

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF CRIMINOLOGY

LATEST PUBLICATIONS / FoC

New AIC research trials nature-based intervention with men who perpetrate domestic and family violence

Link to: [Trialling a nature-based intervention with men who perpetrate domestic and family violence](#)

A small-scale trial of a men’s behaviour change program that incorporated a gardening element, conducted by researchers from Griffith University, demonstrates that:

- Such programs need to overcome a range of risks and facilitation issues associated with incorporating a nature-based intervention into a traditional program format.
- The program was felt to improve engagement with men who would otherwise be uncomfortable in the classroom setting, allowing for greater participation and more honest conversations.
- While the size of the trial limited the measurement of outcomes, there was some evidence to suggest the intervention improved men’s wellbeing, including mental health.

New data available on identity crime in Australia

Data from the most recent *Identity crime and misuse in Australia* publication shows that:

- Twenty percent of respondents to the Australian Cybercrime Survey experienced identity crime in the previous 12 months.
- The most common types of personal information misused in the most recent incident of identity crime included names (37%), credit or debit card information (36%) and mobile phone numbers (31%).
- The most common method used to obtain personal information during the most recent incident of identity crime was hacking of a computer or device (16%) or a data breach (14%).
- The majority of respondents detected the misuse themselves (61%).
- Twenty-nine percent of respondents who experienced identity crime in the previous 12 months lost money due to the misuse, and 19 percent had money reimbursed to them by banks or other organisations.

Read [Identity crime and misuse in Australia 2023](#)

Cybercrime in Australia

The Australian Institute of Criminology has released its first report in the Cybercrime in Australia series, based on a large survey of computer users conducted in early 2023. This report aims to provide a clearer picture of cybercrime victimisation, help-seeking and harms among Australian computer users.

- Overall, 47% of respondents experienced at least one cybercrime in the 12 months prior to the survey: 27% of respondents had been a victim of online abuse and harassment, 22% had been a victim of malware, 20% had been a victim of identity crime and misuse, and 8% had been a victim of fraud and scams. Nearly half of all victims reported experiencing more than one type of cybercrime.
- Cybercrime victimisation was not evenly distributed, with certain sections of the community more likely to have been a victim, and certain online activities associated with a higher likelihood of victimisation.
- Most cybercrime victimisation went unreported to police or to ReportCyber, meaning official statistics significantly underestimate the size of the problem. Rates of help-seeking varied and were influenced by the perceived seriousness of the crime and knowledge of how and where to report it.
- Most victims reported relatively small financial losses, but some victims reported losing large sums of money.
- Twenty-five percent of respondents reported experiencing negative impacts of cybercrime in the 12 months prior to the survey, while 22% of respondents who owned or operated a small to medium business said their business was negatively impacted by cybercrime.

Read the [AIC media release](#).

Read [Cybercrime in Australia 2023](#) on the AIC website.

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AIC research reviews initiatives to prevent child sexual abuse material offending

The AIC has released an international review of prevention initiatives for child sexual abuse material (CSAM) offending, including evidence of effectiveness.

- The study identified 74 initiatives in 16 countries, and 34 eligible studies measuring implementation and effectiveness.
- Findings indicate education and awareness campaigns are reaching large numbers of undetected offenders and notable numbers of those at risk of offending.
- Available evidence suggests that initiatives designed specifically for CSAM offending show more promising outcomes for this offence type than those that broadly target contact sexual offending against children. However, further and more robust evaluations are required to determine the impact of many current initiatives on the use of CSAM.

Read [Preventing child sexual abuse material offending: An international review of initiatives](#)

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AIC research examines domestic violence risk assessment tool used by police

The Australian Institute of Criminology has released a new *Trends & issues* paper examining the predictive validity of the Family Violence Risk Assessment Tool (FVRAT) used by police in the ACT when responding to reports of domestic violence.

- The actuarial component of the FVRAT predicts repeat domestic violence moderately well, and compares favourably to other risk assessment tools used for domestic violence in Australia and internationally.
- The actuarial component of the FVRAT strikes a good balance between identifying cases with a high risk of repeat violence (true positives) and separating out cases with a lower risk of repeat violence (true negatives).
- Victim perceptions of risk may hold some value in improving the predictive accuracy of the actuarial component of the FVRAT when it comes to identifying higher risk reports.

Read [Improving police risk assessment of domestic violence: A follow-up validation study](#)

New research examines links between online activities and cybercrime Ugljesa

The Australian Institute of Criminology has released a new *Trends & issues* paper on the influence of online routine activities and life stressors on the likelihood of profit-motivated cybercrime victimisation.

