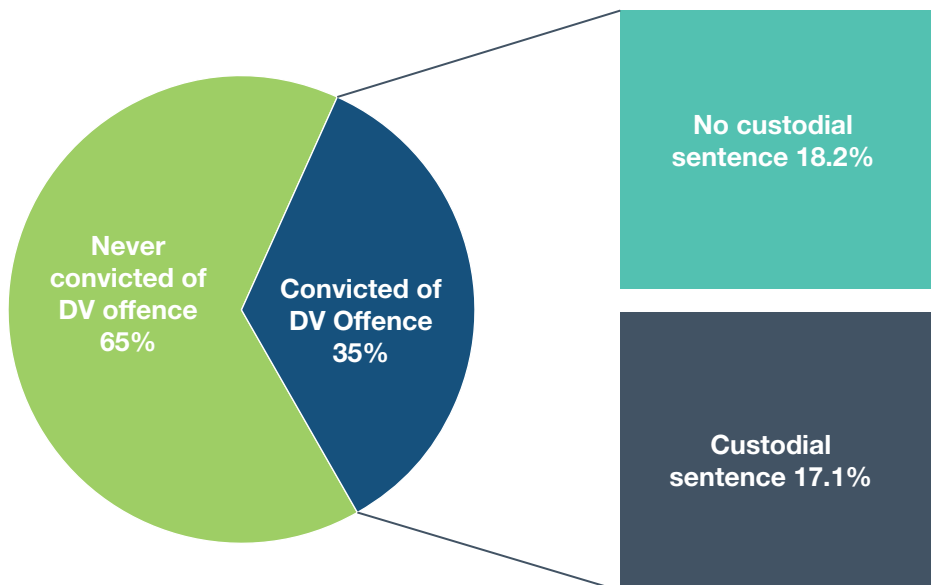
In 49 of these 101 cases, the male abuser had served a custodial sentence in relation to their domestic violence offending (48.5% of men who had been convicted of a domestic violence offence and 17.1% of all male abusers) (Table 3.10, Fig. 3.6).



Table 3.10: Male predominant abuser – custodial sentence for DV offending (n=286)

Custodial sentence for DV offending	Male predominant abuser	%
Never convicted of DV offence	185	64.7%
Convicted of DV offence	101	35.3%
No custodial sentence	(52)	(18.2%)
Custodial sentence	(49)	(17.1%)
TOTAL	286	100%

Figure 3.6: Male predominant abuser – custodial sentence for DV offending (n=286)



Repeat domestic violence victimisation

Female predominant victim – prior partners

Almost one-third of the 286 female victims had no prior intimate partners, i.e., the woman's relationship with the male abuser was her first and only intimate relationship (n=94, 32.9%) (Table 3.11).

Table 3.11: Female predominant victim – prior intimate partners (n=286)

Relationship history	Female predominant victim	%
No prior intimate partner	94	32.9%
Prior intimate partner	192	67.1%
TOTAL	286	100%

Female predominant victim – repeat domestic violence victimisation

Of the 192 female victims who had prior intimate partners, 90 were known to have experienced domestic violence from a prior partner (46.9%) (Table 3.12).

Table 3.12: Female predominant victim – repeat domestic violence victimisation (n=192)

Repeat domestic violence victimisation	Female predominant victim with prior partner	%
Known history of DV victimisation	90	46.9%
No known history of DV victimisation	102	53.1%
TOTAL	192	100%

Female predominant victim – ADVOs with prior partners

Of the 192 women who had prior intimate partners, almost 30 per cent had an ADVO/s with the prior partner (n=55, 28.6%).

In most of these 55 cases, the female victim was named as the person in need of protection in the ADVO against their former partner (n=51) (Table 3.13).

Table 3.13: Female predominant victim – ADVOs with prior intimate partners (n=192)

ADVO with prior partner	Female predominant victim	%
No ADVO with prior partner	137	71.4%
ADVO with prior partner	55	28.6%
Female predominant victim protected	(51)	(26.6%)
Prior partner protected	(0)	(0%)
Cross-ADVO	(4)	(2.1%)
TOTAL	192	100%

Note: figures may not add to 100 due to rounding

Female predominant victim – DV criminal history with prior partners

Of the 192 women who had prior intimate partners, three female victims had been convicted of a domestic violence offence against a prior intimate partner (1.6%).

Custodial Sentences – female predominant victims**Female predominant victim – custodial sentence for DV offending**

As described above, there were five female victims who had been convicted of a domestic violence offence, either against the male abuser, a prior partner, or both (1.7%). One of these women had served a custodial sentence in relation to a domestic violence offence (Table 3.14).



Table 3.14: Female predominant victim – custodial sentence for DV offending (n=286)

Custodial sentence for DV offending	Female predominant victim	%
Never convicted of DV offence	281	98.3%
Convicted of DV offence	5	1.7%
No custodial sentence	(4)	(1.4%)
Custodial sentence	(1)	(0.3%)
TOTAL	286	100%

Known trauma history

The Team’s review process traces the life course of victims and abusers and highlights that in many cases as people age, they transition from being known to police, child protection and other services as child victims of domestic violence, to becoming known as abusers – often in the context of them using violence against their parents or other family members. A trauma-informed response is now widely recognised as best practice across the NSW service system and is being incorporated into many new programs and interventions.

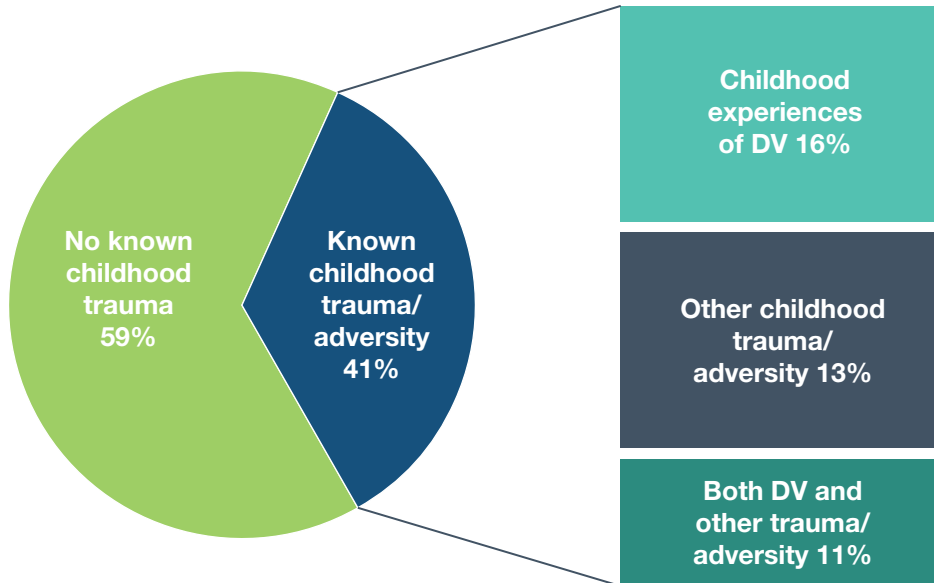
Male predominant abusers

Approximately 40 per cent of the male abusers were known to have experienced trauma and/or adversity in their upbringing (n=117, 40.9%). Most of these 117 men experienced domestic violence as a child (n=79, 67.5%), and the remainder experienced another form of trauma or adversity in their upbringing, for example, non-familial sexual abuse, the death of a parent or sibling, or experiencing the trauma of war (Table 3.15, Fig. 3.7).

Table 3.15: Male predominant abuser – known trauma history (n=286)

Known Trauma History	Male predominant abuser	%
No known childhood trauma	169	59.1%
Known childhood trauma/adversity	117	40.9%
Childhood experiences of DV	(47)	(16.4%)
Other childhood trauma/adversity	(38)	(13.3%)
Both DV and other trauma/adversity	(32)	(11.2%)
TOTAL	286	100%

Figure 3.7: Male predominant abuser – known trauma history (n=286)



Female predominant victims

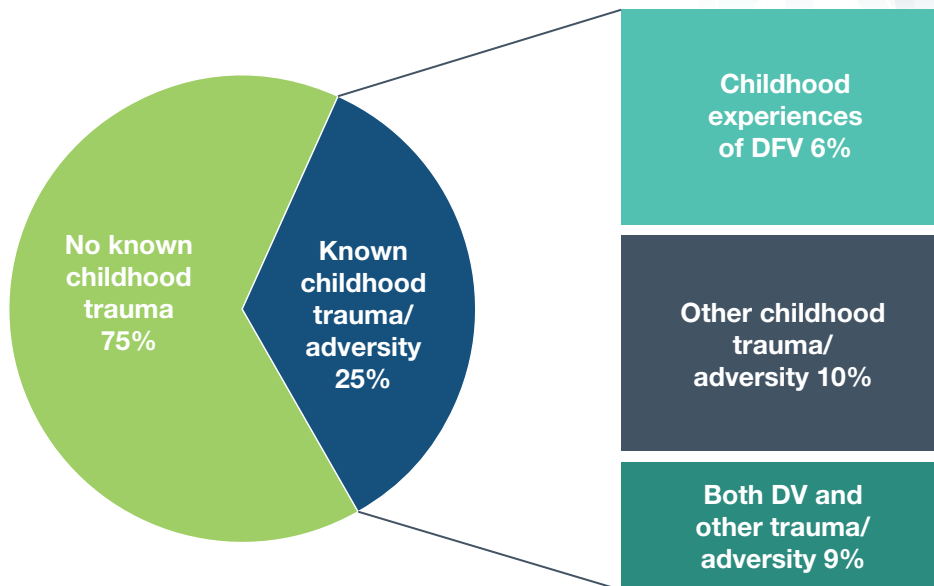
Almost one-quarter of the 286 female victims were known to have experienced trauma and/or adversity in their childhood (n=71, 24.8%). Over half of these 71 women experienced domestic violence as a child (n=41, 57.7%), and the remainder experienced another form of trauma or adversity in their upbringing (Table 3.16, Fig. 3.8).

Table 3.16: Female predominant victim – known trauma history (n=286)

Known Trauma History	Female predominant victim	%
No known childhood trauma	215	75.2%
Known childhood trauma/adversity	71	24.8%
Childhood experiences of DV	(16)	(5.6%)
Other childhood trauma/adversity	(30)	(10.5%)
Both DV and other trauma/adversity	(25)	(8.7%)
TOTAL	286	100%



Figure 3.8: Female predominant victim – known trauma history (n=286)



IPV homicide – deceased characteristics

This section presents data findings on demographic and personal characteristics for the person killed in the IPV homicide. Accordingly, while this data reverts back to a more standard homicide offender/deceased structure it is important to keep in mind the predominant offender/victim framework from the previous section, namely that the majority of male homicide offenders were the predominant abuser and the majority of female homicide offenders were the predominant victim.

As described earlier in this chapter, the IPV Homicide Dataset includes:

- 244 women killed by a male partner;
- 56 men killed by a female partner;
- 7 men killed by a male partner; and
- 1 woman killed by a female partner.

For the analysis that follows, the seven cases where a man killed a male intimate partner and the single case where a woman killed her female intimate partner have been excluded on the basis that the sample size is too small to undertake meaningful data analysis.

Deceased Age

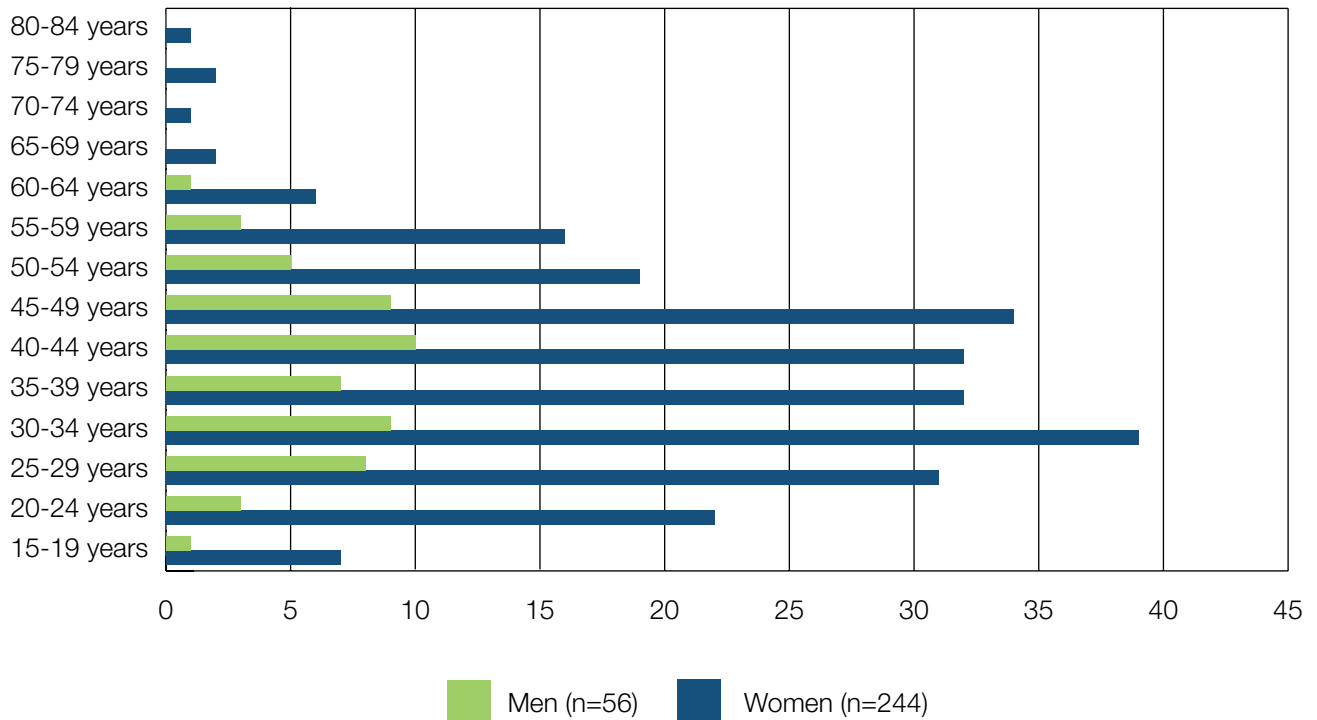
Deceased women

The age of the 244 women killed by a male intimate partner ranged from 15 to 80 years. The average age was 39 years (Fig. 3.9).

Deceased men

The age of the 56 men killed by a female intimate partner ranged from 19 to 61 years. The average age was 39 years (Fig. 3.9).

Figure 3.9: Deceased age (n=300)



Deceased country of birth and visa status

Deceased women

Approximately two-thirds of the 244 women killed were born in Australia (n=157, 64.3%) and the remaining third were born outside Australia (n=87, 35.7%). The 87 women who were born outside Australia were born in 39 different countries.

Of the 87 women who were born outside Australia, 13 were on a temporary visa at the time they were killed (Table 3.17).

Deceased men

Approximately three-quarters of the 56 men killed were born in Australia (n=43, 76.8%) and the remaining quarter were born outside Australia (n=13, 23.2%). The 13 men that were born outside Australia were born in 11 different countries.

Of the 13 men who were born outside Australia, five were on a temporary visa at the time they were killed (Table 3.17).



Table 3.17: Deceased country of birth and visa status (n=300)

Country of Birth	Deceased Women	% Female	Deceased Men	% Male
Australia	157	64.3%	43	76.8%
Outside Australia	87	35.7%	13	23.2%
Temporary visa	(13)	(5.3%)	(5)	(8.9%)
TOTAL	244	100%	56	100%

Deceased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status

Deceased women

Approximately 16 per cent of the 244 women killed identified as Aboriginal (n=40, 16.4%). No women identified as Torres Strait Islander (Table 3.18).

The Team recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experience domestic violence from both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and non-Indigenous men.⁸² Of the 40 women who identified as Aboriginal, 25 were killed by a man who also identified as Aboriginal (62.5%) and 15 were killed by a non-Indigenous male offender (37.5%).

Deceased men

Over one-third of the 56 men killed identified as Aboriginal (n=20, 35.7%). No men identified as Torres Strait Islander (Table 3.18).

Of these 20 men, 14 were killed by a woman who also identified as Aboriginal (70%) and six were killed by a non-Indigenous female offender (30%).

Table 3.18: Deceased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status (n=300)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status	Deceased Women	% Female	Deceased Men	% Male
Aboriginal	40	16.4%	20	35.7%
Non-Indigenous	204	83.6%	36	64.3%
TOTAL	244	100%	56	100%

Deceased disability

Deceased women

Of the 244 women killed, almost 5 per cent were identified as women with disability (n=12, 4.9%). This included nine women with a physical disability, two women with a cognitive disability and one woman with both a physical and a cognitive disability (Table 3.19).

⁸² Our Watch (2018) (n 11).

Deceased men

One of the 56 men killed was identified as a man with disability, namely a physical disability (1.8%) (Table 3.19).

Table 3.19: Deceased disability (n=300)

Disability status	Deceased Women	% Female	Deceased Men	% Male
With disability	12	4.9%	1	1.8%
Without disability	232	95.1%	55	98.2%
TOTAL	244	100%	56	100%

Deceased place of residence

For this dataset, the Team has relied on the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) Remoteness Structure to determine the geographical remoteness of the deceased's place of residence.⁸³

Deceased women

Approximately 70 per cent of the 244 women killed resided in a major city at the time of the homicide (n=172, 70.5%). Over one-quarter of the women resided outside a major city at the time they were killed (n=68, 27.9%) (Table 3.20, Fig. 3.10).

Deceased men

Over half of the 56 men killed resided in a major city at the time of the homicide (n=32, 57.1%). Almost 40 per cent of the men resided outside a major city at the time they were killed (n=22, 39.3%) (Table 3.20, Fig. 3.10).

Table 3.20: Deceased residence remoteness (n=300)

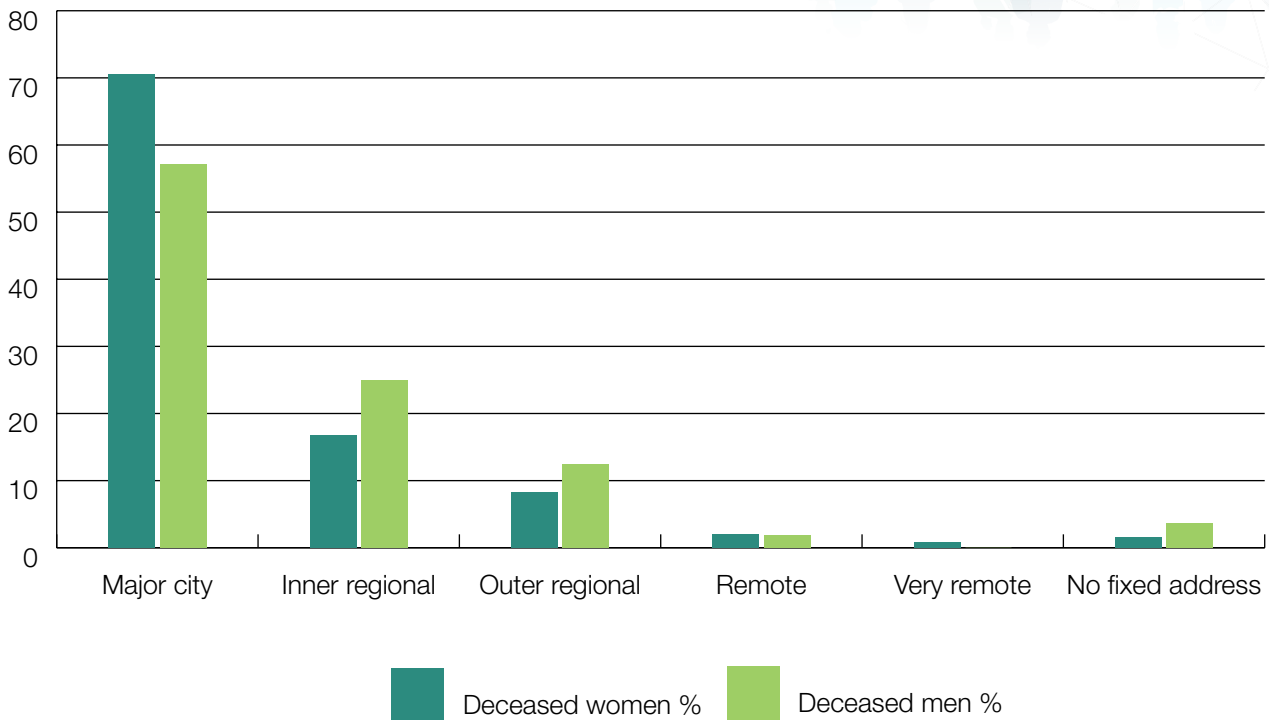
Deceased residence remoteness	Deceased Women	% Female	Deceased Men	% Male
Major city	172	70.5%	32	57.1%
Inner regional	41	16.8%	14	25%
Outer regional	20	8.2%	7	12.5%
Remote	5	2%	1	1.8%
Very remote	2	0.8%	0	0%
No fixed address	4	1.6%	2	3.6%
TOTAL	244	100%	56	100%

Note: figures may not add to 100 due to rounding

⁸³ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021), *Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) Remoteness Structure*, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/standards/australian-statistical-geography-standard-asgs-edition-3/jul2021-jun2026> (accessed 11 January 2024).



Figure 3.10: Deceased residence remoteness (n=300)



Deceased socio-economic status

For this data analysis, the Team has relied on the ABS Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD) to determine the socio-economic status of the deceased.⁸⁴ The IRSD ranks areas in Australia based on social and economic conditions, including income, education, employment, internet access, relationships and family structure. The IRSD refers to the general level of socio-economic disadvantage of all the people in the area in which a person lives, not the person or family unit itself. Areas are grouped in quintiles, with Quintile 1 being the most disadvantaged (lowest socio-economic areas) and Quintile 5 being the least disadvantaged (highest socio-economic areas).

Deceased women

Almost two-thirds of the 244 women killed were living in the two quintiles with the lowest socio-economic status (n=148, 60.6%) (Table 3.21, Fig. 3.11).

Deceased men

Over half of the 56 men killed were living in the two quintiles with the lowest socio-economic status (n=32, 57.1%) (Table 3.21, Fig. 3.11).

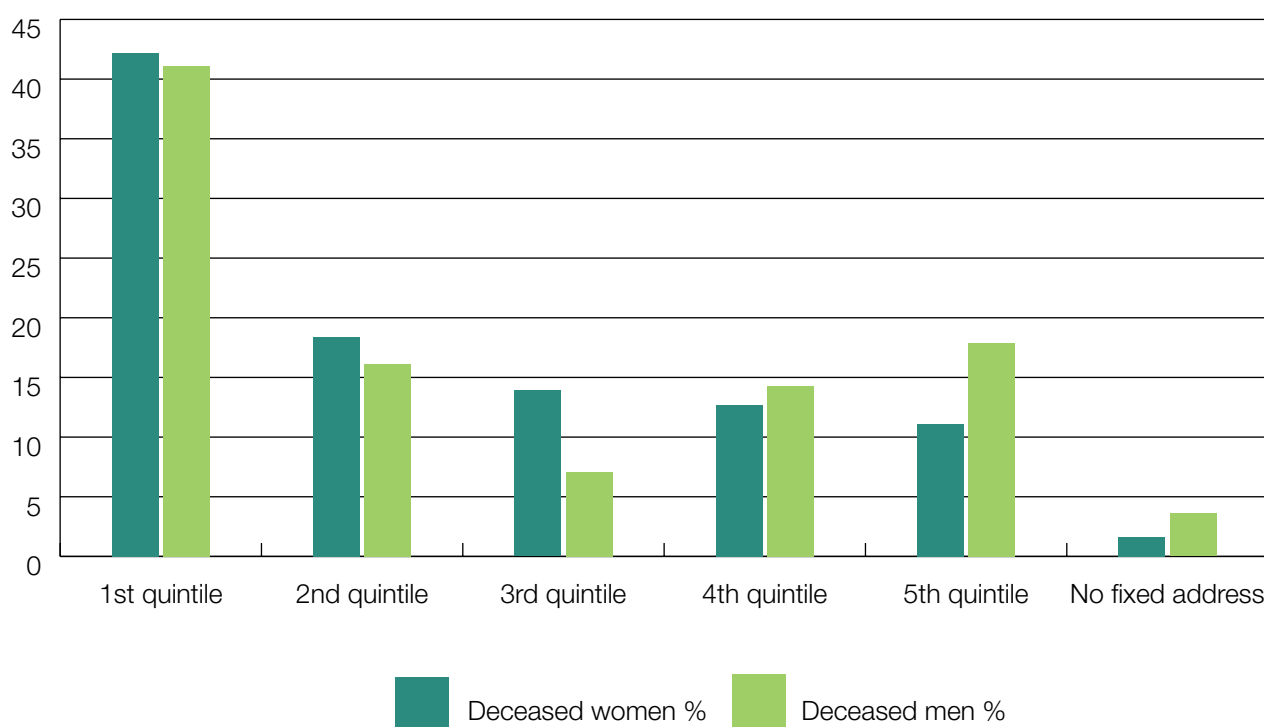
⁸⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2018) (n 27); Australian Bureau of Statistics (2018), 'Technical Paper: Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA)', [https://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/756EE3DBEFA869EFC258259000BA746/\\$File/SEIFA%202016%20Technical%20Paper.pdf](https://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/756EE3DBEFA869EFC258259000BA746/$File/SEIFA%202016%20Technical%20Paper.pdf) (accessed 12 October 2023).

Table 3.21: Deceased residence socio-economic status (n=300)

Socio-economic status	Deceased Women	% Female	Deceased Men	% Male
1st quintile	103	42.2%	23	41.1%
2nd quintile	45	18.4%	9	16.1%
3rd quintile	34	13.9%	4	7.1%
4th quintile	31	12.7%	8	14.3%
5th quintile	27	11.1%	10	17.9%
No fixed address	4	1.6%	2	3.6%
TOTAL	244	-100%	56	-100%

Note: figures may not add to 100 due to rounding

Figure 3.11: Deceased socio-economic status (n=300)



Deceased employment status

Deceased women

Less than half of the 244 women were known to be engaged in paid employment at the time they were killed (n=116, 47.5%). This means that just over half of the women were either unemployed, studying, caring for children or family members, retired or permanently unable to work (n=128, 52.5%) (Table 3.22).



Deceased men

Over half of the 56 men were known to be engaged in paid employment at the time they were killed (n=33, 58.9%) (Table 3.22).

Table 3.22: Deceased employment status (n=300)

Employment status	Deceased Women	% Female	Deceased Men	% Male
Paid employment	116	47.5%	33	58.9%
No paid employment	128	52.5%	23	41.1%
TOTAL	244	100%	56	100%

Deceased mental health

To-date the Team has adopted a broad approach to coding mental health status which draws from both official service records such as medical records, as well as witness statements and other anecdotal evidence. Accordingly, this variable captures a broad spectrum of circumstances ranging from a mental illness diagnosed by a qualified health practitioner, to friends and family reporting behaviours consistent with psychological distress. As described in the *Limitations* section, the Team acknowledges that there are shortcomings with this approach. Accordingly, as part of its future work agenda, the Team intends to re-imagine this data capture in partnership with mental health practitioners, to build in greater nuance around the complex intersection of domestic violence and mental health.

Deceased women

Of the 244 women killed, almost 30 per cent had current and/or historical mental health issues (n=70, 28.7%) (Table 3.23).

Deceased men

Of the 56 men killed, almost 30 per cent had had current and/or historical mental health issues (n=16, 28.6%) (Table 3.23).

Table 3.23: Deceased mental health (n=300)

Mental health status	Deceased Women	% Female	Deceased Men	% Male
Mental health issues	70	28.7%	16	28.6%
No mental health issues	174	71.3%	40	71.4%
TOTAL	244	100%	56	100%

Deceased alcohol and drug use

In this dataset, alcohol and other drug (AOD) use refers to substance use that is negatively impacting on a person's health, family, relationships, work, school or other social situations. Substance dependence, also known as 'alcohol/drug use disorder', may occur when a person continues to use substances even though their use causes them significant problems. It is regarded by many as a medical condition not directly under the control of the individual.

Deceased women

Almost one-third of the 244 women killed were known to have AOD issues (n=74, 30.3%). This included 29 women who used alcohol only (11.9%); 13 women who used drugs only (5.3%); and 32 women who used both drugs and alcohol (13.1%) (Table 3.24, Fig. 3.12).

Deceased men

Over three-quarters of the 56 men killed were known to have AOD issues (n=43, 76.8%). This included 14 men who used alcohol only (25%); eight men who used drugs only (14.3%); and 21 men who used both drugs and alcohol (37.5%) (Table 3.24, Fig. 3.13).

Table 3.24: Deceased AOD use (n=300)

Alcohol and drug use	Deceased Women	% Female	Deceased Men	% Male
No alcohol and/or drug use	170	69.7%	13	23.2%
Alcohol and/or drug use	74	30.3%	43	76.8%
Alcohol use only	(29)	(11.9%)	(14)	(25%)
Drug use only	(13)	(5.3%)	(8)	(14.3%)
Both alcohol and drug use	(32)	(13.1%)	(21)	(37.5%)
TOTAL	244	100%	56	100%

Figure 3.12: Deceased women AOD use (n=244)

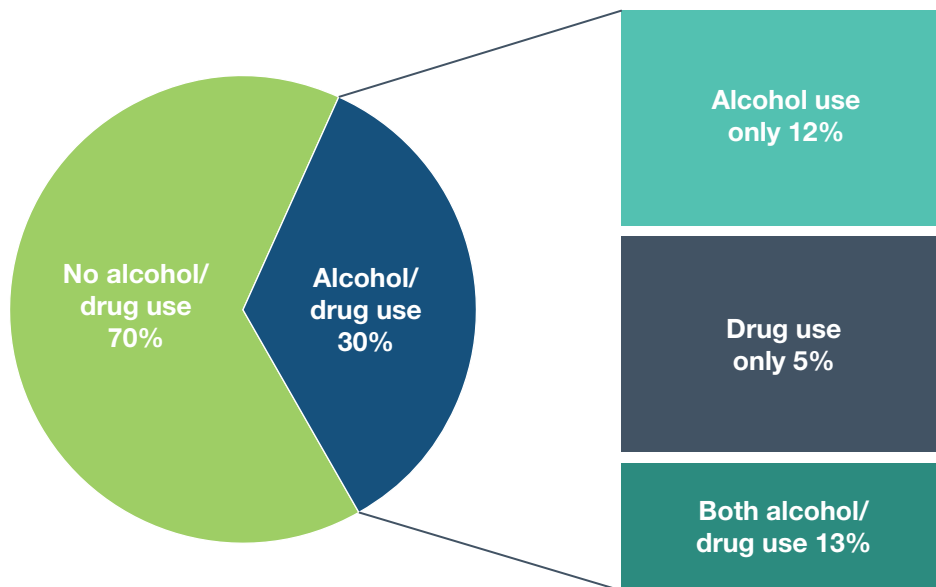
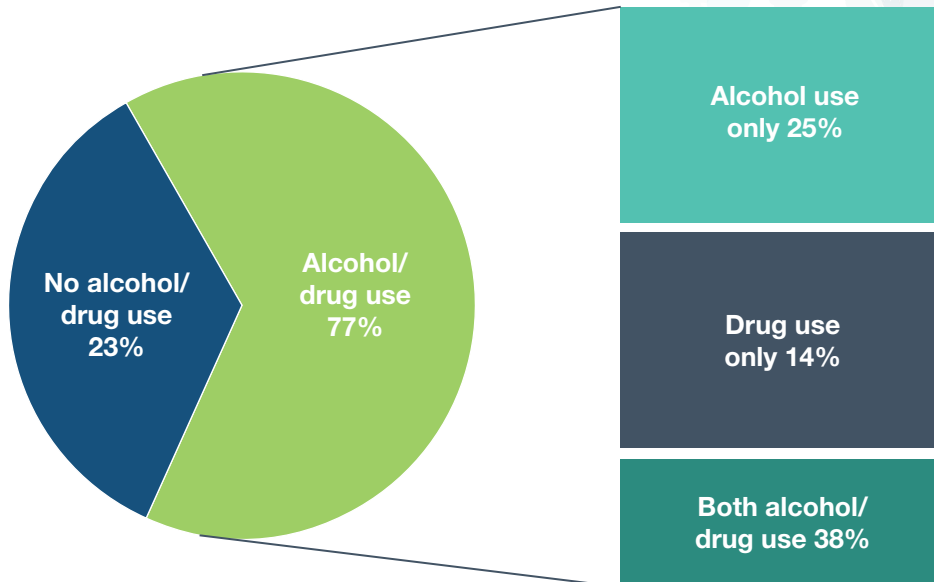




Figure 3.13: Deceased men AOD use (n=56)



Deceased co-occurrence of mental health and AOD issues

Deceased women

Almost 12 per cent of the women killed had both mental health and AOD issues (n=29, 11.9%).

