



VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: INFORMATION AND FACTS 2015-2016

According to the Victorian *Family Violence Protection Act 2008*, family violence is behaviour by a person towards a family member that is physically or sexually abusive; emotionally or psychologically abusive; economically abusive; threatening; coercive; or in any other way controls or dominates the family member, causing them to fear for their safety or wellbeing or that of another family member; or behaviour by a person that causes a child to hear or witness, or otherwise be exposed to the effects of behaviour referred to above.

The Northern Metropolitan Region (NMR)¹ of Melbourne has a population of 985,039, of which 499,310 are female (347,010 are women aged 25 and over) and 309,843 are children and young people aged 24 years and under (152,300 female).²

OFFENCES FROM FAMILY VIOLENCE

In 2015-16, family violence was the context for about half of all assaults and related offences (53.2%), 49.4% of all abductions and related offences and 61% of all stalking, harassment and threatening behaviour in the NMR. Of all sexual offences, 40.9% were perpetrated as part of family violence.

OFFENCES ARISING FROM FAMILY VIOLENCE REPORTED INCIDENTS IN NMR, 2015-16

	Number of offences from family violence	Proportion of all corresponding NMR offences
Homicide	10	36%
Assault and other offences	3,376	53.2%
Rape and Indecent Assault offences	540	41.2%
Abduction and related offences	78	49.4%
Stalking, harassment and threatening behaviour	1,338	61%

Source: LEAP Database provided by the Crime Statistics Agency (where numbers are shown as ≤3, 2 was used for calculation purposes).

Nationwide, on average one woman is killed by her partner each week,³ with the period following separation believed to be the most dangerous for women leaving violent relationships.⁴ Both separation and pregnancy are noted as times of vulnerability to domestic violence – of the 36% of Australian women who have experienced violence by a previous partner, 25% reported that the violence was perpetrated for the first time while they were pregnant.⁵

FAMILY VIOLENCE

In Victoria, family violence incidents increased by 10% from 70,9024 in 2014–15 to 78,012 in 2015–16, and the rate increased from 1,194.15⁶ per 100,000 to 1,288.7 per 100,000.

In the NMR, family violence incidents increased from 11,586 in 2014–15 to 12,149 (an increase of 4.9%) and the rate increased from 1,178.0 per 100,000 to 1,206.8 per 100,000.

Victoria Police provides annual figures for reported incidents of family violence for the seven Local Government Areas (LGAs) in the NMR.⁷ This fact sheet presents the figures for the NMR as a whole. Individual fact sheets have been produced for each LGA in the NMR.

Many women experiencing family violence do not report this to the police, therefore, the NMR figures from Victoria Police are likely to underestimate the extent of the problem.

NMR Family Violence Reported Incidents for 2015–16

- The total number of reported incidents in the NMR was 12,149.
- The total number of reported incidents in Victoria was 78,012.
- This is a rate of 1,206.8 per 100,000 population for the NMR,⁸ compared to a rate of 1,288.7 per 100,000 for Victoria.
- On average, 234 incidents of family violence were reported to police every week.
- Females (75%) were the majority of victims.
- Males (78.4%) were the majority of perpetrators.
- Where NMR victims reported that they were fearful or very fearful, 83.7% (4,563) were female.
- 79% of victimised women were aged between 15 and 44 years.
- Children were present at 4,075 reported incidents of family violence; this equates to children being present at 33.5% of reported incidents and a rate of 454.4 per 100,000 (compared to 425.5 for Victoria). Children were present at 25,754 family violence incidents across Victoria (33%).
- Charges were laid in 4,857 cases, giving a rate of 482.5 per 100,000 (compared to 511.5 in Victoria). A combined total of 3,767 Family Violence Intervention Orders (IVOs) and Family Violence Safety Notices (FVSNs) were issued, giving a rate of 374.2 per 100,000 (compared to 378.1 in Victoria).⁹

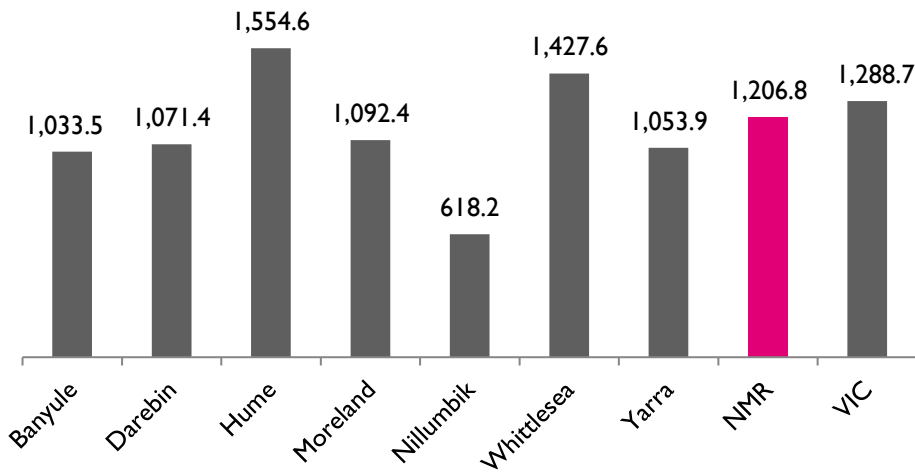
INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Although the proportions of male victims and female perpetrators of family violence seem to correspond, it is incorrect to assume that this represents males victimised by their female partners as:¹⁰