- Compared with non-victims, victims spent more time online, more frequently engaged in recreational online activities and were more likely to employ higher-risk online practices. Small-to-medium enterprise owners working from home were more likely to be victims.
- Respondents who had experienced recent increases in financial stress and gambling and negative impacts on interpersonal relationships as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic were also more likely to be a victim of cybercrime.
- Being accessible online and a lack of personal and physical guardianship are associated with an increased risk of being a victim. Other factors, including significant life events, also influence the susceptibility of computer users to cybercrime victimisation.

Read [Online behaviour, life stressors and profit-motivated cybercrime victimisation](#)

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The role of the internet in radicalisation

The Australian Institute of Criminology has released a new *Trends & issues* paper on how the internet contributes to radicalisation processes, and how best to prevent this.

- This paper reviews recent research on the online drivers of radicalisation to violent extremism, and what works in preventing it.
- It discusses a number of mechanisms through which the internet drives or contributes to radicalisation to violent extremism, namely by making violent extremist content more widely and easily accessible and increasing its persuasiveness, expanding the reach of violent extremist groups and online communities, and protecting the anonymity of those who engage with these views.
- It examines a number of approaches to addressing the online drivers of radicalisation, including the detection and removal of content, account suspension, measures to reduce the anonymity of users, counter-narrative measures and broader education initiatives.

Read [Understanding and preventing internet-facilitated radicalisation](#)

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New data available on fraud against the Commonwealth

Data from the most recent Fraud Against the Commonwealth Statistical Bulletin shows:

- In 2021–22, there were 80,184 fraud allegations reported. Arising from these allegations, 1,998 internal fraud investigations and 3,772 external fraud investigations were commenced.
- The top target of internal fraud was program information and the top target of external fraud was program payments, such as fraudulent claims or the misuse of payments or services.
- Internal fraud (\$2,795,284) and external fraud (\$198,409,958) losses in 2021–22 were less than the total amounts reported in 2020–21.

Read [Fraud against the Commonwealth 2021-22](#)

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Children’s exposure to intimate partner violence and physical and emotional abuse

The Australian Institute of Criminology has released a new report on children’s exposure to intimate partner violence against their female carers, and their direct experiences of physical and emotional abuse.

- This study draws on a survey of almost 4,000 female carers living in Australia during 2021, at the height of COVID-19 restrictions.
- Among the female carers surveyed, 14.1 percent indicated that a child in their care had been exposed to intimate partner violence perpetrated against them in the last 12 months, and 11.5 percent indicated that a child in their care had been the target of direct abuse perpetrated by their current or most recent former partner.
- Female carers who experienced pandemic-related financial strain, employment issues and isolation were significantly more likely to report that children in their care had directly experienced abuse, as were Indigenous carers and those living with a restrictive health condition.

Read [Exposure to intimate partner violence and the physical and emotional abuse of children: Results from a national survey of female carers](#)

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Role of depression in intimate partner homicide perpetrated by men against women

The Australian Institute of Criminology has released a new *Trends & issues* paper on the role of offender depression in intimate partner homicide incidents perpetrated by men against women.

- This study analyses judges’ sentencing remarks in 70 cases of intimate partner homicide in Australia between 2007 and 2018 where the offender had a history of depressive symptoms.

- Most often, judges determined that offenders' depression, while related, was not serious or debilitating enough to diminish their responsibility for the homicide.
- In explaining the link between offenders' depression and the homicide, many judges reported on the cognitive symptoms of depression, such as poor impulse control and impaired cognitive function, along with concurrent alcohol or drug use and comorbid personality issues.
- Overall, the findings show that depression holds limited explanatory value for understanding intimate partner homicide, and must be considered in the context of other co-occurring risk factors.

Read [The role of depression in intimate partner homicide perpetrated by men against women: An analysis of sentencing remarks](#)

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Outlaw motorcycle gangs and domestic violence

The Australian Institute of Criminology has released a new *Trends & issues* paper on domestic violence offending by outlaw motorcycle gang (OMCG) members.

- Forty percent of OMCG members in New South Wales had been proceeded against for a domestic violence offence in the last 10 years.
- OMCG members were twice as likely to have been proceeded against for domestic violence offences as the wider male offending population.
- Domestic violence offending by OMCG members was more harmful and charges were less likely to result in a guilty outcome.

Read [Outlaw motorcycle gangs and domestic violence](#)

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Overlap between child sexual abuse live streaming and other forms of exploitation

A new AIC study examines the overlap between live streaming of child sexual abuse (CSA), contact sexual offending and engagement with child sexual abuse material (CSAM):

- Among the offenders who viewed CSA live streaming, it was common for them to request or be offered CSAM (images and videos) of their victims, and to attempt travel to offend against victims in person.
- Travelling to offend against children, use of CSAM and CSA live streaming appear to be interrelated and should be considered by law enforcement as potential risk factors for one another.
- Detection and removal of new CSAM, and scanning of live streams for abusive content, should be a priority for all electronic service providers.

Read [The overlap between child sexual abuse live streaming, contact abuse and other forms of child exploitation](#)

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