Deceased men

Just over 20 per cent of men killed had both mental health and AOD issues (n=12, 21.4%).

Deceased pregnancy

Six of the 244 women who were killed by their male intimate partner were pregnant at the time of the homicide (2.5%).

IPV homicide – offender characteristics

The IPV Homicide Dataset includes:

- 244 men who killed a female partner;
- 56 women who killed a male partner;
- 6 men that killed a male partner (noting that one man killed two male partners six months apart); and
- 1 woman who killed a female partner.

As with the previous section, the cases where a male killed a male intimate partner, and the single case where a female killed a female intimate partner have been excluded in the following data analysis.

Homicide offender age

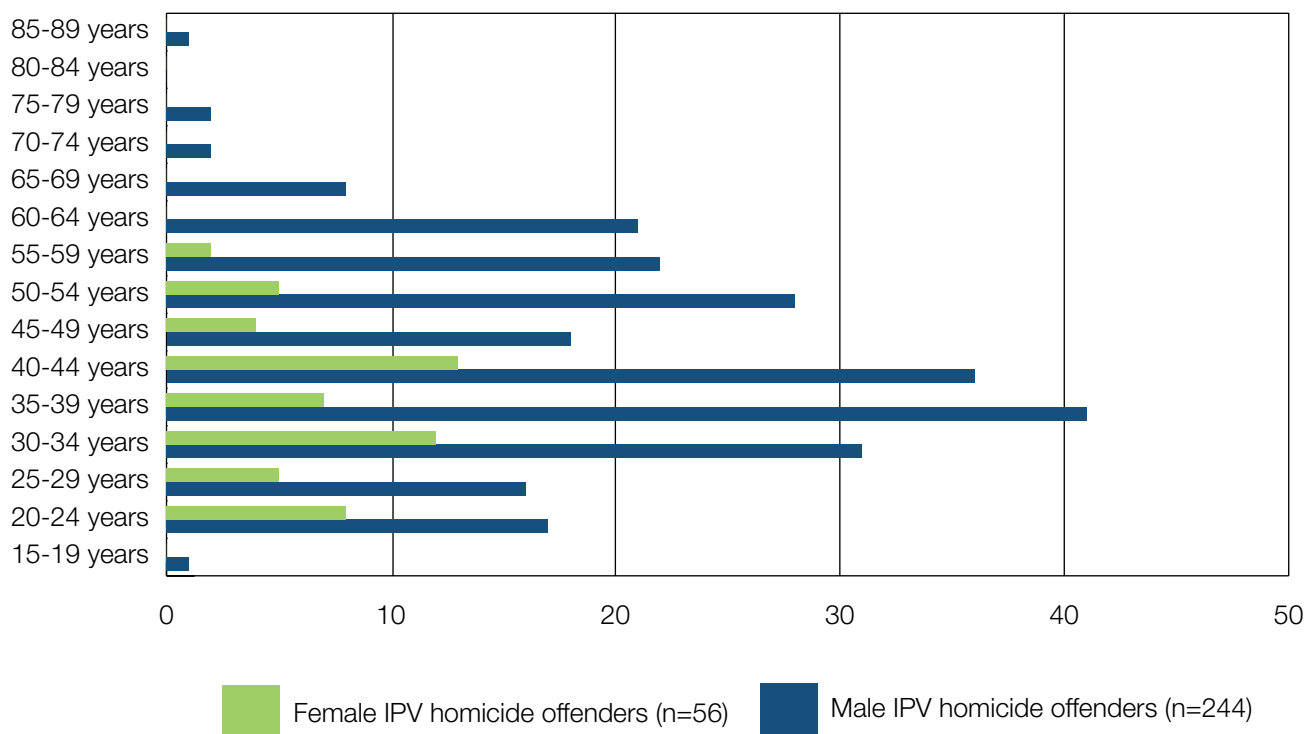
Male homicide offenders

The age of the 244 male IPV homicide offenders who killed a female intimate partner ranged from 17 to 85 years, the average age being 43.5 years (Fig. 3.14).

Female homicide offenders

The age of the 56 female homicide offenders who killed a male intimate partner ranged from 20 to 58 years, the average age being 36.8 years (Fig. 3.14).

Figure 3.14: Age of IPV homicide offender (n=300)



Homicide offender country of birth and visa status

Male homicide offenders

Approximately two-thirds of the 244 male IPV homicide offenders were born in Australia (n=161, 66%) and one-third of male offenders were born outside Australia (n=83, 34%). The 83 male offenders who were born outside Australia were born in 38 different countries.

Of the 83 male offenders who were born outside Australia, 11 were on a temporary visa at the time they committed the homicide (Table 3.25).

Female homicide offenders

Approximately 80 per cent of the 56 female homicide offenders were born in Australia (n=45, 80.4%). The 11 women that were born outside Australia were born in nine different countries.



Of the 11 females that were born outside Australia, three were on a temporary visa at the time they committed the homicide (Table 3.25).

Table 3.25: IPV homicide offender country of birth and visa status (n=300)

Country of Birth	Male Homicide Offender	% Male	Female Homicide Offender	% Female
Australia	161	66%	45	80.4%
Outside Australia	83	34%	11	19.6%
Temporary visa	(11)	(4.5%)	(3)	(5.4%)
TOTAL	244	100%	56	100%

Homicide offender Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status

Male homicide offenders

Approximately 12 per cent of the 244 male IPV homicide offenders identified as Aboriginal (n=30, 12.3%). No male offenders identified as Torres Strait Islander (Table 3.26).

Female homicide offenders

Approximately 30 per cent of the 56 female homicide offenders identified as Aboriginal (n=17, 30.4%). No female offenders identified as Torres Strait Islander (Table 3.26).

Table 3.26: IPV homicide offender Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status (n=300)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status	Male Homicide Offender	% Male	Female Homicide Offender	% Female
Aboriginal	30	12.3%	17	30.4%
Non-Indigenous	214	87.7%	39	69.6%
TOTAL	244	100%	56	100%

Homicide offender disability

Male homicide offenders

Of the 244 male IPV homicide offenders, approximately 6 per cent were identified as men with disability (n=15, 6.1%). This included six men with a physical disability, seven men with a cognitive disability, and two men with both a physical and a cognitive disability (Table 3.27).

Female homicide offenders

Of the 56 female homicide offenders, two were identified as women with disability (3.6%). One of the women had a cognitive disability, and the other woman had both a physical and a cognitive disability (Table 3.27).

Table 3.27: IPV homicide offender disability (n=300)

Disability status	Male Homicide Offender	% Male	Female Homicide Offender	% Female
With disability	15	6.1%	2	3.6%
Without disability	229	93.9%	54	96.4%
TOTAL	244	100%	56	100%

Homicide offender employment status

Male homicide offenders

Just over half of the 244 male IPV homicide offenders were known to be engaged in paid employment at the time they killed their female intimate partner (n=131, 53.7%) (Table 3.28).

Female homicide offenders

Of the 56 female IPV homicide offenders almost one-third were known to be engaged in paid employment at the time they killed their male intimate partner (n=17, 30.4%) (Table 3.28).

Table 3.28: IPV homicide offender employment status (n=300)

Employment status	Male Homicide Offender	% Male	Female Homicide Offender	% Female
Paid employment	131	53.7%	17	30.4%
No paid employment	113	46.3%	39	69.6%
TOTAL	244	100%	56	100%

Homicide offender mental health

As described previously, the Team's current approach to coding mental health status draws from both official service records as well as information in witness statements and other anecdotal evidence. Accordingly, this variable captures a broad spectrum of circumstances ranging from a mental illness diagnosed by a qualified health practitioner, to friends and family reporting behaviours consistent with psychological distress. The shortcomings with this approach have been described previously and the Team endeavours, as part of its future work agenda, to build in greater nuance around the complex intersection of domestic violence and mental health.

Male homicide offenders

Over half of the 244 male IPV homicide offenders had current and/or historical mental health issues (n=132, 54.1%) (Table 3.29).

Female homicide offenders

Of the 56 female homicide offenders, almost two-thirds had current and/or historical mental health issues (n=35, 62.5%) (Table 3.29).



Table 3.29: IPV homicide offender mental health (n=300)

Mental health status	Male Homicide Offender	% Male	Female Homicide Offender	% Female
Mental health issues	132	54.1%	35	62.5%
No mental health issues	112	45.9%	21	37.5%
TOTAL	244	100%	56	100%

Homicide offender alcohol and drug use

As described previously, alcohol and drug (AOD) use refers to substance use that is negatively impacting on a person’s health, family, relationships, work, school or other social situations.

Male homicide offenders

Approximately half of the 244 male IPV homicide offenders, had a known history of AOD use (n=123, 50.4%). This included 39 male offenders with a history of alcohol use only (16%); 18 men who had a history of drug use only (7.4%); and 66 men who had a history of both alcohol and drug use (27%) (Table 3.30, Fig. 3.15).

Female homicide offenders

Almost two-thirds of the 56 female IPV homicide offenders had a known history of AOD use (n=34, 60.7%). Of these 34 women, 11 had a history of alcohol use only (32.4%); 7 had a history of drug use only (20.6%); and 16 had a history of both alcohol and drug use (47.1%) (Table 3.30, Fig. 3.16).

Table 3.30: IPV homicide offender AOD use (n=300)

Alcohol and drug use	Male Homicide Offender	% Male	Female Homicide Offender	% Female
No alcohol and/or drug use	121	49.6%	22	39.3%
Alcohol and/or drug use	123	50.4%	34	60.7%
Alcohol use only	(39)	(16%)	(11)	(19.6%)
Drug use only	(18)	(7.4%)	(7)	(12.5%)
Both alcohol and drug use	(66)	(27%)	(16)	(28.6%)
TOTAL	244	100%	56	100%

Figure 3.15: Male IPV homicide offender AOD use (n=244)

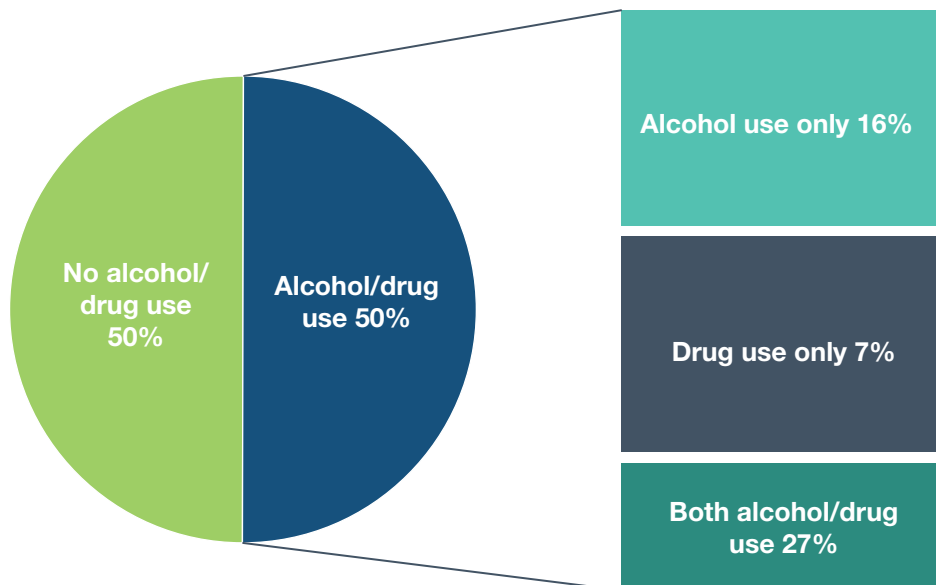
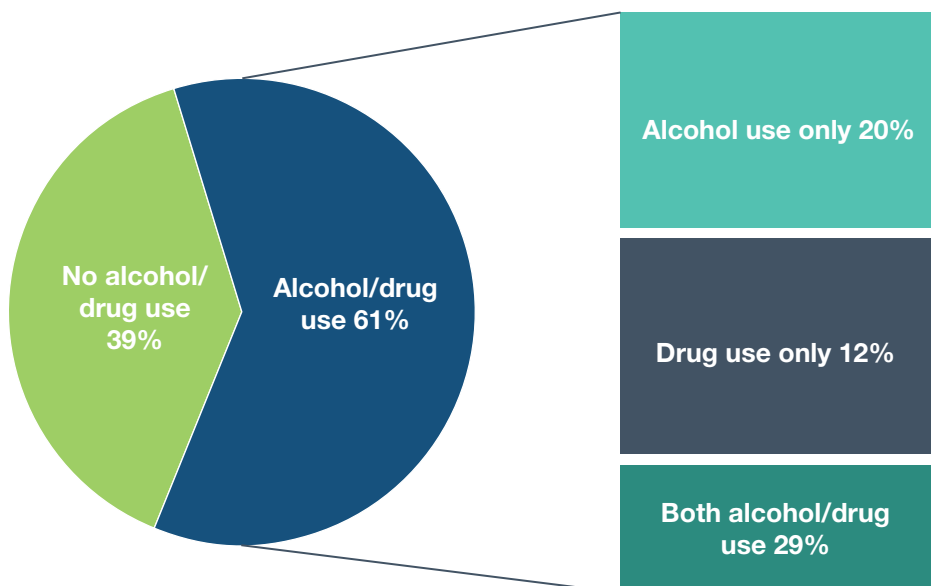


Figure 3.16: Female IPV homicide offender AOD use (n=56)



Homicide offender co-occurrence of mental health and AOD issues

Male homicide offenders

Over one-quarter of the 244 men who killed a female intimate partner had both mental health and AOD issues (n=68, 27.9%).



Female homicide offenders

Over 40 per cent of women who killed their male intimate partner had both mental health and AOD issues (n=23, 41.1%).

Female homicide offender pregnancy

Three of the 56 female IPV homicide offenders were pregnant at the time they killed their male intimate partner (5.4%).

Homicide offender criminal justice outcomes

Male homicide offenders

Three-quarters of the 244 male IPV homicide offenders were dealt with by way of criminal proceedings (n=183, 75%) and the remaining male offenders were subject to coronial proceedings, primarily in circumstances where the man died by suicide following the homicide or otherwise died prior to the criminal proceedings being finalised (n=61, 25%).

Of the 183 male IPV homicide offenders dealt with by way of criminal proceedings: approximately two-thirds were convicted of murder (n=118, 64.5%) and one-fifth were convicted of manslaughter (n=37, 20.2%) (Table 3.31, Fig. 3.17).

Female homicide offenders

Almost all 56 female IPV homicide offenders were dealt with by way of criminal proceedings (n=54, 96.4%). Two women died by suicide following the homicide and were therefore subject to coronial proceedings (3.6%).

Of the 54 women dealt with by way of criminal proceedings almost half were convicted of manslaughter (n=25, 46.3%) and one-third were acquitted or homicide charges were withdrawn (n=16, 29.6%) (Table 3.31, Fig. 3.17).

Table 3.31: IPV homicide offender criminal justice outcomes (n=237)

Criminal justice outcome	Male IPV homicide offender	% Male	Female IPV homicide offender	% Female
Acquitted/Charges withdrawn	6	3.3%	16	29.6%
Manslaughter	37	20.2%	25	46.3%
Guilty plea	(21)	(11.5%)	(16)	(29.6%)
Guilty verdict	(16)	(8.7%)	(9)	(16.7%)
Murder	118	64.5%	9	16.7%
Guilty plea	(51)	(27.9%)	(2)	(3.7%)
Guilty verdict	(67)	(36.6%)	(7)	(13%)
NGMI/Not fit to stand trial	18	9.8%	4	7.4%
Lesser charge	2	1.1%	0	0%
Criminal proceedings ongoing	2	1.1%	0	0%
TOTAL	183	100%	54	100%

Figure 3.17: IPV homicide offender criminal justice outcomes (n=237)



IPV homicide – case characteristics

Method of homicide

Deceased women

Approximately one-third of the 244 women killed by a male intimate partner died as a result of stab wounds, i.e., ‘assault – sharp weapon’ (n=80, 32.8%). The second most common manner of homicide was suffocation/strangulation (n=35, 14.3%), followed by shooting (n=33, 13.5%) and, ‘assault – no weapon’, (n=32, 13.1%). The manner of death is unknown for nine women in circumstances where their body has never been found (n=5) or the cause of death was otherwise unable to be determined (n=4) (Table 3.32).

Deceased men

Almost three-quarters of the 56 men killed by a female intimate partner died as a result of stab wounds (n=41, 73.2%). The second most common manner of homicide was shooting (n=7, 12.5%) (Table 3.32).



Table 3.32: Method of homicide (n=300)

Manner of death	Deceased Women	% Female	Deceased Men	% Male
Assault – sharp weapon	80	32.8%	41	73.2%
Assault – blunt weapon	22	9%	1	1.8%
Assault – MVA related	4	1.6%	2	3.6%
Assault – no weapon	32	13.1%	0	0%
Shooting	33	13.5%	7	12.5%
Suffocation/strangulation	35	14.3%	1	1.8%
Multiple assaultive behaviours	20	8.2%	2	3.6%
Poison/noxious substance	3	1.2%	0	0%
Fire related	5	2%	1	1.8%
Drowning	1	0.4%	0	0%
Unknown	9	3.7%	1	1.8%
TOTAL	244	-100	56	-100

Note: figures may not add to 100 due to rounding

Location of homicide

Deceased women

Approximately three-quarters of the 244 women were killed at home (n=185, 75.8%). Usually this was the home the woman shared with the man who killed her (n=125, 51.2% of all women killed) and in 11 of these cases the relationship had ended but the couple continued to reside together ‘separated under one roof’. For the remaining 60 cases where the woman was killed at home, the woman lived separately from the male offender (24.6% of all women killed) (Table 3.33).

Deceased men

Approximately three-quarters of the 56 men were killed at home (n=41, 73.2%). This was almost always the home the man shared with the female homicide offender (n=37, 66.1% of all men killed) and included two cases where the couple were living ‘separated under one roof’ (Table 3.33).

Table 3.33: Location of homicide (n=300)

Location of homicide	Deceased Women	% Female	Deceased Men	% Male
Deceased residence	185	75.8%	41	73.2%
Shared residence	(114)	(46.7%)	(35)	(62.5%)
Shared residence but 'separated under one roof'	(11)	(4.5%)	(2)	(3.6%)
Separate residence	(60)	(24.6%)	(4)	(7.1%)
Homicide offender residence	16	6.6%	5	8.9%
Other residence	8	3.3%	3	5.4%
Public/open place	28	11.5%	6	10.7%
Hotel/motel	3	1.2%	1	1.8%
Deceased workplace	3	1.2%	0	0%
Unknown	1	0.4%	0	0%
TOTAL	244	100	56	100

IPV homicide – relationship characteristics

Relationship status, separation, and family law proceedings

The Team often has access to detailed information regarding a couple's separation or intention to separate prior to the homicide. This includes details of how soon before the homicide separation occurred, or when an intention to separate was expressed and by whom. This section examines the relationship status at the time of the homicide, as well as any concurrent family law proceedings.

Deceased women

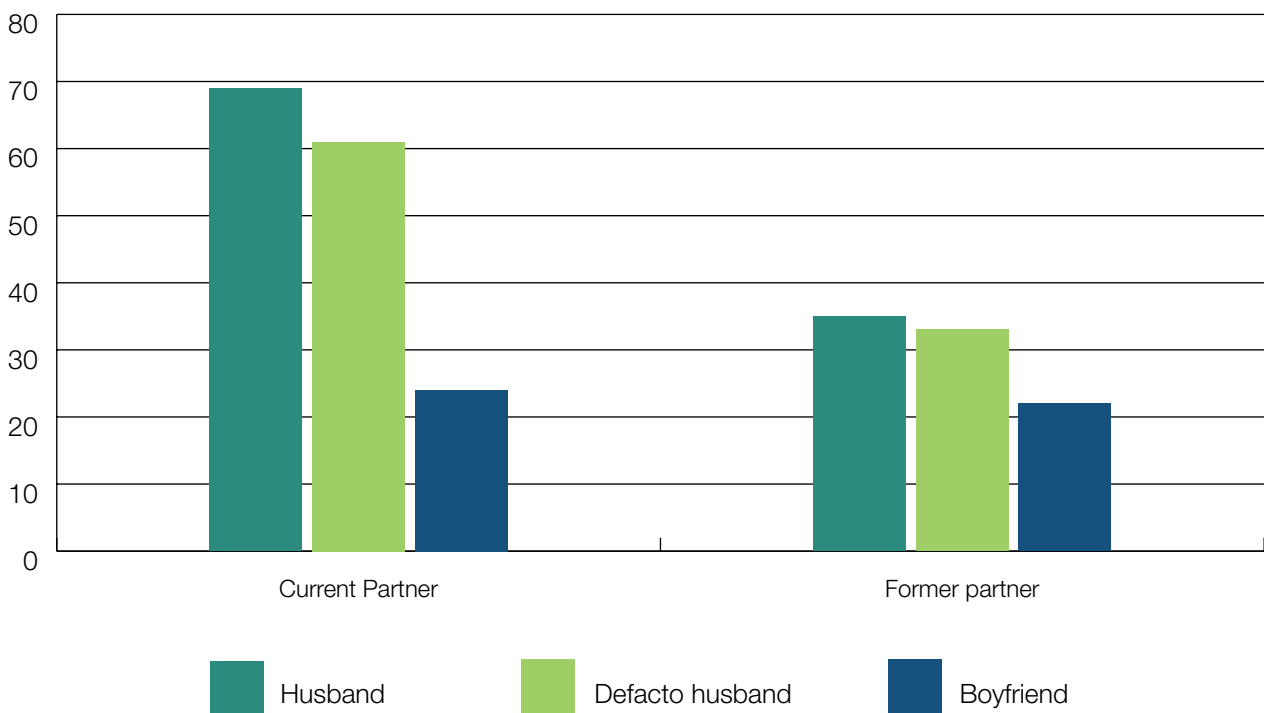
Almost two-thirds of the 244 women were killed by their current male partner, including husbands, de facto husbands and boyfriends (n=154, 63.1%). Accordingly, over one-third of women were killed by their partner after the relationship had ended (n=90, 36.9%) (Table 3.34, Fig. 3.18).



Table 3.34: Relationship of male IPV homicide offender to female deceased (n=244)

Relationship type	Deceased Women	%
Current Partner	154	63.1%
Husband	(69)	(28.3%)
De facto husband	(61)	(25%)
Boyfriend	(24)	(9.8%)
Former Partner	90	36.9%
Former husband	(35)	(14.3%)
Former de facto husband	(33)	(13.5%)
Former boyfriend	(22)	(9%)
TOTAL	244	100%

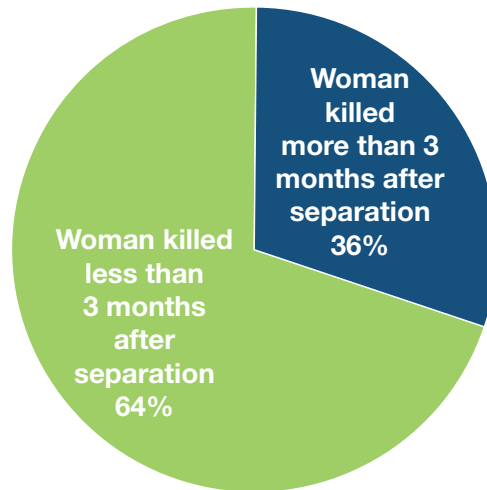
Figure 3.18: Relationship of male IPV homicide offender to female deceased (n=244)



Deceased women killed by former partner

Almost 65 per cent of the women killed by a former partner had separated from the man within three months of the homicide (n=58 of 90 women killed by former partner, 64.4%) (Fig. 3.19).

Figure 3.19: IPV homicide proximal to separation – male homicide offender/female deceased (n=90)

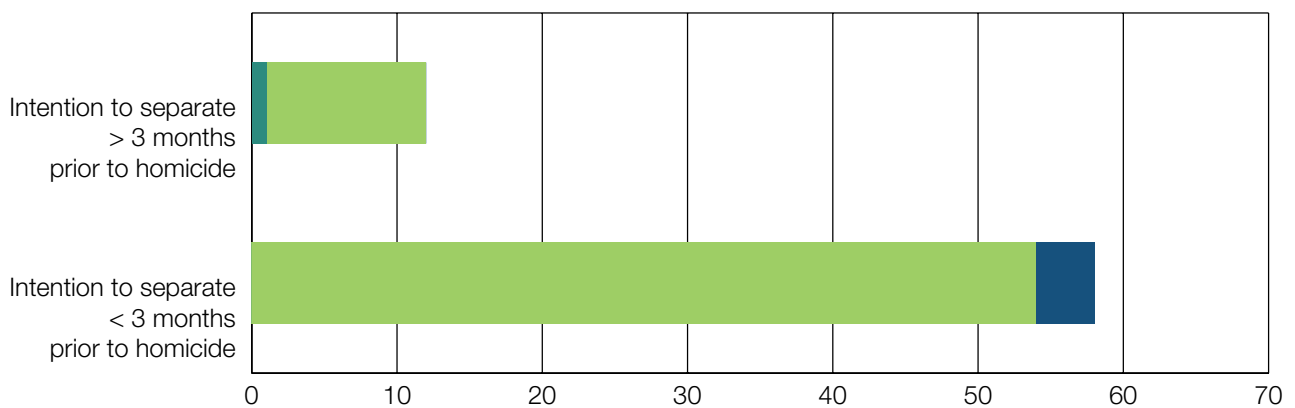


Family law proceedings were ongoing in 10 of the 90 cases where a woman was killed by her former male partner (11.1%).

Deceased women killed by current partner

Almost 45 per cent of the 154 women who were killed by their current partner had indicated an intention to end the relationship (n=69, 44.8%), and in most cases this intention had been signalled within three months of the homicide (n=58) (Fig. 3.20).

Figure 3.20: Intention to separate – male IPV homicide offender/female deceased (n=70)

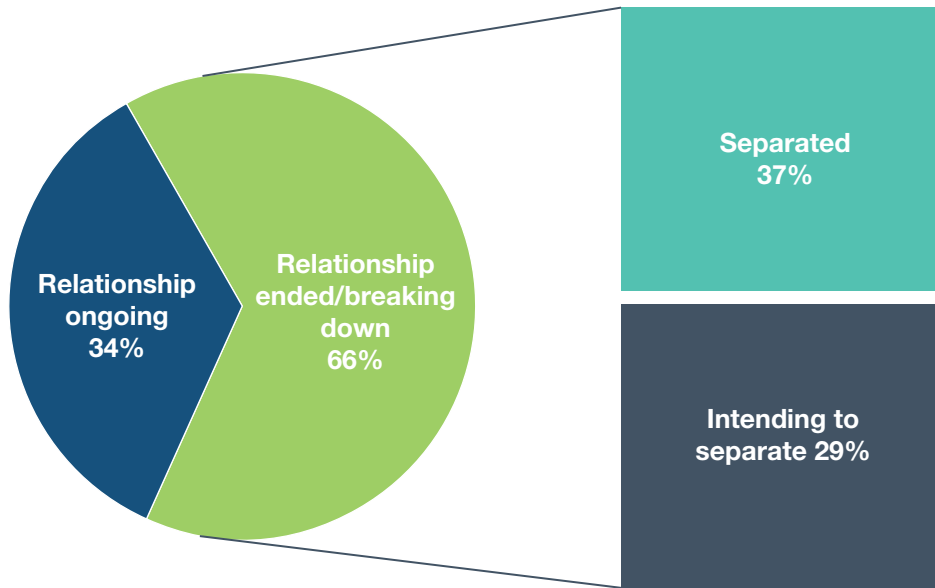


	Intention to separate < 3 months prior to homicide	Intention to separate > 3 months prior to homicide
Male homicide offender	0	1
Female deceased	54	11
Both parties	4	0



Accordingly, in almost two-thirds of the 244 IPV homicides involving a man killing his female partner, the relationship had ended or was breaking down (with one or both parties intending to separate) at the time of the homicide (n=160, 65.6%) (Fig. 3.21).

Figure 3.21: Separation – male IPV homicide offender/female deceased (n=244)



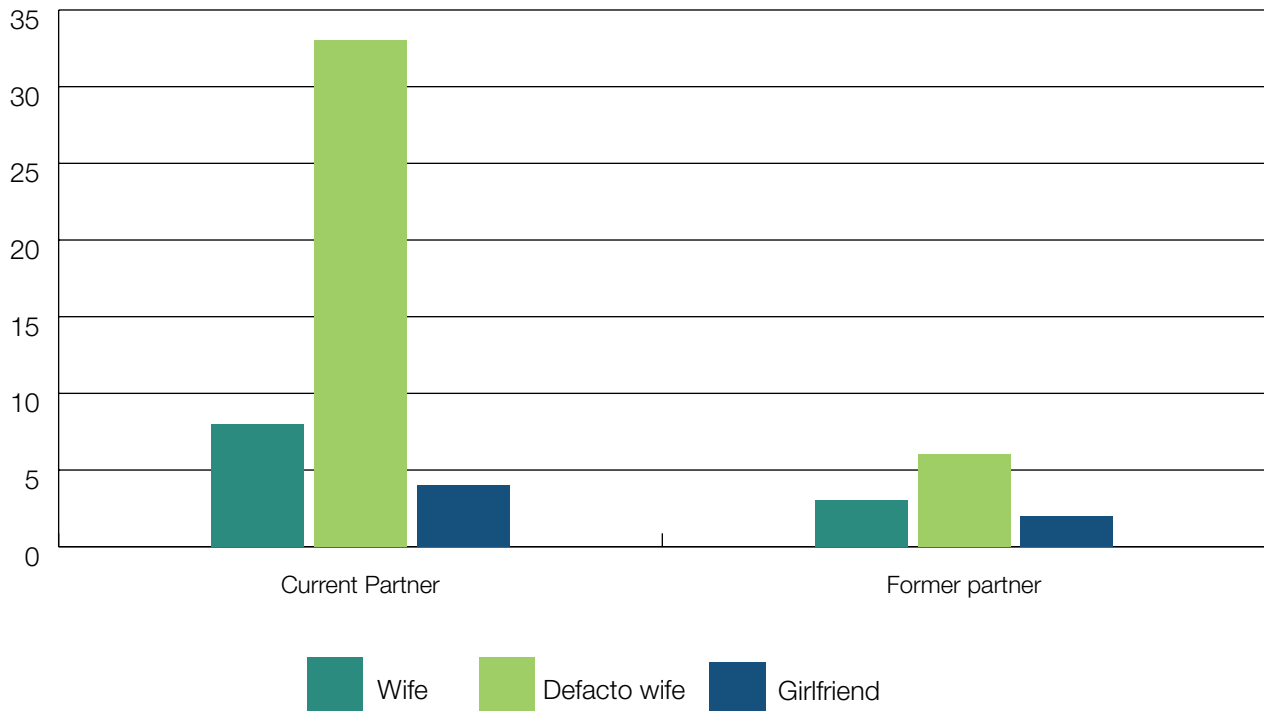
Deceased men

Most men were killed by their current female intimate partner, including wives, de facto wives and girlfriends (n=45, 80.4%) (Table 3.35, Fig. 3.22).