- the definition of family violence is broader than 'intimate partner violence' (IPV) and includes a range of relationships such as elder, father-to-son, and mother-in-law to daughter-in-law abuse, and
- where women do perpetrate violence against their intimate partner, the violence is not an equal violence.¹¹

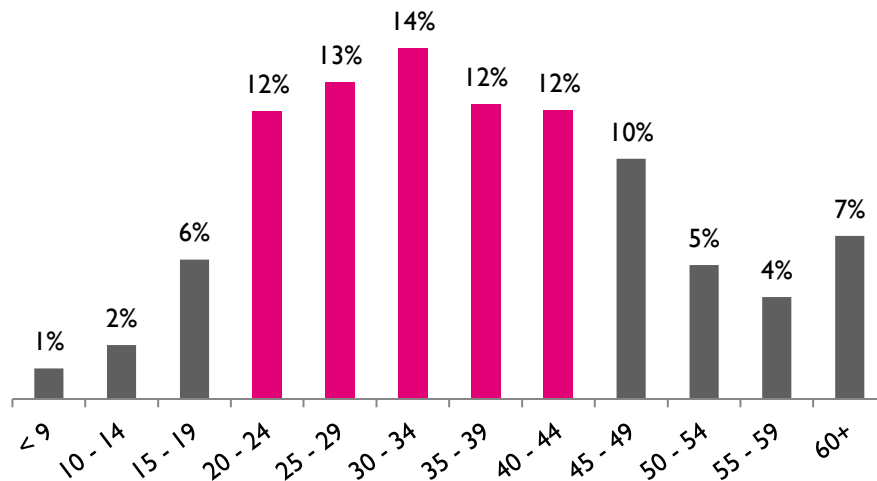
When Victoria Police family violence statistics are limited to IPV¹² in four out of every five incidents, the victim is female. In 2015–16, in the NMR, 14,920 persons were involved in IPV. Half, or 7,435, were noted as the Affected Family Member (AFM), of whom 82.3% were female. The other half were noted as the 'other party' (or perpetrator) and 82.1% of these were male. 82.4% of victimised women who suffered IPV were aged between 15 and 44 years. Totals include 23 AFMs and 53 other parties whose sex is not specified.

CHART 1: FAMILY VIOLENCE REPORTED INCIDENTS RATE PER 100,000, 2015-16



Source: Crime Statistics Agency (2015). Data tables – Family Incidents.

CHART 2: AGE DISTRIBUTION OF FEMALE VICTIMS IN NMR, 2015-16



Source: LEAP Database provided by the Crime Statistics Agency.