Table 3.35: Relationship of female IPV homicide offender to male deceased (n=56)

Relationship type	Deceased men	%
Current Partner	45	80.4%
Wife	(8)	(14.3%)
De facto wife	(33)	(58.9%)
Girlfriend	(4)	(7.1%)
Former Partner	11	19.6%
Former wife	(3)	(5.4%)
Former de facto wife	(6)	(10.7%)
Former girlfriend	(2)	(3.6%)
TOTAL	56	100

Figure 3.22: Relationship of female IPV homicide offender to male deceased (n=56)



Deceased men killed by former partner

One-third of the men killed by a former female partner had separated from the woman within three months of the homicide (n=4 of 11 men killed by former partner, 36.4%).

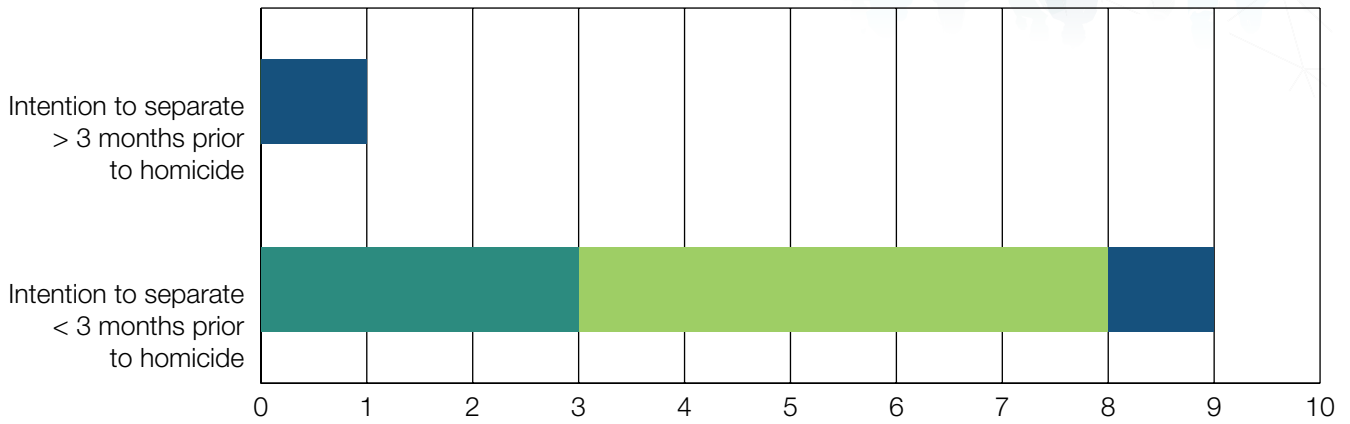
Family law proceedings were ongoing in three of the 11 cases where a man was killed by a former female partner (27.3%).

Deceased men killed by current partner

For over three-quarters of the 45 homicides involving men who were killed by their current female partner, there was no apparent intention to separate by either party (n=35, 77.8%). However, in the remaining 10 cases one or both parties had indicated an intention to end the relationship (Fig. 3.23).



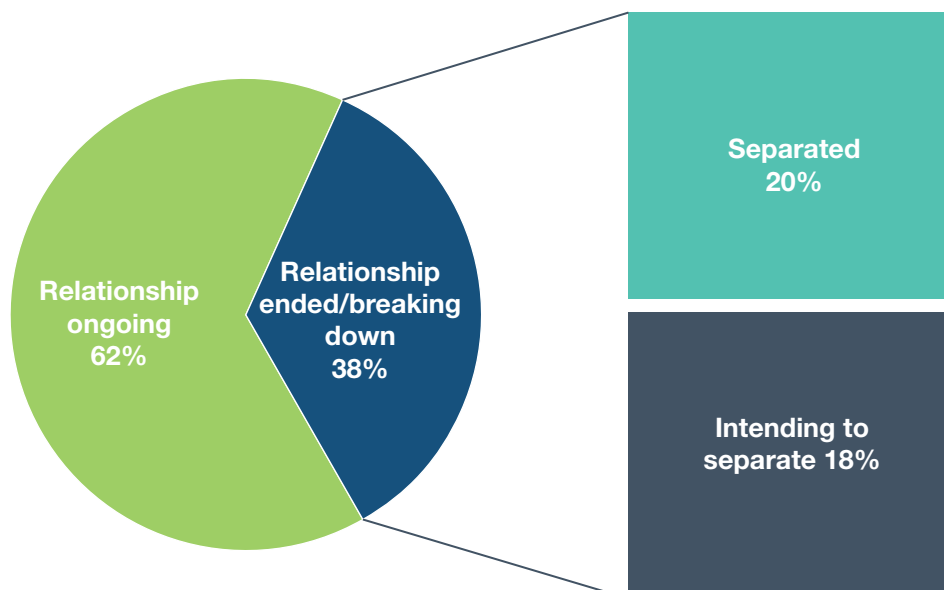
Figure 3.23: Intention to separate – female IPV homicide offender/male deceased (n=10)



	Intention to separate < 3 months prior to homicide	Intention to separate > 3 months prior to homicide
Male deceased	3	0
Female homicide offender	5	0
Both parties	1	1

Accordingly, in over one-third of IPV homicides involving a woman killing her male partner, the relationship had ended or was breaking down (with one or both parties intending to separate) at the time of the fatal episode (n=21, 37.5%) (Fig. 3.24).

Figure 3.24: Separation – female IPV homicide offender/male deceased (n=56)



Relationship length

Deceased women

The duration of the relationships between the 244 women and the male intimate partner who killed them ranged from 1 month to 45 years. The average relationship length was 10.6 years (Fig. 3.25). Almost 10 per cent of women killed had been in the relationship with the male offender for less than one year (n=24, 9.8%) (Fig. 3.26). Almost 20 per cent of women killed had been in the relationship with the male offender for more than 20 years (n=46, 18.9%) (Fig. 3.27).

Deceased men

The duration of the relationships between the 56 men and the female intimate partner who killed them ranged from 6 months to 33 years. The average relationship length was 7.1 years (Fig. 3.25). Five men killed had been in the relationship with the female offender for less than one year (Fig. 3.26) and five men had been in the relationship for more than 20 years (Fig. 3.27).

Figure 3.25: IPV homicide relationship length (n=300)

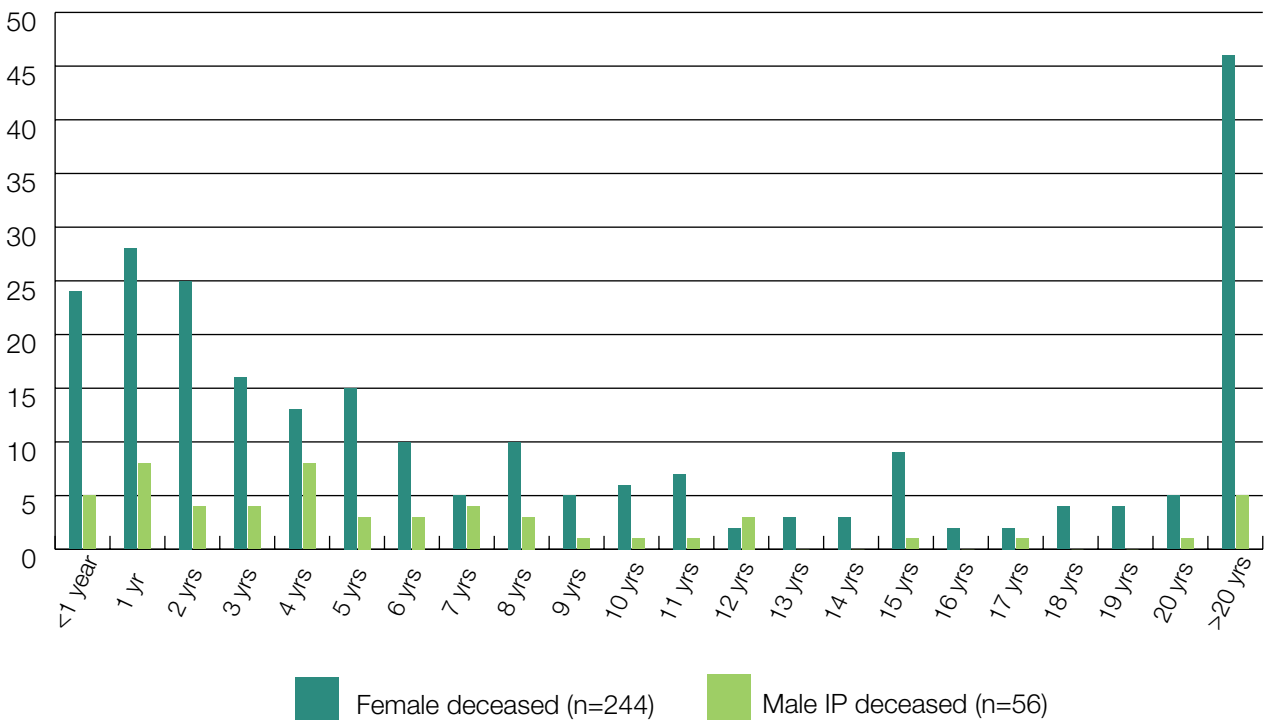




Figure 3.26: IPV homicide relationship <1 yr (n=29)

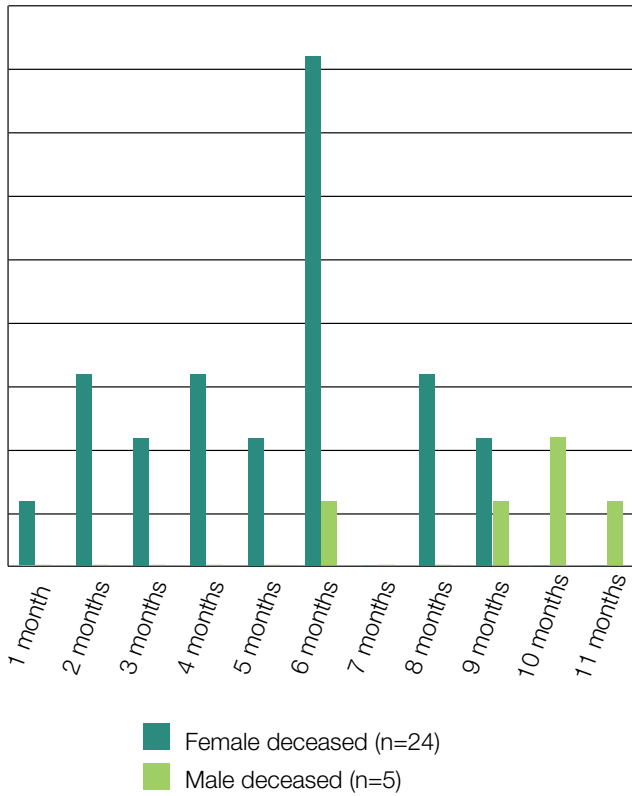
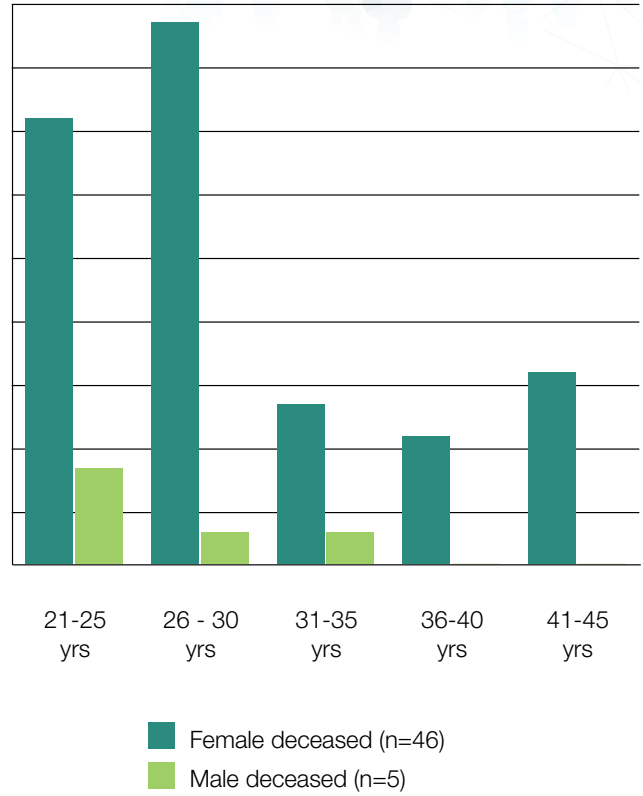


Figure 3.27: IPV homicide relationship >20 yrs (n=51)



Age disparity

Deceased women

Approximately three-quarters of the 244 women killed were younger than the male partner that killed them (n=185, 75.8%). The age difference between the couple ranged from 1 to 42 years (Table 3.36).

Deceased men

More than half of the 56 men killed were older than the female partner that killed them (n=32, 57.1%). The age difference between the couple ranged from 1 to 25 years (Table 3.36).

Table 3.36: Age disparity between deceased and offender (n=300)

Age disparity between deceased and offender	Female deceased	% Female	Male deceased	% Male
>20 years younger than homicide offender	10	4.1%	0	0%
16-20 years younger than homicide offender	8	3.3%	1	1.8%
11-15 years younger than homicide offender	20	8.2%	3	5.4%
6-10 years younger than homicide offender	56	23%	4	7.1%
1-5 years younger than homicide offender	91	37.3%	10	17.9%
Same age as homicide offender	11	4.5%	6	10.7%
1-5 years older than homicide offender	28	11.5%	14	25%
6-10 years older than homicide offender	12	4.9%	10	17.9%
11-15 years older than homicide offender	6	2.5%	6	10.7%
16-20 years older than homicide offender	2	0.8%	1	1.8%
>20 years older than homicide offender	0	0	1	1.8%
TOTAL	244	-100%	56	-100%

Note: figures may not add to 100 due to rounding

IPV homicide and children

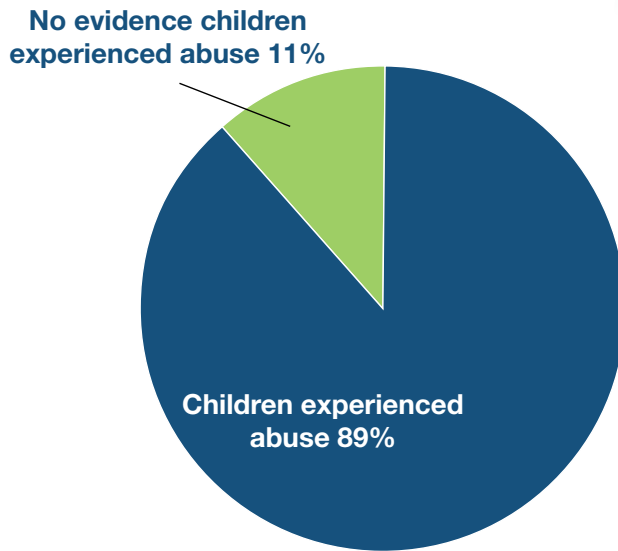
In approximately two-thirds of the 300 IPV homicides, children under the age of 18 were living with the deceased person and/or the homicide offender (n=192, 64%). Usually these were the biological children of the couple (116 of 192 relationships with children, 60.4%); 62 cases involved stepchildren⁸⁵ (32.3% of relationships with children); and 14 cases involved both biological and stepchildren (7.3% of relationships with children).

Most of these children were known to have experienced domestic violence prior to the homicide, including being directly abused (including physical and non-physical abuse); and/or experiencing the violence between the couple (n=170, 88.5% of relationships with children) (Fig. 3.28).

⁸⁵ Meaning the deceased person and homicide offender did not have children together but one or both parties had children from a previous relationship/s and these children resided with the couple full or part time.



Figure 3.28: IPV homicide and children's experiences of domestic violence (n=192)



The deceased persons and homicide offenders were known to be parents (either together or separately) to at least 370 surviving children who were under 18 years of age at the time of the homicide.

As further described below, in 12 IPV homicides children were also killed, resulting in the deaths of 14 children.

Multiple homicide events

There were 16 cases where the homicide offender killed their intimate partner and another person/s.⁸⁶ All but one of these multiple homicide events were perpetrated by a male IPV homicide offender.

Of the 16 multiple homicide events:

- Seven involved a male IPV homicide offender killing his female partner together with one or more of their children;
- One involved a female IPV homicide offender killing her male partner together with their children;
- One involved a male IPV homicide offender killing his female partner together with one of their children and her new partner;
- Five involved a male IPV homicide offender killing his female partner together with another relative/s; and
- Two involved a male IPV homicide offender killing his female partner together with her new male partner (and in one of these cases the new partner's adult son was also killed).

The 16 multiple fatality events resulted in the deaths of 40 victims.

In eight of these cases the IPV homicide offender died by suicide after committing the multiple homicide event (seven male homicide offenders and one female homicide offender).

⁸⁶ Cases where a homicide offender killed their intimate partner and then died by suicide are not coded as a multiple homicide event in the DVDRT database.

Domestic violence- context filicide in NSW, 2000-2022

This chapter presents a comprehensive analysis of the 96 domestic violence-context filicides that occurred in NSW between 1 July 2000 and 30 June 2022.





Introduction

Filicide, or the killing of a child by a parent, has been described as a ‘virtually incomprehensible’ phenomenon; going against duties born of both evolutionary biology and strong social norms around a parent’s duty to care for their child.⁸⁷

In Australia, after intimate partner homicide, filicide comprises the second largest proportion of domestic homicides.⁸⁸ This chapter builds on the novel filicide dataset presented in the Team’s 2019-21 Report⁸⁹ and includes in-depth analyses of all domestic violence-context filicides (‘DV-context filicides’) occurring in NSW between 1 July 2000 and 30 June 2022.

The data findings in this chapter reinforce the Team’s previous work which revealed that most filicides in Australia occur following an identifiable history of intimate partner violence, meaning that the intervention and prevention of domestic violence is a critical component in reducing the unacceptably high rates of filicide in NSW.⁹⁰

The high rates and gendered nature of IPV that preceded the DV-context filicides – namely, male filicide offenders are most often abusers against their female partners and female filicide offenders are most often victims of abuse from their male partners – further highlights that violence against women needs to be understood as a risk of harm to her children.

Inclusion criteria

For this analysis, DV-context filicides are those in which:

- **a biological or non-biological parent** (or parents);
- **kills a child** (or children) under the age of 18;⁹¹
- **in a DV-context**, i.e., there was evidence of a history of domestic violence either directed against the child; directed against other children in the family unit; or where the child otherwise experienced domestic violence behaviours between their parents/other relevant parties prior to the homicide;
- **within the data reporting period** – 1 July 2000 and 30 June 2022; and
- **the deceased child was ordinarily a resident in NSW** – the deceased child permanently resided in NSW, notwithstanding that they may have been killed in another state or territory.

In adopting this approach, the Team seeks to highlight intimate partner violence as a risk indicator in filicide cases and emphasise the devastating impact that seeing, hearing or otherwise experiencing such violence has on children more broadly.

87 Klier, C. et al. (2019), ‘Filicide research in the twenty-first century’, *Arch Womens Ment Health*, vol. 22, pp. 135–137. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00737-018-0924-0> (accessed 2 October 2023).

88 Serpell, B. et al (2022), ‘Homicide in Australia 2019-20’, *Statistical Report 39*, Australian Institute of Criminology. https://www.aic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-03/sr39_homicide_in_australia_2019-20.pdf (accessed 2 October 2023).

89 DVDRT Report 2019-2021 (n 7).

90 Ibid.

91 Cases where an unborn child died as a consequence of domestic violence (for example, physical assault against a pregnant mother), or forced abortion are not included in this analysis. In NSW the ‘born alive rule’ means that homicides can only be committed against a legally recognised person that has been ‘fully born in a living state’: See *R v Iby* [2005] NSWCCA 178. However, the Team notes that there has been a recent development for foetal homicide laws in NSW that creates a separate offence for unborn children who are killed as a result of a criminal act (known as Zoe’s law): *s54A and B, Crimes Act 1900 (NSW)*.

Data findings

Overview

Between 1 July 2000 and 30 June 2022 there were 108 filicide events in NSW resulting in the deaths of 125 children, meaning that some cases involved the killing of multiple children.⁹²

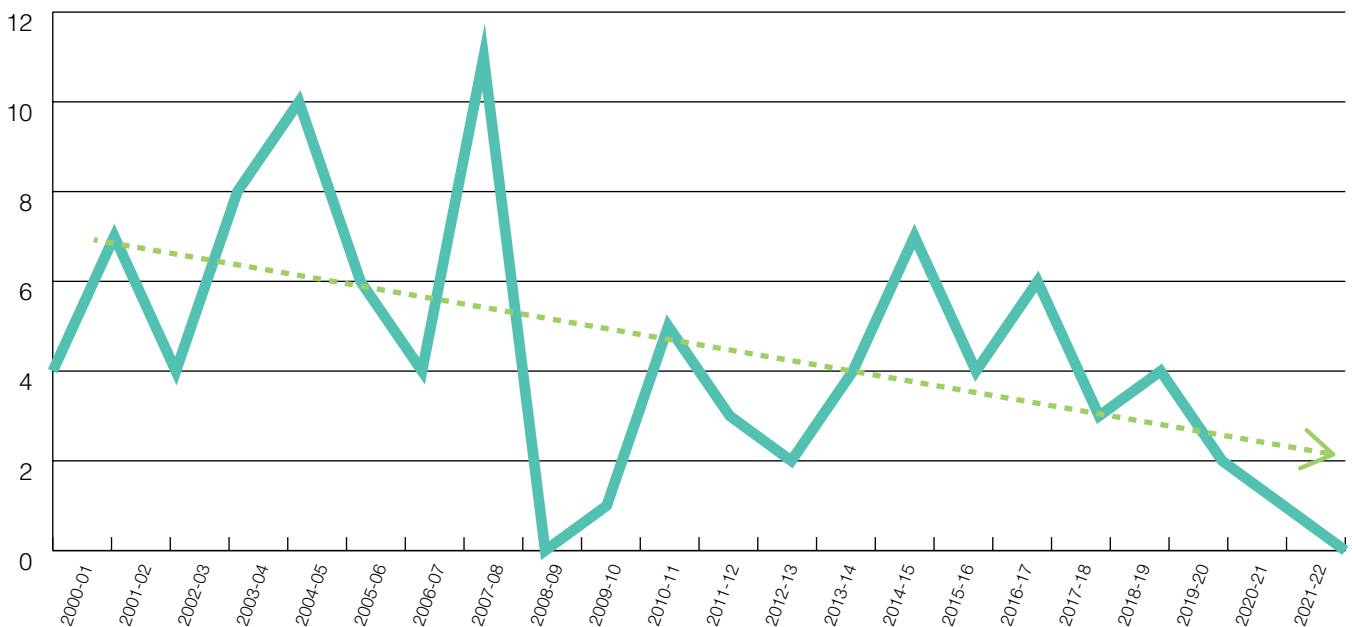
Approximately three-quarters of the 108 filicide events occurred in a DV-context (n=80, 74.1%). The 80 DV-context filicide events resulted in the deaths of 96 children.

The 28 filicide events that were coded as not having occurred in a DV-context (and which resulted in the deaths of 29 children) most frequently involved an offender experiencing a significant mental health episode absent any identifiable history of domestic violence.

Domestic violence-context filicide trends over time

This is the first time the Team has presented data on DV-context filicides over time. The significant variances year-on-year can be partly explained by the statistically small number of cases, however it appears that there is a general downward trend.

Figure 4.1: DV-context filicide in NSW, July 2000 to June 2022 (n=96)



⁹² It is noted that a further eight suspicious child deaths occurred during this period with a parent/s being identified as a person of interest but investigations are ongoing and there has been no definitive finding that the death was in fact the result of a homicide.



Domestic violence-context filicide and gender

Of the 80 DV-context filicides events, almost 60 per cent were perpetrated by a male parent acting alone (n=46, 57.5%) resulting in the deaths of 59 children. In 30 per cent of cases the DV-context filicide was perpetrated by a female parent acting alone (n=24) resulting in the deaths of 27 children. In the remaining cases, both a male and female parent were held to be criminally responsible for the child’s death (n=10, 12.5%) resulting in the deaths of 10 children (Table 4.1, Fig. 4.2).

Figure 4.2: DV-context filicide event by offender gender (n=80)

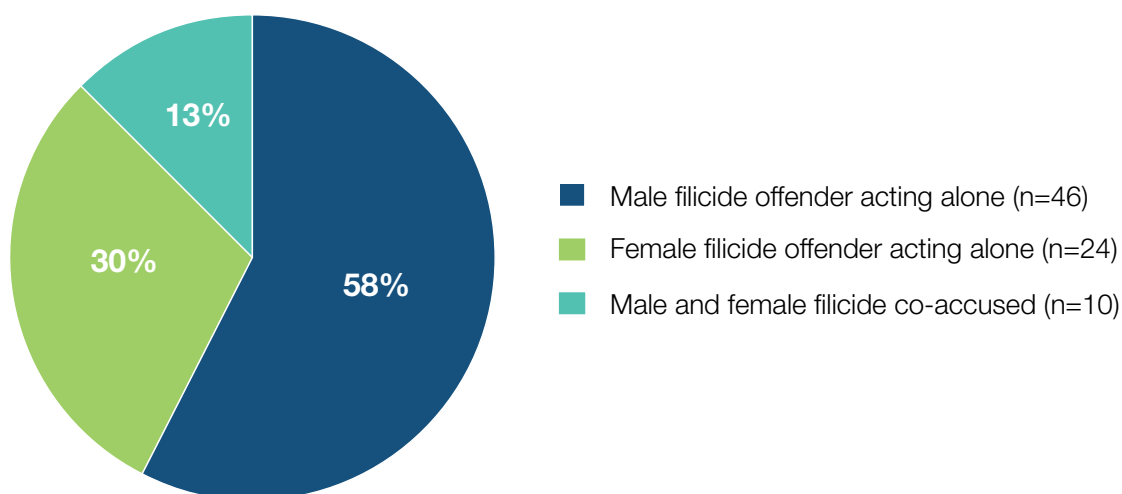


Table 4.1: DV-context filicide event by offender gender (n=80)

Filicide Offender	No. of DV context filicide events	%	No. of deceased children
Male filicide offender acting alone	46	57.5%	59
Female filicide offender acting alone	24	30%	27
Male and female co-accused	10	12.5%	10
TOTAL	80	100%	96

Domestic violence-context filicide – child characteristics

This section presents the demographic characteristics of the 96 children killed in DV-context filicide events in NSW between 1 July 2000 and 30 June 2022.

Child gender

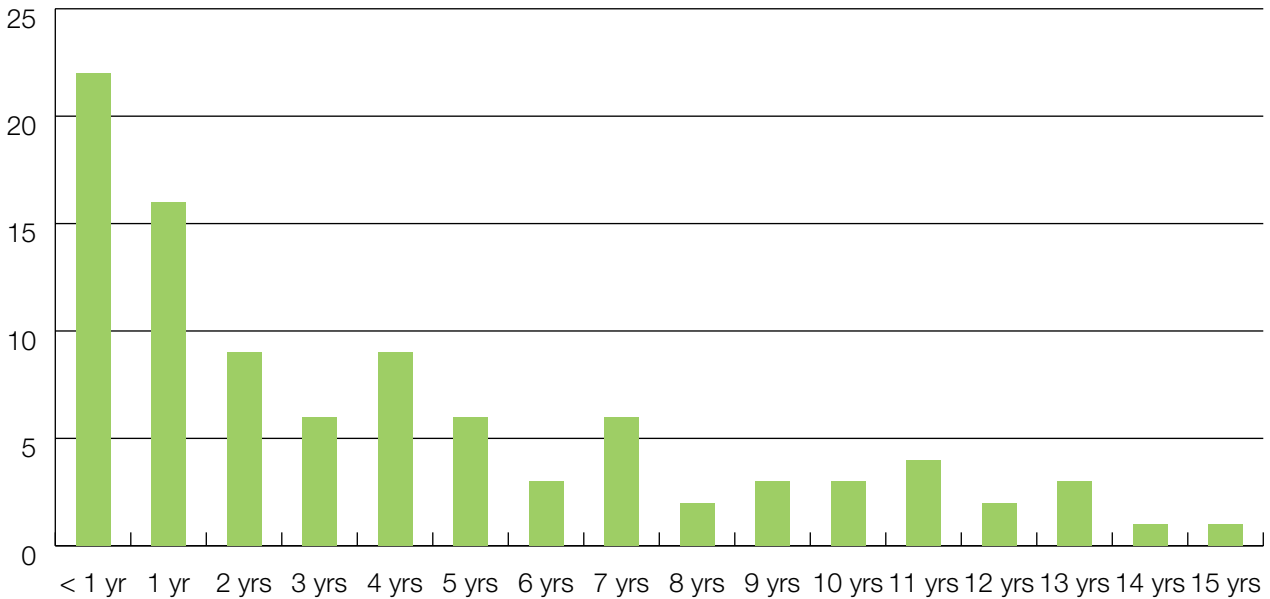
The 80 DV-context filicide events resulted in the deaths of 96 children, 52 boys (54.2%) and 44 girls (45.8%).

As this finding reveals little difference between the proportion of boys and girls killed in filicide events, the following demographic findings have not been disaggregated by gender.

Child age

The 96 children killed ranged from four weeks to 15 years of age. The average age was 4.1 years. Almost 40 per cent of children were aged one year or less (n=38, 39.6%) (Fig. 4.3).

Figure 4.3: Age of deceased child (n=96)



Child country of birth

Nearly all of the children killed were born in Australia (n=93, 96.9%). The three children who were born outside Australia were born in three different countries and were all permanent residents of Australia (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2: Child country of birth (n=96)

Country of Birth	Deceased child	%
Australia	93	96.9%
Outside Australia	3	3.1%
TOTAL	96	100%

Child Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status

Almost 20 per cent of the children killed identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (n=19, 19.8%) (Table 4.3).

These 19 children were killed by 21 filicide offenders (15 offenders also identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and six offenders were non-Indigenous).