¹ The NMR covers seven LGAs: Banyule, Darebin, Hume, Moreland, Nilfumbik, Whittlesea and Yarra.
² Sex-disaggregated population data accessed 03/10/2016 from: (Cat. 3235) Population by Age and Sex, Regions of Australia, 2015. <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@nsf/DetailsPage/3235.02015?OpenDocument>.
³ Broderick, E. (2011). Sex Discrimination Commissioner and Commissioner Responsible for Age Discrimination, When domestic violence comes to work. The Punch. Retrieved from http://humanrights.gov.au/about/media/media_releases/op_ed/20110308_violence.html#fn2 (accessed 26/9/2013).
⁴ Bagshaw, D., & Brown, T. (2010). The Experiences and Views of Children and Adults from Families who Separated Post-1995 and Post-2006. Volume 1. Canberra: Attorney-General's Department; Dearden & Jones; Mouzos, J. (2005). Homicide in Australia 2003–2004: National Homicide Monitoring Program Annual Report. Vol. 65. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology.
⁵ Campo, M. (2015). *Domestic and family violence in pregnancy and early parenthood*. Australian Institute of Family Studies, available at <https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/domestic-and-family-violence-pregnancy-and-early-parenthood>, accessed 18/10/2016.
⁶ In order to be consistent with the population data used by the Crime Statistics Agency, all rates are calculated using figures from the Victoria In Futures program, August 2015. The population figure for the NMR in this data is 1,006,675.
⁷ As the NMR does not correlate with Victoria Police's North West Metro region, the NMR rates have been calculated based on totals of the seven LGA populations obtained from the Crime Statistics Agency.
⁸ Crime Statistics Agency (2016); Data tables – Family Incidents. Retrieved from <https://www.crimestatistics.vic.gov.au/crime-statistics/latest-crime-data/family-incidents-0> (accessed 18/10/2016).
⁹ Purchased data extracted from Crime Statistics Agency LEAP on 18 July 2016 and subject to variation. Produced by Crime Statistics Agency, Victoria Police, September 2016.
¹⁰ VicHealth (2011). *Preventing Violence against Women in Australia: Research Summary*. Carlton South: VicHealth, p. 3.
¹¹ There are very few indications that women subject their male partners to the same level of severe, continuing and escalating violence as that which men perpetrate against their female partners. World Health Organization (2002) *World Health Report on Violence and Health*. Geneva: WHO, p. 94.
¹² The term 'intimate partner' is defined by the Crime Statistics Agency in the data purchased in August 2015 as including 'Boyfriend/Girlfriend, De facto, Divorced, Married and Separated'.
¹³ The Crime Statistics Agency (CSA)'s definition of sexual offences is broad, including offences relating to sexting, pornography and child pornography.
¹⁴ Purchased data extracted from Crime Statistics Agency LEAP on 18 July 2016 and subject to variation. Produced by Crime Statistics Agency, Victoria Police, September 2016.
¹⁵ The use of the terms 'victim reports', 'sexual offence victim reports' and 'alleged offender incidents' is recommended by the Crime Statistics Agency. These are the most accurate terms as, for example, one alleged offender may have multiple incidents, and one victim may have multiple victim reports within the same reference period.

SEXUAL OFFENCES

Police records of sexual offences¹³ (including offences relating to sexting, pornography and child pornography) are another measure of the extent of violence against women. As with family violence, recorded offences are likely to underestimate the extent of the problem. For the 2015–16 period in the NMR:

- On average, 29.7 sexual assault offences were recorded by police every week.¹⁴
- Females (83%) were the majority of victim reports.¹⁵
- 51.2% of female victims were aged less than 25 years.
- Males comprised 95.9% of alleged offender incidents.

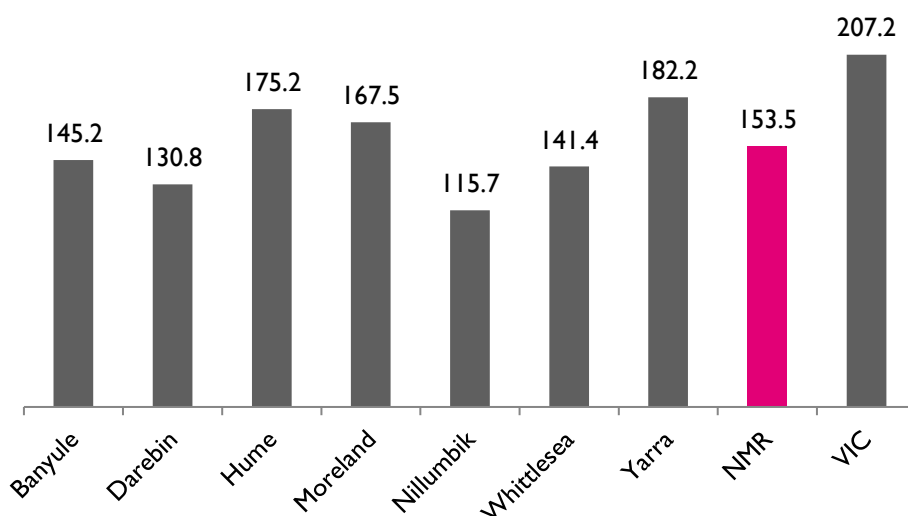
NMR Recorded Sexual Offences 2015-16

- There were 1,545 sexual offences recorded – this is a rate of 153.5 per 100,000 population, compared to 207.2 per 100,000 for Victoria.
- The total number of recorded sexual offences in Victoria was 12,545.

NMR Rape and Indecent Assault 2015-16

- On average, 25 rape and indecent assault offences were recorded by police every week.
- Females (83%) were the majority of victims.
- 50.6% of female victims were aged less than 25 years.
- Males comprised 96.2% of alleged offenders.

CHART 3: SEXUAL ASSAULT (RAPE) AND SEXUAL ASSAULT (OTHER) RECORDED OFFENCES RATE PER 100,000, 2015–16



Source: LEAP Database provided by the Crime Statistics Agency.