Table 4.3: Child Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status (n=96)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status	Deceased child	%
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	19	19.8%
Non-Indigenous	77	80.2%
TOTAL	96	100%

Child disability

Approximately 10 per cent of the children killed were children with disability (n=9, 9.4%), including an intellectual or physical disability, or both (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4: Child disability (n=96)

Disability	Deceased child	%
Children with disability	9	9.4%
Children with no disability	87	90.6%
TOTAL	96	100%

Child place of residence

For this dataset, the Team has relied on the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) Remoteness Structure to determine the geographical remoteness of the child's place of residence.⁹³

Approximately two-thirds of the deceased children were living in a major city when they were killed (n=64 out of the 94 children with a fixed address, 68.1%). Accordingly, almost one-third of the children were living outside a major city at the time they were killed (n=30 out of 94 children with a fixed address, 31.9%) (Table 4.5, Fig. 4.4).

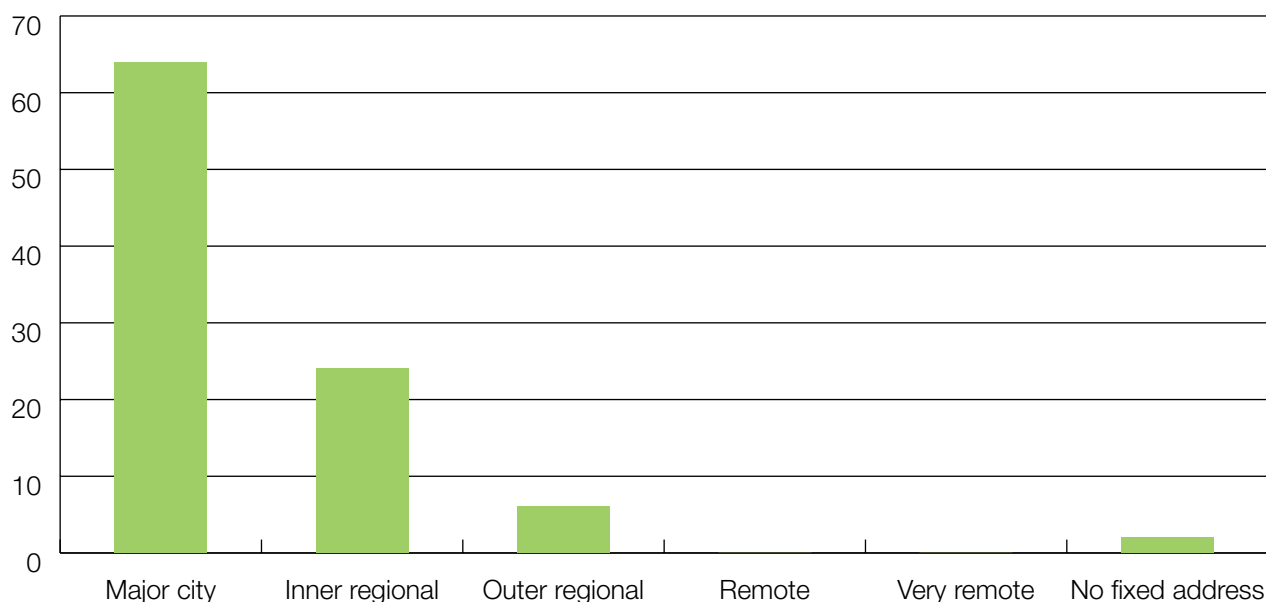
Table 4.5: Child remoteness (n=96)

Remoteness	Deceased child	%
Major city	64	66.7%
Inner regional	24	25%
Outer regional	6	6.3%
Remote	0	0%
Very remote	0	0%
No fixed address	2	2.1%
TOTAL	96	100%

Note: figures may not add to 100 due to rounding

93 Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021) (n 3).

Figure 4.4: Child remoteness (n=96)



Child socio-economic status

The ABS Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD) has been used to determine the socio-economic status of the children killed.

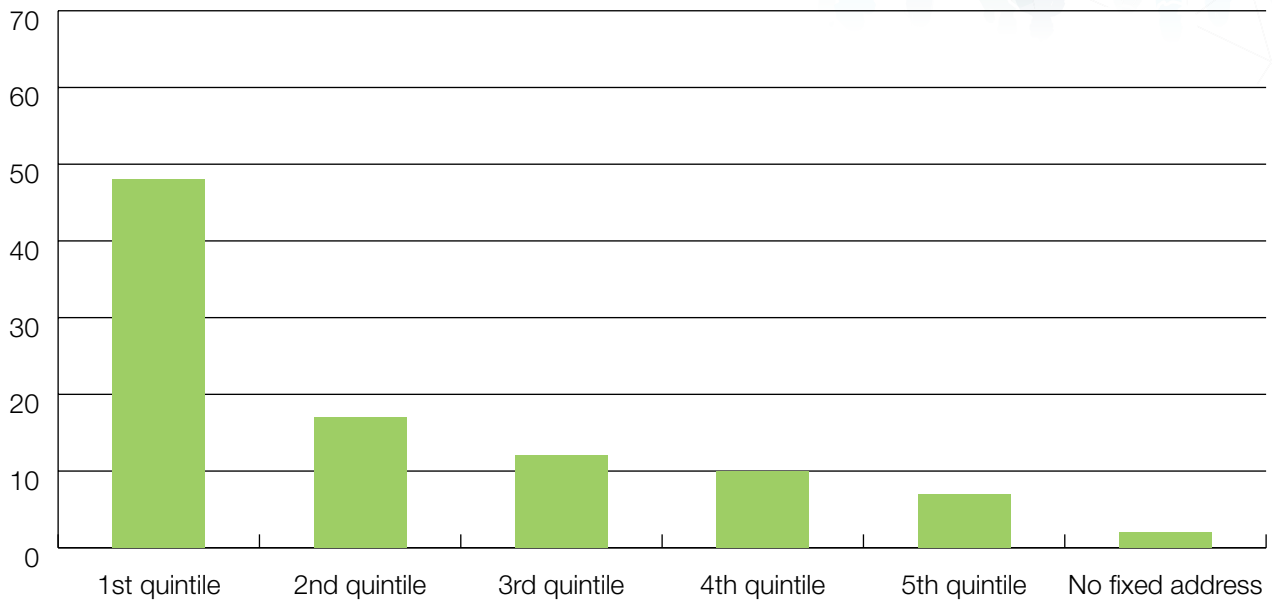
Half of the children were living in the lowest ranked socio-economic areas of NSW (n=48, 50%) (Table 4.6, Fig. 4.5).

Table 4.6: Child socio-economic status (n=96)

IRSD Quintile	Deceased child	%
1st quintile	48	50%
2nd quintile	17	17.7%
3rd quintile	12	12.5%
4th quintile	10	10.4%
5th quintile	7	7.3%
No fixed address	2	2.1%
TOTAL	96	100%



Figure 4.5: Child socio-economic status (n=96)



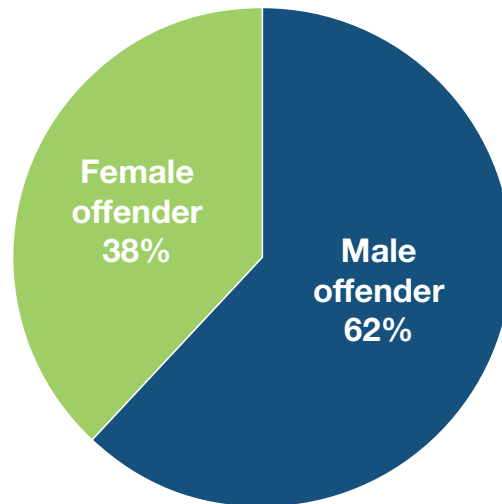
Domestic violence-context filicide – offender characteristics and histories of violence

This section presents demographic and psychosocial characteristics of the 90 parents who killed their child/ren in NSW between 1 July 2000 and 30 June 2022.

Filicide offender gender and relationship to child

Approximately 60 per cent of filicide offenders were male (n=56, 62.2%) and 40 per cent were female (n=34, 37.8%) (Fig. 4.6).

Figure 4.6: Filicide offender gender (n=90)



Of the 56 male filicide offenders, approximately 60 per cent were the biological father of the child/ren they killed (n=33, 58.9% of male offenders) and 40 per cent were a non-biological parent (n=23, 41.1%)

Almost all of the 34 female filicide offenders were the biological mother of the child/ren they killed (n=31, 91.2% of female offenders) (Table 4.7, Fig. 4.7).

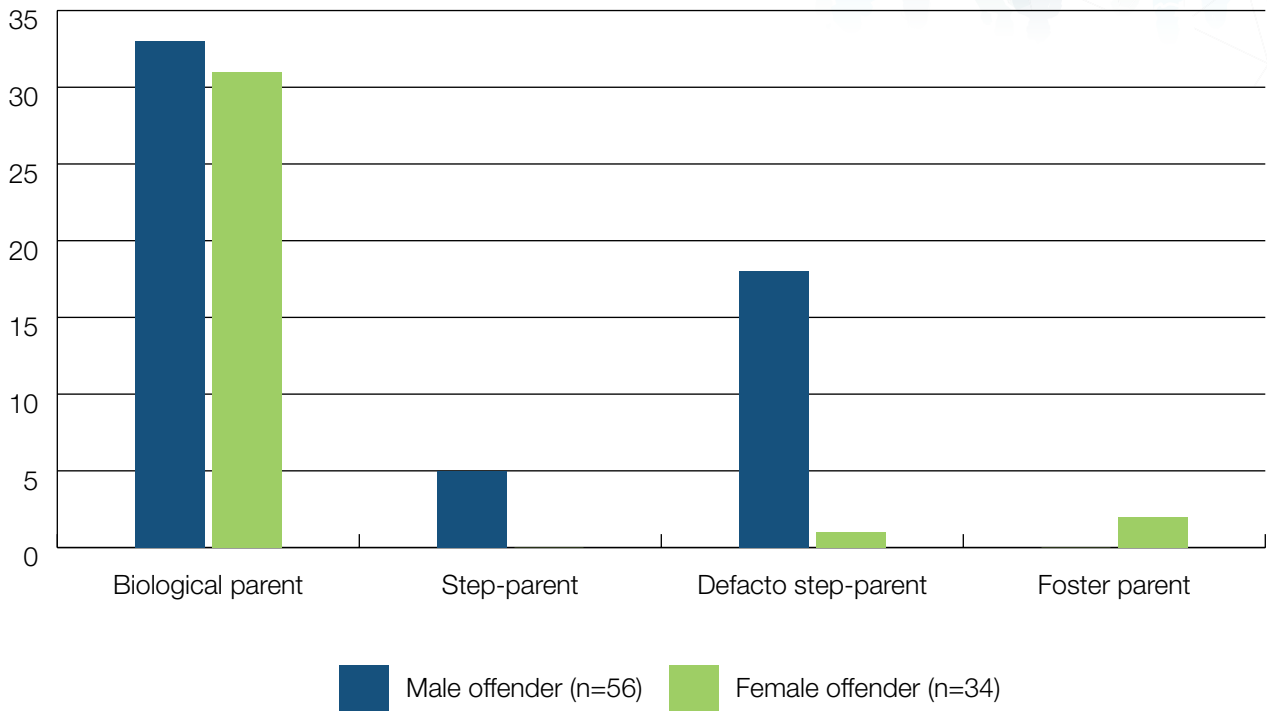
Table 4.7: Relationship of filicide offender to child (n=90)

Relationship to child	Male filicide offender	% Male	Female filicide offender	% Female
Biological parent	33	58.9%	31	91.2%
Step-parent	5	8.9%	0	0%
De facto step-parent	18	32.1%	1	2.9%
Foster parent	0	0%	2	5.9%
TOTAL	56	-100%	34	100%

Note: figures may not add to 100 due to rounding



Figure 4.7: Relationship of filicide offender to child (n=90)



Filicide offender history of domestic violence perpetration/victimisation

As described above, the 80 filicide events considered in this dataset occurred following an identifiable history of domestic violence, meaning a history of intimate partner violence was evident between the parents and/or there was a history of violence against the child that was killed and/or a sibling. This section examines the history of domestic violence victimisation and perpetration for each of the 90 DV-context filicide offenders (56 male parents and 34 female parents).

History of intimate partner violence

Male filicide offenders

For 48 of the 56 male filicide offenders, intimate partner violence was evident in their relationship with the child’s mother (85.7%). In 47 of the 48 cases involving a history of intimate partner violence, the male filicide offender was the predominant domestic violence abuser against their female partner. In the remaining case, (which involved both the male and female parent being held criminally responsible for the child’s death) it was not possible to distinguish which party was the predominant abuser or predominant victim based on the information available.

At the time of the filicide, five male offenders were defendants in a current ADVO protecting the deceased child’s mother (8.9% of all male filicide offenders).

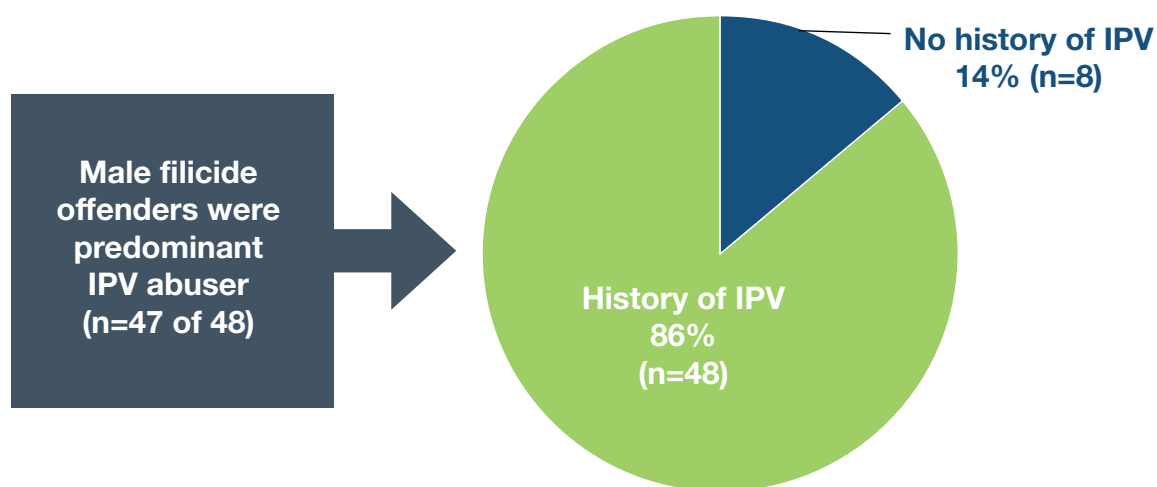
For eight of the 56 male filicide offenders (14.3%) there was no evident history of intimate partner violence and accordingly the DV-context related only to the male filicide offender’s history of violence towards the deceased child (Table 4.8, Fig. 4.8).

Table 4.8: Filicide offender history of IPV perpetration/victimisation (n=90)

Intimate partner violence history	Male filicide offenders	% Male	Female filicide offenders	% Female
Filicide offender was predominant IPV abuser	47	83.9%	0	0%
Filicide offender was predominant IPV victim	0	0%	32	94.1%
Predominant abuser/victim not able to be determined	1	1.8%	1	2.9%
No identifiable history of IPV	8	14.3%	1	2.9%
TOTAL	56	100%	34	-100%

Note: figures may not add to 100 due to rounding

Figure 4.8: Male filicide offender - history of IPV (n=56)



Female filicide offenders

For 33 of the 34 female filicide offenders, intimate partner violence was evident in their relationship with the deceased child's father (97.1%). In 32 of the 33 cases involving a history of intimate partner violence, the female filicide offender was the predominant victim of domestic violence from their male partner. As noted above, in one case where both parents were held criminally responsible for the child's death, based on the information available it was not possible to identify which party was the predominant abuser or predominant victim (Table 4.8, Fig. 4.9).

At the time of the filicide, four female offenders were named as the person in need of protection under a current ADVO against the deceased child's father (11.8% of all female filicide offenders).

In one case the female filicide offender had no evident history of experiencing intimate partner violence, and accordingly the case involved a history of violence by the female filicide offender against the child (Table 4.8, Fig. 4.9).

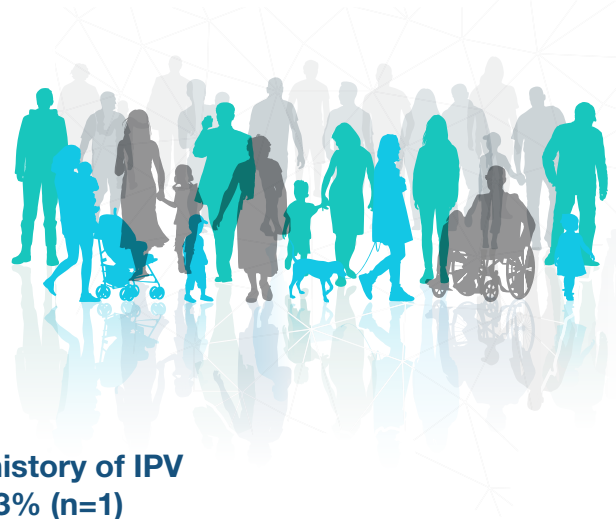
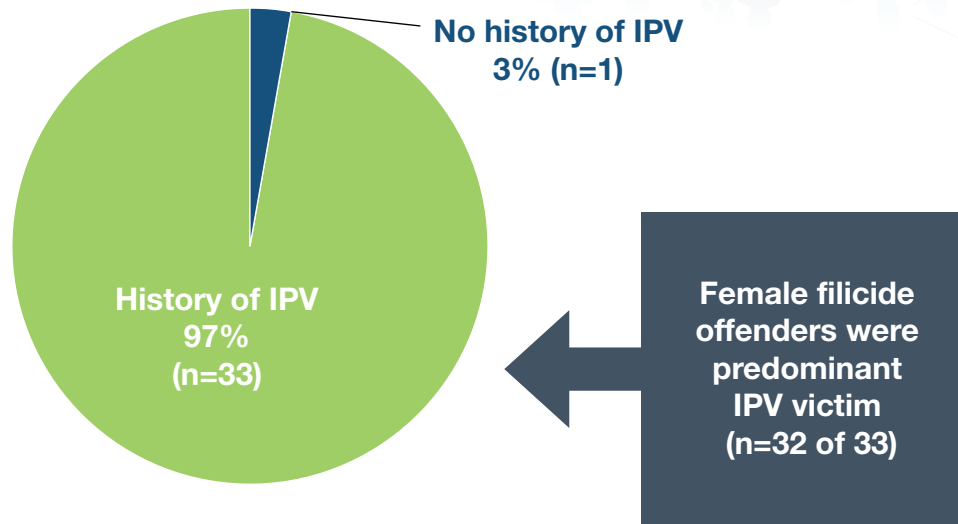


Figure 4.9: Female filicide offender - history of IPV (n=34)

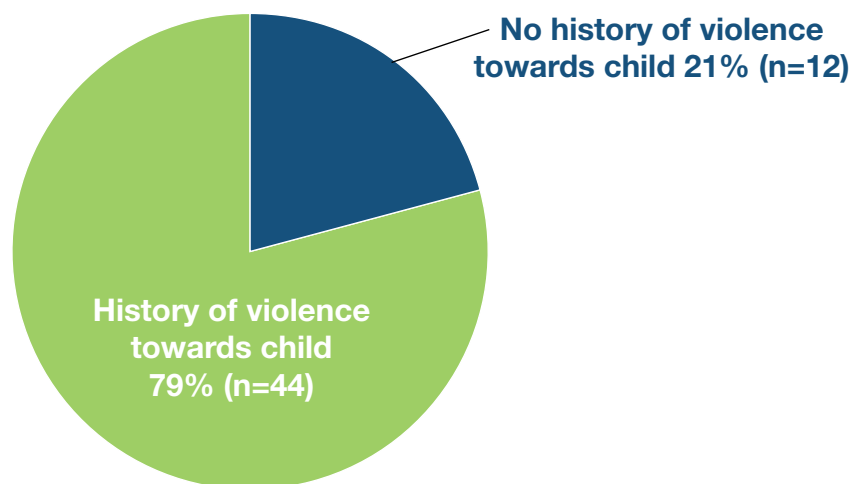


History of violence against the child/ren

Male filicide offenders

Most male filicide offenders had abused the child they killed prior to the filicide (n=44, 78.6%). The remaining offenders, who had no history of abuse directed towards the child they killed, satisfied the DV-context inclusion criteria because the offender had been abusive towards their intimate partner (n=12, 21.4%) (Fig. 4.10).

Figure 4.10: Male filicide offender - history of violence towards deceased child (n=56)



The Team acknowledges that seeing, hearing, or otherwise experiencing the traumatic effects of intimate partner violence has a significant and long-lasting impact on the emotional and psychological well-being of children. This finding also highlights intimate partner violence as a risk indicator in filicide cases, including in circumstances where the child has never been the direct target of violence.

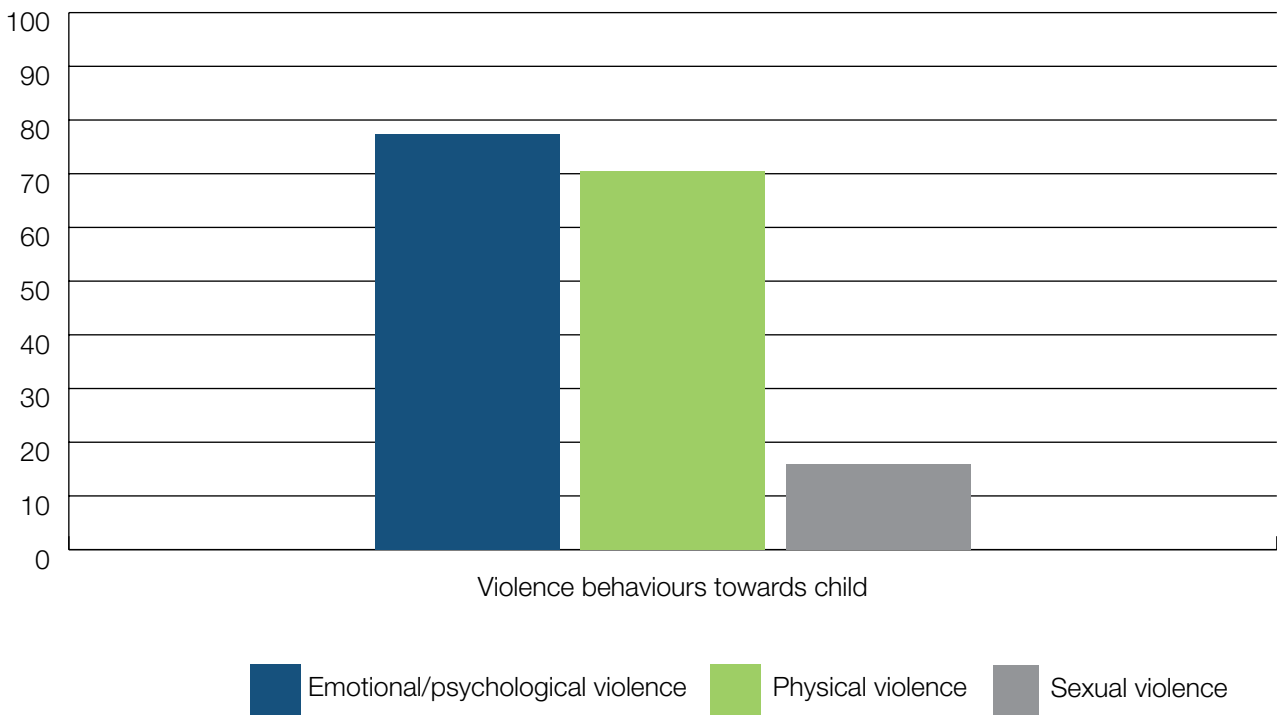
Male filicide offenders – violence behaviours

The majority of the 44 male filicide offenders who had abused the child they killed, used emotional/psychological violence (n=34, 77.3%) and/or physical violence (n=31, 70.5%). Sexual violence against the child was identified for 16 per cent of offenders (n=7, 15.9%) (Table 4.9, Fig. 4.11).

Table 4.9: Violence behaviours of male filicide offender towards deceased child (n=44)

Violence behaviours towards child	Male filicide offender with history of violence towards deceased child	%
Emotional/psychological violence	34	77.3%
Physical violence	31	70.5%
Sexual violence	7	15.9%

Figure 4.11: Violence behaviours of male filicide offender towards deceased child (n=44)

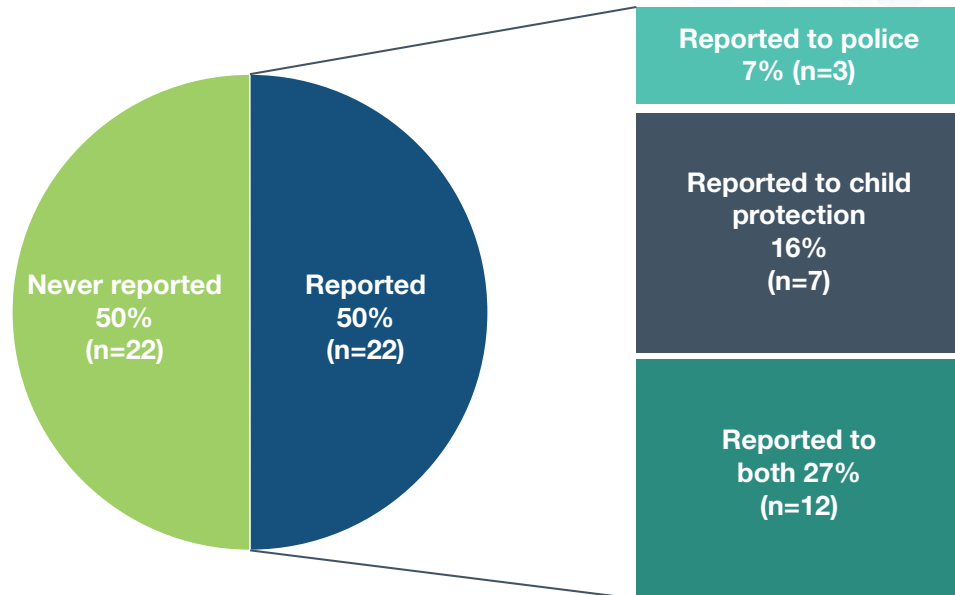


Male filicide offenders – reported history of violence

Half of the 44 male filicide offenders who had abused the child they killed, had been reported to police, child protection services or both in relation to their violence (n=22, 50%) (Fig. 4.12).



Figure 4.12: Male filicide offender - reported history of violence against deceased child (n=44)

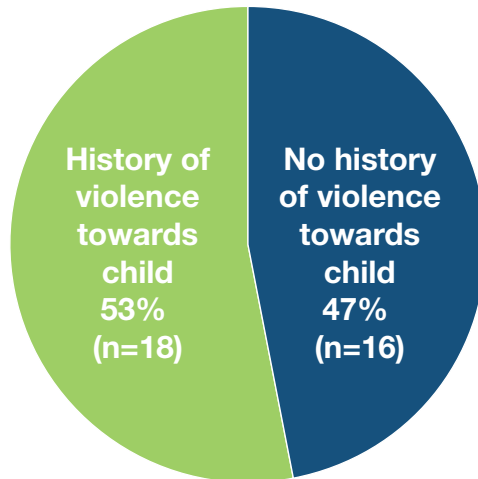


Two male filicide offenders were named as defendants in current ADVOs protecting the deceased child/ren at the time of the filicide. In one of those cases, the male offender had also been convicted of a domestic violence offence against the child resulting in a custodial sentence.

Female filicide offenders

Approximately half of the female filicide offenders had abused the child they killed, prior to the filicide (n=18, 52.9%). The remaining offenders, who had no history of abuse directed towards the child they killed, satisfied the DV-context inclusion criteria because the offender had been the victim of violence from her intimate partner (n=16, 47.1%) (Fig. 4.13).

Figure 4.13: Female filicide offender - history of violence towards deceased child (n=34)



Female filicide offenders – violence behaviours

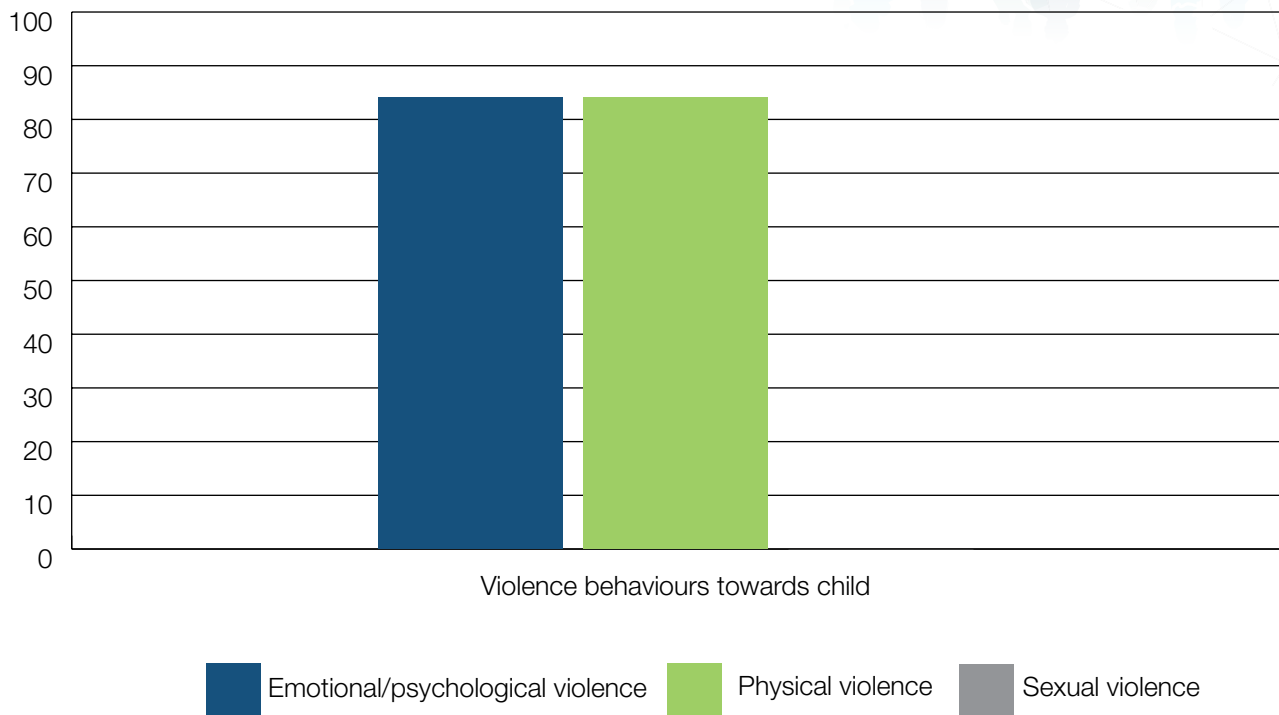
Most of the 18 female filicide offenders who had abused the child they killed, used emotional/psychological violence (n=15, 83.3%) and/or physical violence (n=15, 83.3%) (Table 4.10, Fig. 4.14).

Table 4.10: Violence behaviours of female filicide offender towards deceased child (n=18)

Violence behaviours towards child	Female filicide offender with history of violence towards deceased child	%
Emotional/psychological violence	15	83.3%
Physical violence	15	83.3%
Sexual violence	0	0%



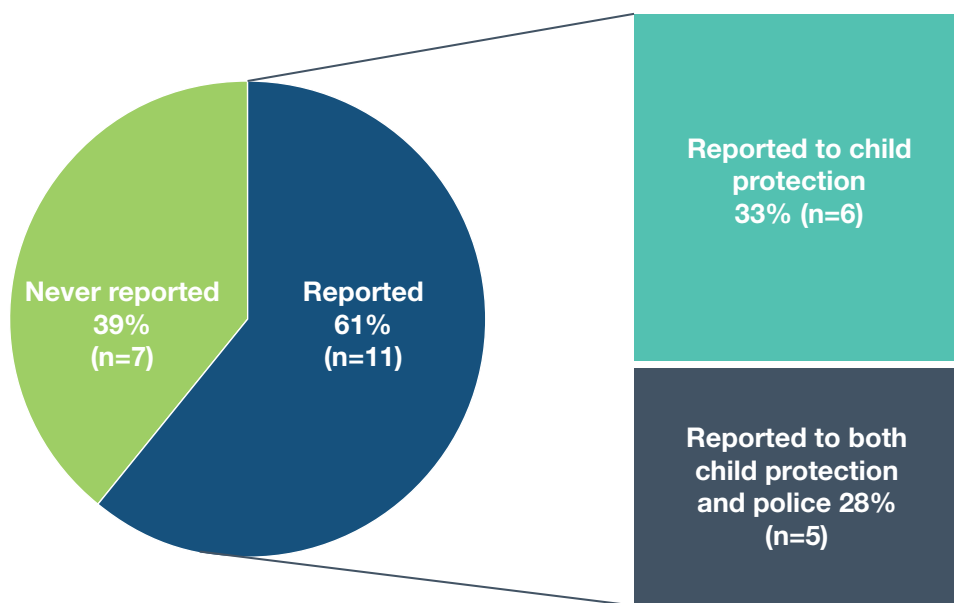
Figure 4.14: Violence behaviours of female filicide offender towards deceased child (n=18)



Female filicide offenders – reported history of violence

Over half of the 18 female filicide offenders who had abused the child they killed, had been reported to police, child protection services or both (n=11, 61.1%) (Fig. 4.15).

Figure 4.15: Female filicide offender - reported history of violence against deceased child (n=18)



No female filicide offenders were named as a defendant in a current ADVO protecting the child/ren at the time of the filicide. One female offender had been convicted of a domestic violence offence against the child resulting in a non-custodial sentence.

Filicide offender age

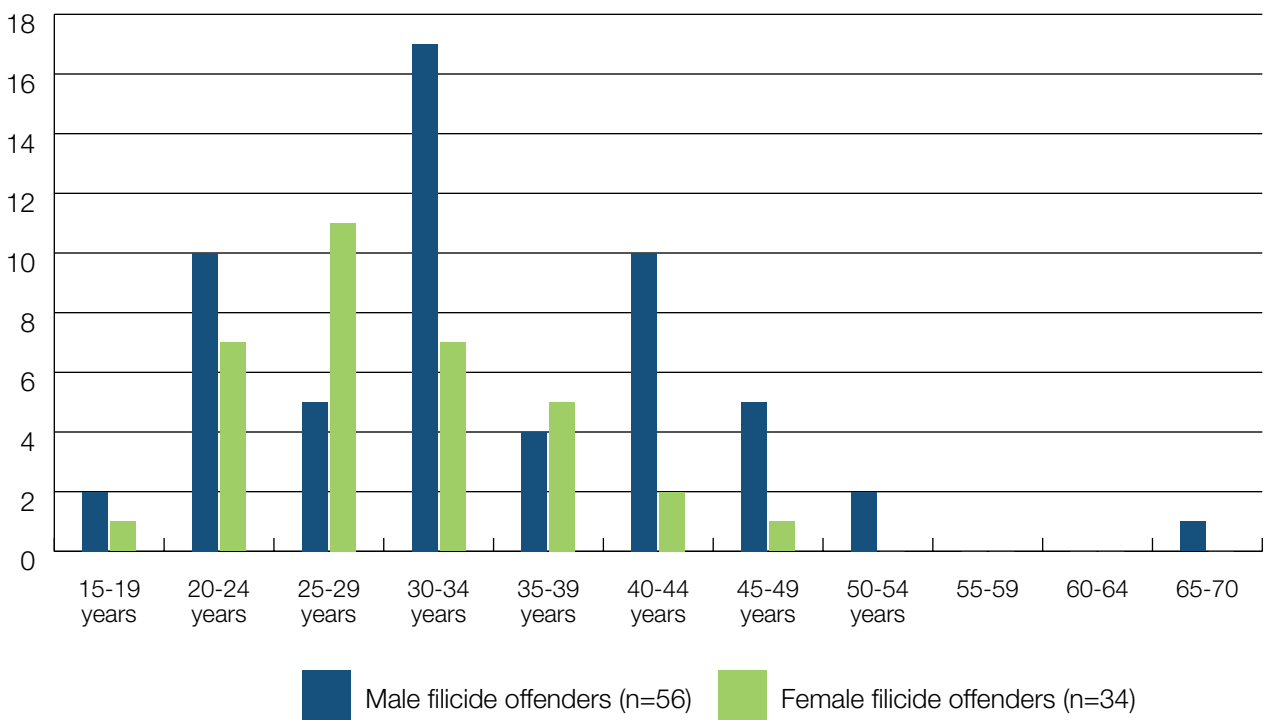
Male filicide offenders

The 56 male filicide offenders were aged between 18 and 68 years, with the average age being 34 years (Fig. 4.16).

Female filicide offenders

The 34 female filicide offenders were aged between 18 and 47 years, with the average age being 29 years (Fig. 4.16).

Figure 4.16: Age of filicide offender (n=90)



Filicide offender country of birth

Male filicide offenders

Three-quarters of the male filicide offenders were born in Australia (n=42, 75%). The remaining 14 offenders were born in 11 different countries (25%) (Table 4.11).

Female filicide offenders

Over 85 per cent of the female filicide offenders were born in Australia (n=29, 85.3%). The remaining five offenders were born in three different countries (14.7%) (Table 4.11).



Table 4.11: Filicide offender country of birth (n=90)

Country of Birth	Male offender	% Male	Female offender	% Female
Australia	42	75%	29	85.3%
Outside Australia	14	25%	5	14.7%
TOTAL	56	100%	34	100%

Filicide offender Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status

Male filicide offenders

Ten of the 56 male filicide offenders identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (17.9%) (Table 4.12).

Female filicide offenders

Five of the 34 female filicide offenders identified as Aboriginal (14.7%) (Table 4.12).

Table 4.12: Filicide offender Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status (n=90)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status	Male offender	% Male	Female offender	% Female
Aboriginal/ Torres Strait Islander	10	17.9%	5	14.7%
Non-Indigenous	46	82.1%	29	85.3%
TOTAL	56	100%	34	100%

Filicide offender mental health

As described previously, the Team's current approach to coding mental health status draws from both official service records as well as information in witness statements and other anecdotal evidence. Accordingly, this variable captures a broad spectrum of circumstances ranging from a mental illness diagnosed by a qualified health practitioner, to friends and family reporting behaviours consistent with psychological distress. The shortcomings with this approach have been described previously and the Team endeavours, as part of its future work agenda, to build in greater nuance around the complex intersection of domestic violence and mental health.

Male filicide offenders

Over half of the male filicide offenders had current and/or historical mental health issues (n=29, 51.8%) (Table 4.13).

Female filicide offenders

Over 85 per cent of the female filicide offenders had current and/or historical mental health issues (n=29, 85.3%) (Table 4.13).

Table 4.13: Filicide offender mental health (n=90)

Mental health history	Male filicide offenders	% Male	Female filicide offenders	% Female
Mental health issues	29	51.8%	29	85.3%
No mental health issues	27	48.2%	5	14.7%
TOTAL	56	100%	34	100%

Filicide offender alcohol and drug use

As described previously, alcohol and drug (AOD) use refers to substance use that is negatively impacting on a person's health, family, relationships, work, school or other social situations.

Male filicide offenders

Almost 60 per cent of the male filicide offenders had a history of AOD issues (n=33, 58.9%). This included: six male parents who used alcohol only (10.7%); nine male parents who used drugs only (16.1%); and 18 men who used both alcohol and drugs (32.1%) (Table 4.14, Fig. 4.17).

Female filicide offenders

Less than half of all female filicide offenders had a history of AOD issues (n=15, 44.1%). This included: two female parents who used alcohol only (5.9%); seven female parents who used drugs only (20.6%); and six who used both alcohol and drugs (17.6%) (Table 4.14, Fig. 4.18).

Table 4.14: Filicide offender AOD use (n=90)

Alcohol and drug	Male filicide offenders	% Male	Female filicide offenders	% Female
No alcohol or drug use	23	41.1%	19	55.9%
Alcohol and/drug use	33	58.9%	15	44.1%
Alcohol use only	(6)	(10.7%)	(2)	(5.9%)
Drug use only	(9)	(16.1%)	(7)	(20.6%)
Both alcohol and drug use	(18)	(32.1%)	(6)	(17.6%)
TOTAL	56	100%	34	100%



Figure 4.17: Male filicide offender AOD use (n=56)

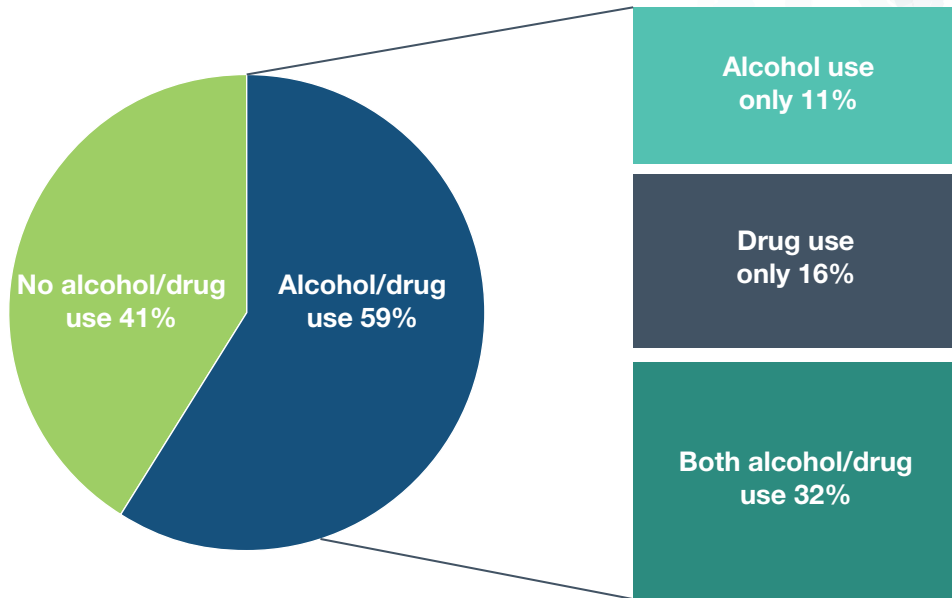
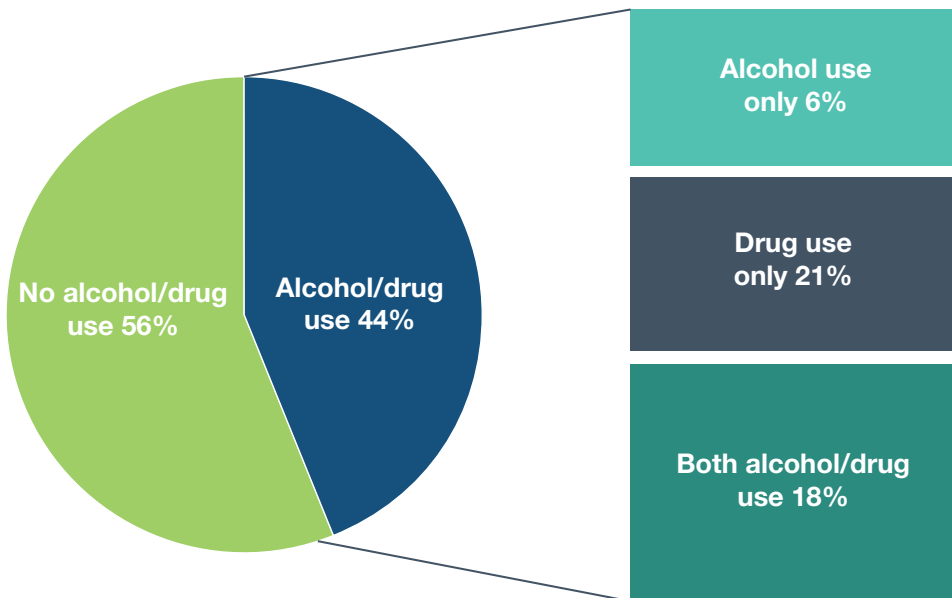


Figure 4.18: Female filicide offender AOD use (n=34)



Filicide offender known trauma history

Male filicide offenders

Almost half of the male filicide offenders were known to have experienced trauma and/or adversity during their childhood (n=25, 44.6%). This included 20 men who had experienced domestic violence as a child (Table 4.15, Fig. 4.19).

Female filicide offenders

Almost three-quarters of the female filicide offenders, were known to have experienced trauma and/or adversity during their childhood (n=25, 73.5%). This included 19 women who had experienced domestic violence as a child (Table 4.15, Fig. 4.20).

Table 4.15: Filicide offender – known trauma history (n=90)

Known trauma history	Male filicide offenders	% Male	Female filicide offenders	% Female
No known childhood trauma	31	55.4%	9	26.5%
Known childhood trauma/adversity	25	44.6%	25	73.5%
Childhood experiences of DV	(6)	(10.7%)	(5)	(14.7%)
Other childhood trauma/adversity	(5)	(8.9%)	(6)	(17.6%)
Both DV and other trauma/adversity	(14)	(25%)	(14)	(41.2%)
TOTAL	56	100%	34	100%

Figure 4.19: Male filicide offender – known trauma history (n=56)

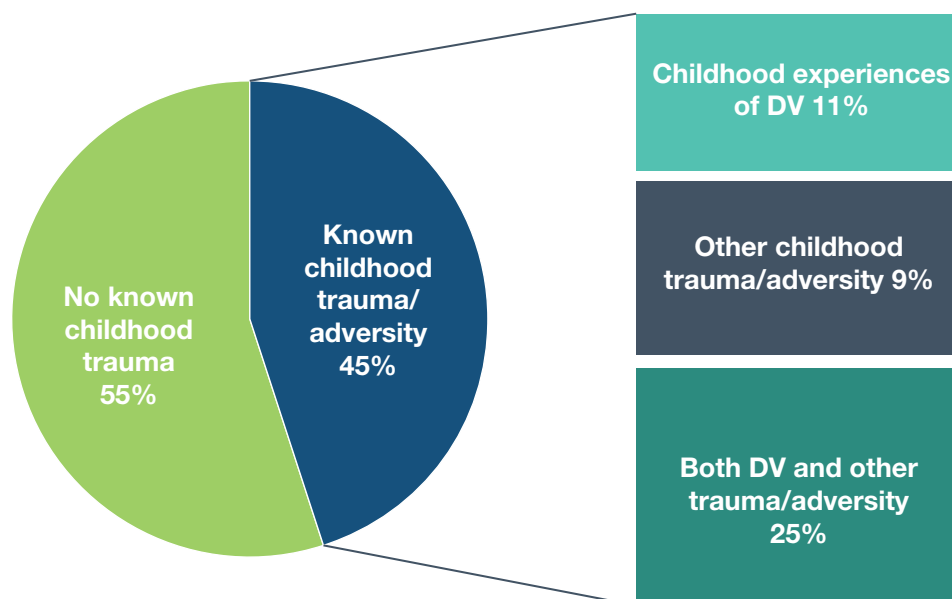
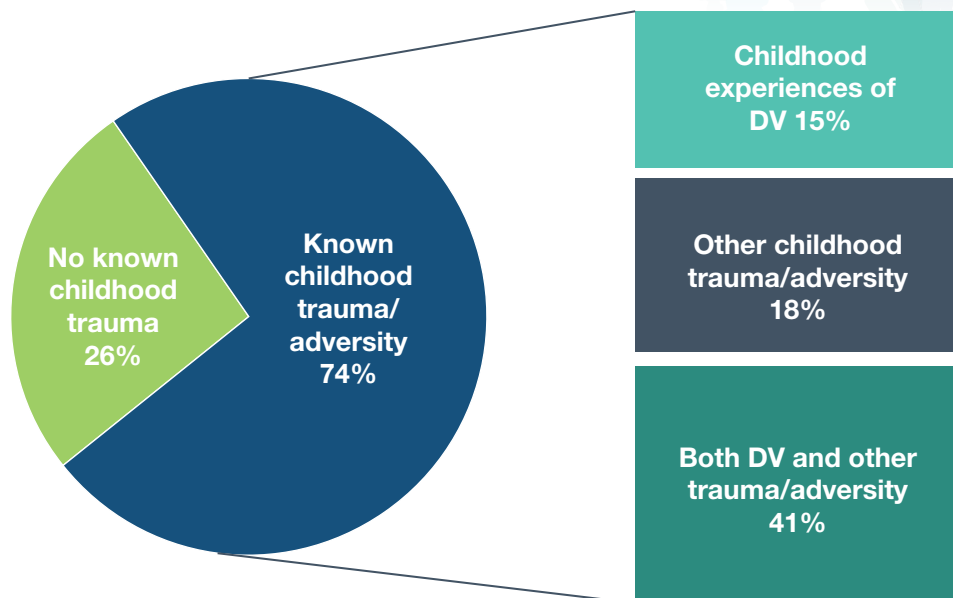




Figure 4.20: Female filicide offender – known trauma history (n=34)



Criminal justice outcomes

Male filicide offenders

Coronial proceedings

Approximately one-quarter of the male filicide offenders died by suicide after killing their child/ren (n=15, 26.8%). All but one of these offenders were the biological father of the child/ren they killed. Ten of the 15 male filicide offenders who died by suicide killed more than one child (see 'Multiple filicide events and familicide' below). The 15 cases where the male filicide offenders died by suicide were, therefore, finalised by way of Coronial Inquest.

One further case was finalised by coronial proceedings in circumstances where the male filicide offender died accidentally in the house fire he intentionally lit, killing his former intimate partner and de facto step-child.

Criminal proceedings

For the remaining 40 male filicide offenders who were dealt with by way of criminal proceedings, approximately half were convicted of manslaughter (n=19, 47.5%) and approximately 40 per cent were convicted of murder (n=17, 42.5%). Three offenders were found not guilty by reason of mental illness (7.5%); and one died of natural causes prior to trial and the matter was accordingly withdrawn (2.5%) (Table 4.16).

Female filicide offenders

Coronial proceedings

Of the 34 female filicide offenders, approximately 17 per cent died by suicide after killing their child/ren (n=6, 17.6%). All these offenders were the biological mother of the child/ren they killed. Two of the six female filicide offenders who died by suicide killed more than one child (see 'Multiple filicide events and familicide' below).

Criminal proceedings

For the remaining 28 female filicide offenders who were dealt with by way of criminal proceedings, approximately

60 per cent were convicted of manslaughter (n=17, 60.7%). Six female filicide offenders were convicted of murder (21.4%); three were found not guilty by reason of mental illness (10.7%); one was found guilty of infanticide (3.6%); and in one matter the charges were discontinued (3.6%) (Table 4.16).

Table 4.16: Filicide offender criminal justice outcomes (n=68)

Criminal justice outcome	Male filicide offender	% Male	Female filicide offender	% Female
Acquitted/Charges withdrawn	1 ⁹⁴	2.5%	1 ⁹⁵	3.6%
Manslaughter	19	47.5%	17	60.7%
Guilty plea	(17)	(42.5%)	(12)	(42.9%)
Guilty verdict	(2)	(5%)	(5)	(17.9%)
Murder	17	42.5%	6	21.4%
Guilty plea	(6)	(15%)	(2)	(7.1%)
Guilty verdict	(11)	(27.5%)	(4)	(14.3%)
Infanticide	0	0%	1	3.6%
NGMI/Not fit to stand trial	3	7.5%	3	10.7%
TOTAL	40	100%	28	100%

Male and female co-accused filicide offenders

As described previously in this chapter, there were 10 filicide events where both the male and female parent were held to be criminally responsible for the death of the child (resulting in the deaths of 10 children).

In two cases the child died from neglect, and in the remaining eight cases the child died from assault.

In the two neglect cases both the man and the woman were the biological parents of the child killed. In both cases the woman was the predominant victim of domestic violence from the co-accused male parent. In one of these cases the woman was convicted of manslaughter for failure to seek medical attention for the child, but her abusive male partner (also charged with manslaughter) died of natural causes while on remand. In the other neglect case, the woman was convicted of the child’s murder and her abusive male partner was convicted of manslaughter for failing to protect/seek medical attention for the child.

In all eight of the assault cases, the woman was the biological parent of the child. In seven of the eight assault cases, the man was the child’s step-father. In seven of the eight assault cases, the woman was the predominant victim of domestic violence from the co-accused male parent. In one case it was not possible to distinguish (based on the available evidence) who was the predominant abuser and who was the predominant victim.

In five of the seven cases where the woman was the predominant victim of violence from the male co-accused parent, it was the male parent who inflicted the fatal assault/s that killed the child, and the woman was convicted of manslaughter for failing to protect/seek medical attention for the child. All five women received a custodial sentence in relation to their perceived role in the child’s death.

94 The offender died of natural causes prior to trial and the matter was accordingly withdrawn.

95 In this case the woman, who was a victim of intimate partner violence by the child’s father, was charged with manslaughter on the basis of criminal negligence following the drowning death of her child. After lengthy delays in proceedings the charges were ultimately withdrawn as it was determined that there were no reasonable prospects of a conviction.



Domestic violence-context filicide - case characteristics

This section presents additional findings in relation to the characteristics and context of the filicide events considered in this chapter. Some case characteristics are described by reference to the 96 deceased children (for example location of filicide, cause of death) while others are described by reference to the 80 filicide events, noting that in several cases multiple children were killed in a single filicide event.

Location of filicide

The vast majority of the 96 children were killed in their own home (n=76, 79.2%). Usually this was the home where the child lived full-time with the filicide offender (n=68, 70.9%). For the remaining eight cases, this was the home the child lived in separately from the offender (8.3%) (Table 4.17).

Table 4.17: Location of filicide (n=96)

Location of filicide	Deceased child	%
Child's residence	76	79.2%
Lived full-time with filicide offender	(68)	(70.9%)
Lived separately from filicide offender	(8)	(8.3%)
Filicide offender residence	10	10.4%
Public/open place	8	8.3%
Hotel/motel	2	2.1%
TOTAL	96	100%

Over three-quarters of the 96 deceased children were residing full-time with the filicide offender at the time they were killed (n=76, 79.2%).

Method of filicide

Approximately one-third of the 96 children died from a fatal assault (n=35, 36.5%). Fatal assault includes actions such as shaking, hitting, kicking or dropping/throwing the child from a height. All but three of the 35 children who died from a fatal assault were aged four years or less (n=32, 91.4%) and the majority were aged one year or less (n=23, 65.7%). Following fatal assault, the next most prevalent filicide methods were suffocation/strangulation (n=12, 12.5%); poison/noxious substance⁹⁶ (n=11, 11.5%); and shooting (n=9, 9.4%) (Table 4.18).

⁹⁶ For example, carbon monoxide poisoning and methadone intoxication.

Table 4.18: Method of filicide (n=96)

Manner of death	Child killed by male parent	Child killed by female parent	Child killed by male and female parent	TOTAL
Assault	21 (35.6%)	6 (22.2%)	8 (80%)	35 (36.5%)
Suffocation/strangulation	7 (11.9%)	5 (18.5%)	0	12 (12.5%)
Poison/noxious substance	7 (11.9%)	4 (14.8%)	0	11 (11.5%)
Shooting	7 (11.9%)	2 (7.4%)	0	9 (9.4%)
Assault – sharp weapon	6 (10.2%)	1 (3.7%)	0	7 (7.3%)
Drowning	3 (5.1%)	5 (18.5%)	0	8 (8.3%)
Multiple assaultive behaviours	2 (3.4%)	1 (3.7%)	0	3 (3.1%)
Neglect	1 (1.7%)	0	2 (20%)	3 (3.1%)
Assault – MVA related	2 (3.4%)	0	0	2 (2.1%)
Fire/heat related	1 (1.7%)	1 (3.7%)	0	2 (2.1%)
Unknown	2 (3.4%)	2 (7.4%)	0	4 (4.2%)
TOTAL	59	27	10	96

Note: figures may not add to 100 due to rounding

Evidence of planning

In over one-third of the 80 filicide events (resulting in the deaths of 96 children), the circumstances leading up to the fatal episode demonstrated a level of planning and/or premeditation by the filicide offender (n=28, 35%) (Fig. 4.21).

Figure 4.21: Evidence of planning by filicide offender (n=80)





Evidence of planning included, for example, rigging cars to take in carbon monoxide, purchasing and administering prescription medications, writing notes or recording testimonials detailing intentions to kill the child/ren (usually in the context of filicide-suicide), taking the child/ren to a specific location for the purpose of carrying out the filicide.

All 28 filicide events where there was evidence of planning were perpetrated by a filicide offender acting alone (18 men and 10 women).

Of the 18 men who demonstrated planning or premeditation behaviours prior to the filicide, 15 were the child/ren’s biological father and three were a step-parent. In 14 of the 18 cases where the male filicide offender demonstrated planning behaviours, the man suicided after killing his child/ren (with one further biological father attempting suicide).

All 10 of the women who demonstrated planning or premeditation behaviours prior to the filicide were the child/ren’s biological mother. In six of the 10 cases where the female filicide offender demonstrated planning behaviours, the woman suicided after killing her child/ren (with a further three women attempting suicide).

Separation and/or family law proceedings

Separation

In approximately one-third of the 80 filicide events the relationship between the child’s parents had ended, or they had indicated an intention to separate (Table 4.19).

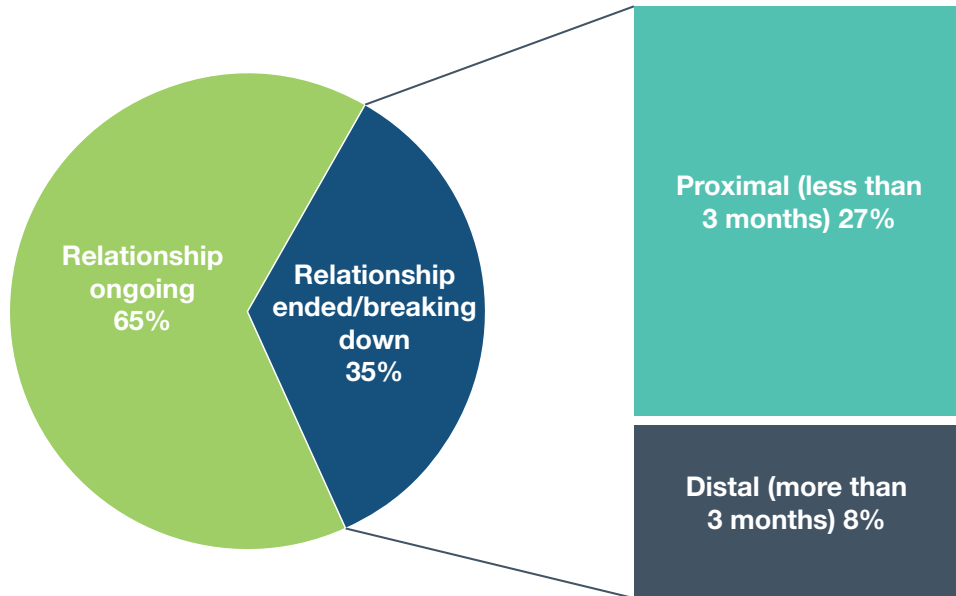
Table 4.19: Separation by filicide event (n=80)

Separation	Filicide events	% filicide event
No separation identified as a feature of the filicide event	52	65%
Separation identified as a feature of the filicide event	28	35%
TOTAL	80	100%

Proximal separation

In 22 of the 28 cases where separation was a feature, the separation was ‘proximal’ (less than 3 months) to the filicide. This meant that within three months of the filicide the parent’s relationship had either ended, or the relationship was breaking down and one or both parents had indicated an intention to separate (Fig. 4.22).

Figure 4.22: Proximal separation as a feature of the filicide event (n=80)



Separation by gender

In 20 of the 28 cases where separation was a feature, the filicide was perpetrated by a male filicide offender acting alone (71.4%). The eight remaining filicide events where separation was a feature were perpetrated by a female offender acting alone (n=8, 28.6%). Separation was not evident in any of the 10 cases where the male and female parents were jointly held responsible for the child’s death (Table 4.20).

Table 4.20: Offender gender in filicide event where separation was a feature (n=28)

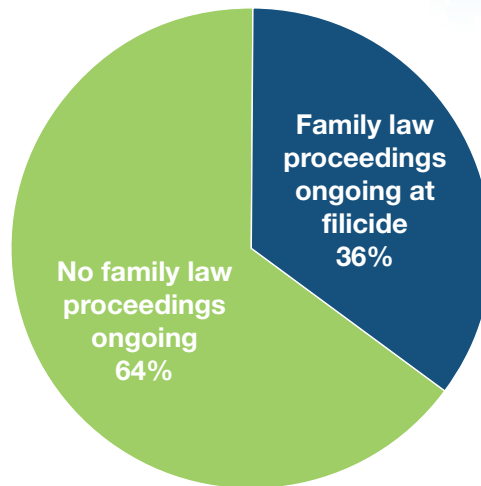
Filicide offender	Filicide event where separation was a feature	%
Male filicide offender acting alone	20	71.4%
Female filicide offender acting alone	8	28.6%
Male and female co-accused	0	0%
TOTAL	28	100%

Separation and family law proceedings

In 10 of the 28 cases where separation was a feature, the child’s parents were engaged in family law proceedings at the time of the filicide (36%) (Fig. 4.23).



Figure 4.23: Family law proceedings in filicide events where separation was a feature (n=28)



Multiple filicide events and familicide

Multiple filicide events

In 12 of the 80 filicide events, the offender killed more than one child resulting in the deaths of 28 children.⁹⁷ Of the 12 multiple filicide events, nine were perpetrated by the children’s biological father and three by the children’s biological mother (Table 4.21).

Table 4.21: Offender gender in multiple filicide events (n=12)

Filicide offender	Multiple filicide event	%
Male filicide offender acting alone	9	75%
Female filicide offender acting alone	3	25%
Male and female co-accused	0	0%
TOTAL	12	100%

In three-quarters of the multiple filicide events, the filicide offender suicided, (n=9, 75% including the suicides of seven men and two women).

Familicide events

In nine cases, the filicide offender killed one or more children, as well as their intimate partner (the child’s other parent), a phenomenon referred to as familicide. The nine familicide events resulted in the deaths of 14 children and nine intimate partners.⁹⁸ Eight of these cases were perpetrated by the child/ren’s father (six biological and two step-fathers) and one was perpetrated by the children’s biological mother (Table 4.22).

⁹⁷ And in one case the children’s grandfather (the offender’s father-in-law) was also killed trying to intervene in the fatal episode.

⁹⁸ And in one case a women’s new intimate partner was also killed.

Table 4.22: Offender gender in familicide events (n=9)

Filicide offender	Familicide event	%
Male filicide offender acting alone	8	88.9%
Female filicide offender acting alone	1	11.1%
Male and female co-accused	0	0%
TOTAL	9	100%

In seven of the nine familicide events, the filicide offender suicided, (including the suicides of six men and one woman).

The eight male familicide offenders were identified as a predominant domestic violence abuser against the intimate partner they killed and the one female familicide offender was the predominant victim of domestic violence from the intimate partner she killed.

Introduction

For this dataset the term ‘relative/kin DV-context homicide’ is used to describe cases in which a person is killed by a relative (or family member) following an identifiable history of domestic violence. Most commonly this encompasses violence perpetrated by male adult children against their parents, but also extends to violence perpetrated against siblings, in-laws, guardians, or other extended family members. Noting the previous chapters in this report, this dataset excludes intimate partner homicides and filicides as these cases demonstrate distinct characteristics and are analysed as unique datasets.

Over the past decade in NSW, IPV homicides have been the subject of increased attention, and this has led to significant reforms across the domestic violence response system. By comparison, relative/kin homicides have received only limited focus and there remains a critical gap in our understanding of these cases. Many of the tools and resources currently relied upon when responding to relative/kin domestic violence have been developed within an IPV framework, underpinned by IPV research. Relative/kin domestic violence remains relatively under-researched in the literature and this chapter aims to contribute to the evidence base to improve understanding and responses to this complex form of violence.

This chapter provides in-depth data analysis of the 88 relative/kin DV-context homicide events that occurred in NSW between 1 July 2000 and 30 June 2022. As with all the Team’s analysis, this dataset draws on a rich repository of primary source material that offers detailed information about the life course and relationship histories of the homicide offender and the deceased person, as well as the nature of the violence they used or experienced.

This chapter presents data findings relating to a range of factors, including homicide characteristics, ADVOs, service contact, and issues around mental health and AOD use. The primary challenge for this ground-breaking dataset is effectively portraying the constellation of different relationships and experiences of violence victimisation and perpetration that can exist within the family unit. Accordingly, this dataset will continue to evolve as discrete patterns are identified and further trends emerge.

Inclusion criteria

For this analysis, relative/kin DV-context homicides are those in which a person is killed by:

- **a relative (or family member)** excluding intimate partner homicides and filicides;
- **in a DV-context**, i.e., there was an identifiable history of domestic violence either directed against the family member who was killed; the homicide offender; or against another member of the family unit;
- **within the data reporting period** – 1 July 2000 and 30 June 2022; and
- **the deceased person was ordinarily a resident in NSW** – the deceased person permanently resided in NSW, notwithstanding that they may have been killed in another state or territory.



Data findings

Overview

Between 1 July 2000 and 30 June 2022 there were 164 relative/kin homicide events resulting in the deaths of 183 people, including 169 adults and 14 children. Over half of the 164 relative/kin homicide events were identified as having occurred in a context of domestic violence (n=88, 53.7%). The 88 relative/kin DV-context homicide events resulted in the deaths of 94 people, 88 adults and six children (Table 5.1).

The 76 relative/kin homicide events that were coded as not having occurred in a context of domestic violence occurred in a range of non-domestic violence related circumstances, most frequently an offender experiencing a significant mental health episode absent any identifiable history of domestic violence.

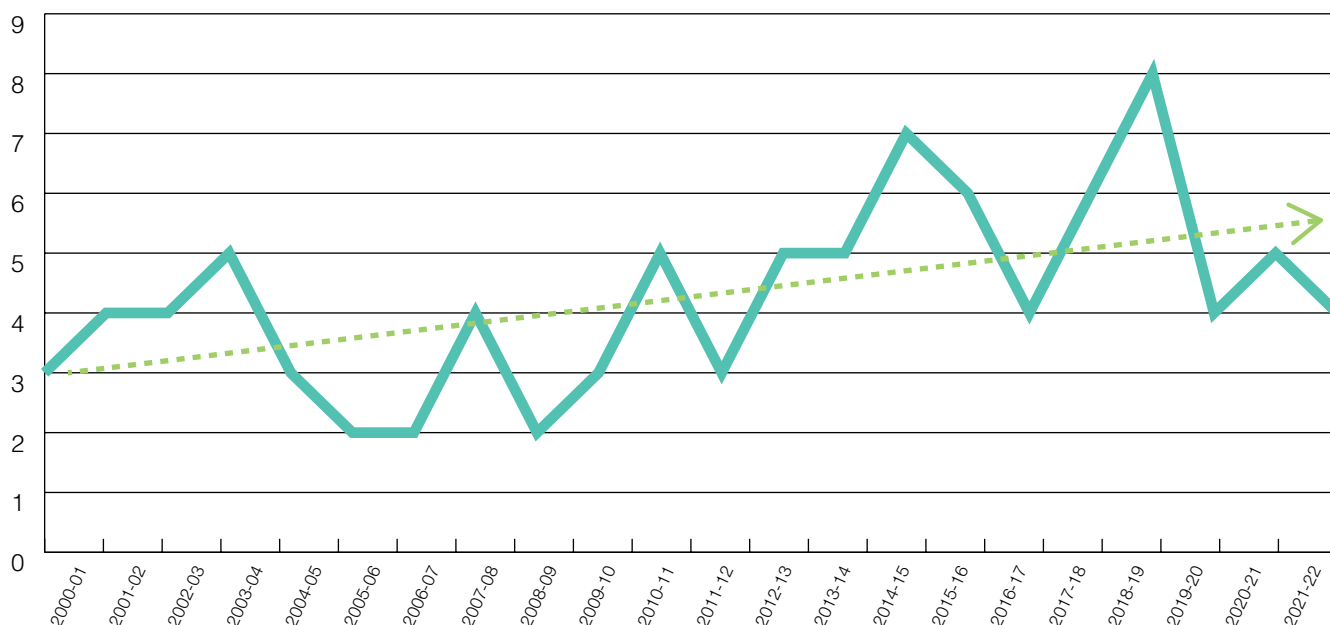
Table 5.1: Relative/kin homicide – domestic violence-context

DV-context	Relative/ kin homicide event	%	Deceased adults	%	Deceased children	%
History of DV	88	53.7%	88	52.1%	6	42.9%
No history of DV	76	46.3%	81	47.9%	8	57.1%
TOTAL	164	100%	169	100%	14	100%

Relative/kin domestic violence-context homicide trends over time

This is the first time the Team has presented data on relative/kin DV-context homicides over time. The significant variances year-on-year can be partly explained by the statistically small number of cases, however it appears that there is a general upward trend in these types of homicides (Fig. 5.1).

Figure 5.1: Relative/kin DV-context homicides in NSW, July 2000 to June 2022 (n=94)



Relationship of relative/kin domestic violence-context homicide offender to deceased

Of the 94 individuals killed in a relative/kin DV-context homicide event: almost half were killed by their son (n=44, 46.8%); over 10 per cent were killed by their daughter (n=11, 11.7%); seven individuals were killed by their brother (7.4%); with the remaining third of individuals killed by various, usually male, family members (Table 5.2).

Table 5.2: Relationship of relative/kin DV-context homicide offender to deceased (n=94)

Relationship of homicide offender to deceased	Deceased female		Deceased male		TOTAL	%
	Count	%	Count	%		
Son	19	47.5%	25	46.3%	44	46.8%
Biological	(17)	(42.5%)	(22)	(40.7%)	(39)	(41.5%)
Non-biological	(2)	(5%)	(3)	(5.6%)	(5)	(5.3%)
Daughter	7	17.5%	4	7.4%	11	11.7%
Biological	(7)	(17.5%)	(2)	(3.7%)	(9)	(9.6%)
Non-biological	(0)	-	(2)	(3.7%)	(2)	(2.1%)
Brother	2	5%	5	9.3%	7	7.4%
Son-in-law	2	5%	3	5.6%	5	5.3%
Brother-in-law	1	2.5%	4	7.4%	5	5.3%
Nephew	3	7.5%	1	1.9%	4	4.3%



Father	0	-	3	5.6%	3	3.2%
Grandson	3	7.5%	0	-	3	3.2%
Grandfather	1	2.5%	2	3.7%	3	3.2%
Uncle	1	2.5%	1	1.9%	2	2.1%
Mother	0	-	2	3.7%	2	2.1%
Mother-in-law	0	-	2	3.7%	2	2.1%
Multiple family members	1	2.5%	1	1.9%	2	2.1%
Extended family/kin	0	-	1	1.9%	1	1.1%
TOTAL	40	100%	54	-100%	94	-100%

Note: figures may not add to 100 due to rounding

Relative/kin domestic violence-context homicide - deceased characteristics

This section presents the demographic and psychosocial characteristics of the 94 individuals killed by a family member in NSW between 1 July 2000 and 30 June 2022.

Deceased gender

The 94 individuals killed in a relative/kin DV-context homicide included: 54 males, including four boys under 18 years of age (57.4%); and 40 females, including two girls under 18 years of age (42.6%) (Table 5.3).

Table 5.3: Relative/kin DV-context homicide - deceased gender (n=94)

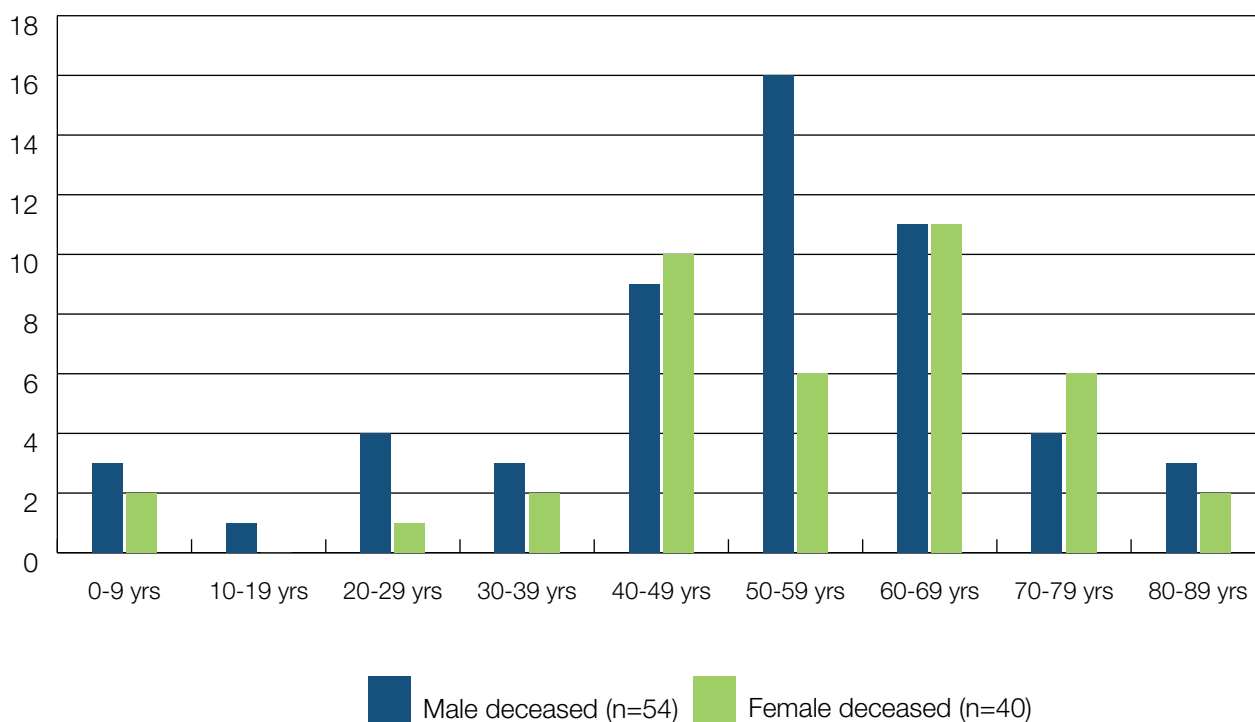
Gender	Deceased	%
Males	54	57.4%
Men	(50)	(53.2%)
Boys	(4)	(4.3%)
Females	40	42.6%
Women	(38)	(40.4%)
Girls	(2)	(2.1%)
TOTAL	94	100%

Deceased age

The 94 individuals killed in a relative/kin DV-context homicide ranged from three months to 87 years of age (Fig. 5.2).

The average age of females killed was 55.3 years of age and the average age of males killed was 51.6 years of age.

Figure 5.2: Relative/kin DV-context homicide - deceased age (n=94)



Deceased country of birth

Approximately 70 per cent of the 94 people killed were born in Australia (n=66, 70.2%). The 28 people born outside Australia were born in 17 different countries. One of the men born outside Australia was on a temporary visa at the time he was killed, and one woman was living in Australia in breach of her visa (Table 5.4).

Table 5.4: Relative/kin DV-context homicide - deceased country of birth and visa status (n=94)

Country of Birth	Deceased Male	% Male	Deceased Female	% Female	Total	%
Australia	39	72.2%	27	67.5%	66	70.2%
Outside Australia	15	27.8%	13	32.5%	28	29.8%
Temporary visa	(1)	(1.9%)	(0)	-	(1)	(1.1%)
Unlawful non-citizen	(0)	-	(1)	(2.5%)	(1)	(1.1%)
TOTAL	54	100%	40	100%	94	100%

Deceased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status

Of the 94 people killed in a relative/kin DV-context homicide, 18 identified as Aboriginal (19.1%): 10 males (including two male children); and eight women (Table 5.5).

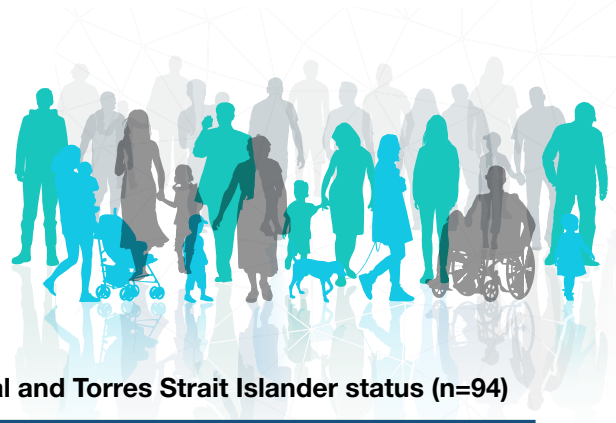


Table 5.5: Relative/kin DV-context homicide - deceased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status (n=94)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status	Deceased Male	% Male	Deceased Female	% Female	Total	%
Aboriginal	10	18.5%	8	20%	18	19.1%
Non-Indigenous	44	18.5%	32	80%	76	80.9%
TOTAL	54	100%	40	100%	94	100%

Deceased disability

Approximately 9 per cent of the 94 people killed in a relative/kin DV-context homicide identified as people with disability (n=8, 8.5%), including intellectual and physical disability or both (Table 5.6).

Table 5.6: Relative/kin DV-context homicide - deceased disability (n=94)

Disability status	Deceased Male	% Male	Deceased Female	% Female	Total	%
With disability	5	9.3%	3	7.5%	8	8.5%
Without disability	49	90.7%	37	92.5%	86	91.5%
TOTAL	54	100%	40	100%	94	100%

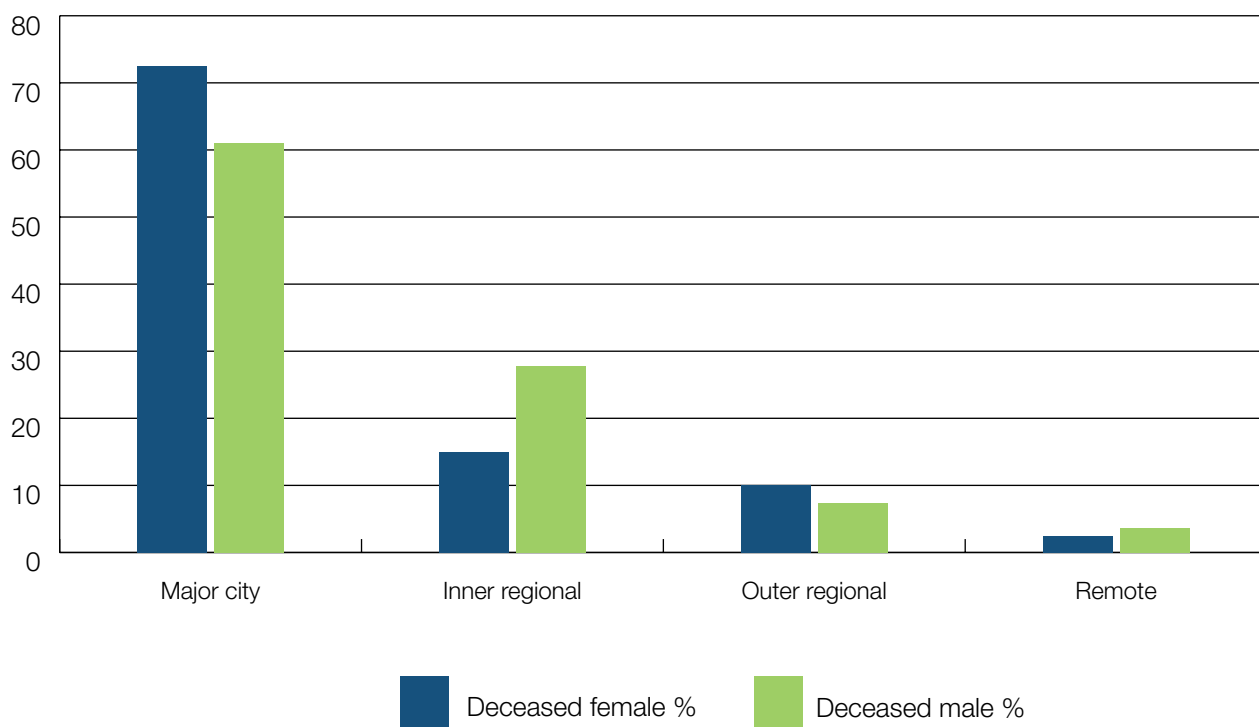
Deceased place of residence - remoteness

Two-thirds of the 94 people killed in a relative/kin DV-context homicide were residing in a major city at the time they were killed (n=62, 66%) (Table 5.7, Fig. 5.3).

Table 5.7: Relative/kin DV-context homicide - deceased residence remoteness (n=94)

Remoteness	Deceased Male	% Male	Deceased Female	% Female	Total	%
Major city	33	61.1%	29	72.5%	62	66%
Inner regional	15	27.8%	6	15%	21	22.3%
Outer regional	4	7.4%	4	10%	8	8.5%
Remote	2	3.7%	1	2.5%	3	3.2%
TOTAL	54	100%	40	100%	94	100%

Figure 5.3: Relative/kin DV-context homicide - deceased residence remoteness (n=94)



Deceased socio-economic status

As described in the IPV Homicide Dataset, the ABS Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD) has been used to determine the socio-economic status.

Over one-third of the 94 people killed in a relative/kin DV-context homicide were living in the lowest ranked socio-economic areas of NSW (n=33, 35.1%) (Table 5.8, Fig. 5.4).

Table 5.8: Relative/kin DV-context homicide - deceased socio-economic status (n=94)

IRSD Quintile	Deceased Male	% Male	Deceased Female	% Female	Total	%
1st quintile	20	37%	13	32.5%	33	35.1%
2nd quintile	15	27.8%	11	27.5%	26	27.7%
3rd quintile	8	14.8%	9	22.5%	17	18.1%
4th quintile	4	7.4%	2	5%	6	6.4%
5th quintile	7	13%	5	12.5%	12	12.8%
TOTAL	54	100%	40	100%	94	-100%

Note: figures may not add to 100 due to rounding

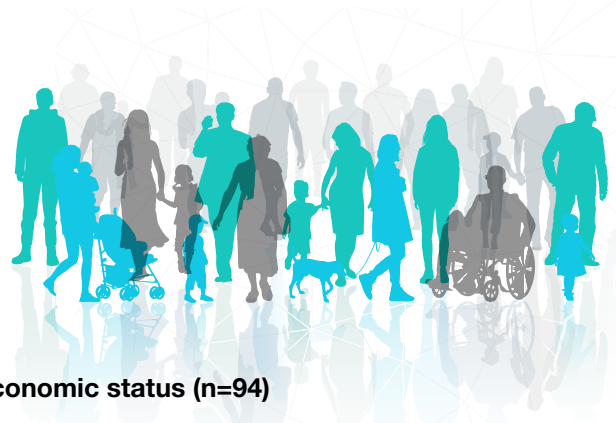
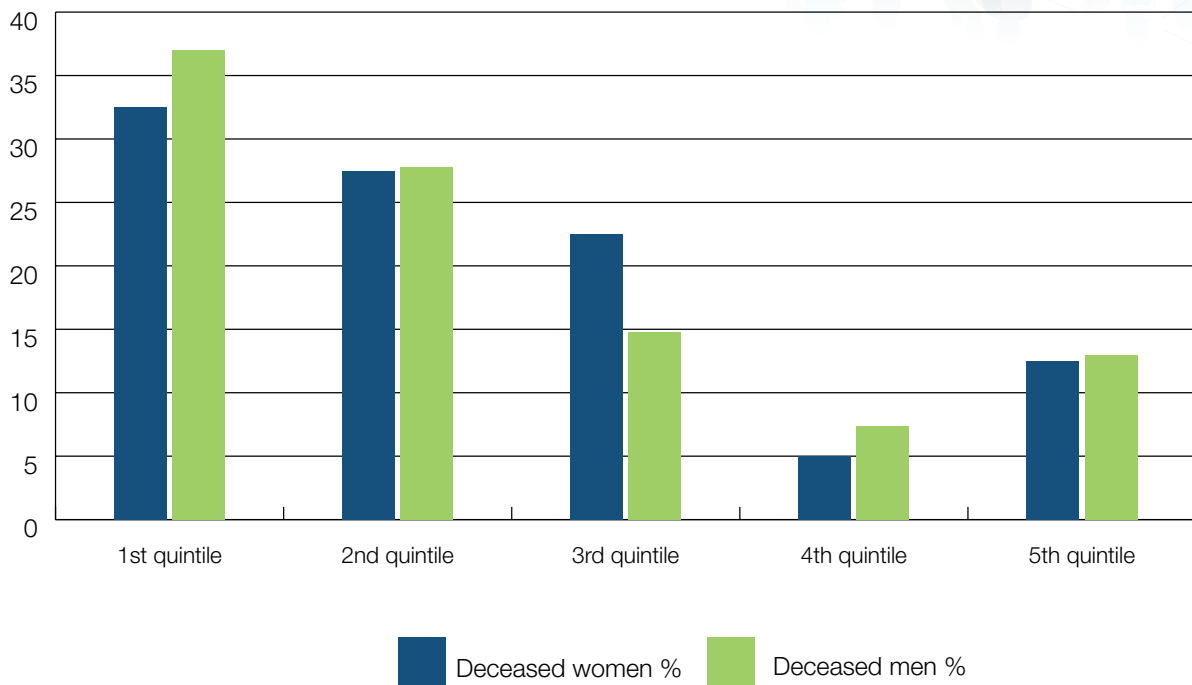


Figure 5.4: Relative/kin DV-context homicide - deceased socio-economic status (n=94)



Deceased employment status - Adults

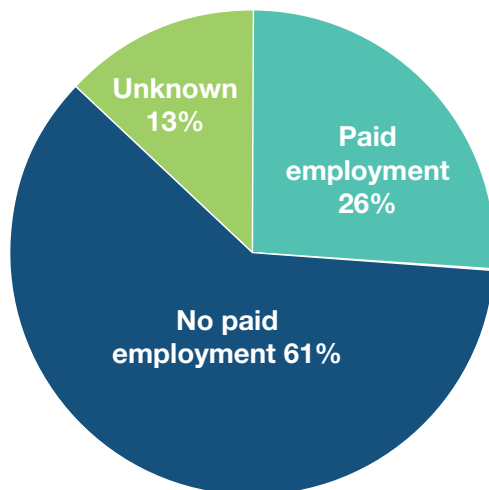
The findings in relation to the deceased’s employment only consider the 88 adults killed in a relative/kin DV-context homicide.

Over one-quarter of the 88 deceased adults were known to be engaged in paid employment at the time they were killed (n=23, 26.1%). This means that the majority of adult relatives were either unemployed, studying, caring for children or family members, retired or permanently unable to work (n=54, 61.4%) (Table 5.9, Fig. 5.5).

Table 5.9: Relative/kin DV-context homicide - deceased employment status (adults) (n=88)

Employment status	Adult deceased male		Adult deceased female		Total	%
		% Male		% Female		
Paid employment	12	24%	11	28.9%	23	26.1%
No paid employment	29	58%	25	65.8%	54	61.4%
Unknown	9	18%	2	5.3%	11	12.5%
TOTAL	50	100%	38	100%	88	100%

Figure 5.5: Relative/kin DV-context homicide - deceased employment status (adults) (n=88)



Deceased mental health - Adults

The comments made in the previous chapters relating to the Team’s approach to mental health similarly apply to this dataset. It is noted, however, that the findings in relation to the deceased’s mental health only consider the 88 adults killed in a relative/kin DV-context homicide.

Approximately one-quarter of the 88 adults killed in a relative/kin DV-context homicide had current and/or historical mental health issues (n=21, 23.9%) (Table 5.10).

Table 5.10: Relative/kin DV-context homicide - deceased mental health (adults) (n=88)

Mental health status	Adult deceased male	% Male	Adult deceased female	% Female	Total	%
Mental health issues	10	20%	11	28.9%	21	23.9%
No mental health issues	40	80%	27	71.1%	67	76.1%
TOTAL	50	100%	38	100%	88	100%

Deceased alcohol and drug use - Adults

The comments made in the previous chapters relating to the Team’s approach to alcohol and drug (AOD) use similarly apply to this dataset. It is noted, however, that the findings in relation to the deceased’s AOD use only consider the 88 adults killed in a relative/kin DV-context homicide.

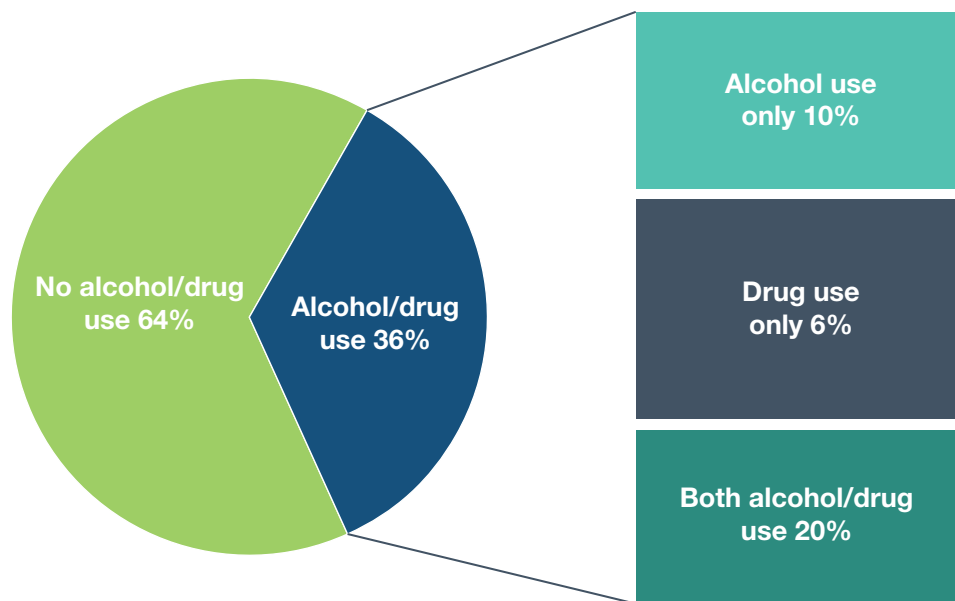
Over one-third of the 88 adult relatives killed were known to have AOD issues (n=32, 36.4%). This comprised: nine adults who used alcohol only (10.2%); five adults who used drugs only (5.7%); and 18 adults who used both drugs and alcohol (20.5%) (Table 5.11, Fig. 5.6).



Table 5.11: Relative/kin DV-context homicide - deceased AOD use (adults) (n=88)

Alcohol and drug use	Adult deceased male	% Male	Adult deceased female	% Female	Total	%
No alcohol and/or drug use	29	58%	27	71.1%	56	63.6%
Alcohol and/or drug use	21	42%	11	28.9%	32	36.4%
Alcohol use only	(7)	(14%)	(2)	(5.3%)	(9)	(10.2%)
Drug use only	(1)	(2%)	(4)	(10.5%)	(5)	(5.7%)
Both alcohol and drug use	(13)	(26%)	(5)	(13.2%)	(18)	(20.5%)
TOTAL	50	100%	38	100%	88	100%

Figure 5.6: Relative/kin DV-context homicide - deceased AOD use (adults) (n=88)



Relative/kin domestic violence-context homicide - offender characteristics

The 88 relative/kin DV-context homicide events (resulting in 94 deaths) were perpetrated by 90 offenders, noting that in six cases the homicide offender killed multiple family members, and in two cases the person was killed by multiple family members.

This section presents demographic and psychosocial characteristics of the 90 people who killed a family member in NSW between 1 July 2000 and 30 June 2022.

Homicide offender gender

Of the 90 homicide offenders, the vast majority were male, including two boys under 18 years of age (n=74, 82.2%) and 16 were female, including two girls under 18 years of age (17.8%) (Table 5.12).

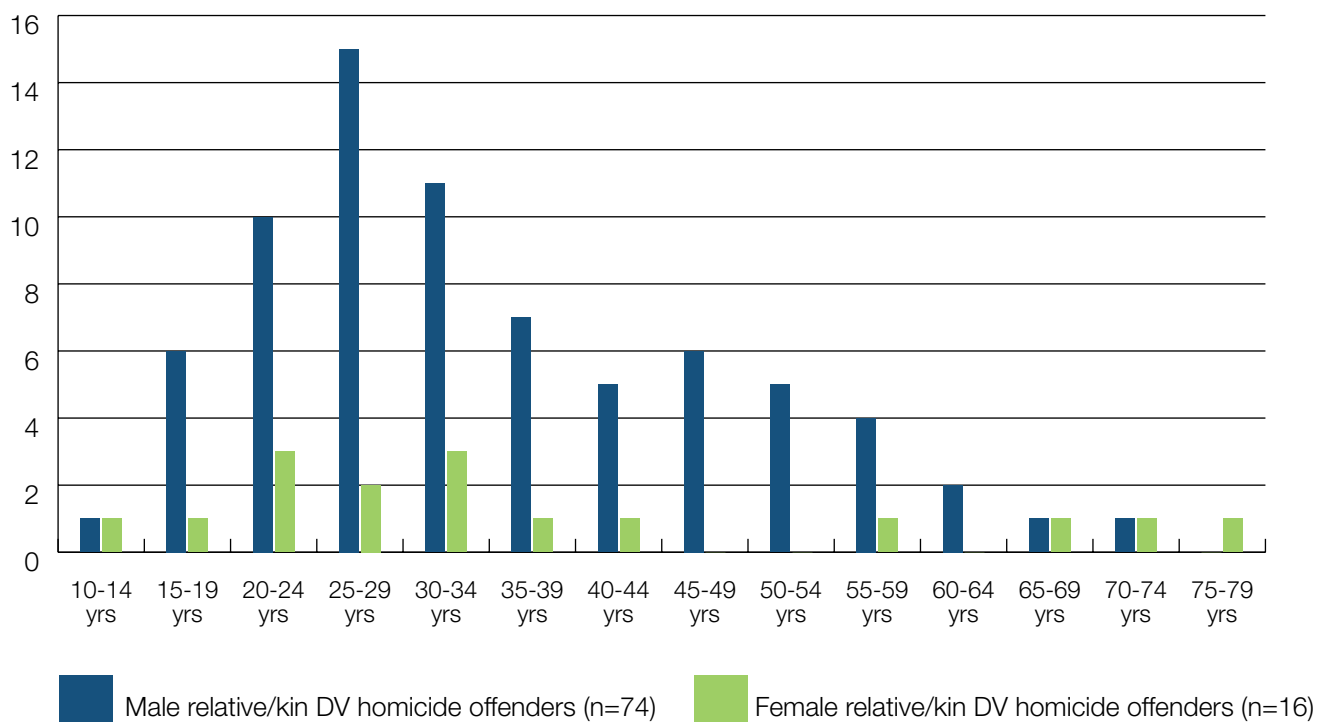
Table 5.12: Relative/kin DV-context homicide - offender gender (n=90)

Gender	Offender	%
Males	74	82.2%
Men	(72)	(80%)
Boys	(2)	(2.2%)
Females	16	17.8%
Women	(14)	(15.6%)
Girls	(2)	(2.2%)
TOTAL	90	100%

Homicide offender age

The homicide offenders were aged between 13 and 75 years, with the average age being 35.1 years (Fig. 5.7).

Figure 5.7: Relative/kin DV-context homicide - offender age (n=90)



Homicide offender country of birth

Approximately three-quarters of the relative/kin DV-context homicide offenders were born in Australia (n=68, 75.6%). The 20 people born outside Australia (19 males and one female) were born in 15 different countries. Two of the male homicide offenders born outside Australia were on temporary visas at the time of the homicide (Table 5.13).

Table 5.13: Relative/kin DV-context homicide - offender country of birth and visa status (n=90)



Country of Birth	Male offender	% Male	Female offender	% Female	Total	%
Australia	54	73%	14	87.5%	68	75.6%
Outside Australia	19	25.7%	1	6.3%	20	22.2%
Temporary visa	(2)	(2.7%)	(0)	-	(2)	(2.2%)
Unknown	1	1.4%	1	6.3%	2	2.2%
TOTAL	74	-100%	16	-100%	90	100%

Note: figures may not add to 100 due to rounding

Homicide offender Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status

One-fifth of the 90 relative/kin DV-context homicide offenders identified as Aboriginal (n=18, 20%): 14 males, including one boy under the age of 18 years; and four females (Table 5.14).

Table 5.14: Relative/kin DV-context homicide - offender Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status (n=90)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status	Male offender	% Male	Female offender	% Female	Total	%
Aboriginal	14	18.9%	4	25%	18	20%
Non-Indigenous	60	81.1%	12	75%	72	80%
TOTAL	74	100%	16	100%	90	100%

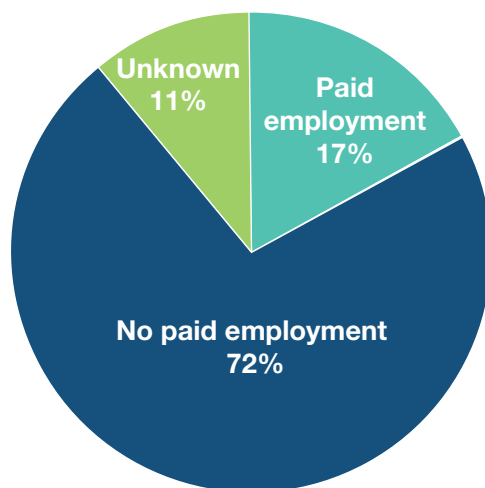
Homicide offender employment status

Almost three-quarters of the 90 homicide offenders were not engaged in any paid employment at the time of the homicide, meaning that they were either unemployed, studying, caring for children or family members, retired or permanently unable to work (n=65, 72.2%) (Table 5.15, Fig. 5.8).

Table 5.15: Relative/kin DV-context homicide - offender employment status (n=90)

Employment status	Male offender	% Male	Female offender	% Female	Total	%
Paid employment	15	20.3%	0	-	15	16.7%
No paid employment	51	68.9%	14	87.5%	65	72.2%
Unknown	8	10.8%	2	12.5%	10	11.1%
TOTAL	74	100%	16	100%	90	100%

Figure 5.8: Relative/kin DV-context homicide - offender employment status (n=90)



Homicide offender - mental health status

Approximately 80 per cent of the 90 homicide offenders had current or historical mental health issues (n=73, 81.2%). Male homicide offenders were more likely to have a history of mental health issues than female homicide offenders (Table 5.16).

Table 5.16: Relative/kin DV-context homicide - offender mental health status (n=90)

Mental health status	Male offender	% Male	Female offender	% Female	Total	%
Mental health issues	62	83.8%	11	68.8%	73	81.1%
No mental health issues	12	16.2%	5	31.3%	17	18.9%
TOTAL	74	100%	16	-100%	90	100%

Note: figures may not add to 100 due to rounding

Homicide offender alcohol and drug use

As described in the IPV Homicide Dataset, AOD use refers to substance use that is negatively impacting on a person’s health, family, relationships, work, school or other social situations.

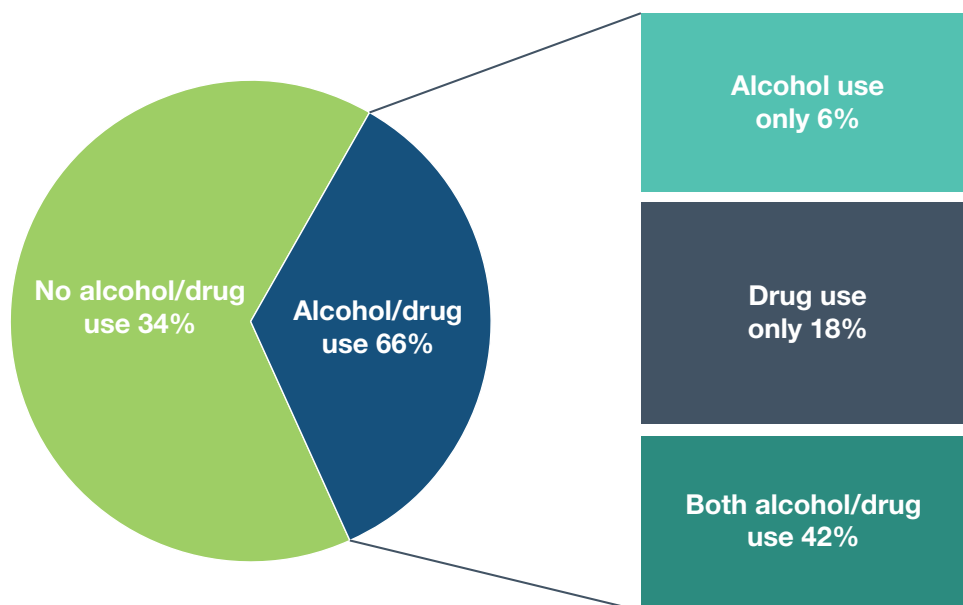
Almost two-thirds of the 90 relative/kin DV-context homicide offenders had a history of AOD use (n=59, 65.6%). This comprised five adults who used alcohol only (5.6%); 16 adults who used drugs only (17.8%); and 38 adults who used both drugs and alcohol (42.2%). Male homicide offenders were more likely to engage in AOD use than female homicide offenders (Table 5.17, Fig. 5.9).



Table 5.17: Relative/kin DV-context homicide - offender AOD use (n=90)

Alcohol and drug use	Male Offender	% Male	Female Offender	% Female	Total	%
No alcohol and/or drug use	22	29.7%	9	56.3%	31	34.4%
Alcohol and/or drug use	52	70.3%	7	43.8%	59	65.6%
Alcohol use only	(4)	(5.4%)	(1)	6.3%	(5)	(5.6%)
Drug use only	(14)	(18.9%)	(2)	12.5%	(16)	(17.8%)
Both alcohol and drug use	(34)	(45.9%)	(4)	25%	(38)	(42.2%)
TOTAL	74	100%	16	100%	90	100%

Figure 5.9: Relative/kin DV-context homicide - offender AOD use (n=90)



Criminal justice outcomes

Almost all the relative/kin DV-context homicide offenders were dealt with by way of criminal proceedings (n=85, 94.4%) and the remaining five offenders (all male) were subject to coronial proceedings, primarily in circumstances where they died by suicide following the homicide or otherwise died prior to the criminal proceedings being finalised (n=5, 5.6%).

Of the 85 homicide offenders dealt with by way of criminal proceedings: approximately one-third were found not guilty by reason of mental illness (n=28, 32.9%); one-quarter were convicted of manslaughter (n=22, 25.9%); and one-quarter were convicted of murder (n=21, 24.7%) (Table 5.18).

Table 5.18: Relative/kin DV-context homicide - offender criminal justice outcomes (n=85)

Criminal justice outcome	Male offender	% Male	Female offender	% Female	Total	%
Acquitted/Charges withdrawn	5	7.2%	4	25%	9	10.6%
Manslaughter	16	23.2%	6	37.5%	22	25.9%
Guilty plea	(10)	(14.5%)	(5)	(31.3%)	(15)	(17.6%)
Guilty verdict	(6)	(8.7%)	(1)	(6.3%)	(7)	(8.2%)
Murder	19	27.5%	2	12.5%	21	24.7%
Guilty plea	(12)	(17.4%)	(1)	(6.3%)	(13)	(15.3%)
Guilty verdict	(7)	(10.1%)	(1)	(6.3%)	(8)	(9.4%)
NGMI/Not fit to stand trial	25	36.2%	3	18.8%	28	32.9%
Criminal proceedings ongoing	4	5.8%	1	6.3%	5	5.9%
TOTAL	69	100%	16	100%	85	100%

Relative/kin domestic violence-context homicide - history of violence

Deceased history of domestic violence perpetration/victimisation with homicide offender

This section presents an examination of the history of domestic violence victimisation and perpetration for each of the 94 family members who were killed in a relative/kin DV-context homicide (54 males and 40 females), including recorded and anecdotal histories of violence with the homicide offender, as well as experiences of intimate partner violence.

A primary challenge in undertaking this analysis is reconciling the myriad of different familial relationship types that are evident in this dataset into overarching experiences of domestic violence. These experiences have been broadly captured into the following four categories:

- the deceased family member **experienced violence from** the homicide offender and was killed;
- the deceased family member **used violence against** the homicide offender, and was killed, often in the context of self-preservation or resistance;
- the deceased person **both used violence against and experienced violence** from the homicide offender and it is not able to be determined who was the predominant abuser; and
- the deceased person **neither used violence against nor experienced violence** from the homicide offender but the death was determined to have occurred in a context of domestic violence. For this category of cases, the DV-context was derived from the histories of violence by either the homicide offender or deceased person against other family members. For example, a family member who killed, or was killed, intervening in an episode of intimate partner violence.



Almost half of the 94 family members killed were known to have *experienced violence from* the homicide offender prior to the murder (n=43, 45.7%). The rates of violence victimisation experienced by deceased female relatives (67.5%) were more than double those experienced by deceased males (29.6%).

Just under one-quarter of the family members killed were known to have *used violence against* the homicide offender (n=22, 23.4%). Male deceased relatives (33.3%) were three times more likely to have used violence against the homicide offender, than female deceased relatives (10%).

In 17 per cent of cases, the deceased *both used violence against and experienced violence from* the homicide offender (n=16). Again, this was more than twice as likely to be male deceased relatives (22.2%), rather than female deceased relatives (10%).

In approximately 14 per cent of cases, the family member killed had *neither used violence against nor experienced violence from* the homicide offender (Table 5.19).

Table 5.19: Deceased relative – history of violence perpetration/victimisation with homicide offender (n=94)

History of violence	Male deceased	% Male	Female deceased	% Female	Total	%
Deceased <i>experienced violence from</i> homicide offender	16	29.6%	27	67.5%	43	45.7%
Deceased <i>used violence against</i> homicide offender	18	33.3%	4	10%	22	23.4%
Deceased <i>both used and experienced violence from</i> homicide offender	12	22.2%	4	10%	16	17%
Deceased <i>neither used nor experienced violence from</i> homicide offender	8	14.8%	5	12.5%	13	13.8%
TOTAL	54	-100%	40	-100%	94	-100%

Note: figures may not add to 100 due to rounding

Deceased police recorded history of violence and ADVOs with homicide offender

The following analysis examines only the 81 cases where the deceased used violence against and/or experienced violence from the homicide offender (and excludes the 13 cases where no history of violence victimisation/perpetration between the deceased/homicide offender was evident).

In just over half of the 81 cases involving a history of violence perpetration/victimisation, the history of abuse that preceded the homicide had been reported to police (n=41, 50.6%). Accordingly, in just under half of the cases, the history of abuse had never been reported to police (n=40, 49.4%). Cases where a female was killed were more likely to have police recorded histories of violence than cases where a male was killed (Table 5.20).

Table 5.20: Deceased relative – police recorded history of violence (n=81)

Police recorded history	Male deceased	% Male	Female deceased	% Female	Total	%
Reported to police	22	47.8%	19	54.3%	41	50.6%
Unreported	24	52.2%	16	45.7%	40	49.4%
TOTAL	46	100%	35	100%	81	100%

At the time of the homicide, five deceased relatives (all male) were named in a current ADVO as the person in need of protection from the homicide offender (6.2% of 81 deceased relatives with a history of violence perpetration/victimisation). One male deceased relative was a defendant in a current ADVO protecting the homicide offender (1.2%) (Table 5.21).

Table 5.21: Deceased relative - current ADVOs with homicide offender (n=81)

Current ADVOs	Male deceased	% Male	Female deceased	% Female	Total	%
No ADVO at time of homicide	40	87%	35	100%	75	92.6%
ADVO at time of homicide	6	13%	0	-	6	7.4%
Deceased protected from homicide offender	(5)	(10.9%)	0	-	(5)	(6.2%)
Homicide offender protected from deceased	(1)	(2.2%)	0	-	(1)	(1.2%)
TOTAL	46	100%	35	100%	81	100%

Prior to the homicide, eight of the deceased family members (four females and four males) were named in a historical ADVO as the person in need of protection from the homicide offender (9.9% of 81 deceased relatives with a history of violence perpetration/victimisation). Four additional deceased family members (one female and three males) were named as the defendants in a historical ADVO protecting the homicide offender (4.9%) (Table 5.22).

Table 5.22: Deceased relative - historical ADVOs with homicide offender (n=81)

Historical ADVOs	Male deceased	% Male	Female deceased	% Female	Total	%
No historical ADVOs	39	84.8%	30	85.7%	69	85.2%
History of ADVOs	7	15.2%	5	14.3%	12	14.8%
Deceased protected from homicide offender	(4)	(8.7%)	(4)	(11.4%)	(8)	(9.9%)
Homicide offender protected from deceased	(3)	(6.5%)	(1)	(2.9%)	(4)	(4.9%)
TOTAL	46	100%	35	100%	81	100%



Deceased history of domestic violence perpetration/victimisation – other relatives

Over one-third of the 94 people killed in a relative/kin DV-context homicide had a history of domestic violence victimisation and/or perpetration with other relatives within their family unit, i.e., not including the homicide offender or intimate partners (n=36, 38.3%).

Males that were killed had much higher rates of domestic violence perpetration against other family members (n=17, 31.5%) than the females killed (n=4, 10%). Conversely, the females that were killed were more likely to have experienced domestic violence victimisation from other family members (n=9, 22.5%) compared to the males that were killed (n= 2, 3.7%) (Table 5.23).

Table 5.23: Deceased relative - history of domestic violence with other relatives (n=94)

History of DV	Male deceased	% Male	Female deceased	% Female	Total	%
No history of DV	32	59.3%	26	65%	58	61.7%
History of DV	22	40.7%	14	35%	36	38.3%
DV victimisation	(2)	(3.7%)	(9)	(22.5%)	(11)	(11.7%)
DV perpetration	(17)	(31.5%)	(4)	(10%)	(21)	(22.3%)
Both DV victimisation and perpetration	(3)	(5.6%)	(1)	(2.5%)	(4)	(4.3%)
TOTAL	54	100%	40	100%	94	100%

Deceased history of intimate partner violence – Adults

The following analysis of the deceased's history of intimate partner violence victimisation/perpetration only considers the 88 adults killed in a relative/kin DV-context homicide.

For over half of the 88 adult family members killed, intimate partner violence was evident in their current or former relationships (n=50, 56.8%). The males who were killed were more likely to have perpetrated IPV (n=28, 56%) and the females killed were more likely to have experienced IPV victimisation (n=17, 44.7%) (Table 5.24).

Table 5.24: Deceased relative - history of IPV (adults) (n=88)

History of IPV	Adult Male deceased	% Male	Adult Female deceased	% Female	Total	%
No history of IPV	21	42%	17	44.7%	38	43.2%
History of IPV	29	58%	21	55.3%	50	56.8%
IPV victimisation	(1)	(2%)	(17)	(44.7%)	(18)	(20.5%)
IPV perpetration	(28)	(56%)	(2)	(5.3%)	(30)	(34.1%)
Both IPV victimisation and perpetration	(0)	-	(2)	(5.3%)	(2)	(2.3%)
TOTAL	50	100%	38	100%	88	100%

Homicide offender history of domestic violence perpetration/victimisation – other relatives

Two-thirds of the relative/kin DV-context homicide offenders had a history of experiencing domestic violence victimisation and/or perpetration from other relatives within their family unit, i.e., not including the deceased relative or intimate partners (n=60, 66.7%).

Male homicide offenders had much higher rates of domestic violence perpetration against other relatives (n= 32, 43.2%) compared to female homicide offenders (n=2, 12.5%). Conversely, the female homicide offenders had much higher rates of domestic violence victimisation from other relatives (n=6, 37.5%) than the male homicide offenders (n=8, 10.8%) (Table 5.25).

Table 5.25: Relative/kin DV-context homicide – offender history of domestic violence with other relatives (n=90)

History of DV	Male offender	% Male	Female offender	% Female	Total	%
No history of DV	25	33.8%	5	31.3%	30	33.3%
History of DV	49	66.2%	11	68.8%	60	66.7%
DV victimisation	(8)	(10.8%)	(6)	(37.5%)	(14)	(15.6%)
DV perpetration	(32)	(43.2%)	(2)	(12.5%)	(34)	(37.8%)
Both DV victimisation and perpetration	(9)	(12.2%)	(3)	(18.8%)	(12)	(13.3%)
TOTAL	74	100%	16	-100%	90	100%

Note: figures may not add to 100 due to rounding

Homicide offender history of intimate partner violence

For close to half of the 90 relative/kin DV-context homicide offenders, IPV was evident in their current or former relationships (n=39, 43.3%).

Male homicide offenders were more likely to have perpetrated IPV (n=31, 41.9%) and the female homicide offenders were more likely to have experienced IPV victimisation (n=5, 31.3%) (Table 5.26).



Table 5.26: Relative/kin DV-context homicide – offender history of IPV (n=90)

History of IPV	Male offender	% Male	Female offender	% Female	Total	%
No history of IPV	42	56.8%	9	56.3%	51	56.7%
History of IPV	32	43.2%	7	43.8%	39	43.3%
IPV victimisation	(0)	-	(5)	(31.3%)	(5)	(5.6%)
IPV perpetration	(31)	(41.9%)	(2)	(12.5%)	(33)	(36.7%)
Both IPV victimisation and perpetration	(1)	(1.4%)	(0)	-	(1)	(1.1%)
TOTAL	74	100%	16	-100%	90	100%

Note: figures may not add to 100 due to rounding

Relative/kin domestic violence-context homicide - case characteristics

This section presents additional findings in relation to the characteristics and context of the relative/kin DV-context homicide events considered in this chapter. Some case characteristics are described by reference to the 94 relatives killed (for example location of homicide, cause of death) while others are described by reference to the 88 homicide events.

Method of relative/kin DV-context homicide

Almost half of the 94 people died from stab wounds, i.e., ‘assault -sharp weapon’ (n=46, 48.9%). The next most prevalent methods of homicide were: ‘multiple assaultive behaviours’ (n=15, 16%); assault – no weapon (n=13, 13.8%); and shooting (n=11, 11.7%) (Table 5.27).

Table 5.27: Method of relative/kin DV-context homicide (n=94)

Manner of death	Male deceased	% Male	Female deceased	% Female	TOTAL	% Total
Assault – sharp weapon	27	50%	19	47.5%	46	48.9%
Multiple assaultive behaviours	7	13%	8	20%	15	16%
Assault (no weapon)	8	14.8%	5	12.5%	13	13.8%
Shooting	9	16.7%	2	5%	11	11.7%
Suffocation/strangulation	1	1.9%	3	7.5%	4	4.3%
Fire related	2	3.7%	0		2	2.1%
Drowning	0	-	1	2.5%	1	1.1%
Neglect	0	-	1	2.5%	1	1.1%
Unknown	0	-	1	2.5%	1	1.1%
TOTAL	54	-100%	40	100%	94	100%

Note: figures may not add to 100 due to rounding

Location of homicide

The majority of family members were killed in their own home (n=78, 83%). Usually this was the home that they lived in full-time with the homicide offender (n=46, 48.9%) (Table 5.28).

Table 5.28: Location of relative/kin DV-context homicide (n=94)

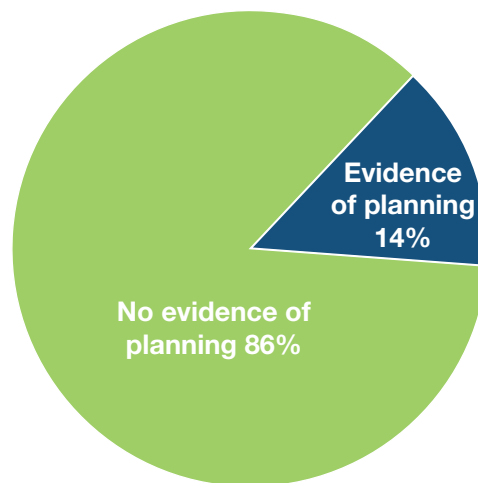
Location of homicide	Male deceased	% Male	Female deceased	% Female	TOTAL	% Total
Deceased residence	43	79.6%	36	90%	78	83%
Lived full-time with homicide offender	(22)	(40.7%)	(25)	(62.5%)	(46)	(48.9%)
Lived separately from homicide offender	(21)	(38.9%)	(11)	(27.5%)	(32)	(34%)
Homicide offender residence	7	13%	2	5%	9	9.6%
Other residence	2	3.7%	0	-	2	2.1%
Public/open place	2	3.7%	1	2.5%	3	3.2%
Unknown	0	-	1	2.5%	1	1.1%
TOTAL	54	100%	40	100%	94	100%



Evidence of planning

In 14 per cent of the 88 relative/kin DV-context homicide events (resulting in the deaths of 94 individuals), the circumstances leading up to the fatal episode demonstrated a level of planning and/or premeditation by the homicide offender/s (n=12, 13.6%). Evidence of planning was apparent in eight cases perpetrated by a male homicide offender acting alone, three cases involving a female homicide offender acting alone, and one case where a father and son were both held criminally responsible for killing a family member (Fig. 5.10).

Figure 5.10: Evidence of planning in relative/kin DV-context homicide (n=88)



Evidence of planning included, for example, the offender specifically travelling to the deceased's residence for the purpose of carrying out the homicide; the offender/s establishing a false alibi; and the offender pre-purchasing weapons/other implements for the purpose of carrying out the homicide.

Multiple fatality events

Of the 88 relative/kin DV-context homicide events, 12 involved the homicide offender killing more than one person in the fatal episode, resulting in the deaths of 26 people. Of the 12 multiple fatality events:

- Four cases involved the homicide offender killing both parents (three male offenders and one female offender);
- Five cases involved a male homicide offender killing a family member/s and their intimate partner;
- One case involved a male homicide offender killing his grandmother and a stranger/bystander;
- One case involved a male homicide offender killing his father-in-law and his two children; and
- One case involved a male homicide offender killing his mother and nephew.

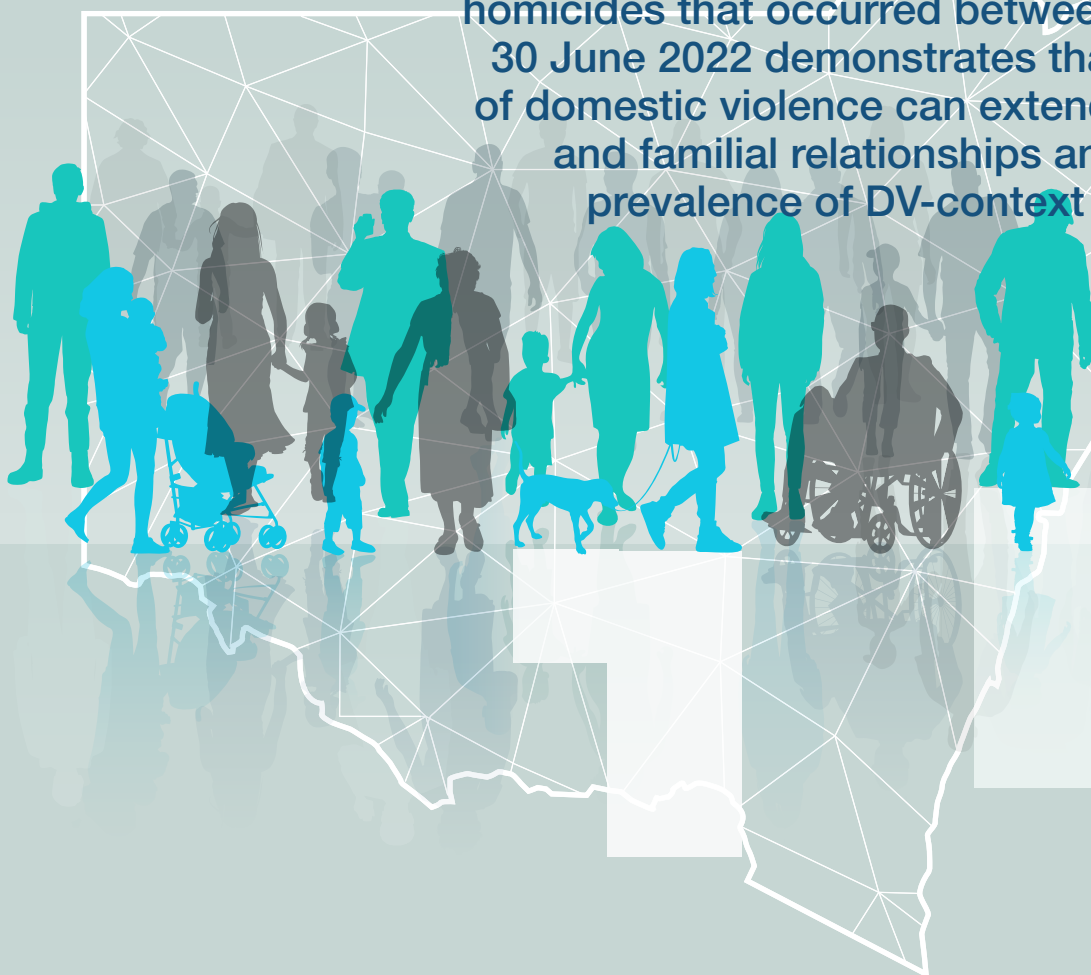
All but one of the 12 multiple fatality events were perpetrated by a male homicide offender (Table 5.29).

Table 5.29: Relative/kin DV-context homicide – multiple fatality events by offender gender (n=12)

Homicide offender	Multiple fatality event	%
Male offender	11	91.7%
Female offender	1	8.3%
TOTAL	12	100%

‘Other’ domestic violence-context homicide in NSW, 2000-2022

This chapter examines cases where the homicide offender and deceased person did not share an intimate or familial relationship but the death nevertheless occurred in a context of domestic violence. This analysis of the 55 ‘other’ DV-context homicides that occurred between 1 July 2000 and 30 June 2022 demonstrates that the fatal impact of domestic violence can extend beyond intimate and familial relationships and reveals the true prevalence of DV-context homicide in NSW.



Introduction

The work of the Team highlights that the fatal impact of domestic violence can extend beyond intimate and familial relationships. The term ‘other’ DV-context homicide is used by the Team to describe cases where a person is killed by someone with whom they have no intimate or familial relationship, but the death is nevertheless considered to have occurred in a context of domestic violence. ‘Other’ DV-context homicides include, for example, a bystander who is killed intervening in a domestic violence episode, a person who is killed in a police operation involving a response to domestic violence, or a person who is killed by their partner’s former intimate partner.

Outside the work of the Team, these cases are not reflected in domestic violence homicide data in NSW. The need for greater recognition of these cases has been acknowledged in the broader literature when examining domestic violence homicide.⁹⁹ It is critical therefore, that these homicides are examined by the Team, both to reveal the true prevalence of domestic violence homicide in NSW and to examine patterns and distinctive characteristics in these cases. These cases can provide critical insights into the experiences of domestic violence victims as they frequently survive the homicide and can tell their story.

More so than any other dataset considered in this report, mapping the histories of domestic violence for ‘other’ DV-context homicides is particularly complex because of the multiple parties and relationships surrounding the homicide, and their varying nature. For this reason, the findings for this group of cases are limited to a few key data variables, namely: the nature of the DV-context in terms of whether it related to intimate partner violence or relative/kin domestic violence; the relationship of the homicide offender to the deceased; the predominant abuser status of the homicide offender and deceased; and whether anyone else was injured or killed in the homicide event. This chapter also provides some demographic and case characteristic information in relation to the homicide offender and deceased person.

Inclusion criteria

For this analysis, ‘other’ DV-context homicides are those in which a person is killed by:

- **a person** with whom they have no intimate or familial relationship;
- **in a DV-context**, i.e., the homicide is directly related to the domestic violence behaviours of either the deceased or the homicide offender, including, for example a bystander who is killed intervening in a domestic violence episode, a person who is killed in a police operation involving a response to domestic violence, or a person who is killed by their partner’s former intimate partner.
- **within the data reporting period** – 1 July 2000 and 30 June 2022; and
- **the deceased person was ordinarily a resident in NSW** – the deceased person permanently resided in NSW, notwithstanding that they may have been killed in another state or territory.

⁹⁹Dobash, R. and Dobash, R. (2015), ‘When Men Murder Women’, *Oxford University Press*, New York; Meyer, E., and Post, L. (2013), ‘Collateral Intimate Partner Homicide’, *Sage Open*, 3(2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244013484235> (accessed 26 November 2023).



Data findings

Overview

Between 1 July 2000 and 30 June 2022 in NSW, there were 1,168 people killed by a person with whom they had no intimate or familial relationship. Approximately one in 20 of these people were killed in a context of domestic violence, meaning that although the deceased had no intimate or familial relationship with the person that killed them, the death was nonetheless determined to have occurred in a DV-context (n=55, 4.7%).

The 1,113 non-domestic violence related homicides occurred in a range of circumstances including: violence between friends/acquaintances/peers; violence related to organised crime and other criminal activities and (infrequently) stranger homicides. It should be noted that many of these homicide offenders and deceased persons had extensive histories of using and experiencing domestic violence throughout their lives, however this history was not of itself sufficient to satisfy inclusion in the category of 'other' DV-context homicide as the homicide was not directly linked to any history of domestic violence perpetration or victimisation.

Table 6.1: 'Other' homicide domestic violence context (n=1,168)

Non-domestic homicides	Deceased adults	%
DV-context	55	4.7%
No DV-context	1,113	95.3%
TOTAL	1,168	100%

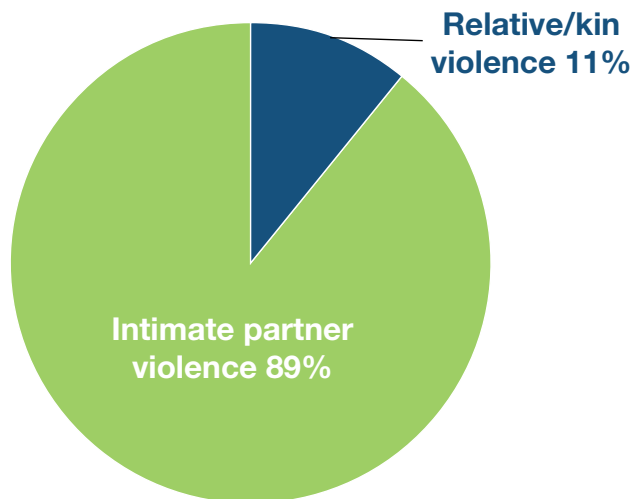
Domestic violence context

Nature of domestic violence context

Of the 55 individuals killed in 'other' DV-context homicides, almost 90 per cent were killed following an identifiable history of intimate partner violence, meaning that the homicide offender and/or the deceased person had a history of using or experiencing intimate partner violence that was directly related to the homicide event itself (n=49, 89.1%).

The remaining six cases involved an identifiable history of violence perpetrated by a relative/kin, meaning that the homicide offender and/or the deceased person had a history of using or experiencing relative/kin domestic violence that was directly related to the homicide (n=6, 10.9%) (Fig. 6.1).

Figure 6.1: Nature of DV-context (n=55)



Relationship of homicide offender to deceased

The majority of 'other' DV-context homicides involved a person who was killed by their partner's current/former intimate partner (n=38, 69.1%). This included a former partner killing a new partner (or perceived new partner) (n=24, 43.6%); a current partner killing a former partner (n=11, 20%) and a current partner killing another partner from a clandestine relationship (n=3, 5.5%).

Almost one-quarter of the homicides involved the killing of a bystander during an episode of domestic violence (n=13, 23.6%), including the deaths of 11 people who were killed intervening in an episode of domestic violence (n=11, 20%) and two people that were killed in the context of the homicide offender killing their intimate partner or a family member (n=2, 3.6%).

Three individuals were lawfully killed by police officers in the context of a police operation where the officers were responding to an episode of domestic violence (n=3, 5.5%) (Table 6.2).

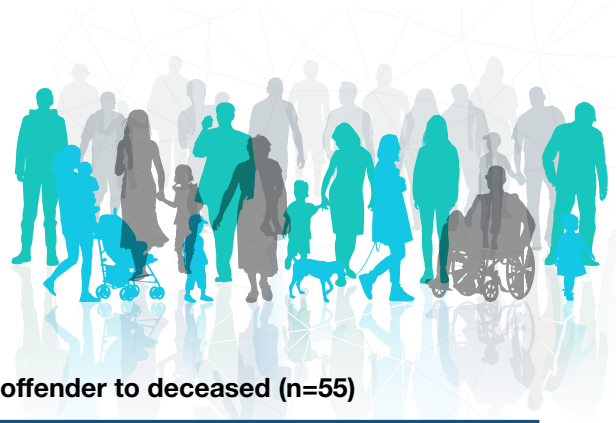


Table 6.2: ‘Other’ DV-context homicide - relationship of homicide offender to deceased (n=55)

Relationship of homicide offender to deceased	TOTAL	%
Current/former IP	38	69.1%
Former IP kills new IP	(24)	(43.6%)
Current IP kills former IP	(11)	(20%)
Current IP kills IP (clandestine)	(3)	(5.5%)
Stranger	13	23.6%
Intervener killed	(11)	(20%)
Bystander killed	(2)	(3.6%)
Police officer ¹⁰⁰	3	5.5%
Former IP kills ex-girlfriend’s father	1	1.8%
TOTAL	55	100%

Homicide offender and deceased gender

The following analysis excludes the three police officers who lawfully killed a domestic violence abuser during a police operation and therefore considers only 52 offenders.

The vast majority of ‘other’ DV-context homicides involved male homicide offenders killing another man (Table 6.3). Of the three women killed, two were killed by another woman and one was killed by a man.

Table 6.3: ‘Other’ DV-context homicide – deceased and offender gender (n=107)

Gender	Deceased	%	Homicide Offender	%
Men	52	94.5%	48	92.3%
Women	3	5.5%	4	7.7%
TOTAL	55	100%	52	100%

Predominant abuser status – homicide offender and deceased

Approximately 70 per cent of the 52 homicide offenders were identified as the predominant domestic violence abuser (n=37, 71.2%). For the remaining homicide offenders who were not identified as abusers, often they were acting in self-defence, or alternatively had been coerced into participating in the homicide.

One-third of the individuals killed were identified as the predominant domestic violence abuser (n=18, 32.7%). These included circumstances whereby an abuser is killed by a police officer during a police operation, as well as when a former abusive partner kills a new abusive partner, i.e., both the former partner and the new partner had a history of abuse against the same domestic violence victim (Table 6.4).

¹⁰⁰ As noted in Chapter 1, the Team’s definition of ‘homicide’ includes all cases where an individual’s intentional act, or failure to act, resulted in the death of another person, regardless of whether the circumstances were such as to contravene provisions of the criminal law.

Table 6.4: ‘Other’ DV-context homicide - predominant abuser status (n=107)

Predominant Abuser status	Deceased	%	Homicide Offender	%
Predominant Abuser	18	32.7%	37	71.2%
Not predominant abuser	37	67.3%	15	28.8%
TOTAL	55	100%	52¹⁰¹	100%

Multiple fatalities and attempted homicides

In four cases the ‘other’ DV-context homicide offender killed more than person, resulting in the death of nine people. These four multiple fatality cases included:

- a man killing his former intimate partner and the woman’s new male partner;
- a man killing his former intimate partner, her new male partner and that man’s son;
- a man killing his former intimate partner, their daughter, and the woman’s new male partner; and
- a man killing his grandmother and a bystander.

The deaths of the former intimate partners and other family members are reflected in the relevant datasets in this report.

A further six cases involved the homicide offender attempting to kill another person as well as the deceased. Four of these six cases involved a man attempting to kill his former partner as well as killing the woman’s new partner (Table 6.5).

Table 6.5: ‘Other’ DV-context homicide – multiple fatalities and attempted homicide by offender (n=52)

Number of people injured/killed	Homicide Offender	%
One person	42	80.8%
Multiple people	10	19.2%
Injured	(6)	(11.5%)
Killed	(4)	(7.7%)
TOTAL	52¹⁰²	100%

It is noted that in 21 cases the homicide offender’s current/former intimate partner was also present at the homicide but was physically unharmed.

101 The three police officers who lawfully killed a domestic violence abuser during a police operation have been excluded from this analysis.

102 Again, the three police officers who lawfully killed a domestic violence abuser during a police operation have been excluded from this analysis.



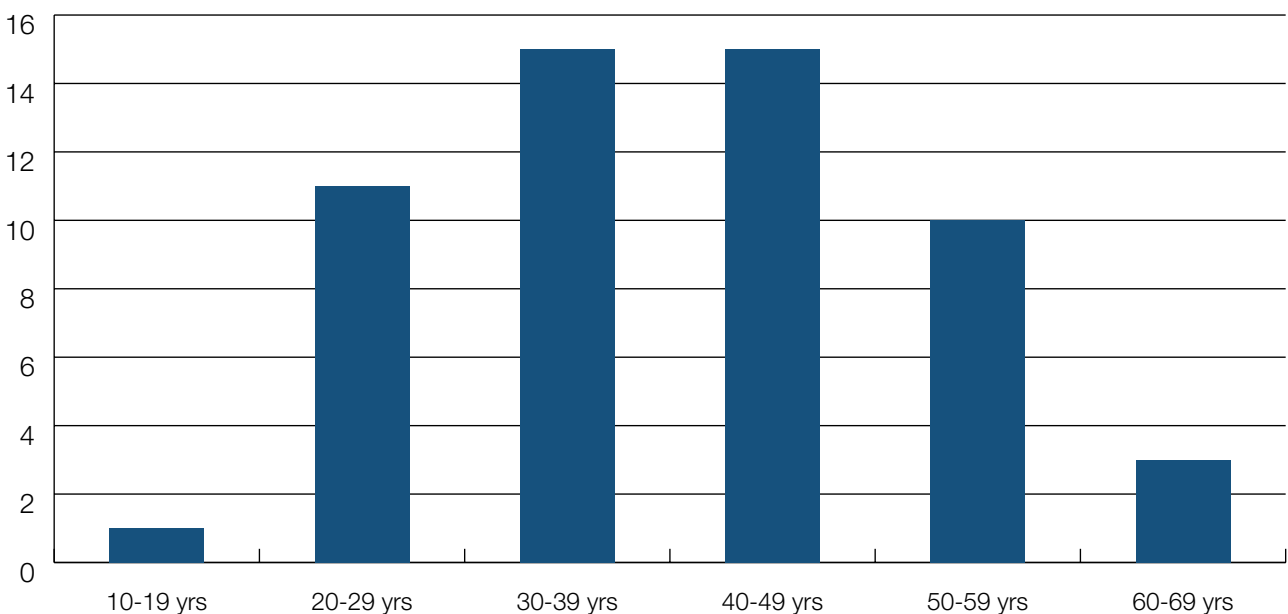
‘Other’ DV-context homicide - deceased characteristics

This section presents the demographic characteristics of the 55 individuals killed in ‘other’ DV-context homicides in NSW between 1 July 2000 and 30 June 2022.

Deceased age

The 55 individuals killed ranged from 19 to 67 years of age (Fig. 6.2). The average age was 40.5 years.

Figure 6.2: ‘Other’ DV-context homicide – deceased age (n=55)



Deceased country of birth

More than two-thirds of the 55 people killed were born in Australia (n=37, 67.3%). The 18 people born outside Australia were born in 14 different countries. One person born outside Australia was on a temporary visa at the time he was killed (Table 6.6).

Table 6.6: ‘Other’ DV-context homicide – deceased country of birth and visa status (n=55)

Country of Birth	Total	%
Australia	37	67.3%
Outside Australia	18	32.7%
Temporary visa	(1)	(1.8%)
TOTAL	55	100%

Deceased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status

Of the 55 people killed in 'other' DV-context homicides, five identified as Aboriginal (9.1%) (Table 6.7).

Table 6.7: 'Other' DV-context homicide – deceased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status (n=55)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status	Total	%
Aboriginal	5	9.1%
Non-Indigenous	50	90.9%
TOTAL	55	100%

Deceased place of residence - remoteness

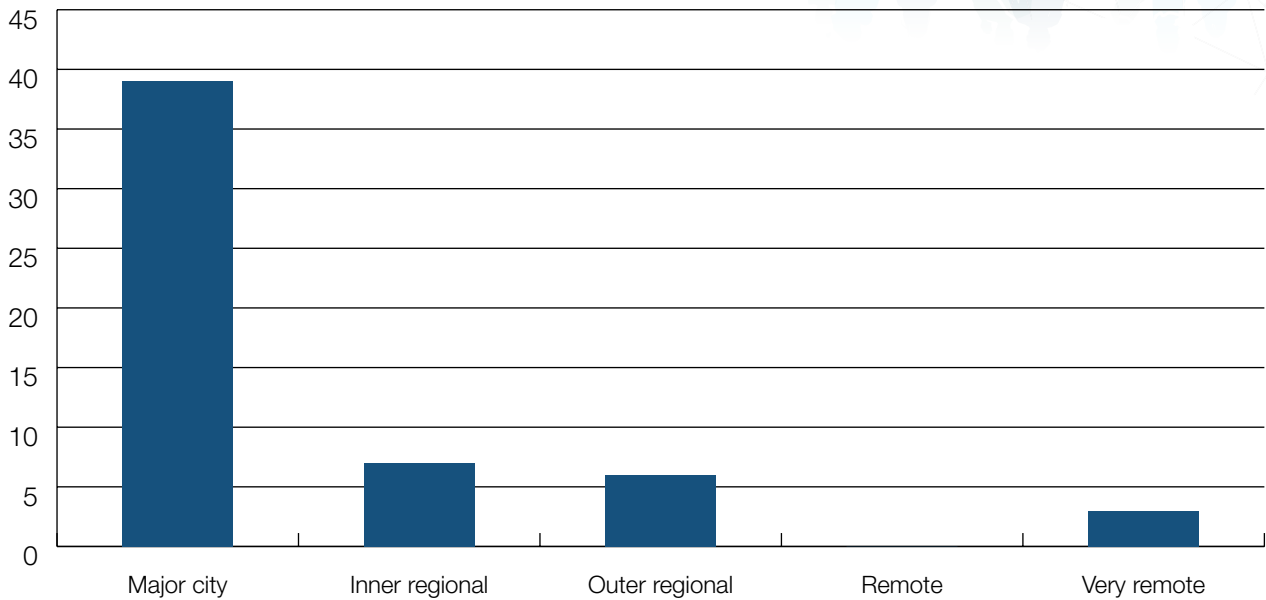
Approximately 70 per cent of the 55 people killed were residing in a major city at the time of the homicide (n=39, 70.9%) with the remainder residing outside a major city (Table 6.8, Fig. 6.3).

Table 6.8: 'Other' DV-context homicide – deceased residence remoteness (n=55)

Remoteness	Total	%
Major city	39	70.9%
Inner regional	7	12.7%
Outer regional	6	10.9%
Remote	0	-
Very remote	3	5.5%
TOTAL	55	100%



Figure 6.3: ‘Other’ DV-context homicide – deceased residence remoteness (n=55)



Deceased socio-economic status

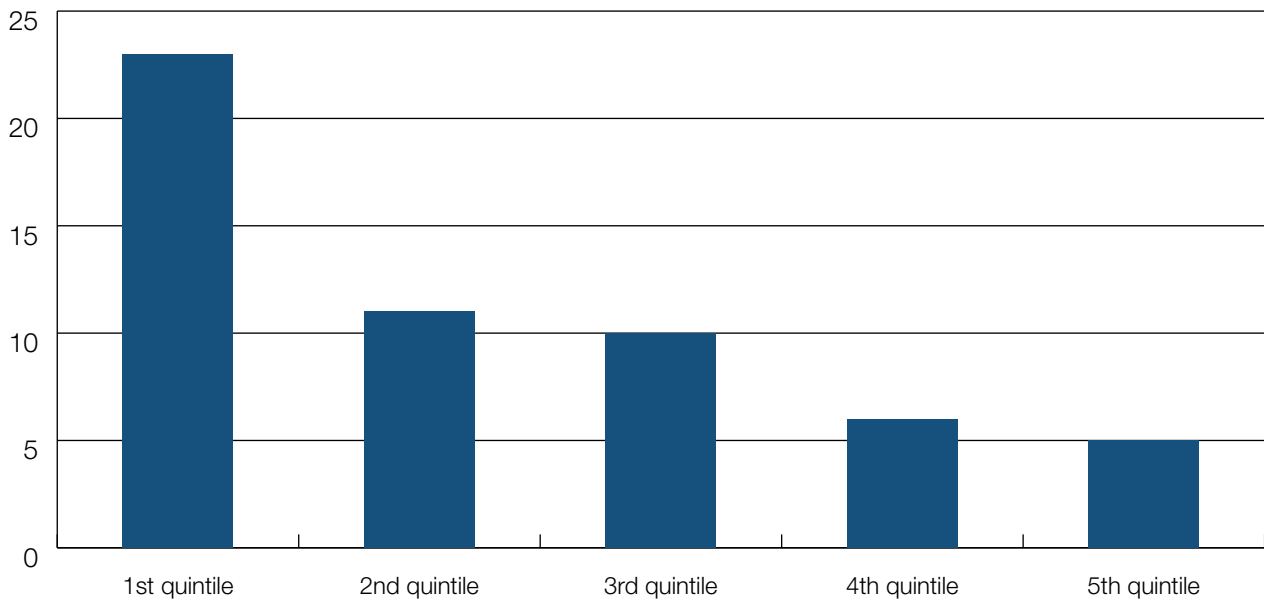
The ABS Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD) has been used to determine the socio-economic status of the deceased.

Over 40 per cent of the people killed were living in the lowest ranked socio-economic areas of NSW (n=23, 41.8%) with smaller proportions residing in the least disadvantaged areas (Table 6.9, Fig. 6.4).

Table 6.9: ‘Other’ DV-context homicide – deceased socio-economic status (n=55)

IRSD Quintile	Total	%
1st quintile	23	41.8%
2nd quintile	11	20%
3rd quintile	10	18.2%
4th quintile	6	10.9%
5th quintile	5	9.1%
TOTAL	55	100%

Figure 6.4: 'Other' DV-context homicide – deceased socio-economic status (n=55)



'Other' DV-context homicide – offender characteristics

This section presents demographic characteristics of the 52 homicide offenders who killed a person in an 'other' DV-context homicide in NSW between 1 July 2000 and 30 June 2022.

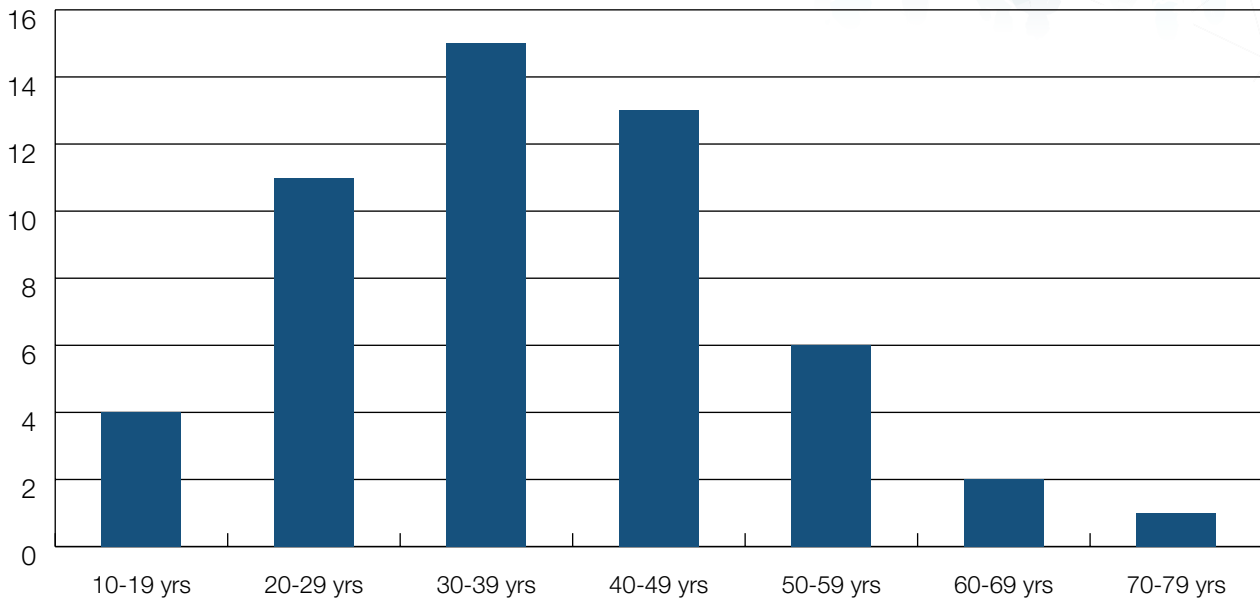
The characteristics of the three police officers who lawfully killed a domestic violence abuser during the course of a police operation have been excluded from this analysis.

Homicide offender age

The homicide offenders were aged between 16 years and 75 years, with the average age being 37.5 years (Fig. 6.5).



Figure 6.5: 'Other' DV-context homicide - offender age (n=52)



Homicide offender country of birth

Approximately two-thirds of the 52 homicide offenders were born in Australia (n=34, 65.4%). The 18 people born outside Australia were born in 15 different countries. Two of the homicide offenders born outside Australia were on temporary visas at the time of the homicide (Table 6.10).

Table 6.10: 'Other' DV-context homicide - offender country of birth and visa status (n=52)

Country of Birth	Total	%
Australia	34	65.4%
Outside Australia	18	34.6%
Temporary visa	(2)	(3.8%)
TOTAL	52	100%

Homicide offender Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status

Approximately 17 per cent of the homicide offenders identified as Aboriginal (n=9, 17.3%) (Table 6.11).

Table 6.11: 'Other' DV-context homicide - offender Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status (n=52)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status	Homicide Offender	%
Aboriginal	9	17.3%
Non-Indigenous	43	82.7%
TOTAL	52	100%

Homicide offender criminal justice outcomes

The vast majority of the 52 homicide offenders were dealt with by way of criminal proceedings (n=49, 94.2%) and the remaining three offenders were subject to coronial proceedings in circumstances where the offender died by suicide following the homicide (n=3, 5.8%).

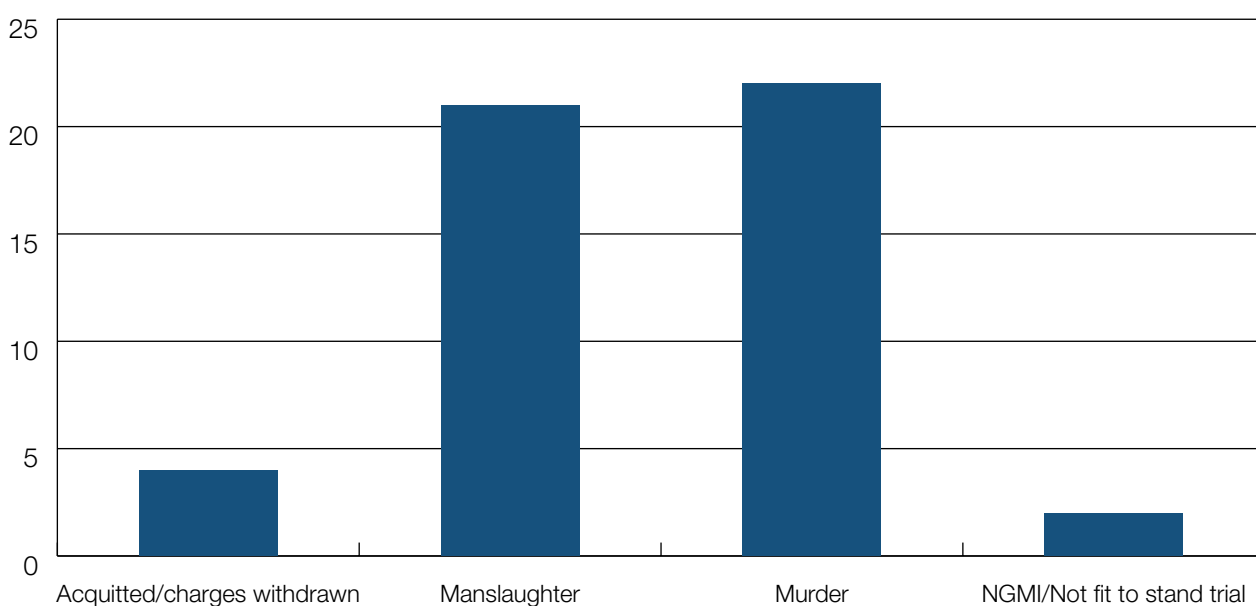
Approximately 45 per cent of the 49 homicide offenders dealt with by way of criminal proceedings were convicted of murder (n=22, 44.9%), and a similar proportion were convicted of manslaughter (n=21, 42.9%) (Table 6.12, Fig. 6.6).

Table 6.12: 'Other' DV-context homicide – offender criminal justice outcomes (n=49)

Criminal justice outcome	Homicide offender	%
Acquitted/Charges withdrawn	4	8.2%
Manslaughter	21	42.9%
Guilty plea	(11)	(22.4%)
Guilty verdict	(10)	(20.4%)
Murder	22	44.9%
Guilty plea	(9)	(18.4%)
Guilty verdict	(13)	(26.5%)
NGMI/Not fit to stand trial	2	4.1%
TOTAL	49	-100%

Note: figures may not add to 100 due to rounding

Figure 6.6: 'Other' DV-context homicide - offender criminal justice outcomes (n=49)





‘Other’ DV-context homicide – case characteristics

This section presents additional findings in relation to the characteristics and context of the ‘other’ DV-context homicides considered in this chapter. Some case characteristics are described by reference to the 55 people killed (for example, location of homicide, cause of death) while others are described by reference to the 52 homicide offenders (excluding the three police officers who lawfully killed the deceased in the context of a police operation).

Method of homicide

Over half of the 55 people killed died from stab wounds, i.e., ‘assault -sharp weapon’ (n=31, 48.9%). The next most prevalent method of homicide was shooting (n=13, 23.6%) (Table 6.13).

Table 6.13: Method of ‘other’ DV-context homicide (n=55)

Manner of death	TOTAL	% Total
Assault – sharp weapon	31	56.4%
Assault – blunt weapon	3	5.5%
Assault – MVA related	2	3.6%
Assault – no weapon	2	3.6%
Shooting	13	23.6%
Shooting (police)	3	5.5%
Suffocation/strangulation	1	1.8%
TOTAL	55	100%

Location of homicide

Most people who died in ‘other’ DV-context homicides were killed in their own home (n=24, 43.6%) (Table 6.14).

Table 6.14: Location of ‘other’ DV-context homicide (n=55)

Location of homicide	TOTAL	% Total
Deceased residence	24	43.6%
Homicide offender residence	10	18.2%
Other residence	12	21.8%
Public/open place	8	14.5%
Hotel	1	1.8%
TOTAL	55	-100%

Note: figures may not add to 100 due to rounding

Evidence of planning

Almost half of the 52 homicide offenders demonstrated a level of planning and/or premeditation in the lead up to the homicide (n=25, 48%). Evidence of planning included, for example, the offender specifically travelling to the deceased's residence for the purpose of carrying out the homicide, the offender establishing a false alibi, or pre-purchasing weapons/other implements for the purpose of carrying out the homicide.

Figure 6.7: Evidence of planning in 'other' DV-context homicide (n=52)



ANNEXURE 1: Secretariat Activities Report



The work of the DVDRT is supported by a two-person Secretariat, comprising a Manager and a Research Analyst. The Secretariat supports the Team to fulfil its legislative function by:

- developing and maintaining the Team’s specialised domestic violence homicide dataset;
- preparing in-depth case reviews for examination by the Team members; and
- drafting the Team’s reports for tabling in Parliament.

In addition to the work undertaken to support the operation of the DVDRT, the Secretariat’s role encompasses a range of additional duties, including:

- leading the development of national domestic violence death review data as Chair of the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Network in partnership with ANROWS;
- working with Coroners on open cases where domestic violence is relevant to the inquiry; and
- participating in a wide range of forums to share learnings from the DVDRT.

The Australian Domestic & Family Violence Death review Network-ANROWS partnership

Since the Team’s establishment in 2010, an additional key role of the Secretariat has been to work closely with equivalent review bodies in other jurisdictions to share information and learnings. This engagement has culminated in the establishment of the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Network in 2011. The Team’s Manager is the chair of the Network.

One of the key achievements of the Network was producing its first National Data Report in 2018 providing, for the first time in Australia, specialised national data with respect to all intimate partner homicides that occurred in the context of domestic violence. This report was the culmination of years of extensive work and, as the jurisdiction most progressed in terms of data reporting, the Secretariat drove the development, design and implementation of this project.

As a result of the significant and positive feedback on the report, in 2020 ANROWS was funded to establish a collaborative partnership with the Network to produce a second National Data Report on IPV Homicides.¹⁰³ This report was launched at the 2022 ANROWS Annual Conference with the opening presentation from the Team’s Manager.

Following the success of this partnership, ANROWS secured funding from the Commonwealth Department of Social Services to continue the collaboration with the Network. In July 2024 the partner project published a national data report with respect to filicides occurring in the context of domestic violence, titled *‘Filocides in a domestic and family violence context 2010-2018’*.¹⁰⁴ Again, this work has been heavily guided by the Team’s quantitative data review and the Team’s Manager was the Network lead on this important project.

103 Australian Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Network and Australia’s National Research Organisation for Women’s Safety (2022), ‘Data Report: Intimate partner violence homicides 2010–2018’, 2nd ed., *Research report 03/2022*, ANROWS, <https://www.anrows.org.au/project/australian-domestic-and-familyviolencedeath-review-network-national-data-update/> (accessed 31 May 2024).

104 Australian Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Network & Australia’s National Research Organisation for Women’s Safety (2024) ‘Australian Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Network data report: Filicide in a domestic and family violence context 2010-2018’, 1st ed., *Research report 06/24*, ANROWS, <https://www.anrows.org.au/publication/australian-domestic-and-family-violence-death-review-network-filicides/> (accessed 2 July 2024).



Open case review function

In addition to the case reviews prepared for the Team, the Secretariat also works with Coroners on open cases where domestic violence is relevant to the coronial inquiry. During this reporting period the Secretariat assisted Coroners in three Inquests.

In this role, the Secretariat assisted Coroners by:

- preparing a domestic and family violence expert report based on the brief of evidence and a comparative analysis using its quantitative and qualitative data;
- recommending additional brief requisitions to enhance the investigation;
- giving expert evidence at hearing; and
- proposing potential areas for recommendation.

This enhanced role for the Secretariat was one of seven recommendations proposed following the Statutory Review of the Team's establishing legislation in late 2015. It was the Review's perspective that this enhanced role would utilise the expertise of the Secretariat to ensure earlier identification of individual domestic violence related deaths and their targeted investigation in a coronial inquiry. The whole-of-government response to the Review indicated support for this recommendation and since 2016 the Secretariat has provided assistance on 14 inquests.

Amplifying the work of the Team through conferences, publications and other information sharing forums

The work of the Team is recognised and highly regarded both nationally and internationally and its profile continues to grow. The Secretariat is regularly asked to participate in a range of forums to share the learnings from the Team.

This provides an important opportunity to engage more closely with key stakeholders and build relationships across the domestic violence response system. Engagement of this kind also provides important reciprocal learnings to guide the Team's work, extends the reach of the Team and reinforces the legitimacy of this work.

Recent engagements/activities include:

- **Monthly attendance** at the NSW Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Sector Group meeting convened by the NSW Women's Safety Commissioner, Sydney.
- **May 2024:** Presentation to the NSW Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Board, Sydney.
- **May 2024:** Participation in the Federal Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commissioner's Crisis Talks into Murdered and Missing Women, Canberra
- **April 2024:** Presentation to the NSW Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Steering Committee, Sydney.
- **February 2024:** Co-chairing the Domestic Violence Homicide Review Community of Practice Roundtable, Centre for Criminology, Law and Justice, UNSW.

- **December 2023:** Presentation at the National Family Violence Safety Summit, Perth.
- **December 2023:** Presentation at the ANROWS Research Implications for Policy: Works in Progress Forum - Filicides in the context of domestic and family violence.
- **November 2023:** Presentation at the Corrective Services NSW DFV Conference, Sydney.
- **November 2023:** Presentation at the ANROWS-National Plan Senior Officials Research Implications for Policy Forum.
- **November 2023:** Participation as a facilitator at the DCJ Stronger Together DFV forum for religious, community and sector leaders, Parramatta.
- **November 2023:** Recording a social media video for DVNSW's 16 Days of Activism campaign – 'Debunking myths about domestic and family violence'.
- **November 2023:** Presentation for Court Services Executive Meeting, Parramatta.
- **September 2023:** In camera briefing for the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Reference Committee – Inquiry into missing and murdered First Nations women and children.
- **August 2023:** Presentation for the DFSV Joint Board and Steering Committee Meeting, Parramatta
- **July 2023:** Presentation for the Australian and New Zealand Association of Psychiatry, Psychology and Law.
- **April 2023:** Presentation for the NSWPF Commander's Forum, Goulburn.
- **November 2022:** Presentation at the USYD Law School DFV Conference.



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